

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 17 January 2019

Report of the Head of Service - Highways

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Rossendale South;

Irwell Vale Road, Aitken Street, Bowker Street and Milne Street, Edenfield - Proposed Changes to Weight Restrictions

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

Chris Nolan, Tel: (01772) 531141, Highways Regulation - Community Services,
chris.nolan@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

This report sets out a proposal to revoke structural weight limits of 7.5 tonne on two bridges in Irwell Vale and replace them with an 18 tonne environmental weight limit. The structural weight limits are no longer appropriate as the bridges have been strengthened. The 18 tonne weight limit is considered necessary to protect the private roads in Irwell Vale from unsuitable heavy vehicles but allow a reasonable level of access for deliveries to the area.

The proposals have been advertised in the local press and one objection has been received.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the making of a Traffic Regulation Order as advertised in the Notice of Proposal attached at Appendix 'A'.

Background and Advice

Two private bridges at Irwell Vale have been strengthened: Ogden bridge and Irwell Vale bridge have been subject to a 7.5 tonne structural weight limit due to their condition. As the bridges are now capable of carrying 40 tonne vehicles the structural weight limits are no longer appropriate and therefore the relevant weight limits require review.

The options considered to replace the structural weight limit are:

- Option 1: An environmental weight limit of 7.5 tonnes with supplementary plate reading 'except for access'
- Option 2: An environmental weight limit of 18 tonnes (no supplementary plate)
- Option 3: No weight limit

Following consultation with Rossendale Borough Council and the Lancashire Constabulary it is considered that an 18 tonne environmental weight limit be introduced. This would have the benefit of limiting the vehicle axle loading on the private roads affected by the current restrictions whilst also being more practical to enforce than an 'except for access' regulation.

Consultations

Prior to the formal consultation, all affected residents were consulted by letter: 4 replies were received (2 in favour and 2 against).

The Irwell Vale Residents Association was consulted and indicated that it is in favour of the changes as advertised.

Formal consultation was undertaken between Friday 8 June and Friday 6 July 2018 when a notice was posted onsite and in the local press. At the same time the divisional county councillor and the borough council were also informed along with the council's usual consultees for traffic regulation orders. This consultation resulted in one objection from residents.

The basis of the objection is that heavy vehicles will cause damage to the private road network and that in the area around their home the road is unmade and in a poor state of repair. For this reason they would want to retain the current 7.5 tonne restriction to prevent any further damage.

Comments on the objection

The present order is a 7.5 tonnes weight limit due to the structural limitations of the bridge prior to the repairs. Now that the bridges are capable of taking 40 tonne loads this is not correct and therefore an environmental weight limit is required. There are two options for an environmental weight limit supported by the Department for Transport: 7.5 tonnes or 18 tonnes.

To implement a 7.5 tonne environmental order for this area it would need a clause that allowed an exception for access, so that larger vehicles can make deliveries of larger bulky items. With such a situation vehicles up to 40 tonnes will be able to enter the area. If such vehicles were to enter the area, as there is no through access, it would be difficult to challenge the usage of the roads and therefore the order would be difficult to enforce.

An 18 tonne limit would not require an exception for access. Under this legislation any vehicle over 18 tonnes would be committing an offence and subject to an automatic penalty. Therefore it is considered that the proposed 18 tonne

environmental weight restriction would be the best compromise between protecting the road from damage by heavy vehicles and allowing residents to have bulky goods delivered.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

The estimated cost of new signing including advance warning signs at the junction of Irwell Vale Road and Manchester Road is £5,000 which will be funded by the highways revenue signs and lines budget.

Risk management

The existing structural weight limit is no longer valid. Without a weight restriction or with a 7.5 tonnes weight restriction (with an exception in favour of 'access') vehicles up to 40 tonnes could use the private road network which is unsuitable for such loads. The implementation of an 18 tonnes weight restriction will allow the road to be protected by limiting heavy traffic.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		