

# Portfolio Holder Decision – The Warwickshire County Council (Potford Bridge, Linden Lane, Polesworth) (7.5 tonne Weight Restriction) Order 2021

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Portfolio Holder</b> | <b>Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning</b> |
| <b>Date of decision</b> | <b>19 July 2021</b>                                |
|                         | <b>Signed</b>                                      |

## 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 (Potford Bridge, Linden Lane, Polesworth) (7.5 tonne Weight Restriction) Order 2021

## Reasons for decisions

- A copy of plan TR-11348/99 detailing proposals for the weight restriction 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              | 7 |
| Additional comments           | 0 |
| Support in principle received | 0 |

| Ref | Objections received  | Total number of responses containing the comment |
|-----|--|--|
| A   | No sensible diversion / Unsuitable diversion route past school       | 4  |
| B   | Agricultural vehicles would cause more congestion on diversion route | 7  |

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| C   | Agricultural vehicles could be involved in accidents on diversion route   | 2 |
| D   | Excessive diversion route for multiple regular trips on slow vehicles   | 6 |
| E   | A permanent weight restriction will be ignored  | 1 |
| Ref | Officer Comments in Response to Objections  |   |
| A   | In deciding the signed alternative route consideration was given to all HGV movements through Polesworth especially past the school which could contribute to increased traffic risks. However, these slightly increased risks have been taken into consideration and weighed against the safety risks associated with continued HGV use of the weakened structure; measures to strengthen or replace the bridge structure will be taken as soon as possible.                   |   |
| B   | The signed alternative route will increase the number of Agricultural Vehicle movements having to make journeys through local villages and could contribute to congestion. However, the inconvenience of slightly increased congestion on local roads for these vehicles must be weighed against the safety risks associated with Agricultural Vehicle use of the weakened structure; measures to strengthen or replace the bridge structure will be taken as soon as possible. |   |
| C   | It is expected that Agricultural Vehicle movements through local villages could contribute to increased traffic risks. However, these slightly increased traffic risks must be weighed against the safety risks associated with continued use of the weakened structure; measures to strengthen or replace the bridge structure will be taken as soon as possible.  |   |
| D   | Agricultural Vehicles may have to make several journeys in carrying out their normal duties due to the weight restriction being imposed, however we have to consider these increased journey times against the safety risks associated with continued use by all vehicles of the weakened structure; measures to strengthen or replace the bridge structure will be taken as soon as possible.  |   |
| E   | The possible increased risks of accidents, congestion and increased journey times may lead to frustration by regular users of this road. However, these frustrations must be weighed by each road user against the safety risks associated with continued HGV use of the weakened structure for themselves and for other users of the road, including those whose vehicles are not restricted by the weight limit.  |   |

## Background information

2. A temporary 7.5 tonne weight restriction was imposed at Potford Bridge on Linden Lane, Polesworth on 17 August 2019 for a period of eighteen months, after WCC identified a serious defect with the steel beams that are encased in the bridge deck concrete. The bridge was already on the Council's monitoring list as a provisionally sub-standard structure but during a routine inspection, a section of the concrete had spalled off from the underside of the deck to reveal steel corrosion and section loss so severe that officers became concerned about the bridge's load bearing capacity.
3. The 18-month temporary order has now come to an end so a permanent restriction is being placed on the bridge while the Council continues work to find the best solution that will allow the bridge to safely carry full traffic loads. Another 18-month temporary order is not thought to be sufficient if the bridge is to be replaced. Atkins report due in Summer 2021 will indicate the future timelines of options.
4. Contractors are currently reassessing the bridge's capacity and undertaking a study to see if it's feasible to repair and strengthen the structure or if it will need replacing. Site investigations and material testing were completed in March 2021 to help inform this process. Once work to strengthen or replace the bridge is complete, the TRO for the weight restriction could be revoked, following the appropriate statutory consultation process. Atkins are currently working on a new load capacity assessment which will be used to inform a feasibility study which is due to be completed later this summer. Once complete and the recommendations accepted, we will move forward with designing the strengthening or replacement solution and, if necessary, begin the process of securing any additional funding required. The weight limit order is necessary for the time being.
5. Proposals were advertised and consulted upon in accordance with statutory procedure on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021, with consultation open until the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021.
6. Weight restrictions are enforced by the police, any reports of vehicles flouting the restriction should be passed to the police to investigate.
7. The statutory criteria for decisions on making Traffic Regulation Orders are included as **Appendix 1**.
8. Drawings showing published proposals for the weight restriction and alternative route are found in **Appendix 2**.

## Financial implications

1. Costs associated with the introduction of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction on Potford Bridge (including legal costs, consultation and potential implementation) are expected to be under £10k.
2. All costs will be funded from the existing Structural Maintenance revenue budgets.
3. Atkins report is due back in summer 2021 which will give some idea of the costs of options. The cost of fully replacing the bridge is estimated to be approximately £600,000

### Environmental implications

The weight restriction will cause longer journeys by agricultural vehicles.  
This will cause more noise/pollution and possibly congestion on the surrounding villages.

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Report Authors</b>     | Graham Stanley<br>grahamstanley@warwickshire.gov.uk   |
| <b>Assistant Director</b> | Scott Tompkins, Assistant Director for<br>Environmental Services                                    |
| <b>Lead Director</b>      | Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities  |
| <b>Lead Member</b>        | Jeff Clarke, Portfolio Holder for Transport and<br>Planning This may change on 25 <sup>th</sup> May |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Urgent matter?</b>   | No |
| <b>Confidential or exempt?</b>                                      | No |
| <b>Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?</b> | No |

### List of background papers

none

### Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Jeff Clarke this may change 25<sup>th</sup> May  
Corporate Board – Mark Ryder  
Legal – Serena Cammish  
Finance – John Stansfield  
Equality – Keira Rounsley  
Democratic Services – Paul Williams  
Local Member(s): Councillor Marian Humphreys