

Portfolio Holder Decisions/Leader Decisions

Date: Thursday 5 August 2021
Time: 12.00 pm

Membership

Councillor Wallace Redford

Items on the agenda: -

1. **The Warwickshire County Council (Coton Bridge, Coton Road, Parish Of Nether Whitacre) (Weight Restriction) Order 2021** 3 - 54

Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

Disclaimers

Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members are required to register their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election of appointment to the Council. A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which s/he has a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless s/he has a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if s/he has not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- Must leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting

Non-pecuniary interests must still be declared in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

These should be declared at the commencement of the meeting

The public reports referred to are available on the Warwickshire Web

<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

Public Speaking

Any member of the public who is resident or working in Warwickshire, or who is in receipt of services from the Council, may speak at the meeting for up to three minutes on any matter within the remit of the Committee. This can be in the form of a statement or a question. If you wish to speak please notify Democratic Services in writing at least two working days before the meeting. You should give your name and address and the subject upon which you wish to speak. Full details of the public speaking scheme are set out in the Council's Standing Orders.

Portfolio Holder Decision

The Warwickshire County Council (Coton Bridge, Coton Road, Parish of Nether Whitacre) (Weight Restriction) Order 2021

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning
Date of decision	5 August 2021
	Signed

Decision taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning approves that the below named proposed Traffic Regulation Order be made as advertised:

- The Warwickshire County Council (Coton Bridge, Coton Road, Parish of Nether Whitacre) (Weight Restriction) Order 2021.

1. Reasons for decisions

1.1 A copy of plan TR-11220 detailing proposals for an 18 tonnes weight limit on Coton Bridge can be found as Appendix B. Objections and comments were received to these proposals; the following tables detail the objections and comments received together with the officers' responses.

Emails/letters	
Total objections	25
Support in principle received	2

Ref	Objections received	Total number of responses containing the comment
A	Alternative route is unsuitable – increased HGV traffic through local villages.	23
	Perceived issues with ease of access will have a detrimental	

B	effect on business for The Cedars	3
C	Air quality and noise levels will be affected in villages on the alternative route.	9
D	Increased risk of obstruction, damage and accidents on alternative route – including Station Road and the Green Man crossroads, Coleshill.	18
E	On-street parking narrows the carriageway in places along the alternative route, with the potential for damage to parked cars by larger vehicles and disruption to traffic flow	11
F	There is a risk of HGV drivers using 'shortcuts' instead of the signed alternative route, using narrower lanes with dangerous junctions and tight bends. Specifically, Halloughton Grange which has seen incidents with overhead cables being damaged by over-height vehicles using the lane.	9
G	Original designers / construction company for the bridge should be liable for repairs.	3
H	Costs of potential accidents and disruption will outweigh the costs involved of repairing / replacing the bridge.	2
I	County Council have been negligent in allowing the bridge to fall into disrepair; priority should be given to repairing / replacing the bridge.	10
Ref	Officer Comments in Response to Objections	
A, B, C	<p>The weight limit for Coton Bridge is proposed based on the findings of a structural assessment and is necessary to ensure the structure can safely remain open to most traffic. Not imposing the restriction risks further structural damage and may result in the need for lower weight limits, a full road closure or could even result in a structural failure. It is accepted that the alternative route is longer and that increased HGV traffic will add to existing traffic on it with consequent impacts on emissions and amenity. However, it is considered that there is no alternative given the condition of the bridge and the risks of continued use by very heavy vehicles.</p> <p>It is our intention to either strengthen or replace the bridge, but we are at a very early stage in this process. A feasibility study is proposed to determine the most appropriate solution and an estimated cost. Due to the type of bridge and the nature of the defects, a replacement structure is likely to be required but we will also consider the feasibility of strengthening options as a medium-term solution. The extent of the work anticipated is beyond what we can deliver with our bridge maintenance budget and a funding bid application will be prepared once the feasibility study is complete. Once the bridge is</p>	

	either strengthened or replaced, the weight limit will be removed.
D	<p>The effects of the introduction of a weight restriction and alternative route will be monitored, with the potential for further mitigation works to be investigated if necessary.</p> <p>Design work is currently under way as a separate scheme to upgrade the Green Man crossroads in Coleshill, on the alternative route, which would allow for ease of traffic flow through the junction.</p>
E	<p>The existing 7.5T environmental weight restriction in place on Coton Road is subject to an exemption which allows for access to properties and businesses within the area, and this and other traffic on the alternative route means that there is already a need for available carriageway width for the passing of HGVs. Where there are no formal parking restrictions in place, responsibility lies with the individual motorist to park in a manner which does not endanger other users of the public highway or cause an obstruction.</p>
F	<p>The weight restriction at the bridge itself will be signed with advance notice at suitable locations on either approach, ensuring that HGV drivers are informed before turning into Coton Road and therefore negating the need for any reversing or unsuitable turning manoeuvres. The alternative route will be clearly signed at all junctions along the route; consideration can also be given to including "Unsuitable for HGVs" signs at the entrance to other roads which may otherwise be used as shortcuts.</p>
G, H, I	<p>Coton Bridge is inspected for structural defects annually as part of Warwickshire County Council's routine inspection programme for highway structures. It is also subject to more rigorous inspections as it is a post-tensioned structure which puts it at greater risk of developing serious hidden defects than other bridge types. As a post tensioned structure, we are required to carry out detailed intrusive inspections every 18 years to check for defects within the bridge's main beams. The last of these detailed inspections was undertaken in 2019 and identified issues with the bridge's internal steel tendons that raised concerns about its long-term load bearing capacity. This subsequently led to a structural assessment being undertaken by our engineering partners at Atkins and Jacobs which found that the bridge can no longer safely carry full highway traffic loads and a weight restriction was recommended.</p> <p>A similar assessment carried out in 1994 found that the bridge edges were unable to sustain the loads from a vehicle accidentally mounting the footway and this led to the installation of the barriers currently in place to prevent vehicles from pulling onto the footways. The defects with the bridge's main beams were not identified at that time and so a weight restriction was not then required.</p> <p>Once the weight restriction is in place, it will apply to heavy goods vehicles with a plated maximum gross weight greater than 18 tonnes. This means that it will apply to both laden and unladen vehicles. This is so that the police can enforce weight restrictions without the need to take the vehicles to a weighbridge.</p> <p>It is our intention to either strengthen or replace the bridge, but we are at a very early stage in this process. A feasibility study is proposed to determine the most appropriate solution and an estimated cost. Due to the type of bridge and the nature of the defects, a replacement structure is likely to be required but we will also consider the feasibility of strengthening options as a medium-term solution. The extent of the work anticipated is</p>

	<p>beyond what we can deliver with our bridge maintenance budget and a funding bid application will be prepared once the feasibility study is complete. Once the bridge is either strengthened or replaced, the weight limit will be removed.</p> <p>The weight limit for Coton Bridge is proposed based on the findings of the structural assessment and is necessary to ensure the structure can safely remain open to most traffic. Not imposing the restriction risks further structural damage and may result in the need for lower weight limits, a full road closure or could even result in a structural failure.</p>
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2. Background information

- 2.1 Coton Bridge, on Coton Road between Marston and Whitacre Heath, was originally constructed in 1894, and then in 1957 the abutments were strengthened and the deck replaced, making the bridge effectively 64 years old. The type of bridge deck chosen at the time would have been of a modern design, but as time has passed defects have been discovered in these post tensioned structure bridges, where the post tensioned tendons can be vulnerable to corrosion and severe deterioration. At the time of the construction, the risks of deterioration to the tendons would not have been known about and are only identifiable from carrying out intrusive inspections which puts it at greater risk of sudden failure than other bridge types and because of this it is subject to an enhanced regime of routine inspections.
- 2.2 During the last inspection, concerning defects were found with the tendons within the bridge's concrete beams. Most notable of these defects was that several tendons were found to have become loose instead of being under tension as intended in its original design. As a result, a structural assessment has been carried out by the consultants on WCC's Professional Services Framework and this concluded that the bridge is no longer able to safely carry unrestricted vehicle loads.
- 2.3 An earlier assessment found that the bridge's edges are under strength which led to the installation of the traffic signals and vehicle barriers that are currently in place to protect the weak footways from accidental loading. This latest assessment has found that the bridge's main beams, beneath the carriageway, are also under strength and a permanent 18 tonne weight restriction is required to minimise the risk of structural damage or failure. Not imposing this weight limit could risk structural failure of the bridge. A feasibility study has been commissioned to investigate if the bridge could be strengthened or needs replacing and to estimate the costs of restoring this route to carry full highway loading. Given the nature of the defects, it is likely that the structure will need replacing. Any solution will most likely exceed the annual bridge maintenance budget, and specific funding would have to be identified and allocated for works to bring the bridge back to full strength. At present it is not possible to provide timescales until a solution has been identified.
- 2.4 Coton Road is already within the area covered by an environmental weight limit of 7.5T under the provisions of The Warwickshire County Council (Various Roads, Lea Marston, Nether Whitacre and Shustoke) (Prohibition of Commercial Vehicles of over 7.5 Tonnes) Order 1987. This allows specific exemptions, including for loading/unloading access to properties within the restricted area; as a structural weight limit for reasons of road safety, the proposed 18 Tonne restriction would NOT be subject to access exemptions.

- 2.5 Recent traffic counts adjacent to the bridge on Coton Road have shown that the 5-weekday average for vehicles over 18T is 74v/pd Northbound, and 87v/pd Southbound (these figures exclude weekends when there is less movements). The diversion route proposed will have an impact on the surrounding roads with an increased number of heavy vehicles over 18T, which will have a longer route along the main A4097,A446 and the B4114. However, this route is already used by a significant amount of heavy traffic and it is considered that this route is suitable for such traffic and has the capacity for additional traffic without causing traffic disruption. Blythe Road and Station Road will have increased heavy vehicle traffic movements which will have an environmental effect on residents living on that route, unfortunately there is no other alternative route for heavy vehicles to use to access The Cedars.
- 2.6 Proposals were advertised and consulted upon in accordance with statutory procedure on the 18th March 2021, with consultation open until the 9th April 2021.
- The statutory criteria for decisions on making Traffic Regulation Orders are included as **Appendix A**.
 - Drawings showing published proposals for the weight restriction and alternative route are found in **Appendix B**.
 - Copies of objections and comments received can be found in **Appendix C**.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 Costs associated with the introduction of a weight restriction on Coton Bridge (including legal costs, consultation and potential implementation) would be expected to be under £10k.
- 3.2 All costs are funded from existing Structural Maintenance budgets.
- 3.3 A feasibility study is proposed to investigate further the costs associated with repairing or replacing the existing bridge structure.

4. Environmental implications

- 4.1 The longer alternative route would increase emissions and add to existing impacts on amenity. However, these impacts are outweighed by the risks arising from the condition of the bridge, and the impacts would be even greater if further deterioration of the bridge were to require even lower limits or a total road closure.

Report Author	Phil Mitton philmitton@warwickshire.gov.uk,
Assistant Director	David Ayton-Hill, Assistant Director for Communities
Lead Director	Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities
Lead Member	Wallace Redford, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning

Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers

None

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Wallace Redford

Corporate Board – Mark Ryder

Legal – Ian Marriott

Finance – John Stansfield

Equality – Keira Rounsley

Democratic Services – Paul Williams

Councillors – Leaders of the Party Groups, Communities OSC Chair & Spokespersons

Local Member(s): Councillor Andy Jenns

Paragraph to be included in Committee Reports relating to TROs
(NB this does not apply to parking places or speed limit orders)

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 enables the Council to implement Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for one or more of the following purposes:-

- a) avoiding danger to persons or traffic;
- b) preventing damage to the road or to buildings nearby;
- c) facilitating the passage of traffic;
- d) preventing use by unsuitable traffic ;
- e) preserving the character of a road especially suitable for walking and horseriding;
- f) preserving or improving amenities of the area through which the road runs;
- g) for any of the purposes specified in section 87(1)(a) to (c) of the Environment Act 1995 in relation to air quality.

TROs are designed to regulate, restrict or prohibit the use of a road or any part of the width of a road by vehicular traffic or pedestrians. Permanent TROs remain in force until superseded or revoked.

TROs must not have the effect of preventing pedestrian access at any time or preventing vehicular access for more than 8 hours in 24 to premises on or adjacent to the road. This restriction does not apply if the Council states in the order that it requires vehicular access to be limited for more than 8 hours in 24.

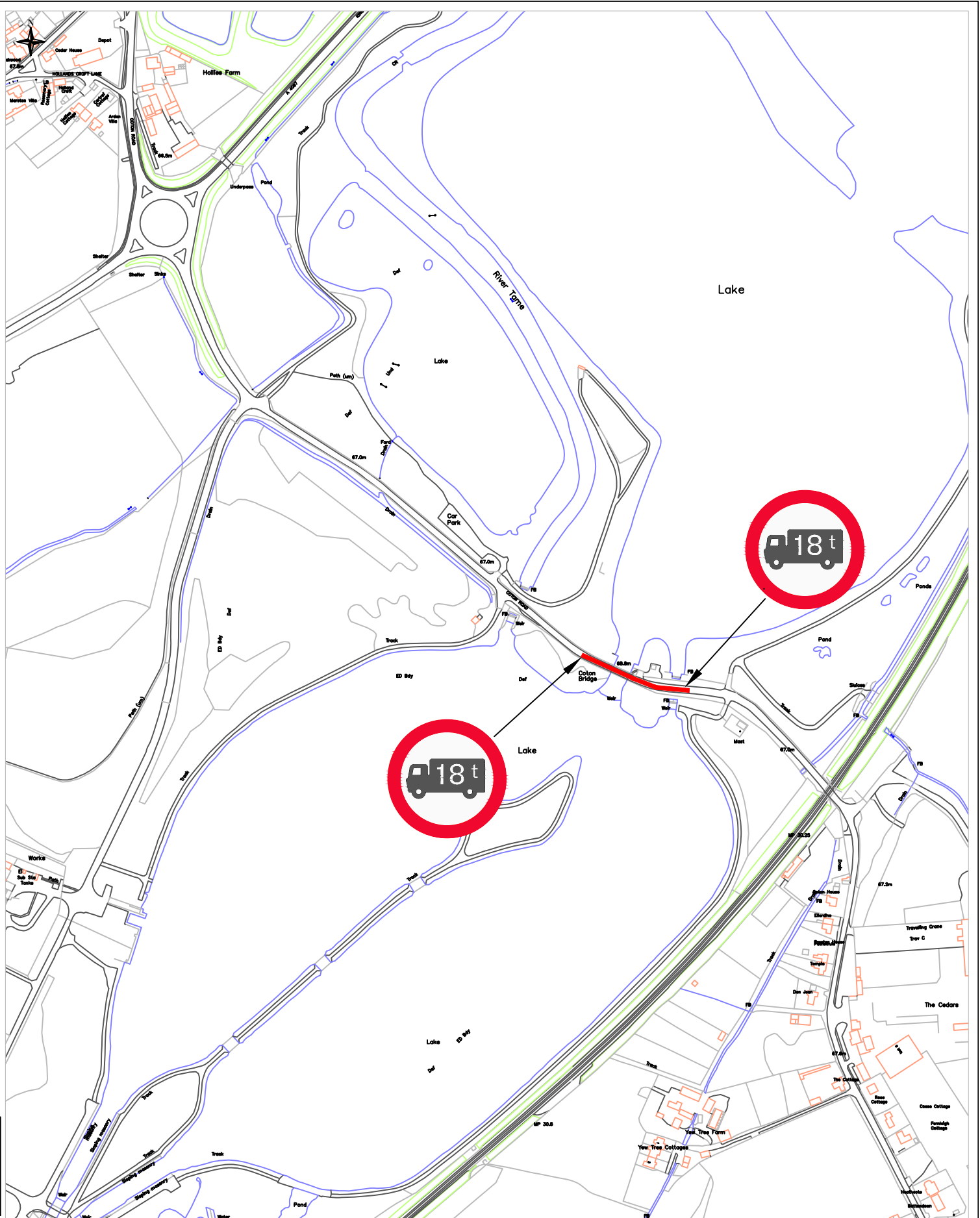
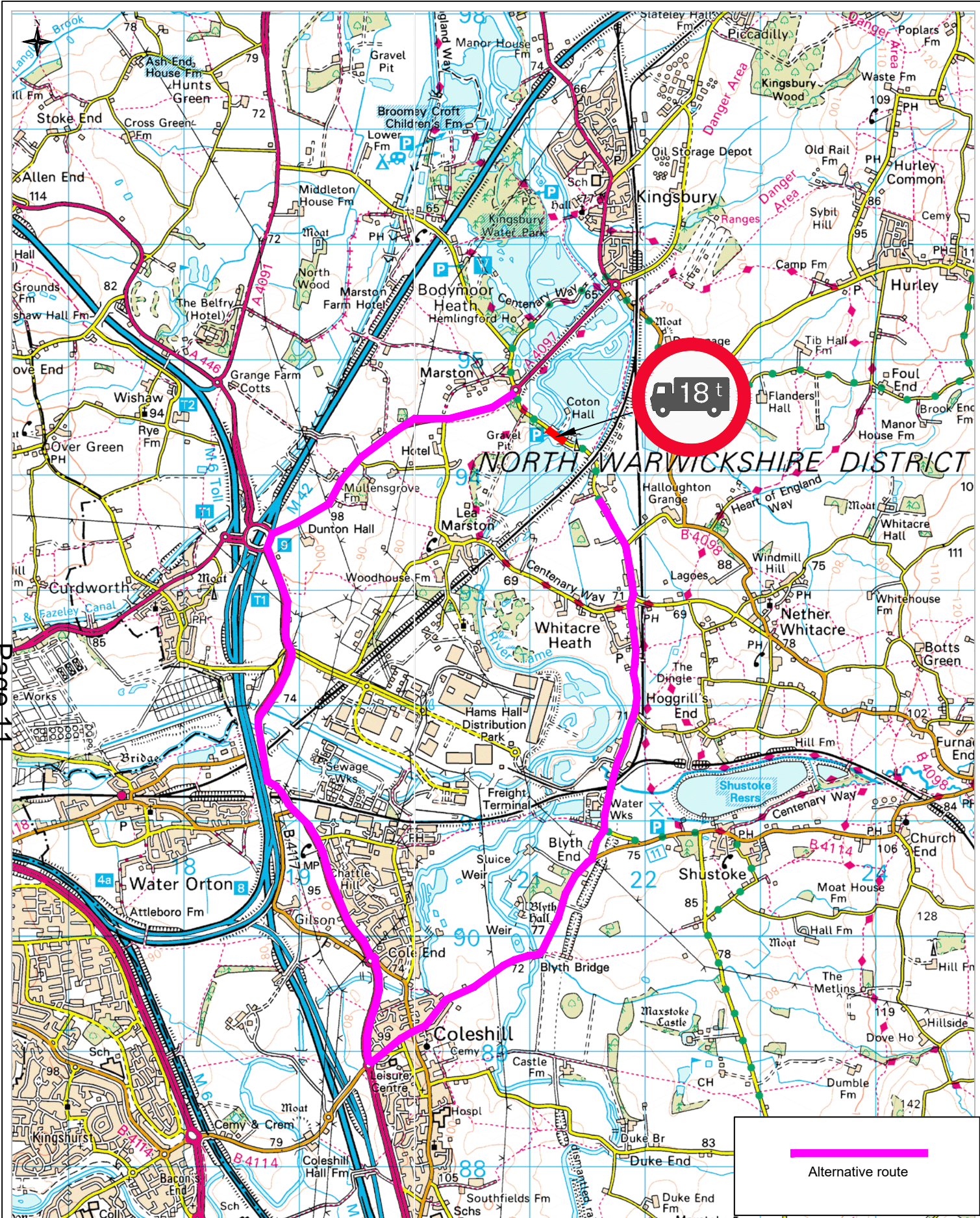
In deciding whether or not to make a TRO, the Council is required to have regard to the matters set out in section 122 of the 1984 Act. Section 122(1) requires the Council to exercise the functions conferred on it by the 1984 Act as (so far as practicable having regard to the matters specified in section 122(2)) to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians), and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway.

The matters to which the Council must have regard are:-

- the desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises
- the effect on the amenities of any locality affected and the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run

- the national air quality strategy prepared under section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1995
- the importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles
- and any other matters appearing to the Council to be relevant

Therefore whilst the overall objective of the Council must be to secure the expeditious convenient and safe movement of vehicular traffic this will sometimes need to give way to the objectives in section 122(2) and a balance has to be achieved between the overall objective and the matters set out in section 122(2).




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Traffic & Road Safety
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NOTES

H:\Traffic\A_Parking Management\AA_North Warwickshire Borough\Cotton Bridge 18T\Cotton Bridge 18T.dwg
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REV	DATE	BY	CHK	AMENDMENT
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Drawing title
**Cotton Bridge
 Nr Whitacre Heath
 18T Weight Restriction
 North Warwickshire**

Project title
Cotton Bridge 18T

Drawn by
PM

Checked by

Date
10 August 2020

Scale
NTS @ A3_L

Drawing number
TR/11220

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Tue 23-Mar-21 9:05 PM
To: PMC WCC
Dear Phil

Proposed Restriction to 18T for Coton Road Bridge

As someone who lives in the village I am objecting to this restriction. I work in HGV transport and understand the challenges around safe road use. However, this restriction is non-sensical as it would majorly impact the surrounding villages road networks with unrestricted loads and no-suitable stops or safe places to pull over to allow driver breaks or the follow of traffic.

The way accessing Cedars currently works from Kingsbury island and the motor way networks is safe and well organised. As they turn off the main road routes and immediately enter the site there is no impact on any of the villages.

Forcing unrestricted loads via any of the villages routes will cause damage, obstruction, and accidents by causing major risk to all other village road users. It will also churn up the village roads (causing more expense than fixing the bridge) and the council would be liable if it were proven anyone was injured (or worse) as a direct result of an accident due to the restriction. One injury claim would be far higher than the cost of fixing the bridge.

By not fixing the bridge, tired drivers who do not know the route will be forced to divert around unsuitable and busy country lanes (often at night). Thus increasing driving times, and creating tired, confused drivers with no rest areas. There is a very obvious risk of serious accidents.

Surely with the money and development being done by HS2 in the area a small amount can be used to fix the bridge or make it suitable for its original use and purpose?

It is important we know who built the bridge and surveyed the area because someone must be liable for negligence in designing and building a modern bridge that was proven to be totally unsuitable for purpose so legal action should be taken to pay for the works.

I fully object to the bridge being reduced to 18T for many reasons and whatever action is required to make the bridge safe and suitable for its intended use must be taken.

Kind Regards

Wed 24-Mar-21 11:25 AM
To: PMC WCC

Coton Bridge concerns , proposed weight restriction.

I absolutely must **object** to this ridiculous 'ill-thought out' proposition to set a weight restriction on this bridge. The Bridge serves a key access route from major road networks locally to the local 'Cedar's' Lorry park. To redirect HGV's away from that bridge will be devastating to our village.

To restrict the bridge in this way would mean that the only access route to this sizeable lorry park/facility would be via the local villages of Whitacre Heath / Nether Whitacre & Lea Marston, which are small villages who already suffer with mass volumes of cars using it as a cut through. There are various 'pinch points' that already cause problems and residents , along with the local council, and county council have been working together for many years now to address the traffic issues in the village of Whitacre Heath specifically..including management of pinch points, improved road safety, attempting to reduce the volume of cars that pass through, and slow down the cars that race through the villages. To add to that pressure it would be ludicrous to add HGV's to that already precarious safety concerns, for what I can only see as a failure or neglect of duty by the County Council to maintain the structure of Coton Road bridge. The impact on the local village would be devastating.

We have a number of families with young children who live at those pinch points (e.g Station Road Cottages ..but not exclusively), we also have an older persons residential bungalows also in the heart of the village by the pinch point. Both of which would create safety concerns..I think you should see the size of the lorries that pass through the village already, so to propose an increase in that would be a problem. We already have seen damage to cars along the route, we experience backlogs / jams through the village at the pinch points, and this is especially problematic when HGVs are involved, as there are simply no where to go so the road becomes blocked. You have to also appreciate that if the Coton Road bridge is restricted we will have significant 'two-way' traffic coming through the village with HGVs coming to/from the Cedars site which will be at least chaotic, if not dangerous.

These HGVs will then also have to head out via Coleshill, which will add yet further pressure to the Coleshill Crossroads..which the County Council already are aware of the pressures at that junction. It is certainly an ill-thought through proposition, and one which can only be for the avoidance of spending money to the detriment of the villages, its residents, safety ,and the environmental impact caused by the congestion.

I am pleased to see that representation will be sought from the Local MP Craig Tracy - in the hope that the matter can be resolved in the best interests for all and not solely the financial interest of the County Council.

We have two major roads in the vicinity which could alleviate HGVs from the village (A4047 Kingsbury) & M42, the County council should be supporting ways in improving access not wilfully thwarting them.

Yours faithfully,

Wed 24-Mar-21 3:39 PM
To: PMC WCC
Coton Road Bridge.docx

Dear Phil

Please find attached my objections to the weight restrictions for Coton Bridge.

Can you please acknowledge receipt?

I am assuming this will be sufficient and I do not need to post a hard copy?

Many Thanks

Weight Restriction Order 2021-Coton Bridge-Coton Road

I would like to object to the weight restrictions order for a maximum of 18 tonnes HGV lorries to pass over Coton Bridge.

Having read Sections **1 & 2 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA)** and having read the very short and limited **Statement of Reasons (SOR)** for the application I have the following observations:

Business Implications

It is HGV's entering the Cedars that will be most affected in terms of business:



The Cedars Site

The Cedars is situated on Coton Road and advertises itself as being perfectly placed for transport links nationwide whilst enjoying an idyllic and peaceful rural setting. It is a perimeter fenced 32 acre secure site which is covered by 24 hour CCTV. It offers brick built and portal frame offices, secure walled or fenced outdoor hard standing/parking, cranes, forklifts, weighbridge and platform lift facilities as well as communal onsite facilities include a cafe and a toilet block with showers, wash basins and WCs. The site additionally holds an ADR license; these licences are required by vehicles carrying dangerous goods.

Present occupants include: Masteel-specialist steel stockholders, Land & Water-drainage and marine specialists, Plant Hire specialists, Rhino Steel Cladding, Superjet: high pressure jetting specialists.

Although not mentioned in the SOR, it is highly likely that the continuous access to this very large industrial site must have had a significant effect on the Coton Road bridge as access is currently across that bridge.

The Cedars in their accounts for 2019 have Investment property worth £3.4m and Masteel UK in 2020 are reporting turnover up 17% at £20m and profit of £1m. The businesses on this site appear to be flourishing and any constraints to traffic flow would be detrimental.

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

The **RTRA 1984** (outside Greater London), allows the traffic authority to make an order under section 1 in respect of the road where it appears to the authority making the order that it is expedient to make it:

- a) *for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising, or*
- b) *for preventing damage to the road or to any building on or near the road, or*
- c) *for facilitating the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians), or*
- d) *for preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property, or*
- e) *without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (d) above) for preserving the character of the road in a case where it is specially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot, or*
- f) *for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs or*
- g) *for any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 (air quality)*

Safety & Environment

The official diversion route has major implications for the crossroads at the Green Man, Station Road and the Cedars end of Coton Road.

Green Man Crossroads

- This is already a very busy crossroads especially at certain times of the day with long queues on both sides waiting to get across
- Birmingham Road as you approach the hill towards Morrison's Supermarket narrows considerably and often vehicles have to cross the white line
- It is a relatively small junction, inappropriate for very large HGV's and difficult for them to navigate



This crossing is likely to become much more heavily congested than it already is and most certainly more dangerous.

Station Road

- Busiest and most congested, it already suffers from heavy traffic which passes through the village at speed, well in excess of the 30mph limit
 - How will the speed limit be monitored?
- The road is occupied by families some with young children, imagine the implications of a 40 tonnes+ lorry passing through at speed
- Limited parking with the Railway Cottages having no garages or parking areas, there are vehicles constantly parked on the road. Residents have had cars damaged and even written off by being hit by passing traffic and they are already asked regularly to move cars when HGV's pass through

Section 1d of the RTRA states *'for preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property'*

There is no possible way 18+ tonnes HGV's can be considered suitable to pass by Station Road as a permanent diversion.

Rural Roads in General

- Rural roads are not main roads they tend to be narrower and have multiple bends, they are not built to withstand HGV lorries, has any consideration been given to road size, difficulties of large HGV's turning, dealing with blind bends
- What consideration has been given to congestion as inevitably some of these vehicles will get stuck?
- What consideration has been given to potential volumes?
- Very large HGV's have high emissions, imagine how the air quality would be affected by the vehicle fumes not only driving through but at a standstill waiting to pass other vehicles
- Very large HGV's are also noisy and cause vibrations has any consideration been given to residents who will have to suffer from this
- Our roads are rural which means we have walking groups, dog walkers, horses and sometimes horse and carts. Warwickshire is renowned for its countryside and scenic walking routes, people come from far and wide to use them

Section 1e & f of the RTRA states *'preserving the character of the road in a case where it is specially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot, or preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs'*

Section 1 g of the RTRA states *'for any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 (air quality)'*

There can be little doubt that the proposed diversion satisfies none of the above and in fact does the exact opposite.

Drivers

The chances are high that some of the drivers will not be familiar with the roads; following the diversion is filled with issues, possibly meaning drivers will turn down even more inappropriate roads and potentially get stuck.

It is unclear from the proposal what the signage will be, how likely is it that drivers will turn down Coton Road from the A4097 and get stuck as there is no way for them to turn around. The likelihood is that they will simply cross the bridge. One could also see numerous scenarios where drivers are not prepared to do the long diversion and will simply cross the bridge anyway. Again it is unclear from the proposal what will be put in place to prevent this from happening.

The uncertainty and potential issues could well have an impact on the Cedars and those businesses using the site and potentially cause further damage to the bridge.

Statement of Reasons

This is a short and one sided statement, with the consequences of these actions being poorly thought out:

- what discussions have taken place with the Cedars
- what discussions have taken place with the residents who are affected by these changes
- what monitoring has been completed to understand the impacts of the decision
- what are the likely volumes involved

The SOR only seems to be focussed on the structural integrity of the bridge and not the consequences of the changes proposed.

Economics

It would appear that the County has been negligent in regard to the safety of the bridge and has no plans in place for repair or replacement.

This might be a false economy as all of the diverted roads will be affected. The roads are already in disrepair and are often flooded. These roads are not designed for traffic of this type, as previously suggested rural roads are narrow and bendy in nature. One only has to see the state of the road leading to Coleshill Parkway to see the destruction these HGV's cause, there are huge craters in the road.

Section 1a & b of the RTRA states *'for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising, or for preventing damage to the road or to any building on or near the road'*

It is inevitable that the rural surrounding roads will be damaged, in contravention of the RTRA.

Has the County done a full study into the cost to repair the bridge versus the cost to repair all of the surrounding village roads?

As pointed out in an earlier section the Cedars and its occupants are thriving and growing, the use of that bridge must have been massively impacted by those businesses, what discussion have been had to discuss potential contributions or changes to their business models?

What happens if the County decide not to repair the bridge but also not to divert due to safety reasons? What happens if local residents decide to protest and disrupt the flow of those vehicles?

Conclusion

This is a poorly thought through solution, with no regard to safety, pollution, the businesses affected; the residents affected or even the wider economics.

It is not a sustainable long term solution, especially when you consider that Masteel grew by 17% in 2020.

Scenario planning is required to understand the impacts of the change both in terms of volumes but also in terms of financials; reviewing the damage that will be incurred on the surrounding roads, let alone the impacts to safety and livelihoods.

Subject to forecast financials being drawn up, the most obvious solution would be to repair and strengthen the bridge to enable the Cedars to continue to flourish and have access to the site from the A4097.

I would encourage the County to re-consider and look in more depth at the proposal.

Wed 24-Mar-21 4:28 PM

To: PMC WCC; County Highways Minor Works
Good Afternoon Phil Mitton,

I'd like to formally object to the proposed 18 tonne weight restriction.

I'd like to raise the following points/ questions and expect a formal response:

Additional HGV's using Station Road as an alternative route will increase the traffic issues we already have. Vehicles parked outside the railway cottages have been damaged and even written off in recent years and on a number of occasions residents have been asked to move their cars because HGV's have been unable to squeeze through and are unable to reverse back down the road. Young children and elderly residents live in the cottages posing a huge safety issue with 40 Tonne plus vehicles driving through, many of them often doing over the 30mph speed limit.

If drivers follow the official diversion route this will lead to issues at the Green Man crossroads, Station Road at the railway cottages and then at the Cedars end of Coton Road. Eventually drivers will take the easiest options of Kingsbury Road, Haunch Lane, Birmingham Road, Lea Marston, Coton Road or Kingsbury Road, Coventry Road, Houlloughton Grange Lane, turning right into Coton Road which has poor visibility. Alternatives are Tamworth Road, Gate Lane/Middle Lane.

Other safety issues are HGVs needing to pass each other, meeting school buses and other daily traffic on the tight bends in Lea Marston, pinch points through Whitacre and bends on Halloughton Grange Lane. Dangers at junctions accessing Kingsbury Road and Coventry Road.

Where will drivers be alerted to the weight limit and that it is a weak bridge? Signs need to be placed before the Coton road roundabout coming from all directions to try to stop drivers entering Coton Road, if not many will cross the bridge as turning round is impossible.

County have been negligent in dealing with the structural stability of the bridge. The load capacity of the bridge is such that it is unsafe. When did the bridge have a structural inspection before this decision was made? Has it been deteriorating for years hence the increased inspection?

No plans are evident at the County Council for its repair/replacement as they say there is no money in their budget. Is this negligence, bad planning on behalf of WCC? Is there not an emergency fund? Why have the County not budgeted for a replacement?

What monitoring has been done on traffic volume to understand the impact of this decision on neighbouring villages?

I look forward to hearing back from you on all of these points.

Best regards,

Thu 25-Mar-21 4:55 PM

To: PMC WCC

Cotonbridgeobjection.docx

Please find attached our letter of objection to the proposals for a weight limit on Coton Bridge.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Regards

Mr Phil Mitton,
Senior Engineer
Communities Group,
PO Box 43,
Shire Hall,
Warwick,
CV34 4SX

Dear Mr Mitton

Re: Coton Bridge, Nether Whitacre - 18 Tonne Weight Limit – Warwickshire County Council

We strongly object to the proposed imposition of an 18 tonne weight limit on Coton Bridge.

As you will know, the bridge is just some 200 metres from the Cedars Industrial Estate. If the weight limit is put in place it will significantly increase the number of HGV's attempting to access the Cedars using local roads which are totally unsuitable to take such vehicles. They are narrow and many have bends and visibility issues at junctions.

We do not know the numbers of HGV's that will be affected and would be interested to learn this from the assessment you have carried out. We can see that there are at least 60 spaces on the Cedars site for oil tankers and we know that there are 89 HGVs with an operator's licence for the Cedars that are required to turn right out of the site and cross the bridge. Plus, there is an application for 10 more vehicles currently being determined by the Highway Commissioner. There are probably many more that use this site that we don't know about. So, there is going to be a significant number of HGV's coming through our village or other villages.

The signed route proposed by WCC for HGV's, if followed, would lead to additional traffic issues at the Green Man crossroads in Coleshill where lorries struggle to pass at the narrowed junction.

It would also result in further interference with the free flow of traffic outside the railway cottages on Station Road, Whitacre Heath, where there will be an increased conflict between parked cars and HGV's. Whilst the majority of commercial vehicles access the Cedars from Coton Bridge, it is already the case that some HGV's approach or depart the Cedars via Station Road. Residents are repeatedly asked by HGV drivers to move their parked cars to enable them to get through. This would be exacerbated.

Furthermore, these properties are occupied by many elderly residents and families with young children. It will become even more of a safety issue to cross the road with additional HGV's driving through.

Residents on Coton Road near to and opposite the Cedars Industrial Estate regularly experience issues with HGV's. During Lockdown 1, the main access to the Cedars was closed for several months which led to HGV's using the second entrance. In order to pass each other, HGVs were seen mounting the kerbs. This was reported to the County at the time and obviously if HGV traffic has to go through the village this will happen on an increasingly frequent basis. It would become a source of obstruction and danger to other highway users and pedestrians. It will also increase noise and environmental pollution.

In both locations the speed of traffic is also a major concern. Motorists and HGV drivers travel well above the 30mph speed limit. To add more HGVs into these areas is unwise.

We are also of the view that HGV drivers will bypass the signed route as it is exceptionally long. They will look for short cuts. There is every chance that they will come through Lea Marston via Haunch Lane, with its dangerous bend, or they will use Hams Lane. If this is the case this will adversely affect residents of that village due to noise and disturbance. The lanes in Lea Marston are narrow and totally inappropriate to take such traffic.

We are aware that large numbers of HGV's accessing the Cedars already use the narrow lane known as Halloughton Grange. Again, this lane is not wide enough to take such vehicles: it also has dangerous junctions at either end. It cannot take HGVs in larger numbers.

We are also concerned about how HGV drivers will be alerted to the weight limit and that it is a weak bridge. It is essential that signs are placed before the Coton Road roundabout on Kingsbury Road to deter drivers entering Coton Road. If this does not happen many will enter Coton Road, will be unable to turn round and will cross the bridge!

The operation of the Cedars Industrial Estate in this rural setting is a source of tension between local residents, the owners of the site and its users. Almost the only mitigating factor is that Coton Bridge provides ready access from the Cedars to the only nearby main roads – the A4097, A446 and M42. It seems to us that this delicate situation will be made intolerable if the bridge is closed to the heaviest vehicles. We therefore wish to know why the proposal is to divert this traffic and not strengthen the bridge. Your regular tests would presumably have indicated a need at some point to carry out this reinforcement. Why were plans not made to anticipate that? We are of the view that had the prospect of the bridge being limited been known, permissions granted for the expansion and operation of the Cedars in recent years would have been assessed differently. We would therefore wish to know how long the Council has been aware of the bridge's deterioration.

The safety of residents and road users is paramount, so we urge the Council to seek emergency funding to strengthen or replace the bridge as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely

Fri 26-Mar-21 12:14 PM

To: PMC WCC

+5 others

Coton Road Bridge GT.pdf

Dear Phil,

Please find my objections to the above order. Please could you confirm receipt.

I have copied this to several members of the Parish council as I am sure they will be equally concerned.

Weight Restriction Order 2021-Coton Bridge - Coton Road

I would like to object to the weight restrictions order for a max of 18 tonnes HGV lorries to pass over Coton Bridge.

I believe the potential consequential impacts resulting from this decision are substantial both in terms of risk and harm to residents, to property and to the highways.

It appears to be a short-term decision and does not account for

- Potential future growth of 'The Cedars' and increasing volumes
- Cost of damage repair on the alternative route

These impacts could significantly outweigh the current cost of repairing the bridge. I have asked a number of questions (in blue) which I would appreciate responses on.

Safety & Environment

The official diversion route has major implications

- **Green Man Crossroads** – all current issues would be amplified
 - Extremely busy intersection at certain times of the day with long queues
 - Birmingham Road narrows preventing 2 lorries passing at the same time
 - It is a small junction, inappropriate for very large HGV's and difficult for them to navigate

There is already an inherent risk for pedestrians crossing here which would be worse.

- **Station Road**

The village suffers significantly from speeding and excess traffic now, exacerbated when there are issues on the M42

- Local residents, walkers, cyclists, dog walkers, horse riders, would be at significant risk from excess heavy lorry traffic
- On-street parking narrows the highway to single file
 - o Parked cars are damaged now as vehicles attempt to squeeze through
 - o Substantial bottle necks occur without lorries creating frustration for drivers
 - o HGV's occasionally get stuck needing residents to move cars
 - o Air quality from emissions will deteriorate significantly

RTRA notable points

The council should explain how they deem 18+ tonne HGV's as suitable to pass along Station Road as a permanent diversion and is the solution to not repairing the bridge.

- Section 1d of the RTRA states 'for preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property'
- Section 1e & f of the RTRA states 'preserving the character of the road in a case where it is especially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot, or preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs'
- Section 1g of the RTRA states 'for any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 (air quality)

I would also remind the council of their obligations as outlined in the legislation opposite

The **RTRA 1984** (outside Greater London), allows the traffic authority to make an order under section 1, in respect of the road where it appears to the authority making the order, that it is expedient to make it:

- a) for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising, or
- b) for preventing damage to the road or to any building on or near the road, or
- c) for facilitating the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians), or
- d) for preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property, or
- e) without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (d) above for preserving the character of the road in a case where it is especially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot, or
- f) for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs or
- g) for any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 (air quality)

Questions regarding Safety & Environment

Rural roads tend to be narrower, have multiple bends and are not built to withstand HGV lorries use.

- What consideration has been given to road size and HGV's use
- What consideration has been given to the inevitable increased congestion?
- What volumes of traffic are forecast on new routes and when?
- How will air quality be monitored and maintained?
- How will the increase in noise be monitored for kerbside properties?
- What changes in signage are being planned to ensure compliance and awareness for all?

Section 1e & f of the RTRA states '*preserving the character of the road in a case where it is especially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot, or preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs*'

Section 1 g of the RTRA states '*for any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 (air quality)*

There can be little doubt that the proposed diversion satisfies none of the above and is likely to achieve the exact opposite.

Statement of Reasons

The SOR is only focussed on the structural integrity of the bridge and not the consequences of the changes proposed.

Economics

The County appears to be caught out regarding the safety of the bridge with no plans in place for repair or replacement?

It is likely all diverted roads will degrade further which would be a false economy of enormous proportions. The roads currently are already in disrepair with many potholes.

Section 1a & b of the RTRA states '*for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising, or for preventing damage to the road or to any building on or near the road*'

Is a short and one sided and does not address consequences

- What discussions have taken place with the residents affected by these changes?
- Has the County assessed the cost to repair the bridge versus the cost to repair surrounding village roads?
- What discussion have there been to discuss repair contributions from the Cedars?
- What happens if the County decide not to repair the bridge but also not to divert due to safety reasons?
- What happens if local residents decide to protest through action and disrupt the flow of these vehicles?

It is inevitable that the rural surrounding roads will be damaged, in contravention of the RTRA!

Conclusion

This decision appears to be short-term in nature with no regard to safety, pollution, the local economy and importantly the communities impacted.

Modelling is required to understand the full impacts of the change both for now and in the future. This should cover the cost of repairing the bridge versus collateral cost escalation in other areas. It should also be balanced with the potentially intangible impacts of safety, damage, traffic flow & delays and air pollution.

As should be expected, only when the business case has been objectively analysed, should a decision be made. If you are saying this has been conducted summary information should be released, without the need for a Freedom of Information request.

I would encourage the County to allow sufficient time to re-evaluate this decision in light of feedback received.

Fri 26-Mar-21 4:28 PM
To: PMC WCC
Dear Phil.

Please find attached my response to the notification re the above.
Please acknowledge receipt.

Regards.

Dear Mr Mitton

Ref Coton Bridge. (C125/007 Coton)

Our Parish Council recently received the notification of weight restrictions being implemented on this bridge.

In objecting, I make the following observations and conclude with a freedom of information request.

I note that you state 'it is subject to an enhanced regime of routine inspections'

And that you also state 'An earlier assessment found that the bridge's edges are under strength which led to the installation of the traffic signals and vehicle barriers that are currently in place to protect the weak footways from accidental loading'

The addition of Traffic lights and barriers were many years ago!

Notwithstanding elements within the RTA 1984, your own policies are set out giving you the manner by which you aim to maintain such structures.

Warwickshire local transport plan 2011 to 2026.

Policy BM3: Strengthening

The County Council will seek to strengthen weak bridges where appropriate and possible, and will avoid the imposition of weight limits unless unavoidable.

In determining priorities for strengthening, the County Council takes account of:

- The degree of structural inadequacy and the level of risk presented to highway users;
- The importance of the route and the availability of suitable alternatives;
- The views of the local community and users;
- The consequences of permanent or temporary weight restrictions; and
- The need for co-ordination with other highway or related works.

Weight restrictions

The County Council's aim is to ensure that all bridges on the road network are capable of Carrying 40 tonne vehicles and the imposition of weight limits is avoided wherever possible.

A weight limit is generally only considered appropriate if a bridge is located:

- On a minor road where a suitable alternative route is reasonably convenient (5km or less);
- or
- On a minor road where a suitable alternative route is longer than 5km but the numbers of HGV's affected are less than 10 in a 12-hour day.

There is also the:-

Highway Asset Management strategy Jan 2019.

Taking elements from page 13:-

Structures

Warwickshire County Council actively manages its highway structure assets in accordance with Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice published by UK Roads Liaison Group.

'Detailed asset information on the structure stock inventory and its condition is stored in a bespoke structure management system (SMS)'

'WCC's bridge maintenance team inspects all structures carrying or spanning the highway every two years regardless of ownership in order to ensure public safety. High risk structures are inspected more frequently. The findings of these inspections are recorded in the SMS and used to determine the maintenance required to ensure the structures remain safe for use and fit for purpose. Where safety critical components are identified as being deficient, steps are taken to make them safe as soon as possible.

The SMS also records the load carrying capacity of highway structures. Structures are designed and assessed to ensure they can safely carry vehicles of up to 40/44 tonnes gross weight. Where structures are found to be substandard in their load carrying capacity, they are managed in accordance with nationally agreed standards prior to being strengthened or replaced where feasible and cost effective. At present, 37 substandard structures are monitored to ensure their structural performance. A further 12 structures owned by Warwickshire and 34 owned by third parties have structural weight limits'

This bridge is owned by WCC.

'The approach to achieving the desired outcomes is to use the findings of an annual programme of inspections and assessments along with asset lifecycle planning tools and engineering judgement to develop and implement a risk based, prioritised maintenance programme. The maintenance programme provides a cost effective approach to repair

damage caused by deterioration, vehicle collision or vandalism, slow or prevent the deterioration process, meet changing user demands and implement structural upgrades.

The inspection programme involves undertaking General Inspections every two years and more detailed Principal Inspections on a risk based interval determined in accordance with nationally agreed standards and tailored to budget limitations. More frequent Special Inspections are undertaken of sub-standard structures'

In your email you point out:-

Please find attached documentation relating to a proposed 18T weight restriction to be applied to Coton Bridge on Coton Road, near Nether Whitacre. There is already a 7.5T weight restriction in place which allows an exemption for access - please note that the proposed 18T limit is for structural reasons and therefore does not allow the same exemption for access. In real terms, this is therefore likely to only affect vehicles accessing The Cedars industrial and commercial units, which would previously have had access via Coton Road to and from the A4097 Kingsbury Road.

Details are included on the public notice of how to lodge representations (either as objection or in support) - please note that these can also be submitted to this e-mail address, including "Coton Bridge" in the subject header.

If, as you say the 'restriction is to be applied to' then lodging representations is a fruitless exercise since :-'Coton Bridge, Nether Whitacre - 18 Tonne Weight Limit – Warwickshire County Council

A structural assessment has been carried out by Warwickshire County Council and it has been concluded that the Coton Road bridge is no longer able to safely carry unrestricted vehicle loads'

What you don't say is what you intend to do to remedy the situation.

Whilst there is a 7.5T limit in the village, this limit is abused. The village is used as a rat run by cars and trucks.

This is a VILLAGE with a 7.5T 30mph limit. Narrow roads, parked cars on both sides and school children.

In summary.

An earlier assessment found that the bridge's edges are under strength.

The bridge is in fact subject to an enhanced regime of routine inspections. (less than 2 yrs?)

This problem bridge has been known by your good selves for many years.

Why is it not (for example) in the Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund Tranche 2B

It is not apparent you have met the requirements of Policy BM3 on strengthening.

It is not apparent you have met the requirements of Policy BM3 on weight restrictions.

The Cedars is a large commercial operation which uses the bridge. Traffic from the Cedars is contracted to use the bridge at all necessary times and not use the village route.

The alternative route is far longer than 5km, (see plan ref. TR/11220) Through a renowned hot spot of the Coleshill crossroads, straight through the spine of the village to the Cedars. The

numbers of HGV's affected are more than 10 in a 12-hour day. Cedars operates on a 24 hour basis and is currently requesting a license for 10 more HGV's. It is growing as it should be, You could be holding it back.

It is not apparent if this is, as it should be, temporary with an imminent repair.

It is not apparent at all what your proposed outcome for the bridge is!

Therefore,

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I respectfully request the following information.

- a) Copies of the inspection reports for Coton bridge from the time of the introduction of the barriers and traffic lights including the decision notes made at each inspection, up to and including the latest inspection deciding the need for weight restriction.
- b) Copies of the discussion minutes deciding that this bridge should not be included in any maintenance which will maintain the strength of the bridge.
- c) Discussion minutes deciding not to include this bridge in the (or any other suitable scheme of repair) Local Maintenance Challenge Fund
- d) Please provide copies of the road traffic movement data collected in Nether Whitacre and surrounding villages, in support of this action
- e) The weight limit was at best decided in 2020. See WCCC-723747648-1436.pdf. August.
Discussions must have been carried out before this action. Please provide all copies of discussion minutes in 2019/20 deciding the action to be taken on this bridge.

Faithfully yours

Sun 28-Mar-21 2:59 PM
To: PMC WCC
To whom it may concern

I would like to object to the issue of Coton Bridge weight issue in Nether Whitacre.

I believe this weight restriction will significantly increase the volume of HGV's using our local roads as a resident of Lea Marston living on Birmingham Road.

This would adversely effect our community and environment that we live in.

Kind Regards,

Mon 29-Mar-21 11:45 AM

To: PMC WCC

Dear Sir,

We are writing to you regarding the proposed weight restriction for Coton bridge, Nether Whitacre.

Firstly, we are extremely concerned about what this action will mean in relation to HGV lorries using the village roads. The village already is suffering increasing traffic over the years as people use it as a short cut to Hams Hall and Kingsbury. A lot of the traffic does not abide by the speed limit. To add to an already difficult traffic problem more HGV lorries is simply unacceptable.

We understand that the Council have been aware of the weakening strength of the bridge for some time and has excused their lack of action with the excuse of no budget to do the work that is necessary. This again is unacceptable. Increased lorries passing through the narrow village roads will cause accidents, decrease air quality and increase noise pollution.

The village has a parking problem so cars are parked on the roads, which means large vehicles passing them, on what are not wide roads, will inevitably cause damage.

We respectfully ask that the Council come up with a plan that will mean HGV lorries do not use our village roads as a cut through.

We await your comments.

Regards,

Residents of Nether Whitacre

Thu 01-Apr-21 11:12 AM

To: PMC WCC

Good morning Mr Mitton,

█ has been contacted by residents and businesses in the area of the Coton Road Bridge who are very concerned with the proposal to put an 18t weight restriction on it. They have raised some concerns that I would like to ask you to address.

- When was the last inspection of the bridge,
- Can you tell me when the decision was first made that the bridge was dangerous to lorries over 18t,
- Why was the restriction not put in place straight away when the fault was reported,
- Why can empty lorries over 18t still travel over the bridge,
- Why is the bridge not being repaired/replaced and what was the estimated costs,
- Is this a weight restriction until the bridge is repaired when funding becomes available and when would this be,
- Why is it not in current budget,
- Was this issue not anticipated when the edges were found to be unstable and the traffic lights fitted for single lane traffic,
- What traffic modelling has been done to monitor the numbers of lorries traveling over the bridge which will then have to travel through the villages and on to the green man crossroads,
- What dates were these conducted as the lockdown would give significantly less traffic than in normal times,
- Are there any traffic calming measures for Station Road and Blithe Road as well as the Green man crossroads as there is significant concern with the amount of HGV's already without this change and HS2 construction traffic increasing.
- Are you aware that the industrial Estate is a 24 hr operation not 12 hour as stated to the Parish council and that they are looking to expand at this time meaning more traffic will be travelling through the villages.

The Parish Council have been conducting traffic surveys but have had to pause due to school holidays can they submit further surveys, after 9 April and before the decision is made, as they want WCC to see the real impact this will have on their lives and environment as continuing through the holiday and lockdown will not show the full impact of the problems on the road through the villages.

Kind regards

Thu 01-Apr-21 1:42 PM

To: PMC WCC

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED OUR OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED WEIGHT RESTRICTION ORDER

REGARDS

PROPOSED WEIGHT RESTRICTION ORDER, COTON BRIDGE, COTON ROAD, PARISH OF NETHER WHITACRE

For The attention of Mr. Phil Mitton, Communities Directorate, WCC

████████████████████ wish to strongly object to the proposal of a weight restriction on Coton Bridge, Coton Road. We would like to understand how WCC have come to this totally unsuitable conclusion of applying a weight restriction to a bridge so integral to the success of a local industrial estate and crucial in the protection of our local environment.

The Cedars industrial site is situated on the edge of our parish, we are protected from the effects of HGVs, Tankers and other associated traffic as we currently benefit from vehicles having easy access off the A4097, over Coton Bridge and into the site. We carried out a traffic survey on 30th March and counted 59 Tankers, 104 HGVs and 366 movements of other traffic in and out of the site. This was during a 12 hour period 7am-7pm, consideration needs to be given to The Cedars operating 24/7 as a secure parking site for HGVs which could increase these figures considerably and as Covid restrictions ease there is likely to be further growth in the business. We fail to see why this does not automatically result in strengthening the bridge in line with WCC policy and question what monitoring WCC have carried out when making the decision to apply a weight restriction.

Policy BM3: Strengthening - The County Council will seek to strengthen weak bridges where appropriate and possible, and will avoid the imposition of weight limits unless unavoidable.

In determining priorities for strengthening, the County Council takes account of:

- The degree of structural inadequacy and the level of risk presented to highway users;
- The importance of the route and the availability of suitable alternatives;
- The views of the local community and users;
- The consequences of permanent or temporary weight restrictions; and
- The need for co-ordination with other highway or related works.

Weight restrictions

The County Council's aim is to ensure that all bridges on the road network are capable of carrying 40 tonne vehicles and the imposition of weight limits is avoided wherever possible.

A weight limit is generally only considered appropriate if a bridge is located:

- On a minor road where a suitable alternative route is reasonably convenient (5km or less);
- or
- On a minor road where a suitable alternative route is longer than 5km but the numbers of HGV's affected are less than 10 in a 12-hour day.

The email received proposing this weight restriction states 'A structural assessment has been carried out by Warwickshire County Council and it has been concluded that the Coton

Road Bridge is no longer able to safely carry unrestricted vehicle loads'. We would like to understand if WCC have been negligent in their maintenance regime in respect of this bridge. When was this structural assessment carried out; When was the previous structural assessment carried out; Has the bridge deteriorated at such a rate that WCC have been unable to put in place a realistic plan to budget for the strengthening or replacement of the structure. Have WCC sought quotes to carry out the required works.

It does seem grossly unfair that residents of local villages should suffer as a result of bad management within WCC. Warwickshire portrays itself as being a lovely place to visit, we pay a premium to live, work and play in our parish and expect WCC to play its part in protecting our environment.

The Official Diversion route is flawed with issues. Our local roads are not built to carry HGVs, not wide enough for them to pass through the village unhindered by parked cars. They often resort to making U turns or reversing back down the road. We have blind bends and difficult junctions making it extremely hazardous for large vehicles and other drivers using the roads. We have been and continue to pursue traffic calming measures since we already suffer from rat running motorists who speed through the parish. How will these measures impact on the safety of our community. Young children and elderly residents live in the railway cottages on Station Road which only have a pavement and small front garden protecting them from the road.

Our village is extremely popular with cyclists and walkers using waymarked WCC rights of way and we form part of the Arden Trail. Horse riding plays a huge part in our area with a busy horse show most Sundays.

If drivers follow the official diversion route this will lead to issues at the Green Man crossroads, Station Road at the railway cottages and then at the Cedars end of Coton Road. Eventually drivers will take the easiest options of Kingsbury Road, Haunch Lane, through Lea Marston to Coton Road or Kingsbury Road, Coventry Road, Halloughton Grange Lane, turning right into Coton Road which has poor visibility. Other safety issues are HGVs needing to pass each other, meeting school buses and other daily traffic on the tight bends in Lea Marston, pinch points through Whitacre and bends on Halloughton Grange Lane. Dangers at junctions accessing Kingsbury Road and Coventry Road.

We would ask you to seriously consider strengthening the bridge for the safety of our community and to halt the detrimental effects this will have on The Cedars business as large vehicles become frustrated with the difficulties of accessing the site.

HGVs using Station Road, Whitacre Heath.
Local roads totally unsuitable for vehicles of this nature.



Station Road, Nether Whitacre.HGV clearly over the Centre of the road. He is approaching the centre of the village where the village hall is, local pub, church hall and Methodist church. Lots of local car movements and pedestrians.



Vehicle entering the cedars.



Thu 01-Apr-21 1:48 PM

To: PMC WCC

Dear Sirs

i wish to lodge an objection to the proposed weight restriction of the Bridge on Coton Road Whitacre Heath.

This bridge has always allowed heavy goods vehicles access to the former concrete works now a multi industrial facility.

I have lived in the village for 50yrs & remember the Hgv traffic that came through the village to access the quarry in Coton Road

from 5am in the morning till 6pm at night,the roads then did not have amount of cars parked along them namely Station Rd.

Over the past few years with increased traffic using it as a rat run avoiding the M42 we have seen numerous accidents involving

traffic hitting parked cars And heavy goods vehicle damaging wing mirrors etc on cars parked near Cottage Lane.The last accident involved a vehicle hitting a parked car and

pushing it into 2 other cars all 3 were write offs.If this goes ahead all Hgv traffic will use Haunch Lane or Coventry Road either way coming through the 7.5 ton weight

restriction.The area is now under the restraints of Hs2 and they will take up the option to use ir as a short cut.The Bridge in question is only single carriageway policed by traffic

lights it does not have a long span so sureley it would not be to expensive to upgrade & seeing as it spans the river Tame & the flood holding lakes Severn Trent or the Nra

should partially fund any upgrades

Fri 02-Apr-21 11:32 AM
To: PMC WCC
Dear Mr Mitton,

My husband and I have lived in Whitacre Heath for the last 30 years. Our property, Temple Cottage, is located directly opposite the Cedars operating site.

Since this site was purchased by the Bridges family some years ago we have seen a significant increase in the number of HGVs and heavy plant entering and leaving the location.

With this in mind, you can imagine our concern at learning that there is a proposal to impose an 18 tonne weight restriction on the Coton Bridge, Coton Road.

A traffic survey conducted on Tuesday 30th March by local residents confirmed that on that particular day 59 tankers and 104 HGVs entered and left the Cedars between the hours of 7am and 7pm.

This is just ONE day.

During a normal working week the impact of a significant number of these vehicles passing through the village from the Blythe road junction to Coton road would be intolerable both from an environmental - noise and fumes- and safety point of view.

This route is, unquestionably, not fit for purpose.

A particular 'pinch point' is at the terraced railway cottages on Station Road. Most residents are forced to park roadside which means that access at this point is generally limited to one vehicle passing at a time. There is barely room for a car let alone an HGV weighing over 18 tonnes!

Parked vehicles at this location have previously been damaged by 'Large Loads' and there will be significant danger and intolerable unpleasantness for the families living in these little terraced houses.

If you are familiar with Coton road you will be aware that there are a number of significant and dangerous bends on it.

This is particularly so at the location of Halloughton Grange Lane.

This is a 'blind bend' and its tight angle dictates that large vehicles have to cross over the central line in order to manoeuvre around it.

The consequences for a vehicle travelling in the opposite direction (often at speed as there is a 40 MPH zone here) and meeting a large vehicle in the middle of the road could be catastrophic. An increased number of large vehicles will undoubtedly result in the likelihood of this happening.

I must question why the residents of Whitacre are being forced to have their environment compromised. This is a semi-rural, Green Belt area and people pay a house price premium to have the privilege of living here.

Why has Coton Bridge been allowed to erode to such a state that a weight restriction needs to be imposed?

Why should the villagers be expected to suffer as a result of this negligence?

Without attention, the bridge will continue to deteriorate - what then? A further weight

restriction? More HGVs being forced onto a road not fit for purpose?

Surely a long term strategy needs to be implemented?

Clearly this proposal is unacceptable and unviable. To clarify, I strongly oppose the weight restriction and suggest that the better long term solution would be to strengthen the bridge and maintain it appropriately.

Yours sincerely,

27^m March 2021

Dear Mr. Milton,

I am very concerned about the Council's proposal to impose a 18 tonne weight limit on Coton Bridge, between Mauston & Whitacre Heath. If this is agreed it would mean that virtually all the lorries & trailers from the Edars would be passing my house on a daily basis. One of the reasons the Traffic Commissioners agreed to there being lorries at the Edars was because a restriction was put upon them turning left on exit and passing down through the village. Now, with this limit being suggested on the bridge, there would be no alternative.

Already traffic can be a problem along the village roads. Noise & pollution will increase & it could become a safety risk to have heavy vehicles thundering past my door. There is often not enough room for cars to pass each other as it is.

Surely WCC are responsible for the maintenance & structural stability of the bridge & should repair it? Can you tell me when the bridge was inspected before this decision was announced? I appreciate that repairs would necessitate money being available but since the traffic lights were installed there several years ago, why was there not a budget put aside to replace the bridge? Both Severn Trent and the Cedars must be anxious to have the bridge repaired & I just feel that no consideration is being given to us, the residents in local villages, whose lives will be impacted by the increased volume of traffic if this weight limit goes ahead.

I look forward to getting some answers to my questions.

Yours truly



Mr. P. Mutton
Communities Group
Shore Hall
Warwick CV34 4SX

Communities Group
P.O Box 43
Shire Hall
Warwick CV34 4SX



30th March 2021.

Re: Weight restriction order Coton Road bridge following evidence of reinforcement failures.

Dear Mr Mitton,

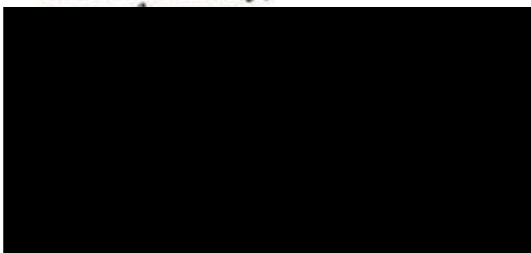
I have recently been made aware of the latest order on the Coton Road river bridge imposing an 18 tonne weight restriction.

This structure carries huge amounts of HGV traffic and is the primary exit route for a local industrial estate. The stated diversion route will take vehicles past our houses on Coton Road on a 24 hour cycle creating unacceptable disruption and safety issues.

It seems astonishing that it has come to this, WCC must have been aware of the damage being sustained to the bridge with the level of heavy traffic now using it. The bridge was reduced to one carriageway some years ago due to known side weakness issues. How was this monitored?

If there is no intent to repair the bridge is it now at the end of its useful life? It will go on accumulating damage and the assumption must be that deterioration and fatigue will continue until the point at which it becomes a high risk. What increases in inspection frequencies and strain testing on the beams have been undertaken to check their condition and continuing safety?

Yours faithfully,



Wed 07-Apr-21 8:03 AM

Date: 07/04/2021 08:59 (GMT+00:00)

To: pmc@warwickshire.gov.uk

Subject: Coton Rd bridge

Dear sir, I wish to object to the 18t weight limit being placed on this bridge, which will have a detrimental effect on the residents on nether whitacre with the number of heavy lorries coming through the village to access the Cedars business estate.

I would like councillors to seriously consider the effect this will have and that they find the money to make emergency repairs and then a complete replacement when funds are found.

Regards

Sent: 06 April 2021 18:16

To: Phil Mitton <philmitton@warwickshire.gov.uk>; **Subject:** Road weight changes to Coton Road Nether Heath

Please find attached my response to the pending changes in weight restrictions for Coton Road Whitacre Heath.

As you will see, I have sent copies to Craig Tracey, our local MP and Whitacre Parish Council.

Kind regards

Proposed weight restriction order on Coton Road Bridge

Alternative route for vehicles over 18 Tonnes:

On reading through the paperwork regarding the proposed weight restrictions and the alternative routes that have been advised (**A4097 Kingsbury Road – A446 Lichfield Road – B4114 Birmingham Road/Blythe Road – Station Road – Coton Road (see plan ref. TR/11220)**)

I have noted that no mention has been made regarding traffic using the B4098 Tamworth to Coventry Road and Halloughton Grange.

Please note: That which was always known as Halloughton Grange Lane, the Council has renamed it Halloughton Grange, this will be used as the lane name below.

This is a great concern, as for some time this road and lane have been used as an alternative route for Very high large articulated vehicles, HGV's and Tankers using this route for The Cedars complex on Coton Road.

The facts are:

There are weight restriction notice signs 7.5 ton except for access, that have been in place for many years notifying the restriction from the B4089 main road onto Halloughton Grange.

I would like to bring to your attention the health and safety issues of traffic using the shortcut, which they do, and have done for some time. This has an impact on the Whitacre Heath residents and the additional volume of traffic at peak times.

These roads have become more dangerous over the past few years. Cars from the local villages use this road and lane as a shortcut to get to Coleshill and Birmingham, missing the B4097, with the high-volume usage of the Petroleum Tankers.

Halloughton Grange is a narrow lane which is only suitable at best, for two cars to pass travelling at a relatively low speed.

To have access to Halloughton Grange (house) there is a concealed entrance, the signs, either side of the road advising this, disappeared some time ago. I have two mirrors, to help access on to Halloughton Grange, not located on the verge, but on a telegraph pole in the hedge, a lorry mounted the narrow verge to avoid a car and dented and damaged the mirror.

On Halloughton Grange we have one of the two listed Railway Bridge, No 58. Over the years with the extra volume of traffic the road is giving way and has become more noticeable recently. This may be due to the work that was undertaken to put in the Pipeline to Kingsbury Oil Terminal. This pipeline goes under the lane at this point.

Leading from the B4098, are overhead telephone/broadband cables. The poles used, are an extra height to cross over to Halloughton Grange (house). On many occasions high vehicles have ripped the cables from the poles leaving no telephone or broadband connections to the house, farm buildings and factory units. The last time this happened it was three weeks to resolve the issue for new poles and re-connection.

Halloughton Grange has the added issue of a sewage pipe that crosses from the house to the septic tank, which is located, in the opposite field, the surface of the lane is collapsing with the volume and weight of vehicles which is constantly used.

With little or no maintenance of local lanes and roads over the last years is now proving to become an issue with flooding and surface water, this is highly dangerous to cyclists and cars travelling at speed along the local roads and lanes.

These local roads and lanes were never built for the volume and usage that we have today. The size, height and weight of vehicles we are seeing is unacceptable for villages like Whitacre Heath, Nether Whitacre, and other small surrounding villages locally. The resident's safety, of themselves, and their property is an issue.

I would like to draw your attention to a paragraph from the WCC HGV limits and routing paper as follows:

Can we have a sign advising our road is not suitable for HGV's.

Advisory signs will not be considered for use on A and B class roads. Signs will only be considered on other roads if a survey shows that more than 10% of vehicles using the road are HGV's without legitimate access.....

I would like to point out that, the majority of HGV's and Articulated vehicles using these roads and lanes are only going to The Cedars. The village has no shops that would need

deliveries of goods. As an example, recently, a double low loader drove down Halloughton Grange with two narrow boats; there are no canals, boatyards, nothing that would necessitate that vehicle driving on the lane, I would not consider that as 'legitimate' access.

Sent: 07 April 2021 16:29

To: Phil Mitton <philmitton@warwickshire.gov.uk>

Subject: Weight Limit Coton Bridge

Dear Phil

Please find attached a letter of objection from my elderly parents, Mr and Mrs Field. They have asked me to email it to you on their behalf.

Regards

30 March 2021

Mr P Mitton
Senior Engineer
Communities Group
PO Box 43
Shire Hall
Warwick
CV34 4SX

Dear Mr Mitton

We object to the proposal to install a weight restriction on Coton Bridge.

We already experience problems with HGV's and vehicles with abnormal loads from the Cedars. There have been numerous examples of HGV's being unable to get past the parked cars outside the cottages and residents being asked to move their vehicles to enable the drivers to get through. By putting the restriction on the bridge and directing the diversion via Station Road will increase the problem. What you are proposing is totally unacceptable.

Can you explain what your plans are to strengthen or replace the bridge?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely.

Wed 07-Apr-21 6:16 PM
To: PMC WCC

FAO Phil Mitton, Communities Group.

I am writing regarding the plan to put an 18 tonne weight restriction on Coton bridge over the river Tame, Coton Road between Marston and Whitacre Heath.

Apart from the obvious problems the alternative route will bring, there is currently a restriction that all HGV Vehicles leaving The Cedars must turn right under the railway bridge. This restriction on vehicles over 18 tonne will mean those vehicles will have to turn left breaking the current restriction and bringing more vehicles along Coton Road.

Coton road is a very narrow road with no pavements outside mine and other properties and this already makes it a danger to walk our dogs or ride horses to nearby bridle paths. The road is a North Warwickshire cycle route used by adults and children often cycling out to Kingsbury Water Park. Lorries have difficulties passing each other and often have to drive on the side verges and additional lorries will only make the road more of a hazard.

There is currently a height restriction for vehicles approaching the railway bridge from Coton Bridge, many vehicles ignore this and end up hitting the bridge or having to reverse back, I believe any weight restriction will also be ignored.

Adding a weight restriction to the bridge will only increase the issues with HGV's in the area and consideration should be given to restricting the number of HGV's along Coton Road.

Wed 07-Apr-21 8:51 PM
To: PMC WCC
Dear Mr Mitton

The planned weight restriction for Coton Bridge will cause major alterations to the volume of heavy traffic using Coton Road, Station Road, Birmingham Road, Halloughton Lane and Middle Lane in Whitacre. This increase will seriously diminish the quality of life of residents of the village in the following ways:

Traffic congestion will be a serious inconvenience
Serious road safety issues will arise
Parked vehicles will be at increased risk of damage
Road surfaces will deteriorate more quickly
Noise pollution will increase
Air pollution will increase
Roadside trees will be damaged

Both Halloughton Lane and Middle Lane have listed railway bridges that were built in the 1840s and were designed to carry much lighter loads than 18 tons. These architectural gems will be at increased risk of irreparable damage.

If the quality of life is to be preserved in our village, the following should be considered

Replacement of Coton Bridge by one that can cope with the heavy traffic coming and going to and from The Cedars
Restriction of access to The Cedars to vehicles which the present bridge can carry

Increased traffic volume on the roads mentioned is already expected over the next decade due to diversions being imposed to enable the construction of HS2 in the neighbourhood and by the very presence of the workforce required for that project.

Yours sincerely

Thu 08-Apr-21 8:40 AM
To: PMC WCC

Good morning Phil,

My reason for this mail is regarding the proposed 18 tonne weight restriction on Coton bridge on Coton Road Whitacre Heath.

There is currently a restriction on HGV vehicles leaving The Cedars to turn right under the railway bridge and not left into the village. This weight restriction will mean that all HGV's must turn left and will be forced to pass into the village. If you have ever been onto Coton Road and ever had the privilege of diving there when a HGV is passing you will understand fully the reasoning for this mail.

I have no need to over exaggerate but the amount of chaos that HGV's cause currently by using the road from Shustoke / The Swann pub to the Cedars is unbelievable. To think that this can be totally mitigated by keeping to the current restrictions to turn right out of the Cedars or approach from the railway bridge is quite frankly frustrating. I have had to install CCTV onto my house as I have had HGV's pulling on my drive narrowly missing my car, to allow another HGV to pass. I know I am not the only person that feels this pain and the HGVs disrupt the whole street.

Adding a weight restriction to the Coton Bridge will only increase the problems that already exist dramatically. Consideration should be made to help the village and the trouble we have with HGV's, not to make this any worse. Please keep this in mind whilst reviewing the 18 Tonne weight restriction.

Kind Regards

Thu 08-Apr-21 1:39 PM

To:PMC WCC

FAO - Mr Phil Mitton Communities Directorate WCC>

Further to your Public Notice I attach my Public Objection details in accordance with such regarding the above subject.

May I request your formal receipt of this e-mail.

However should you have any query please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

PUBLIC OBJECTION

Subject; Proposed Weight Restriction Order, Coton Bridge, Coton Road –within the Parish of Nether Whitacre.

Date; 7th April 2021

We are concerned here with a proposal for a permanent weight restriction of 18 tonnes to a bridge termed Coton Bridge serving access over the Lea Marston purification lakes weir located in Coton Road, Nether Whitacre. The Bridge provides a HGV access route in each direction.

I consider it is most important to consider history or events that may be applicable in providing details to determine the objection. Such is the level of HGV movements and storage especially via Coton Road and The Cedars Storage and Industrial Park following the change of use from a precast manufacturing plant that vehicle activity has increased to an unacceptable level. Without road infrastructure enhancement and a periodic review process, there are and have been safeguarding concerns for local parishes which are generically linked by their local road systems.

I have lived in the Parish of Lea Marston for over thirty years and have served the Parish Council for over 25 years. During this time I have witnessed the increase in HGV movements predominately created by the following;

a) Development and expansion of Hams Hall Industrial Park. This has evolved into a Distribution Park away from the original concept of Distribution and Manufacturing increasing the HGV Movements and increasing local road capacity.

b) Creation of HGV Satellite storage yards within local Parishes. These consist of the following;

1) Bentons Haulage – Located at Newlands Farm, Hams Hall Industrial Park and Furnace End.

2) Kingsbury Transport- Located adjacent the Hurley junction ,Kingsbury.

3) Archers Transport- The Forklift Truck Co – Located at Hurley and Hams Hall.

4) The Cedars- Heavy plant, Fabrication , Storage HGV parking -Located Coton Road . This also allows for the storage of Petrol tankers which are now outsourced and were previously stored at Kingsbury Oil Terminal. This location is located adjacent the Coton Bridge and provides the most cause of concern due to weight restrictions. Unfortunately the operator /owner advertises via road side illegal sign pollution the facility of secure parking thus increasing future levels of HGV activity. This happens in five location within local parishes.

5) The Cedars – Sub Let for the storage of HGV vehicles- Marston.

6) Network rail- Located Nether Whitacre.

7) Halloughton Grange- HGV Storage.

8) Additional expansion of Station Road – Coleshill.

9) Kingsbury Link.

10) KSD – Recycle works and yard located adjacent the M42 island.

The above represents local causes for concern to HGV movements as we see the disregard for existing weight signage measures resulting in the taking of short cuts and HGV rat running.

c) Future HGV activity will be added to the existing levels within the Parishes and will come from HS2 whereby Construction compounds will be constructed adjacent Marston off the A4097. A new precast manufacturing plant is to be built to fabricate precast units which includes HGV movements in Marston. Concerns are also to applicable to the M42 (Dunton Island) and a new heavy plant yard located at the same location.

As the past Chairman of Lea Marston Parish Council I was actively involved with Community Engagement with HS2 in determining local traffic impacts within the area which allows me to present my views to the bridge proposal. Due to the issues raised with HS2 it was accepted that a Special Management Zone be set up to discuss and monitor all future HS2 works to Mitigate the future Risk of traffic movements and safeguard the Parishes. Has interface engagement taken place with HS2 and the SMZ by WCC.

I now address the issues that may cause harm to the village of Lea Marston due to the weight restriction order.

The village is served by two lanes being Hams Lane and Haunch Lane. Reference is also made to the Birmingham Road linking the village with Nether Whitacre. Due to the existing railway bridges it is very narrow in width and consists of restricted sight lines. Restriction in width remains until past the flood sluice adjacent the SSI.

Both lanes are very narrow with a restricted width and together with the Birmingham Rd makes the village totally unsuitable for HGV movements through it. The lanes have been subjected to abuse by heavy plant transport in causing damage to existing trees.

Footways are very narrow and are subject to vehicle body overhang together with wing mirror factors. Also the HGV trailer movements are not safe.

The village has a major issue with HGV 's whereby they do not adhere or respect the existing road signs applicable to them so I can only see a total disregard due to additional HGV's not adhering to proposed diversion routes.

The level of vehicle emissions and air quality at present is not acceptable and there is a strong possibility these levels will increase with additional HGV Movements.

I also raise concerns regarding the position of existing properties located adjacent to the road. Damage has been caused in the past to properties by HGV movements.

I now wish to raise issues in Nether Whitacre especially Station Road and Birmingham Road.

The existing road condition of Station Rd has deteriorated so much since the increased HGV movements to The Cedars that the substructure formation is failing due to the increase in weight loading and which has led to the breakdown of the tarmac topping for most of its length to Blythe Rd. There is evidence of weight rutting caused by unacceptable levels of HGV's.

I must raise an issue concerning WCC whereby Mr Graham Stanley a retired Highways representative had existing HGV restriction signs removed from the Station Rd / Birmingham Rd junction. When asked for his reasons for such actions he later accepted the signs should be reinstated to stop HGV movements from making their way to Lea Marston via Birmingham Road. May I request this is part of the Order conditions and appraised accordingly and new signs erected to prevent the passage of vehicles to Lea Marston.

Finally I assume WCC will have undertaken a full Environmental and Health and Safety Risk Assessment and as such consulted with the Community on Engagement to MITIGATE THE RISK to safeguard the Parishes.

Has engagement been undertaken with the Environmental Agency regarding the bridge status and the proposed future intentions to reinstate the river course to its original contour. The objective is to separate the joined up purification lakes into two and allow the river to be free flowing to its natural course before the lakes were constructed.

I remain in objection to the Proposed Weight Restriction Order as I can see existing and future problems and issues arising from such actions due to failure to appreciate the local views of the Parishes.

Thu 08-Apr-21 4:30 PM
To: PMC WCC
To Phil Mitton
Senior Engineer
County Highways

Dear Mr Mitton

Thank you for confirming the email address for the submission of representations regarding the recent Notice published regarding your proposals to introduce a weight restriction on the Coton Road bridge over the River Tame, between Nether Whitacre and Marston. It was an unfortunate omission that the email address was omitted from the Notice as in these testing times I am sure some people will not be able to find a way of reaching out to make their feelings known.

I am sure you are more than aware of the consternation that this has caused to users of the bridge and those affected by your proposals.

Please find enclosed a Representation in the form of Objection on behalf of the Owner and Tenants of the Cedars.

It shall be appreciated if you would acknowledge receipt of the representation.

Regards

Phil Mitton Communities Group Warwickshire County Council PO Box 43 Shire Hall Warwick CV34 4SX. ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 THE WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (COTON BRIDGE, COTON ROAD, PARISH OF NETHER WHITACRE) (WEIGHT RESTRICTION) ORDER 2021 Warwickshire County Council propose to make the above named ORDER under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (the Act), the effect of which would be to impose an 18 tonne maximum gross weight restriction on the Coton Bridge, on Coton Road between Marston and Whitacre Heath as described in the Schedule attached to the draft Notice published on the Warwickshire County Council's (the Authority) website. J Roberts (SPV) Limited are the Owners of The Cedars, a large industrial development located on Coton Road and accessed off Coton Road. The Cedars is an historical industrial development let to various tenants by the Owners. One of the principle attractions to its tenants is the location of the Cedars with easy access to the intersection with the M6 Toll/M42 and its proximity to the M6, M1 and trunk road network. All Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCVs) that access the site, do so by access from the A4097 Kingsbury Road via Coton Road over the River Tame bridge, the exception to this routeing are high vehicles who, because of the height restriction at the Derby – Birmingham rail bridge (4.1m) have to enter the site through Whitacre Heath. This is an OBJECTION to the imposition of the ORDER by the Owner and the Tenants of the Cedars. The provisions of the Act place a duty on the Authority to have regard, inter alia, to: a) Securing and maintaining access to premises; b) The effect on the amenities of any locality affected and the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by HCVs, so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the area through which the roads run; It is difficult to reconcile how the imposition of this Order would secure and maintain access to the property of the Owner. The Order, if confirmed, may discourage present and prospective tenants wanting to use the Cedars. This is a dereliction of statutory duty imposed upon the Authority by the Act. The consequences of the imposition of the Order would also be to divert traffic who wished to access the Cedars through the village of Nether Whitacre if their weight was in excess of the proposed limit. The effect on the amenities of the village would be detrimental and again fundamentally at odds with the principles of the Act. The duty of the Authority is to maintain the public highways within its jurisdiction. There appears to be a

dereliction of that duty by imposing a weight restriction rather than repairing the bridge deck. Published data shows that 7% (53 in number) of the bridges in Warwickshire are considered to be substandard. It is imperative that resources are channelled to maintaining the integrity of the road system otherwise this neglect can only be seen as the slippery slope of decline of the highway system that the UK economy relies upon. S41(1) Highways Act 1980 imposes a Duty upon a highway authority to maintain the highway. Maintaining a highway does not mean managing its decline but maintain it fit for purpose. This leads to the following questions which are not answered in the documents produced by the Authority and are essential for proper decision making and public debate: 1. When was the weakness in the bridge first detected; 2. Before the bridge was reduced to single carriageway, circa 2002, there would have been nothing to prevent two 44 tonne HCVs passing over the bridge at the same time; 3. Why in such a short space of time have we got a reduction in load bearing capacity of nearly eighty per cent; 4. What is the frequency of inspection of the bridge structure; 5. Why has preventative maintenance on the bridge structure not been undertaken and if it has was it defective; 6. Who has undertaken the most recent and previous inspections; 7. Are those inspections available for consideration; 8. Has the opinion of other consultants been undertaken and or considered with regard to the calculated load capacity of the structure, preventative maintenance, repair or modification strategy to enable the bridge to perform; 9. Where are the calculations and evidence that such a draconian weight restriction is necessary; 10. Why is it necessary to go from a 44 tonne unrestricted use to an 18 tonne limit; 11. Has the number of vehicles over 18 tonnes been considered and is the data available for inspection; 12. Why has the Authority not budgeted for replacing or strengthening the bridge. All of this information needs to be flushed out and considered before the proposed restriction might be considered acceptable. The plan accompanying the draft Order shows 18T weight restriction signs are to be placed at the approaches to the bridge. This absurd proposal would lead to large vehicles travelling from either direction either attempting to turn round within the highway where there are no turning points, reversing to the nearest convenient turning place or ignoring the signs. Why are signs not being placed at the junction of Coton Road with Kingsbury Road and say the junction with Halloughton Grange Lane.