

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT – CLLR PHILIP WHITEHEAD
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICE

OFFICER CONTACT: Julie Wharton 01722 434329 email: julie.wharton@wiltshire.gov.uk

REFERENCE: HT-11-15

PROPOSED 7.5T WEIGHT RESTRICTION
B3086, HIGH STREET, LONDON ROAD AND THE PACKWAY, SHREWTON

Purpose of Report

1. To:
 - (i) Consider objections to the proposed introduction of a 7.5t weight limit on the B3086, High Street, London Road and The Packway, Shrewton.
 - (ii) Recommend that the advertised proposal be abandoned and that an application be made to the Department for Transport for a 3.5t weight limit.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The proposed TRO meets two priorities of the Council's Business Plan:
 - Outcome 2 – People in Wiltshire work together to solve problems locally and participate in decisions that affect them.
 - Outcome 6 – People are as protected from harm as possible and feel safe.

Background

3. The initial request for investigation into the existing 2t limit on the B3086 in Shrewton came from Shrewton Parish Council via the Amesbury CATG. On investigation it was discovered that the existing 2t limit is no longer legally enforceable as the type of signs used were removed by the Traffic Signs and General Directions 1981. They should have been removed/replaced by a sign showing '2T' rather than the existing '2 tons' by 1 January 1990. This sign was subsequently removed from the regulations by the Traffic Signs and General Directions 1994 but was allowed to remain in situ until 1 January 2005. This piece of legislation changed how weight restrictions could be signed and essentially introduced the existing situation. Thus, meaning that the existing restriction could not be enforced and the existing signs are in situ illegally.
4. There are currently two types of weight restriction that are available for a highway authority to introduce without special authorisation from the Department for Transport. One is a structural weight restriction that can be introduced to protect a weak structure, this may be introduced as a 3t, 7.5t, 10t, 13t, 26t or 33t. The second is an environmental weight restriction, which is used to limit the size of vehicles passing through an area for reasons other than to protect a weak structure. This may be introduced as a 7.5t or 18t.
5. The Council's Bridge Engineer has confirmed that there was no structural reason for the existing weight restriction and that there are no structures along this length of road that would be compromised by an increase to the proposed 7.5t environmental weight limit.

6. The TRO for the proposal was advertised from 9 April 2015 until 5 May 2015. The consultation was a week longer than is normal to allow for the fact it took place during the May bank holiday weekend. During this formal consultation period, fifty five letters of objection to the proposals were received.

Summary of Proposals

7. A 7.5t weight limit on the B3086, High Street, London Road and the Packway, Shrewton.
8. Plans, showing the Council's advertised proposals, are attached as **Appendix 1**.

Summary of Responses

9. A full summary of the comments raised by objectors, together with officer comments, is attached as **Appendix 2**.

Safeguarding Considerations

10. There is no risk to the Council as a result of these proposals.

Public Health Implications

11. There are none in this scheme.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

12. It is acknowledged that whilst the existing 2t weight limit is currently unenforceable and regularly abused, there may be some increase in traffic of vehicles between the sizes of 2t and 7.5t as a result of the proposal.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

13. There are none in this scheme.

Risk Assessment

14. There is no risk to the Council as a result of these proposals.

Financial Implications

15. There is an allocation in the current Integrated Transport Funding budget for 2015-16.
16. If a decision is taken to delay current proposals, this may result in the loss of the budget.

Legal Implications

17. The introduction of a new weight restriction requires the processing of a TRO. The process of introducing a TRO is governed by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and associated procedural regulations. Failure to adhere to the statutory processes could result in the restrictions being successfully challenged in the High Court.

Options Considered

18. To:
- (i) Implement the proposals as advertised.
 - (ii) Abandon the proposals.
 - (iii) Apply to the Department for Transport for permission to introduce a 3.5t non-prescribed weight limit for environmental reasons.

Reason for Proposal

19. It is acknowledged that whilst the current 2t weight limit is unenforceable and regularly abused it is accepted that it may act as a deterrent to some vehicles between 2t and 7.5t. It is recognised that the High Street is the centre of non-vehicular activity within the village yet there is little scope to improve its facility without removing substantial lengths of parking from the High Street. As the majority of both private residences and businesses along this section do not have off-street parking it is accepted that this would be impractical. Therefore, it is recognised that any increase in vehicle movements along this section of road would be unhelpful.
20. As there is no reason to introduce a structural weight limit it is proposed that for the reasons given above, and in light of the strength of objection from the community, an application be made to the Department for Transport to apply for a 3.5t weight limit to be implemented on the B3086, High Street, London Road and The Packway, Shrewton.

Proposals

21. That:
- (i) An application be made to the Department for Transport to erect the non-prescribed signs necessary for the introduction of a 3.5t weight limit for environmental reasons on the B3086, High Street, London Road and The Packway, Shrewton.
 - (ii) Objectors be informed accordingly.

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

Letters of objection