

**TRANSPORT DECISIONS COMMITTEE – 26 NOVEMBER 2009**  
**BUCKLAND ROAD AND BAMPTON 7.5 TONNE ENVIRONMENTAL  
WEIGHT LIMIT**

**Report by Head of Transport**

**Introduction**

1. This report details responses received to a formal consultation on implementation of a 7.5 tonne environmental weight restriction with exemptions for access on Buckland Road and parts of Bampton.

**Background**

2. A temporary structural weight limit was imposed on prohibiting HGVs over 18T Maximum Gross Weight from using Newbridge on the A415 and Tadpole Bridge on the main Buckland to Bampton Road following structural assessment of both structures. This was a precursor to permanent Orders being progressed.
3. A challenge was received to the legitimacy of the weight limit on Tadpole Bridge and on re-examination it was found that Tadpole Bridge had no structural reason for the imposition of such a limit, and therefore it was subsequently removed. Concerns still prevail about large vehicles “grounding” on the structure.
4. Concerns were then raised by Bampton Parish Council (PC) with respect to HGV traffic diverting from Newbridge passing through part of Bampton and over Tadpole Bridge. They requested that a weight limit be introduced to include the area of Bampton and restrict access for vehicles who wish to pass through the area unless they are issued with an exemption permit.
5. Officers carried out an informal consultation on this proposal and replies were received highlighting that such a measure would be unenforceable because permits could not be given out to every vehicle that needed to access the area as such vehicles could not be readily identified.
6. A permanent order 18T Maximum Gross Weight HGV restriction was then introduced on the A415 at Newbridge due to ongoing deterioration of the structure.
7. Following concerns raised by Bampton PC a meeting was arranged in April 2009 when members of Bampton PC met with Cllr Hudspeth (the then Cabinet Member for Transport) and Peter Ronald (Area Traffic Engineer). Bampton PC were informed that there was no structural reason or accident problem warranting introduction of any form of weight limit.

8. It was agreed that following the introduction of the permanent weight limit on Newbridge and the possibility of HGV traffic diverting to use Tadpole Bridge that Oxfordshire County Council would investigate the introduction of a 7.5T Environmental Weight Restriction with exemption for access for premises within the area until such time that Newbridge is reconstructed and the weight limit removed.
9. It was agreed that Oxfordshire County Council would progress the agreed limit to prohibit large goods vehicles in excess of 7.5T from the Bampton to Buckland Road, part of B4449 High Street Bampton and the majority of roads to the north of B4449 and east of Broad Street within the village whilst still allowing access for premises/land within the area covered by the restriction set out at Annex 1.
10. It is possible to introduce a weight limit to the whole of Bampton. However, the village is split in two by the main A4095 Witney to Faringdon Road along which we would not wish to introduce a weight limit for through traffic. An exemption for HGVs who need to service premises fronting onto the A4095 could also be introduced as part of the Order. This option would require additional weight limit terminal signs to roads with access from the A4095 within the village and would be confusing to both delivery drivers and enforcement officers who would need to be aware of all the exemptions as they would not be understood from the signage that could be provided .

### **Consultation**

11. Formal advertisement and consultation on the proposed weight limit was carried out between 21 August and 11 September 2009. 76 responses were received.
12. Initially Bampton Parish Council replied supporting the proposal to introduce the introduction of a 7.5T Environmental Weight Restriction with the 'Except For Access ' exemption and said they would like to see the restriction introduced without delay. They did, however, ask that the restriction include an exemption for vehicles within the vicinity of Bampton, with Bampton as their postal town address, but this was not a requirement of their support for this Order.
13. Bampton Parish Council has now confirmed their decision that they fully support the introduction of the Environmental Weight Limit with the 'Except for Access' exemption. Article 5 of the Oxfordshire Weight Limit Restriction Order effectively allows normal operations within the Weight Limit zone. Businesses within the Bampton Parish envelope, in particular, will not be negatively impacted by the introduction of the weight limit.
14. They also say that the proposed weight restriction would require the introduction of either:
  - a permit system as previously offered to be managed by Bampton Parish Council.

- for the purpose of this Order the Buckland Road and the restricted zones within Bampton would have to be deemed to be contiguous.

This alters their previous view and conditions their agreement.

15. The decision of Bampton Parish Council has three parts, the first two appear to support the Order and its content. However, the third relates to businesses within the Bampton parish envelope.
16. The proposed order will have a negative impact on local businesses outside of the weight limit zone but within the greater 'Bampton Envelope'. As described by the Parish Council these businesses will not be able to use the lengths of roads included within the order as through routes if they have no reason to service any property/land on those roads.
17. The Parish Council then state for the weight limit to meet with their decision they would require either a permit system or that the Buckland Road be contiguous with the rest of the zone.
18. A permit system may be introduced legally but it would not be practicable to issue permits to every vehicle that is likely to require access to premises within the zone. The second point that the Buckland Road is contiguous with the remainder of the zone is already in place in the order as it is one large zone with no boundaries within.
19. Thames Valley Police has indicated that the proposal will be difficult to enforce if approved.
20. Of the remaining responses 7 took the form of an objection. Ten responses indicated qualified support, including Aston Parish Council. Fifty eight responses agreed with the proposal. A summary of responses along with officer comments is set out at Annex 2.

## **Conclusion**

21. The proposal contains exemptions for vehicles in excess of 7.5 tonnes to allow access to premises within the restriction. It is possible to amend the proposal at this stage to provide an exemption for vehicles used solely for agricultural and forestry purposes which would overcome the objection raised by the local farmer. However, this would not overcome the requirements from Bampton Parish Council, who have not fully supported the Order as advertised and want it extended to cover the whole village envelope.

## **Financial and Staff Implications**

22. The costs of the proposal and associated works will be funded from the Southern Area budget.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

23. **The Transport Decisions Committee is RECOMMENDED not to approve the proposed Traffic Regulation Order to implement a 7.5 tonne environmental weight restriction with exemptions for access on Buckland Road and parts of Bampton.**

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Background papers: TRO documentation

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