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HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICES

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REFERENCE: HSB-006-13

18 TONNE WEIGHT LIMIT PROPOSAL, A3098, CHAPMANSLADE

Purpose of Report

1. To agree the advertising of an 18 tonne weight limit Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on the A3098 through Chapmanslade.

Background

2. Chapmanslade Parish Council, via the Warminster Area Board's Community Area Transport Group, has raised concern about the number of HGVs travelling through Chapmanslade.
3. The Council monitors traffic volumes along the A3098 north east of Chapmanslade. Interrogation of the data shows that the number of long vehicles (greater than 6.5 metres) using the road has remained at around 100 long vehicles per day since 2008 (**see Appendix 1**).
4. The Community Area Manager for the Warminster Area Board has enquired about the legitimacy of the signposted 17 tonne weight limit on the A3098, which commences at Berkley Cross in Somerset and continues through Chapmanslade to the slip road with the A36 at Dead Maids.
5. Investigation into this issue has led the Council to become aware of an unintended situation; namely, that there is no longer an enforceable weight limit on the A3098 through Chapmanslade.
6. The Road Vehicles (Authorised Weight) Regulations in 1998 increased the maximum permitted weight for rigid 2-axle and 3-axle HGVs from 17 tonnes to 18 tonnes. Highway Authorities were given until 31 December 2006 to amend their legal Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and install new Weight Limit Signs to affect this change. At this time, due to representations made by Council members and Somerset County Council, the Council failed to reach an agreement over the introduction of an amended TRO on the A3098 through Chapmanslade. The Council did, however, revoke the existing 17 Tonne weight limit TRO covering the section of the route which is in Wiltshire, but without removing the corresponding road signs.
7. As part of a wider review of HGV movements in the area, Wiltshire County Council's Cabinet held on 23 January 2007 resolved to approve the advertisement of TROs for 7.5 tonne weight restrictions in West Wiltshire to alleviate the HGV problems in the villages of Maiden Bradley (B3092), Chapmanslade (A3098) and Corsley Heath (A362). These proposals included a 7.5 tonne weight limit for the A3098 through Chapmanslade.

8. The various representations received to this consultation indicated that it was considered appropriate to make the TROs for Western Wiltshire. A decision on the proposed TRO was made by the Council in December 2010. In the interests of highway safety it was considered prudent to defer implementation of the TROs until the Highways Agency's preferred road safety scheme at the A303/A350 junction (known as Willoughby Hedge) had been implemented. Details of the decision can be found at: <http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=288>
9. The current situation is that the revoked 17 tonne weight limit (which is currently signed) can no longer be enforced by the Police and the implementation of the 7.5 tonne weight limit along the route is on hold. These circumstances mean that the A3098 is currently effectively open to all vehicles and this has been the case since 1 January 2007. This is an unintended situation that needs to be considered.

Main Considerations for the Council

10. Presently, there is no weight limit through Chapmanslade. In order to protect the residents of Chapmanslade from the negative impacts of HGVs greater than 18 tonne, a new TRO will need to be advertised (see **Appendix 2**).

Safeguarding Considerations

11. None.

Public Health Implications

12. The proposal will control the size and number of HGVs passing through the village of Chapmanslade. This will protect and enhance the amenity of those living along the route.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

13. Introducing an 18 tonne weight limit will mean that Chapmanslade will once again be protected from the heaviest HGVs travelling through the village, thus reinstating the situation before the old 17 tonne restriction was revoked in 2006.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

14. None.

Risk Assessment

15. None.

Financial Implications

16. The costs are in the region of £1,000 for road signs and usual TRO costs, which are approximately £3,000. An allocation for the works can be made out of the Council's Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport allocation.

Legal Implications

17. None.

Options Considered

18. To:

(i) **Do Nothing.**

This would leave the existing 17 tonne weight limit signs in place. This would be an unsatisfactory situation since the signs do not relate to an enforceable weight limit.

(ii) **Remove the old 17 tonne weight limit signs and leave the road open to all traffic.**

This option would mean that there are no restrictions along the route. So all traffic, including HGVS greater than 18 tonnes would be allowed along the route. This is likely to be unpopular with residents since they are expecting a more stringent weight limit (7.5 tonne) as opposed to a relaxation of weight limits. It should be noted that the 7.5 tonne area weight limit was suggested as part of a package of weight limits in western Wiltshire to safeguard Chapmanslade from rerouting as a result of the proposed weight limit through the B3098 through Maiden Bradley (see paragraph (iii) below).

(iii) **Implement the made 7.5 tonne weight limit.**

The 7.5 tonne weight limit formed part of a wider package of weight limits in West Wiltshire. Implementing one of the three proposed weight limits is likely to displace restricted HGVs on to the other equally unsuitable routes. In addition, Somerset County Council opposed this proposal and has stated that it is not prepared to assist with advance signing.

(iv) **Advertise an 18 tonne weight limit.**

Somerset County Council has indicated that it would be willing to work with the Council if an 18 tonne weight limit was proposed along this section of the A3098. This option is likely to raise few objections and does not preclude the future implementation of a 7.5 tonne weight limit as part of a wider scheme in West Wiltshire. Importantly, this option will provide an enforceable weight limit and protect the amenity of those living along the route.

Reason for Proposal

19. The introduction of an 18 tonne weight limit will protect the amenity of residents in Chapmanslade and also remove the confusion regarding the existing 17 tonne weight restriction signing, which is not enforceable.

Proposal

20. That a Traffic Regulation Order to make an 18 tonne weight restriction on the A3098, which commences at Berkley Cross in Somerset and continues through Chapmanslade to the slip road with the A36 at Dead Maids be advertised by the Council.

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None