# 363-tonne transformer journey through Wisbech showcases precision planning and safety measures



In a striking display of logistical coordination and engineering prowess, a 363-tonne transformer convoy traversed through the Fenland town of Wisbech on Sunday, May 18. Accompanied by a police escort, the journey was slow and deliberate, with the colossal load moving at a cautious 10 mph. The transformer, which measured an impressive 64 metres in length and 4.1 metres in height, was transported by the specialist haulage firm Allelys along a carefully mapped route involving West Bank, Bridge Road, the A17, Wisbech Road, and Main Road.

A representative from Lincolnshire Constabulary explained that night-time travel for such large loads is typically avoided due to the underlit nature of many local roads. “For the overall safety of our road users, the abnormal load crew and our officers, we move abnormal loads when it is safe to do so,” they stated. This precaution underscores the complexities involved in moving oversized equipment, where route planning is critical to ensure safety for both the public and the hauliers.

The approved route was not merely a suggestion; it was sanctioned by National Highways and local councils, illustrating the rigorous regulations governing the transportation of abnormal loads. Simple detours are often not an option for loads of this magnitude; the chosen path must account for various factors, including vehicle dimensions, local traffic conditions, and road capacities.

Transporting such sizeable loads requires comprehensive planning and adherence to safety protocols detailed in government guidance. This includes the necessity of securing the load safely, with best practices recommending the use of chains over straps for heavy items. Furthermore, protective measures like bulkheads, chocks, and cradles are essential to stabilise the load during transit.

Efforts to improve the safety and efficiency of abnormal load movements have led to initiatives such as Project SAbLE (Safer Abnormal Load Escorting), driven by the Heavy Transport Association. This project aims to enhance current practices through collaboration between various stakeholders, including hauliers, escort services, and police forces. It addresses risks associated with transporting abnormal loads and fosters the development of enhanced safety measures.

Planning does not only involve securing the load; it also requires notification to local authorities well in advance. Many police forces, including Nottinghamshire Police, stipulate that hauliers must provide a minimum of two full days’ notice for loads exceeding specified dimensions. This advance warning allows for adequate preparation and resource allocation, ensuring police escorts are in place and routes can be assessed for any potential challenges.

Ultimately, the successful movement of such substantial loads is a testament to meticulous planning and coordination between diverse agencies. It highlights the nuanced regulations and safety considerations that come into play whenever abnormal loads are transported on public roads, aiming to safeguard the integrity of local infrastructure and the safety of all road users.

As towns like Wisbech witness these logistical feats, community engagement becomes paramount. Local residents often express concerns or curiosity about these movements, which underscores the importance of clear communication from both hauliers and authorities to mitigate disruption and enhance public understanding of the complexities involved in transporting oversized loads.

Such operations not only reflect the growing demands of infrastructure development but also reinforce the need for sustainable practices that balance efficiency with safety in a rapidly evolving landscape.

**Reference Map:**

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Paragraph 4
3. Paragraph 4
4. Paragraph 4
5. Paragraphs 4, 5
6. Paragraph 4
7. Paragraph 4

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25173039.aerial-photos-lorry-abnormal-load-passing-wisbech/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/securing-loads-on-hgvs-and-goods-vehicles/6-how-to-carry-different-types-of-load-in-hgvs-and-goods-vehicles> - This UK government guidance provides detailed instructions on safely transporting various types of loads, including abnormal loads. It emphasizes the necessity of a separate plan for each abnormal load movement, ensuring appropriate securing methods due to the increased risk. The document outlines effective ways to secure loads, such as using chains instead of straps for heavy loads, and employing physical restraints like bulkheads, chocks, or cradles. It also specifies practices to avoid, like attaching multiple lashings to a single attachment point or looping lashings through attachment points and hooking them onto themselves, which can damage the lashing and reduce its effectiveness.
3. <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/road-safety/abnormal-loads-and-the-esdal-system/advice-for-hauliers/> - National Highways offers comprehensive advice for hauliers transporting abnormal loads. The guidance includes recommendations for marking vehicles, detailing side, front, rear, and projection markings, as well as additional markings for girder frame trailers. It also covers signing and lighting requirements, providing a code of practice for lighting and marking for abnormal load self-escorting vehicles. The document emphasizes the importance of proper lighting and marking to alert road users and the general public, enhancing safety during the movement of abnormal loads.
4. <https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/about-us/how-we-work/publication-scheme/services-provided-police-force/abnormal-loads> - West Yorkshire Police provides detailed information on the movement of abnormal and indivisible loads. The policy outlines the notification requirements for hauliers, specifying that loads exceeding certain dimensions require two full clear days’ notice to the police. It also details escort criteria, stating that loads exceeding specific dimensions will require a self-private escort. The document emphasizes the importance of planning, including avoiding peak traffic times and ensuring that movements during the hours of darkness are lit in accordance with lighting regulations.
5. <https://www.hta.uk.net/Project-SAbLE> - The Heavy Transport Association initiated Project SAbLE (Safer Abnormal Load Escorting) to improve the safety and operational efficiency of abnormal load movements through appropriate escorting practices. The project aims to bring together a range of stakeholders, including abnormal load hauliers, route surveyors, permit agents, consultants, abnormal load escorts, infrastructure owners/managers, equipment manufacturers, and the police. It examines current practices in the risk assessment and escorting of abnormal loads and identifies future practices to enhance the safety and efficiency of these movements.
6. <https://concordcranes.com/blog/abnormal-transport-guide/safety-precautions-for-transporting-abnormal-loads/> - Concord Cranes provides a comprehensive guide on safety precautions for transporting abnormal loads. The article emphasizes the importance of obtaining the necessary permits, which specify the route, time, and date of travel, and any other special conditions. It also highlights the need for careful route planning to ensure suitability for the size and weight of the load, including identifying potential obstacles. The guide stresses the importance of ensuring that the vehicle is in good condition, with all safety equipment functioning correctly, and that the load is properly secured to prevent movement during transit.
7. <https://www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/foi-ai/nottinghamshire-police/publication/our-policies-and-procedures/operational-partnerships/abnormal-and-indivisible-loads-policy-ps-127/> - Nottinghamshire Police's Abnormal and Indivisible Loads Policy outlines the procedures for hauliers when transporting abnormal loads. It specifies that hauliers must notify the Chief Officer of Police through the Abnormal Loads Officer via the Electronic Service Delivery of Abnormal Loads (ESDAL) website. The policy details general movement restrictions, including prohibiting movements during peak traffic periods and specifying conditions for night-time movements. It also outlines the responsibilities of the police, including examining the route, conducting risk assessments, and determining the suitability of the proposed movement.