

Division(s): Burford and Carterton North;
Charlbury and Wychwood

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 16 JULY 2020
WEST OXFORDSHIRE - ASTHALL, CHARLBURY & MINSTER
LOVELL: PROPOSED STRUCTURAL WEIGHT LIMITS

Report by Interim Director of Community Operations

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the structural weight limit and width limit at the bridges over the Windrush river at Asthall and Minster Lovell and an administrative correction to the existing structural weight limit order at the Evenlode river bridge at Charlbury as advertised.

Executive summary

2. Structural weight and width limits are reviewed as part of the on-going maintenance of highway structures.

Introduction

3. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to introduce structural weight limits at the bridges over the Windrush river at Asthall (with the restriction at Asthall also including a width restriction) and Minster Lovell and an administrative amendment to the existing structural weight limit order at the Evenlode river bridge at Charlbury.

Background

4. The above proposals have been put forward as a result of a review of structural weight limits required pending maintenance of these bridges. In the case of the bridges across the Windrush river at Asthall and Minster Lovell it is proposed to make permanent the current temporary traffic regulation orders, for which there is a statutory maximum duration of 18 months which is close to expiry. The proposed amendment to the permanent order for the Evenlode river bridge at Charlbury is for administrative purposes to remove any ambiguity in the order in respect of where the weight restriction applies.
5. The details of the proposed restrictions are set out in the table below:

Site	Proposed restriction
Asthall – bridge over river Windrush at Ninety Cut Hill	3 tonne weight and 2m width restriction
Charlbury – bridge over river Evenlode on the B4437	7.5 tonne weight restriction
Minster Lovell - bridge over river Windrush	18 tonne weight restriction

Consultation

6. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 29 April and 29 May January 2020. A public notice was placed in the Witney Gazette newspaper and sent to statutory consultees including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, West Oxfordshire District Council and local County Councillors. Street notices were placed on site in the immediate vicinity, adjacent to the proposals.
7. Four responses were received. 1 objection, 1 in support and 2 raising concerns. The responses are recorded at Annex 1 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors

Response to objections and other comments

8. Thames Valley Police did not object but sought assurance in respect of the proposals for the B4437 river bridge at Charlbury that the amendment would fully address the ambiguity in the current order. I can confirm that will be the case. It is also confirmed that the County Council's Trading Standards team will be carrying out enforcement of the restriction commensurate with the resources available and also that the advance signing of the restriction will be inspected. In respect of the police comments on the proposal for the river bridge at Asthall, it does appear that the reason for the weight and width restriction on this very minor and lightly trafficked road is understood by the residents etc. in the area.
9. Charlbury Town Council did not object but sought information on the enforcement of the restriction and whether this would/could be increased and also the possibility of the restriction being shown on sat-nav systems. Additionally, the town council requested a review of and improvement to the current advance signing which they felt to be confusing. In respect of enforcement, as noted above, the resources available to the Trading Standards team for enforcing weight limits in the county is finite but the team will continue to enforce this restriction. A review of the advance signing of the restriction will be carried out but noting that the mapping used in sat-nav systems is not within the control of the County Council.
10. Minster Lovell Parish Council objected to the 18 tonne restriction on the grounds that this was too high a limit and that a 7.5 tonne restriction would be more appropriate to limit HGV traffic to avoid the risk of damage to the bridge and detracting from the amenity of Old Minster Lovell village, noting also that nearby weight restrictions with lower permitted maximum weights could also increase the usage of the bridge by HGVs. Noting the above, it

should be stressed that all the proposals are structural weight limits taking account of the current substandard load bearing capacity of these bridges. While not ruling out consideration of a 7.5tonne environmental weight limit, this would be a separate project requiring appraisal, funding and consultation.

11. A response from a member of the public in respect of the proposal for Asthall expressed concern that there was conflicting information, in that permanent orders are being promoted with it also being stated that the intention is to carry out strengthening works to enable the restrictions to be removed. As noted above, the reason for the current proposal is that it has not been possible to carry out these works within the 18-month maximum duration of a temporary traffic regulation order. While it is imperative that the structural weight limit and width restriction remain in force until the works are completed, the intention will be to remove these, subject to a further consultation. The response also expressed a concern about the appearance of the materials used for signing the restriction at Asthall. Although this is noted, the current signing is effective and will be removed on completion of the bridge strengthening.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

12. The proposals are consistent with the effective management of highway structures.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

13. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by the Oxfordshire County Council capital budget.

Equalities Implications

14. The proposals are not considered to have any equalities implications.

JASON RUSSELL
Interim Director of Community Operations

Background papers: Consultation responses

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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>Concerns – Police have responded previously and understand the justification for this restriction but still have some concerns:</p> <p>Forest Hill:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The TRO wording has been subject to debate regarding the B4437 correct designation and definition. Some maps and legal reference has this as Forest Road or Burford Road as you know. The road number and Dyers Hill aspect do fit without ambiguity and potentially if used without ref to the other names could remove that? Can you assure us the correct application from your records would stand up to litigation. 2. HGV drivers should see advanced information and direction signing on the approaches, preferably at locations where they could safely consider a turn rather than arrive at the actual restriction. This approach can remove mitigation with those intent on using the route knowing the law and ignoring it. 3. Can you confirm that OCC Trading standards will be actively enforcing the new order? <p>Asthall:</p> <p>I understand the justification but local consultation and understanding is vital.</p>
(2) Minster Lovell Parish Council	<p>Object – Minster Lovell Parish Council has considered the proposed weight restrictions for the Windrush river bridge. The Council would like to propose a weight limit of 7.5 tonnes on this bridge for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The bridge itself is very old and narrow and the Council is concerned that a limit of 18 tonnes would result in damage being caused to the bridge or vehicles becoming stuck on or around the bridge and blocking the road. This road is the only adjoining road from the Old Village to the main part of Minster Lovell and therefore needs to be maintained as a key access route. - The Council are concerned that the proposed restrictions to the other bridges included in this consultation at Asthall and Charlbury, and existing restrictions in place over bridges in Burford and other nearby villages would result in more large vehicles travelling through Minster Lovell if the limit was 18 tonnes. This would result in increased traffic in a

	<p>small part of the Village where roadways are narrow.</p> <p>- The Old Village is also an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and as such, the Parish Council feels that care needs to be taken to preserve the natural beauty of the area. Increased traffic through the Old Village would undoubtedly have a negative effect upon this special place.</p>
<p>(3) Charlbury Town Council</p>	<p>Support – consulted Town Councillors on this matter and they favour the order being implemented. However, a number of questions have been raised in order to provide clarity.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can better compliance arrangements be introduced into the order? 2. Can the confusing temporary diversion signage, e.g Charlbury Town Centre open for business as usual and temporary signs on the A44 approaching the B4437 junction be replaced with appropriate and clear permanent advance warning signs at A road junctions? (at A44/ B4437junction at Woodleys, A44/B4022 junction at Enstone and the A361/B4437 junction on the Shipton to Burford road) 3. What are the transgression penalties/ enforcement plans? 4. Will sat- navs include the weight restriction to deter HGV's seeking a shorter route perhaps from and to A361/ Enstone,?
<p>(4) Local Resident, (Asthall)</p>	<p>Concerns –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I find the documentation has conflicting information. It says that these orders are permanent, but it also says that there is a continued wish to repair the bridges so that the restrictions can be removed. 2) I may have missed it, but I cannot see anything about the form of street furniture employed to advise of the limit. The current signs and bollards in Asthall are most unsuitable for the location and, in any case, keep getting knocked over. Is there any alternative that can be employed, perhaps in wood?