

## **Decision Record – Marston Lane Canal Bridge, Bedworth Proposed Maximum Gross Weight Limit**

**Cabinet Portfolio Holder taking decision:**

**Councillor Peter Butlin – Portfolio Holder for Transport & Highways**

**Date of Decision: (NOT BEFORE 27 July 2012 )**

**31 July 2012**

### **Decision taken**

I, as Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways, agree that the Warwickshire County Council (Various Bridges) (Weight Restriction) Order 2012, including a 13 tonnes maximum gross weight restriction on Marston Lane, Canal Bridge, Bedworth, be made as advertised.

I also agree with the request of the local member that an investigation be undertaken of better signing of the restriction.

### **Reasons for Decisions**

Changes to the Traffic Signs Regulations and recent structural surveys have resulted in the need to vary the weight limits on a number of bridges throughout the County. The legal process has required proposals for the new weight limits to be publicly advertised. These include a proposal for a 13T (tonnes) maximum gross weight restriction (mgw) on Marston Lane Canal Bridge in Bedworth to which objections have been received. No objections were received to any of the other proposals. As an objection has been received this decision needs to be taken by myself as portfolio holder, following consultation with the local member. The objections and responses to these are given below.

**Background Information/ factors considered in arriving at these decisions - (these are set out in full below, as in the officer report):**

- 1.1 Apart from those on motorways and trunk roads most bridges in Warwickshire are the responsibility of the County Council. However, some – but not all – bridges over railways and canals are the responsibility of Network Rail and British Waterways respectively. In these cases although the Council, as Highway Authority, makes any legal weight limit Order, it does so on the advice of Network Rail or British Waterways.
- 1.2 Marston Lane Canal Bridge is owned and maintained by British Waterways and various structural weight limits have been imposed in the past. These have been based on detailed assessments by Structural Engineers of its carrying

capacity and the weight limit legislation in force at the time.

- 1.3. The effect of a vehicle on a bridge is usually dependent on the actual weight imposed by the heaviest axle of the vehicle. For this reason in the past, weight limits were expressed in terms of actual axle loads. However, this type of restriction proved to be extremely difficult to enforce and a new national system was introduced based on gross weight i.e. the maximum laden weight of a vehicle as laid down in the Motor Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations. The current levels of weight permitted are 26T, 18T, 7.5T and 3T and, in addition for masonry arch bridges only, 33T 13T and 10T are also permitted.
- 1.4. The most recent limit on Marston Lane Canal Bridge was a temporary 10T mgw restriction. However, British Waterways Structural Engineers have re-assessed the carrying capacity of the bridge at 13T. The temporary Traffic Regulation Order has expired.

### **Objections**

- 2.1 A proposal for a 13T mgw restriction on the bridge was publicly advertised in May 2012. Two objections raising broadly similar points were received; one on behalf of the Old Collycroft Residents Association and the other from a Marston Lane resident.

#### **2.2 Objection**

Residents worry that the increase from 10T to 13T will mean that the bridge will be unable to handle the extra load in the long run.

#### **Response**

There are no significant implications with a 13T restriction because, apart from some public service vehicles, there are very few vehicles, if any, that are between 10T and 13T.

Future assessments of the bridge will determine if its condition has deteriorated and if there is any need for a lower weight limit to be imposed.

#### **2.3. Objection**

Residents are concerned that the weight limit will be raised even further to 18T.

#### **Response**

British Waterways are currently not prepared to carry out further work on the bridge and they do not in fact have a legal obligation to do so. If the Council wished to carry out strengthening works it would be necessary to take over ownership and accept future liability for the bridge. As the cost of strengthening or re-building the bridge would be very substantial there is no prospect of this being undertaken in the foreseeable future.

## 2.4 **Objection**

Residents have been complaining since 2007 about the lack of enforcement of the weight limit by heavy vehicles en route to and from the industrial estate at Marston Jabbert.

### **Response**

As the temporary weight limit Order has expired there is currently no enforcement that can be carried out. When a permanent restriction has been made to come into force the police will be requested to undertake additional enforcement attention.

## 3. **Conclusion**

British Waterways has advised that the bridge should have a 13T mgw.

Councillor Chattaway has discussed this report with the Collycroft Residents Association. He accepts the recommendation subject to an investigation of better advance signing of the restriction which will be carried out.

Report Author:	Roger Bennett
Head of Service:	Graeme Fitton
Strategic Director:	Monica Fogarty
Portfolio Holder	Peter Butlin (Highways and Transport)

### **Checklist**

**Urgent matter: yes/no\***

No

**Confidential or Exempt (state category of exempt information)**

No

**Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework**

No

**List of Reports considered** [please attach or forward a copy]

Report (text included above).

**List of Background Papers** *[please include directorate contact names and numbers for access to background papers]*

None

**Any members and officers consulted or informed and any comments given.**

**For Comment:** Cllr P Butlin (decision maker).  
Cllr Richard Chattaway –local member

Legal: Lisa Arben