

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 26 MAY 2020

GRAFTON WITH RADCOT – A4095 AT PIDNELL BRIDGE - PROPOSED REVOCATION OF STRUCTURAL WEIGHT LIMIT

Report by Interim Director of Community Operations

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the revocation of the structural weight limit at A4095 Pidnell Bridge.

Executive summary

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

Introduction

3. This report presents responses to a statutory consultation to revoke the structural weight limit at A4095 Pidnell Bridge prohibiting the passage of track laying vehicles and vehicles with an axle weight exceeding 6 tonnes.

Background

4. The above proposals as shown at Annex 1 have been put forward as a result of a review of structural weight limits following maintenance of the A4095 Pidnell Bridge which has strengthened the bridge sufficiently to remove the above restrictions.

Consultation

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 30 January and 28 February 2020. A public notice was placed in the Oxford Times newspaper and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Oxford City Council and the local County Councillor. Street notices were placed on site in the immediate vicinity, adjacent to the proposals.
6. Eleven responses were received. 6 objections (55%), 1 in support, and 4 neither objecting nor supporting or raising concerns. The responses are recorded at Annex 2 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

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Thames Valley Police did not object to the specific weight restriction but cited the need to ensure retention of the signing for the remaining weight 7.5 tonne environmental weight limit.

7. The local member for the Faringdon division supported the proposal with the proviso that it is confirmed that the structural weight limit is no longer required.
8. The local member for the Carterton South and West division, however, expressed an objection on the grounds that removal of the weight limit would result in larger lorries using the route and also the consequent risk of damage to the adjacent bridges.
9. Faringdon Town Council also expressed an objection on the same grounds. A similar objection was received from a local business and four members of the public.
10. It should be stressed that the proposal is only to revoke the existing structural weight limit of 6 tonnes at the A4095 Pidnell bridge, which is not required following bridge strengthening works and which cannot reasonably be continued. The existing 7.5 tonne environmental weight limit will, however, remain in force and, therefore, there should be no increase in the number of goods vehicles using the route as the result of the revocation of the structural weight limit.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

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

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

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



JASON RUSSELL

Interim Director of Community Operations

Background papers: Plan of proposed weight limit revocation
 Consultation responses

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May 2020

Drawing No.		Revision	
		0	
Key			
		Proposed weight limit revocation	
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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection – Please ensure you do not remove the weight limit signs for Radcot Bridge.
(2) Vale of White Horse District Council	No objection – <i>No comments.</i>
(3) West Oxfordshire District Council	No objection – <i>No comments.</i>
(4) Faringdon Town Council	<p>Object – At the recent planning committee members of Faringdon town council considered the revocation order and commented that the next bridge also has a weight restriction.</p> <p>Faringdon town Council felt that both should remain in place and would like to register their objection the removal of the weight restriction.</p>
(5) Local County Councillor, (Faringdon Division)	Support – I'm supportive of this if the strengthening work to the bridge has definitely strengthened it sufficiently to allow for the proposal to remove the existing weight limit and ensure safety.
(6) Local County Councillor, (Carterton South & West Division)	Object – Im worried as to the size of vehicles more than the weight, I feel if you remove weight limit you will get large vehicles, there are three bridges here two are very narrow with damage done to the brick work is always ongoing so I don't support this change
(7) Local Business, (Radcot)	Object – This move is bordering lunacy! There are already two actions being sought by the Trading Standards in respect of two vehicles that have damaged our property and become stuck on the following Radcot Bridge. I have contact names and emails if you wish to follow this up. I will of course, raise this with them directly too.

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	<p>There are already significant problems with groundings, caused by long-wheeled based vehicles attempting to cross Radcot Bridge. Although the current restriction relates to the weight of the vehicle, it follows that if the weight restriction is lifted, larger vehicles will attempt to cross the bridge, resulting in more groundings and subsequent periods of the road being closed. We have had serious damage to the bridge as well as walls knocked down and damaging cars in our carpark, there are currently two companies being taken to court for flouting the road signs.</p> <p>We have had the road shut in both directions on at least 5 occasions in the last year which include police attending the scene to redirect traffic, one lorry was stuck so severely it took over 6 hours to be released.</p> <p>We actually need more weight restrictions with less large and heavy vehicles coming through this direction.</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Radcot)</p>	<p>Object – The bridge has not changed shape or size, so longer lorries will still get stuck on it which causes traffic chaos in the surrounding areas, that combination of bridges does not enable large vehicles to cross it safely, please do not allow this to happen. Only a couple of nights ago there was chaos on that bridge due to a lorry that was too long trying to get over it</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Grafton)</p>	<p>Object – This bridge has had too many lorries getting stuck on it due to its narrow width and the way the road bends away from the bridge. If you take away the weight restriction, you will inevitably get larger lorries coming down the road and there is just no way they will be able to successfully get over the bridge. To my mind more weight means bigger lorries which will cost the council ie us the tax payer thousands to repair when the money should be going into road repairs etc.</p> <p>You really need to be discouraging large lorries using this road with bigger and better signs not encouraging them.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Faringdon)</p>	<p>Object – Even with the existing weight restriction in place over Pidnell Bridge a number of heavy, long wheel-based vehicles ignore the warning road signs on the approach to Radcot Bridge from Clanfield regarding the weight restrictions and proceed onto the Radcot Bridge. The turn is impossible for long wheel-based vehicles and they become stuck and grounded - blocking access over Radcot. The delay in getting these vehicles moved off the Bridge is significant, exacerbated by the damage that removing them inevitably causes to the Bridge.</p> <p>It seems inevitable that, if the current weight restriction is lifted, drivers of heavier vehicles will assume that the Radcot Bridge is now accessible. It's not. It cannot carry long wheel-based vehicles. Surely all that's going to happen is that</p>

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	<p>heavier vehicles will become stuck between Pidnell Bridge and Radcot Bridge - being unable to pass over the latter. Or they will attempt to cross and become grounded causing more damage to the road, margins and verges in attempting to turn around.</p> <p>I strongly object to this Weight Limit Revocation.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (Radcot)</p>	<p>Concerns – I am very concerned about this proposal and the indirect consequences this change could have. I have witnessed many long and heavy commercial vehicles either grounding out or battering into the historic bridge parapet walls. Invariably this causes gridlock, the severity of which is increasing constantly as new house building in the area attracts more cars to the A4095.</p> <p>The current weight limit on Pidnell bridge assists in deterring long vehicles from attempting the crossing of the Radcot Thames bridges. The logic is that most long vehicles are also heavy. With the weight limit in place Pidnell acts as a defence for problems that long will regularly have (sometimes daily, most definitely weekly).</p> <p>Before lifting the weight limit on Pidnell bridge please do more to deter long vehicles from coming to Radcot. Once new deterrents are established and proven to work, then lift the weight limit on Pidnell?</p>