

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee North Warwickshire Area Committee

Date of Committee 26 March 2008

Report Title C7/01 Station Road Rail Bridge, Polesworth - Road over Rail Safety Scheme

Summary This report relates to the proposed introduction of permanent traffic signals and road restraint barriers on the bridge approaches together with measures to protect the weak bridge deck edges and parapets. The measures would mitigate the risk of errant vehicles reaching the railway. The proposed changes would permit wide farm vehicles to continue to use the bridge.

For further information please contact Stephen O'Connor
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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No

Background Papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- *Details to be specified*

Other Committees North Warwickshire Area Committee 11 July 2007

Local Member(s) Councillor M Stanley – ‘I support the new recommendations and thank those involved for their efforts and investigations. This is the best outcome that will allow access for farming vehicles and improve safety’
(With brief comments, if appropriate)

Other Elected Members

Cabinet Member
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)

- Chief Executive
- Legal I Marriott – agreed.
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** *(If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)*

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

**North Warwickshire Area Committee -
26 March 2008**

**C7/01 Station Road Rail Bridge, Polesworth -
Road over Rail Safety Scheme**

**Report of the Interim Strategic Director for
Environment and Economy**

Recommendation

That Members approve the proposal for a modified scheme to limit incursion onto the railway. The original scheme has been modified to address the concerns raised by users of the bridge.

1. Background

- 1.1 Station Road Rail Bridge carries the C7 over the West Coast Main Line near Polesworth Station. Its location is shown on the plan attached as **Appendix A**.
- 1.2 The bridge is owned by Network Rail and has three spans, constructed with pre-cast concrete beams. It was originally built in 1845 but when the line was electrified in 1960, a new deck was constructed to give greater clearance.
- 1.3 A recent appraisal and risk ranking of the steep approaches to the bridge has shown that there is a very significant risk of vehicles leaving the road and travelling onto the railway track. It is ranked the fourth highest risk site in the County. In this instance there is a 50:50 cost sharing agreement between the County Council and Network Rail to address the problem by the introduction of vehicle containment measures on the approaches.
- 1.4 Additionally, assessment of the bridge has shown that although the carriageway of the bridge is suitable for normal highway loading (40 tonnes) the edges are weak with a rated capacity of 25 tonnes and the existing brick parapets do not conform to current standards. It should be noted that Network Rail does not have a legal responsibility to address these deficiencies.
- 1.5 The County Council proposed a scheme to provide safety barriers on the approaches and to continue the barriers across the bridge in order to protect the weak edges and the substandard parapets. In order to accommodate the barriers and sufficient clearance from the parapets it would be necessary to narrow the road to a single lane across the bridge and provide traffic signals.

- 1.6 The arrangement was approved by Network Rail and by the County Council's Safety Audit Team. However, local people expressed strong concerns that the scheme could not accommodate the very wide farming vehicles currently using the bridge and these would have to be diverted via High Street.
- 1.7 Investigations were carried out and local farmers assisted in a trial movement of the wide vehicle along the diversion route and problems were noted with road width and parked vehicles.

2. Revised Proposal

- 2.1 Whilst the number of movements of wide vehicles is expected to be small, the practical difficulties and strength of feeling have been taken into account and an alternative scheme is now proposed.
- 2.2 The scheme will include traffic signals but the safety barriers will terminate at the bridge and the bridge parapets and edges will be protected by high kerbs. This will allow the wide vehicles to cross the bridge. It may be necessary to increase the height of the parapets near the ends and stabilise the approach embankments. Proposed details are with Network Rail and their comments and acceptance are awaited.
- 2.3 It is felt that on balance, the proposed arrangement would ensure an increased level of safety for users of Station Road and not compromise safety on High Street.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost of the revised proposals is expected to be of the order of £150,000 and could be funded from the Bridges Capital Budget

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 In view of the difficulties likely to be encountered if wide vehicles are diverted via High Street, it is recommended that the revised scheme which would allow the passage of such vehicles be adopted. The scheme would include some protection to the bridge edges and parapets. Traffic signals alone would control vehicle speeds and considerably mitigate risks.

DAVID PYWELL
Interim Strategic Director for Environment and Economy
Shire Hall
Warwick

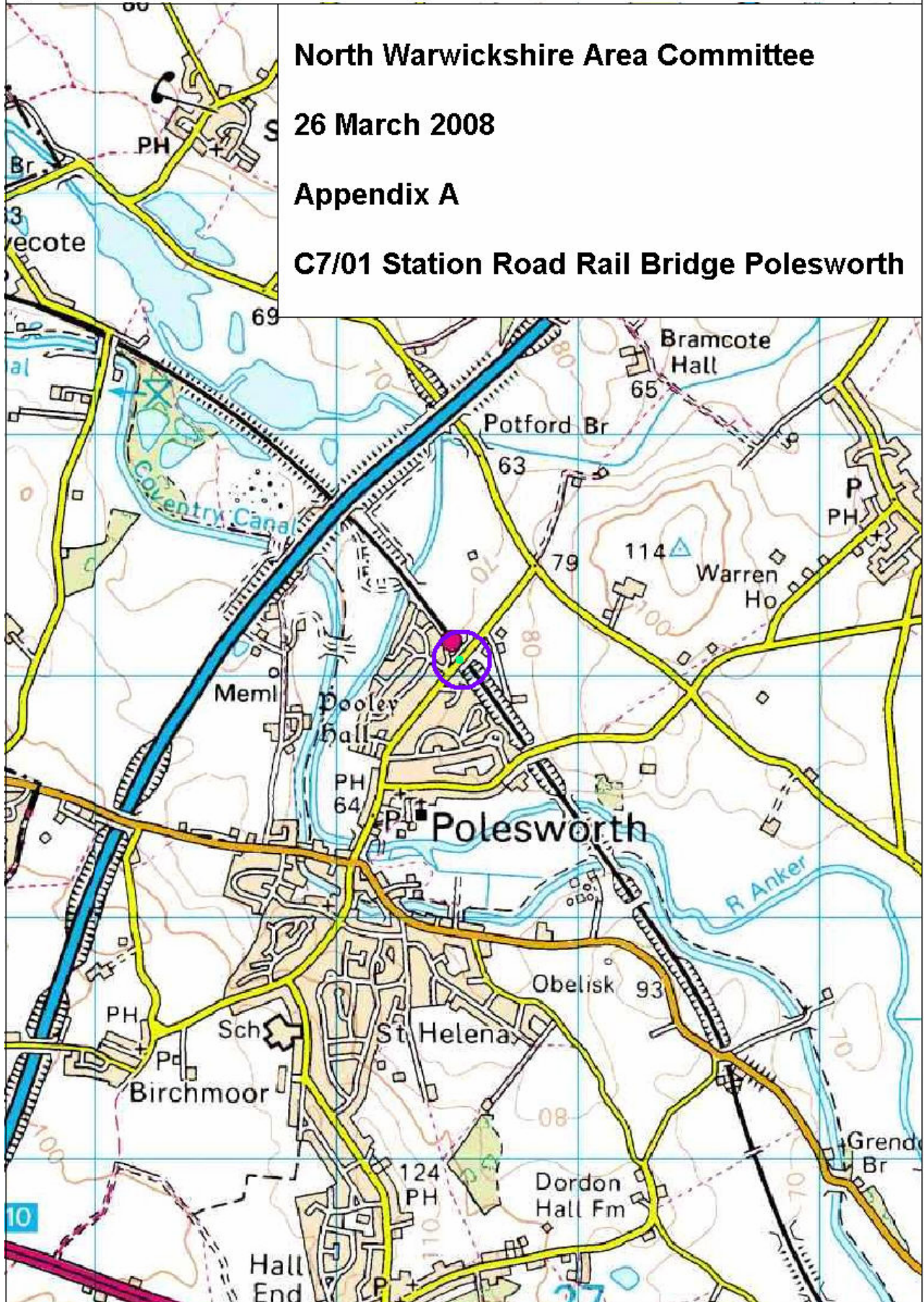
5 March 2008

North Warwickshire Area Committee

26 March 2008

Appendix A

C7/01 Station Road Rail Bridge Polesworth



Scale 1:21312

0 1km.

Based upon OS 1:50,000 Raster (©SIm) with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office ©

