

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 6 JANUARY 2011**

### **BUCKLAND ROAD AND BAMPTON 7.5 TONNE ENVIRONMENTAL WEIGHT LIMIT, PERMIT CONSIDERATION**

**Report by Deputy Director of Environment & Economy – Highways & Transport**

#### **Introduction**

1. Following the introduction of the Buckland Road and Bampton 7.5T environmental weight limit in July 2010 a request has been received from Bampton Parish Council that the Highway Authority reconsiders the introduction of a permit scheme to allow access through the limit.
2. Bampton Parish Council has requested that permits are issued to a number of businesses, farms and hauliers that allows heavy goods vehicles servicing premises within Bampton Parish to pass through the area of the existing weight limit in order to avoid a lengthy alternative route.
3. This report considers the issues relating to the introduction of such a scheme.

#### **Reasons for the weight limit**

4. A number of roads in the village of Bampton, and the Buckland to Bampton road to the west of Buckland, by their nature of construction and width, are unsuitable for frequent use by vehicles in excess of 7.5 tonnes gross weight.
5. Use of such roads by heavy goods vehicles results in risk of accident, damage to the roads and generally detracts from the amenities of residents. The current order allows access for HGV traffic to service premises located within the area of the weight limit order and also allows for agricultural or forestry vehicles and milk tankers to pass through the area unrestricted .

#### **Observations/Comments**

6. The current weight limit order prohibits large goods vehicles 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. This, it is hoped, will reduce the risk of accidents and improve the quality of life for residents in the area. The traffic regulation order contains standard exemptions for vehicles in excess of 7.5 tonnes to allow access to premises within the restriction. It provides further specific exemption for vehicles used solely for agricultural or forestry purposes and milk tankers.
7. A system of permits as requested by Bampton Parish Council was considered during the formulation of the current order. However, such a system was

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considered to be inappropriate and impossible to implement with any reasonable certainty of compliance and to amend the order as requested would also allow greater numbers of vehicles to pass through the area contradicting the rationale of the current order.

8. A permit system would introduce vehicle scheduling complications for operators who need to make deliveries to exempt businesses as they would need to identify individual permitted vehicles that were exempt and it is unlikely that large nationwide delivery companies would be able to manage such a system as their vehicle fleets change frequently. It might also result in some operators refusing to service the area on a particular day if the correct vehicle was not available. This would be seen to have a negative effect on registered businesses obtaining deliveries of goods and essential services.
9. It would be necessary to introduce expiry dates to permits to reduce the possibility of long-term abuse. The processes involved in issuing, amending, renewing, revoking of permits and maintaining an effective and up-to-date record of permitted individual vehicles as operators and vehicles changed would need to be continually managed. This would require additional resources and incur costs both for vehicle operators and the County Council. The County Council's costs would have to be recouped from a charge for each permit application. Bampton Parish Council may wish to manage this permit scheme on behalf of the County Council and recoup their operating costs but this would need to be agreed with them.
10. Enforcement would be further complicated with alleged offences being more difficult to prove. Currently the main enforcement of weight limits within Oxfordshire is undertaken by our Trading Standards team who do not have powers to stop a vehicle to check to see if it has a valid permit. This would make enforcement very difficult and need extensive investigation after a vehicle is seen within the area. It is also doubtful that effective enforcement by any of the other enforcing authorities would be seen as a priority with other environmental restrictions within the county.
11. Any change to the current weight limit would require the full legal processes involved in respect of traffic regulation orders to be met. This would involve public advertisement inviting comment/objection/support. Officers would find it difficult to justify the requested change to the order, given the likelihood of serious objections from local residents who fought for the introduction of the current order.

### **Financial and Staff Implications**

12. No finances or staff resources have been identified for the management of this permit scheme. A decision to carry out further work would mean that other projects would be delayed or not implemented as the programme would need to be reviewed.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 13. The Cabinet Member for Transport is RECOMMENDED not to proceed with the introduction of a permit scheme for the Buckland Road and Bampton 7.5 tonne environmental weight limit zone.**

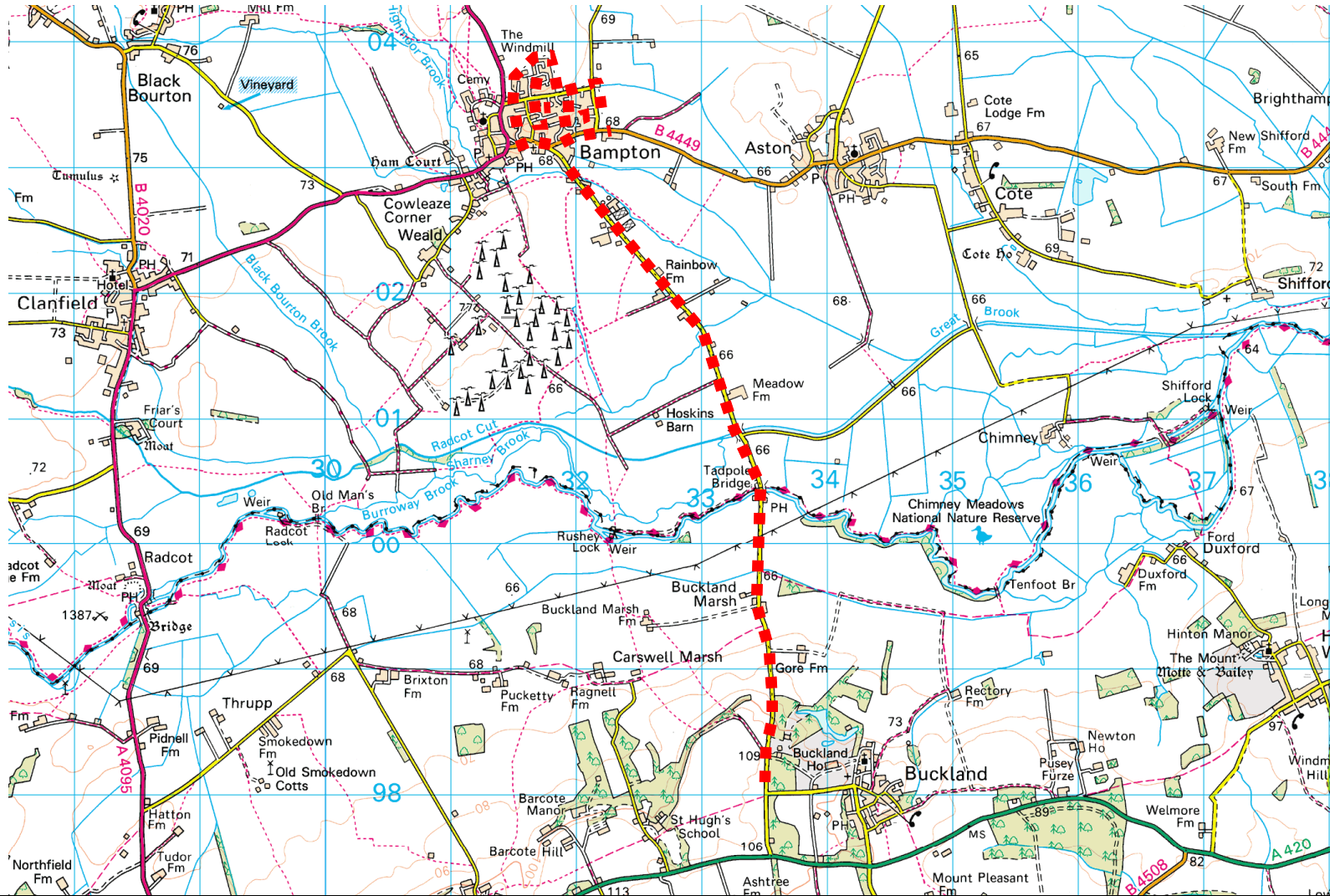
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Deputy Director Environment & Economy


Background papers: Nil

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<b>Title:</b> <b>BAMPTON AND BUCKLAND</b>		<b>Key / Notes:</b> <span style="color: red;">■ ■ ■</span> = Extent of 7.5 tonne weight restriction		 <b>OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</b>
<b>Date:</b> 18 Feb 2009	<b>Scale:</b> N.T.S.	<b>Dwg No:</b> Feb/09/cjl		

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