

NEW SAT-NAV ORDNANCE SURVEY DATABASE TO BE PRODUCED

Many Sat-Navs using the existing databases have become a blight on Britain's country roads - the lorries stuck down narrow lanes after being directed there by sat-nav.

Now ministers spent £3 million to chart about 200,000 miles of roads to create the most detailed digital map of the nation.

For the first time, Ordnance Survey will produce a definitive database for sat-nav manufacturers that contains information on road widths, bridge heights, weight restrictions and bans on left or right turns at junctions.

The system, to be introduced in November 2016, will also draw on data from councils to warn drivers about speed restrictions, roadworks and cycle lanes.

The change comes amid concerns over the number of drivers following digital navigation devices that often fail to inform them about restrictions ahead.

Recent figures from the Department for Transport showed that the majority of drivers - 52 per cent - now reject paper maps in favour of sat-navs. The use of the devices is also being incorporated into driving tests.

However, over the past few years an increasing number of complaints has been logged over lorries being sent down winding roads, damaging buildings and highway surfaces, becoming wedged under bridges and blocking traffic. In some cases incidents involved foreign lorry drivers who cannot read road signs.

Ordnance Survey, which has been developing the technology for two and a half years, said that it would lead to "more efficient routing for all road users, including HGVs".

Recently the Local Government Association welcomed the development but insisted that councils also needed powers to fine lorry drivers who ignored weight restrictions and "blighted rural communities". It wants the power to issue £100 on-the-spot penalties.

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said: "Ministers have proposed that using a sat-nav become part of the driving test, so they have an interest in the technology being 100 per cent accurate. We all want to have faith in technology, but some of us do so a little too blindly."

The national digital road map, which is funded by the DfT, will display the dimensions and accessibility of every street and highway in England and Wales. Local highway authorities will also feed changes to road layouts, newly imposed restrictions, planned roadworks, temporary speed limits and cycle lanes into the system.

ELECTRIC CARS TO GET PRIORITY STATUS ON ROADS

Lanes exclusively for electric cars that gave them priority at traffic lights and the right to go against the flow on one-way streets could be created.

The proposals are part of drive to create "clean-air zones" in five cities to combat air pollution, which has been linked to 40,000 deaths per year.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has begun a consultation on the zones in Birmingham, Derby, Leeds, Nottingham and Southampton, where high levels of nitrogen dioxide are associated with diesel vehicles. The zones are due to be in place by 2020.

Ministers describe the plans as essential to "a long-term ambition for all new cars and vans to be zero emission by 2040, and for nearly every car and van to be zero emission by 2050".

The zones are aimed at supporting this change and "will always favour those vehicles with the very best environmental performance".

A Defra spokesman said: "It may be that in a one-way system they have an extra lane in which electric vehicles can go against the traffic or that they have filter lanes at traffic lights."

Therese Coffey, the environment minister, said: "We need to tackle air pollution and creating clean-air zones will improve the quality of life for people now and in the future."

Last week ministers announced a £35 million package to encourage the purchase and use of electric vehicles, including programmes for more charge points, incentives for business to switch to low-emission fleets and subsidies for electric scooters and motorcycles.

The government car service is acquiring two new Nissan Leaf electric cars to increase its zero-emission fleet to six. Registrations of new ultra-low emissions vehicles have risen sharply in the past two years. Between April and June 2014 there were 2,738 electric vehicles

registered compared with 9,657 in the same period this year.

However, Alan Andrews, a lawyer for ClientEarth, an environmental law group, said that the incentives were not substantial enough. "Requiring just five cities in the UK to introduce clean-air zones doesn't solve a national problem which causes thousands of premature deaths," he told the BBC. "Other local authorities won't introduce voluntary zones unless they are made, or paid to."

Figures published recently revealed that congestion on Britain's roads has risen by 40 per cent, in part because of a large increase in the number of vans delivering internet shopping and an increase in minicabs, especially *Uber* cars.

In an analysis for *The Sunday Times*, Inrix, a traffic information company, examined worsening congestion in 18 urban areas that cover more than 50 per cent of the population. Drivers in those areas spent on average an extra 12.4 hours a year stuck in rush-hour traffic jams last year compared with 2012.

Buses on some of the busiest sections of roads are reported as averaging 3.8mph, slightly faster than walking pace and slower than a horse and cart.

THE CARAVAN CLUB NEWS

VOLUNTEER AT THE NATIONAL
Would you like to volunteer at The Club's biggest event of the year? We are currently looking for members who can help out as marshals at the 2017 National, due to be held at The Sandringham Estate from Friday 26 to Wednesday 31 May.

There are lots of areas in which you can assist, but in particular we are looking to fill the following two positions. Both roles involve working with a Senior Marshal and would suit people with a calm and collected nature who can communicate clearly with others.

Controllee: Key tasks will include logging critical incident details accurately and co-ordinating with an Events Team to deploy relevant staff on the ground (including those working with medical site services or security). You will also be required to monitor radio traffic, hand over to night shift security officers and work throughout the event on a rota.

Communications Marshal: Tasks will include issuing radios and batteries each day, briefing others on radio use and assisting in providing the public with general information. Additionally, we are seeking members who would like to volunteer as Village Tentage Marshals. The job will involve checking that furniture, equipment and stock is in the correct marquee, as well as grass cutting, general grounds keeping and possibly some heavy lifting.

All marshals support the event by paying for their own pitches. If you would like to be a part of the team or would like further information, please email . For more information on The National visit the website www.caravanclub.co.uk/national or call on 01342 488394

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OCTOBER ARVM ONLINE
NEWS, LETTERS AND
ARTICLES IS 18th NOVEMBER**

The database will be sold to sat-nav manufacturers and be-made available free of charge to state organisations including the emergency services.

A spokesman for the DfT said: "This new digital map will help to make Britain easier to navigate, keep traffic moving and help motorists get to their destinations quicker. It will also help businesses, reducing time and money wasted by drivers taking roads unsuitable for their vehicles".