

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER 2017
CALL IN OF CABINET DECISION – A361 HIGH STREET(BURFORD)
PROPOSED 7.5 TONNE WEIGHT LIMIT
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
(Contact: Paul Cracknell, Tel: (01993) 861523)

(The decision on this matter will be a resolution or recommendations to the Cabinet).

I. PURPOSE

To consider the call-in request relating to a Cabinet decision of 18 October 2017 (Minute no. 62) in relation to the proposed introduction of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction within Burford.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That the Committee decides whether or not to support the call-in request; and
- (b) That, if the request is supported, the Committee determines whether it wishes to submit any additional comments to the Cabinet.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. At its meeting held on 12 October 2017 the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report regarding the proposed introduction of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction within Burford. A copy of the report submitted to the Committee is attached at [Appendix A](#).
- 3.2. At that meeting the Committee requested the Cabinet to support for the proposed introduction of a 7.5 tonne Weight Restriction within Burford, excluding Public Service Vehicles and tourist coaches. The relevant extract from the minutes of the meeting is attached at [Appendix B](#).
- 3.3. The matter was subsequently considered by the Cabinet on 18 October when, whilst recognising that the introduction of a weight limit restriction within Burford would accord with the Council's aim to maintain and enhance West Oxfordshire as one of the best places to live, work and visit in Great Britain and its priority to protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy, the Cabinet considered that it would be prudent to await the County Council's revised proposals before taking a decision.
- 3.4. In consequence, the Cabinet resolved that consideration of the matter be deferred pending the outcome of the County Council's further investigations. The relevant extract from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting is attached at [Appendix C](#).
- 3.5. The Cabinet's decision has been the subject of a call-in request from Councillors D A Cotterill, P Emery, H J Howard and R A Langridge, those members having stated:
 - “I cannot, at this stage, confirm that WODC will be consulted on any investigation result or proposal to OCC Cabinet with regard to the proposed

A361 weight limit through Burford as indications in OCC emails are that this is a “moving vehicle matter” and not in WODC’s province of responsibilities.

WODC processes and procedures are also slow such that WODC was unable to respond to the initial consultation on the matter in the time allocated and Environment O&S was discussing it on the day decisions were being made in OCC.

Consequently, I am calling in this “Decision” to defer for the following reasons:

- There may be no opportunity to study and respond after OCC have “further investigated” as it is likely an officer report will go to OCC Cabinet 5 days before the meeting;
- WODC needs to be more proactive to protect Burford’s Heritage Assets and Tourist Economy which are very definitely within WODC’s sphere of responsibility;
- The deferral fails to inspire confidence in WODC in the eyes of Burford Town Council, the Burford electorate and the Ward Councillor;

That many of 400 to 700 HGVs going through Burford each day are already “displaced” vehicles not travelling to Northleach and Stow as signposted and those to Banbury are not using the arterial A40/A34/M40 route but “rat running” through Burford as >100 OCC traffic surveys have already shown. OCC surveys also show that most are long haul and they will not be displaced to smaller village roads. WODC is not recognising this already published information nor recognising the reduction in air pollution which is calculated and anticipated for Chipping Norton by supporting a weight restriction.

The effect upon Burford’s tourist economy has been stated many times over the past 25 years and is being updated to satisfy the Cabinet Member’s request”.

- 3.6. In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules the call-in has been referred by the Head of Paid Service to this Committee for consideration.

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

It is for the Committee to decide whether it supports the call-in request. If it does not then the Cabinet decision will be confirmed.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no financial implications.

6. RISKS

None

7. REASONS

To enable the Committee to consider the call-in request.

Keith Butler
Head of Democratic Services

(Author: Paul Cracknell, Tel: (01993) 861523; Email: paul.cracknell@westoxon.gov.uk)

Date: 7 October 2017

Background Papers: None

Report to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 12 October
2017

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER 2017
A361 HIGH STREET (BURFORD) PROPOSED 7.5 TONNE WEIGHT LIMIT
RESTRICTION

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

(Contact: Paul Cracknell, Tel: (01993) 861523)

(The Committee's decision on this matter will be a recommendation to the Cabinet)

1. PURPOSE

At the request of the Chairman, to give consideration to the proposed introduction of a 7.5 tonne Weight Restriction within Burford

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee considers whether to recommend that the Cabinet expresses support for the proposed Weight Limit Restriction.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Oxfordshire County Council has proposed the introduction of a 7.5 tonne Weight Restriction within Burford on the grounds of promoting road safety, reducing danger and congestion, and improving the environment of the area. The proposal is primarily intended to protect the historic residential streets and its community from heavier lorry traffic. The restriction would also force heavy goods vehicles to make full use of the alternative major road network around the area.
- 3.2. Full details of the proposal can be found in the public notice attached as Appendix A.
- 3.3. Burford Town Council has responded to the consultation expressing its support for the proposals. Details of the Town Council's response may be viewed on the Council's website [here](#)
- 3.4. The Chairman has asked that this matter be brought before the Committee to enable Members to give consideration to making a recommendation to the Cabinet that the Council expresses its support for the introduction of the Order as proposed.
- 3.5. The Committee is invited to consider and determine the request.

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

None applicable

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6. REASONS

The introduction of a weight limit restriction within Burford would accord with the Council's aim to maintain and enhance West Oxfordshire as one of the best places to live, work and visit in Great Britain and its priority to protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy.

Keith Butler
Head of Democratic Services

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Date: 26 June 2017

Background Papers:
None

Extract from the Minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 12 October 2017

29 A 361 HIGH STREET (BURFORD) PROPOSED 7.5 TONNE WEIGHT RESTRICTION

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services regarding the proposed introduction of a 7.5 tonne Weight Restriction within Burford.

Mr Cotterill advised that, when the High Street was particularly busy, retail satellite navigation system designed for the private motorist directed traffic via Barns Lane. This route was clearly unsuitable for HGV's and there had been numerous occasions when such vehicles became stuck and had to be towed out or had caused damage to buildings.

Mr Coles expressed his sympathy for the problems faced by Burford and enquired whether Public Service Vehicles would be exempted from the proposed restrictions. Mr White advised that the weight restriction would only apply to goods vehicles, not to PSV's. Mr Coles also asked whether the County Council had given a commitment to enforce the restriction. Mr White advised that the restriction would be enforced by Trading Standards if the Town Council agreed to meet the cost. An enforcement protocol had been agreed between the County Council and the Burford Town Council whereby the town Council would provide CCTV evidence of transgression and Trading Standards would take action should the Town Council meet the cost. Discussions were ongoing to set a ceiling on potential Town Council Expenditure.

Mr Cotterill noted that Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras were employed at Newbridge where there was an 18 tonne weight limit and Mr White indicated that there were similar aspirations for Burford.

Ms Leffman indicated that there was a weight limit on the bridge at Charlbury as the structure was weak and questioned whether a similar restriction could be applied at Burford. Mr White advised that the bridge had been strengthened significantly by the American Forces during the Second World War to enable its use by armoured vehicles so this was not an issue. Ms Leffman recalled that there had been plans for a wider restricted zone and sought clarification of the current proposals. Mr White advised that, whilst there had been initial proposals for a wider ranging restriction, the Town Council had been unable to guarantee to monitor this area and the current proposals related solely to the High Street. Whilst it was possible that further work could revive this suggestion, Mr White considered this to be unlikely.

Ms Leffman noted that ANPR technology was used successfully elsewhere and suggested that the Town Council raise this with the County.

Mr Fenton asked if routes through Burford were restricted on hauliers' maps and on professional satellite navigation systems. He also questioned whether ANPR technology could be used to enforce against foreign registered vehicles. Mr White explained that Trading Standards did not attempt to enforce against foreign registered vehicles but could not advise on the capability of satellite navigation software. The hope was that, by imposing a weight restriction, HGV's would use alternative routes.

Mr Cotterill advised that a freight quality partnership had been in operation in the past, run by the County Council and incorporating a range of industry professionals as an outcome of the 2006 Transport Plan. From this, Burford had been removed from international hauliers' maps which showed the route as being via Northleach and the Fosse Way. The route via Burford was also not given on professional hauliers satellite navigation systems and the larger foreign companies adhered to the approved routes. However, it was difficult to get systems designed for the private motorist to incorporate such practical information.

Mr Fenton questioned whether the proposed restrictions would be effective and Mr White advised that the erection of 'No HGV' signage had been shown to reduce the number of vehicles by 70%. It was hoped that the introduction of a weight restriction would have the same effect.

Mr Eaglestone questioned whether the introduction of a 20MPH speed limit would have an effect but Mr White indicated that he did not believe that this would reduce HGV movements.

In response to concerns raised by Mr White in his presentation, Mr Cooper questioned whether there was a bus to take school children from Fulbrook to Burford. He advised that residents of Woodstock did not support the proposals which would result in HGV's being diverted through the town. He enquired about the cost of signage and Mr White advised that this would be in the region of £120,000 which would be raised by the town. In addition, the legal and administrative procedures would cost a further £3,000 which would be met by the Town Council.

Mr Cotterill indicated that existing signage on the A40 directed HGV's away from Woodstock along the A40 to Evesham, Northleach and the Fosse way. He noted that Burford had 252 Listed Buildings of which 162 were located on the High Street whilst Woodstock had 165 with only 32 on the main route.

Mr Howard expressed his support for the principle of a weight restriction which would set the tone for vehicle movements through heritage towns for the rest of the nation. He noted that Australia and New Zealand had imposed a ban on engine assisted breaking in residential areas as this reduced noise levels significantly. He also expressed concern that the introduction of an Order as drafted would apply equally to PSV vehicles. Mr White assured Members that the County Council had advised that this was not the case but undertook to raise the question with them.

Mr Postan questioned whether the Council should seek support at Government level for HMRC to take action against foreign registered vehicles failing to comply with such restrictions.

Having been proposed and duly seconded it was:-

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet be requested to support for the proposed introduction of a 7.5 tonne Weight Restriction within Burford, excluding Public Service Vehicles and tourist coaches.

(Mr Cooper requested that his vote against the foregoing resolution be so recorded)

Extract from the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting – 18 October 2017

62. A361 HIGH STREET(BURFORD) PROPOSED 7.5 TONNE WEIGHT LIMIT

The Cabinet received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services regarding the proposed introduction of a 7.5 tonne Weight Restriction within Burford.

Mr Haine noted that the matter had been considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 12 October and advised that he was cognisant of that Committee's request that the Cabinet support the proposed introduction of a 7.5 tonne Weight Restriction within Burford, excluding Public Service Vehicles and tourist coaches.

However, as the County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment (including transport) had decided to defer the implementation of the proposals as advertised, pending further investigation to determine the wider effect the scheme would have on neighbouring areas as a result of displaced vehicles, Mr Haine considered that it would be premature to take a decision at this stage and proposed that consideration of the matter be deferred pending the outcome of the County Council's further investigations.

In seconding the proposition, Mrs Baker acknowledged the problems experienced in Burford and the views expressed by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee but concurred with Mr Haine that it would be prudent to await the County Council's revised proposals before taking a decision.

Mr Cotterill expressed his disappointment at this suggestion, indicating that Burford needed the support of the Council's Executive now. He stressed the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles upon the heritage assets and local economy and advised that some 700 HGV's passed through the town each day. He recognised that Woodstock had expressed concern, fearing that the introduction of a weight limit would result in HGV's being diverted through the town, but stated that route analysis suggested that such concern was unfounded.

Mr Cotterill advised that the problems, which were specific to the locality, did not result from local traffic but from foreign registered vehicles. He advised that, when the High Street was particularly busy, retail satellite navigation system designed for the private motorist directed traffic via Barns Lane. This route was clearly unsuitable for HGV's and there had been numerous occasions when such vehicles became stuck and had to be towed out or had caused damage to buildings.

This was an ongoing problem that would continue if a decision on the matter was deferred and Mr Cotterill noted that Burford had 252 Listed Buildings of which 162 were located on the High Street. These were subject to damage through impact and vibration.

HGV traffic was also detrimental to the town's economy which was reliant on income from tourism. Visitors staying in the town did not want to be disturbed by HGV traffic. CCTV could be employed to police the restriction and Mr Cotterill invited the Cabinet to express support for the introduction of a weight restriction, in

principle, during the deferral period. Mr Owen concurred, indicating that this had been a long standing issue for the town.

Mr Haine acknowledged the concerns expressed but considered deferral to be the correct course of action. He questioned whether the potential impact on local businesses had been fully assessed and considered that, given the High Street was a main 'A' road believed that this was an important piece of work that required further thought. He also questioned what could be done to prevent HGV's using Barns Lane.

Mr Owen indicated that this was also a significant environmental issue and suggested that dispensations could be given to local operators. In response, Mr Mills suggested that a solution was not that straightforward and thought that the question should be asked of the County. Mr Howard advised that his own investigations indicated that the weight restriction as drafted would be absolute and not subject to dispensations for PSV's tourist coaches or local operators.

Mr Cotterill stated that the Town Council had been advised that the restriction would not apply to PSV's, tourist coaches or to vehicles making deliveries. He also indicated that the bridge was a single carriageway lacking a defined footway. As such, children crossing to attend school were put at risk.

Mr Enright suggested that the Cabinet could indicate that it was minded to support a weight restriction subject to clarification of the issues that had been raised. The Council could also seek advice on ways in which to manage and mitigate the problems experienced.

Mr Fenton questioned whether a weight restriction could be effectively enforced against foreign registered vehicles.

Mr Morris acknowledged the concerns raised and expressed sympathy for the problems experienced by local residents. However, he suggested that West Oxfordshire needed to look to the County Council for its expertise on such matters as it did not have the necessary details and information to make a decision at this juncture. It would be more appropriate to wait until this information was available before making comment on whatever proposals came forward.

DECISION: That consideration of the matter be deferred pending the outcome of the County Council's further investigations.

REASONS: Whilst recognising that the introduction of a weight limit restriction within Burford would accord with the Council's aim to maintain and enhance West Oxfordshire as one of the best places to live, work and visit in Great Britain and its priority to protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy, the Cabinet considered that it would be prudent to await the County Council's revised proposals before taking a decision.

OPTIONS: None appropriate.