

## OXFORDSHIRE DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Thursday, 29 July 2021 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.37 pm

**Present:**

Councillor Duncan Enright – in the Chair

Councillors Andy Graham,  
Councillor Liz Leffman  
Councillor Nicholas Field Johnson

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting:  
G.Warrington (Law & Governance)  
Odele Parsons (Environment & Place)  
Natalie Moore (Environment & Place)

*The Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.*

**1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

(Agenda Item 1)

The were no declarations of interest.

**2 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item 3)

<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Item</i>
Mark McCappin & Jan de Haldevang (WIVTAG)	)
John White (Burford Town Council)	)
Ken Gray (Burford Town Council)	)
Councillor Andy Graham (Local member)	) 4. Burford Experimental Weight Limit
Councillor Liz Leffman (Local Member)	)
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Councillor Nicholas Field-Johnson (Local Member)	) )
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### 3 **BURFORD EXPERIMENTAL WEIGHT LIMIT**

(Agenda Item 4)

The Burford Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) of 7.5t had been approved by the former Cabinet Member for Environment on 18 July 2019 and had been in place since 5 August 2020. The Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy was now considering an interim update report (CMDTDS4) on the scheme impacts following the end of the public consultation and traffic monitoring that took place in February.

The report is recommending the Burford ETRO continues to February 2022 to allow for further monitoring in Autumn 2021 using camera technology to provide greater detail of the classification of 2 axle heavy good vehicles and requests that Burford Town Council review, with County Council officers, the permit scheme operations and criteria to reflect the needs of the local rural economy as outlined in some of the consultation responses. The report did not consider whether the Burford ETRO would be made permanent. That decision would be taken at the end of the full eighteen-month experimental order period, in January 2022.

Mark McCappin and Jan de Haldevang presented on behalf of WIVTAG (Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group) which represented a range of organisations in an area of about 100sqm. They went through the four recommendations as set out in the officer report.

The first recommendation recommended that the ETRO should continue but they believed that it should be halted, highlighting in support of that view that OCC's own traffic counts showed an 80% increase in HGVs in Witney an AQMA and so the ETRO was making air pollution worse in an existing black spot. Secondly for farmers the A361 and the bridge in Burford was vital to their operations.

The second recommendation dealt with traffic monitoring. They did not agree that camera technology would help as a camera could not see whether a vehicle was above or below 7.5t and also there would be no 'before' figures available for comparison. Current monitoring was limited to just six main road sites but it also needed extended to smaller roads in Gloucestershire as well as Oxfordshire. Finally, this recommendation offered nothing about larger HGVs.

The third recommendation concerned changes to the permit scheme. The officers' full report suggested increasing the scheme radius to 20 miles with more local hauliers then applying for permits to address the needs of the local economy. However, that would make this a regional issue as opposed

to a local one with the County Council then having to manage a permit system and increasing the radius would bring most local hauliers into the permit area with more vehicles coming through Burford with numbers of heavy HGVs in Burford potentially back to where they were before the weight restriction began. Neither did this recommendation address freight to or from destinations more than 20 miles from Burford.

They believed there was sufficient evidence now to demonstrate failure of the current scheme and that decisions were needed now and to wait until February 2022 was wrong. If the scheme was allowed to continue, local objections would remain and were likely to increase with damage to infrastructure and the environment continuing. WiVTAG's view was that the officers' recommendations would not resolve the problems and might make the situation worse. There must be a better way with a full review essential.

John White spoke on behalf of Burford Town Council. Referring to the WiVTAG Appeal document they had only received that recently and had not had time to review that properly but as this was item was essentially a mid-term review they give the document due consideration before the determinative meeting. He then discussed the Exemption Scheme which had been tailored for Burford with the only guidance coming from the ETRO itself which provided that Burford Town Council would operate an exemption scheme for locally based HGV owners/operators. The Council decided that "locally based" could not just mean within civic boundaries of Burford so we drew a generous line, a radius of 4.8 miles from Burford, which they felt included all the businesses which could legitimately claim an association with the Town. Inevitably there would always be someone who fell just outside the line but that would have happened wherever the line had been drawn. One of the biggest problems had been to get hauliers actually to read the ETRO as it specifically and rightly provided that deliveries to and collections from addresses in Burford were exempt. They wanted to stop HGVs driving through the Town but not stop anyone carrying out their business within the Town. Permits for 122 vehicles in total had been issued to 16 businesses and he had noted from some of the comments made by hauliers during the consultation that they felt hard done by as the scheme had not been publicised on their website but that had now been rectified and would be reviewing the scheme with the county council as recommended. Residents of Burford regarded the ETRO as a great success principally because of the significant reduction in the 18 tonne plus wagons and the equally significant switch from HGVs to LGVs and they hoped that the Order would be made permanent in 2022. In the meantime Burford Town Council strongly supported all the officer recommendations.

Dr Ken Gray spoke as the technical advisor on HGVs to Burford Town Council and wished to comment on some of the technical aspects of the OCC Burford Traffic Data Analysis along with the TRACSIS measurements that supported it and their concerns about the quality and relevance of the data used to make conclusions. They agreed that that OCC could not say how many of the 2-axle HGVs recorded by TRACSIS were between 3.5 and 7.5 tonne and which were greater than 7.5 tonne but it was only the latter

group to which the Burford Weight Limit applied. Consequently, you could not include 2 axle TRACSIS data in drawing any conclusions about the effectiveness of the 7.5 tonne weight limit in Burford and its effect elsewhere, which the report invalidly did and which had been carried forward to today's report. However, the analysis report did give data on HGVs with 3 axles and above for all sites and that table showed a 56% reduction in Burford for which they had independent supporting data and reductions in all sites in Witney, Chipping Norton, Hailey, Bladon but not Woodstock. It was only from analysis of this 3-axle and above data, should any interim conclusions be drawn on the effectiveness of the Weight Limit in Burford and any effects elsewhere. They had also looked at the 2-axle TRACSIS data and were concerned about its accuracy. In 2019 the difference in of HGVs passing West End and Hailey, both on the same road, the B4022, two and a half miles apart, was enormously different. In 2021 the difference was large again but of opposite sign. The difference between the number of HGVs going over Witney Bridge Street and the total number of HGVs travelling round the roundabouts to Woodgreen, West End and Newland was huge in 2019 but almost zero in 2021. The autumn site measurements would be by video monitoring in Burford and cable-in-the-road elsewhere which meant that at the next ETRO review the County Council would still have no data on the 7.5 tonne HGV traffic at all but one of the sites.

County Councillor Andy Graham advised that Woodstock Town Council had expressed in the strongest terms that Oxfordshire County Council should not extend the Burford scheme beyond the trial period of January 2022. The effect of HGVs through Woodstock had been significant and while the report suggested an increase of 14% that figure need to be treated with some caution as counting took place over a week whereas OCC records showed an increase in vehicles over 18 tonnes had been 35%. Woodstock like Burford had many listed buildings and narrow pavements of only 60cm in places with obvious risks to users. Air quality also a problem. Counting also needed to factor in HGVs coming from the north of Chipping Norton on the A44 and through Woodstock as well as the Bladon roundabout. Persisting with the Burford ban was not the answer.

County Councillor Liz Leffman expressed her interest in the WIVTAG report One of the villages mentioned in that report was Ascott under Wychwood but there were other villages and towns which should be seeing more traffic but were not such as Shipton under Wychwood and surprisingly Finstock which seemed to be unaffected. There were other possible routes but again there were no adverse reports from Chipping Norton, Spelsbury or Chadlington. Another possible option could be through Ascott under Wychwood but again no HGV increase had been reported. Finally, another option for an alternative route would have been through Shipton under Wychwood but again nothing. She was mystified as to where the traffic was going so it was obvious that more information was required. There were obvious advantages for Burford but disadvantages for other places such as Woodstock which made it clear that more information needed to be gathered and all the figures and data to be bottomed out.

County Councillor Nick Field-Johnson thanked the officers for their work on this project which had been going on for 15 years. He referred to the high number of listed buildings in Burford which were being shaken and damaged by large HGVs. Air pollution was extremely high as a result of queuing vehicles. There had been 168 expressions of support and while there had been 149 objections and 58 expressions of concern on investigation 80% and 71% respectively had come from Leaffield. Traffic was going through Leaffield to avoid the Chalbury weight limit and had nothing to do with the Burford scheme. Crawley Industrial estate also created a lot of HGV movements which could not be attributed to the Burford ETRO. He had also been surprised at the objection from the haulage association as they had been a party to an earlier agreement to avoid Burford. There was a need to agree a network of suitable roads and to help achieve that it was clear to him that the ETRO should continue in order to gather more information on these trends and so he supported the recommendations.

Councillor Liam Walker opposed the Burford scheme and letting it run for more monitoring would not lead to anymore information other than what was already known. Displacement was taking place across the Windrush valley which was having a negative impact on villages such as Minster Lovell, Crawley, Leaffield and also Witney especially bridge street and west End. He urged that the scheme be terminated and for Burford and neighbouring parish councils to come up with a better scheme or nothing at all. Burford was on a major a road and traffic was currently being forced to use roads through communities not designed for level of traffic.

Tony Robey had submitted the following comments. As a haulier based in Minster Lovell the Burford bridge had been essential for them to access customers on the other side of the River Windrush. They had tried several times to obtain a permit and so had been using the bridge which could support 100T but had now been forced to give up business just north of Burford because the alternative routes made that unviable. He considered the permit scheme was inconsistent, unfair, damaging and anti-competitive preventing legitimate businesses from operating by threatening them with prosecution. He considered the permit scheme was a disaster which needed to be addressed or better still the Burford weight restriction revoked immediately.

The Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy thanked everyone for their comments. This was a difficult balance between stopping unsuitable through traffic while allowing local commerce to function. Recognising the concerns of communities such as Leaffield and Crawley it was clear that these communities had seen an increase in traffic and while it had been pointed out that that was not solely because of the Burford scheme those sorts of concerns needed to be addressed. He was also cognisant of the needs of local businesses particularly equestrian horse transport and transport of livestock so as not to exceed animal welfare standards. There was clearly further work to be done and so having regard to the information in the report together with the representations made to him at the meeting he confirmed his decision as follows:

- a) continue the Burford Experimental Traffic Regulation Order of 7.5t to February 2022;
- b) conduct further traffic monitoring in Autumn 2021 using camera technology to provide greater detail of the classification of 2 axle heavy good vehicles;
- c) request Burford Town Council review, with OCC officers, the permit scheme operations and criteria to reflect the needs of the local rural economy noting that that review needed to take into account the requirements of livestock transport operators to maintain animal welfare standards and the desirability to offer local firms outside the 4.8 mile radius more flexibility;
- d) note the Burford ETRO would return for consideration by the Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy in January 2022 for a final decision on the scheme.

Signed.....  
Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy

Date of signing.....