

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

Date of Meeting: 3 August 2009

Report of: Head of Environmental Services

Subject/Title: 7.5 T Weight Limit Barthomley and Surrounding Area

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Reports have previously been considered by the Crewe and Nantwich Highways and Transportation Local Joint Committee (LJC) for a 7.5T environmental weight limit in the area around Barthomley. The LJC resolved to defer a decision to a future meeting.
- 1.2 This report considers the implications of introducing such an Order.

2.0 Recommendations

That an experimental traffic regulation order be introduced, the effects of which will be to prevent heavy commercial vehicles over 7.5 tonnes from proceeding along the lengths of roads shown on plan 1 (attached) except for access.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The data available suggests that any restriction is not justified and there are concerns about the effects of placing restrictions at the Borough's boundary and not at junctions. However, due to the local concerns, an experimental order will allow a full assessment of the effects of proposal to be undertaken.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Doddington

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Cllr David Brickhill
Cllr John Hammond
Cllr Rodney Walker

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 None

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

7.1 None

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 Installation of 15 unlit sign units and 2 Lit sign units, processing the orders. Estimated cost of £5,000.

8.2 Removal of signs or processing permanent Order estimated cost £2,000

8.3 Funding through the revenue budget allocation for traffic regulation orders.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

9.1 Experimental orders are made under Sections 9 and 10 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended) following consultation with the Chief Officer of Police. It will require notices to be published and documents available for public inspection. Objections cannot be made to the experimental order until it is in force. Once it is in force objections can be made as to its permanence.

9.2 Without the consent of Staffordshire County Council, the experimental order may only cover that part of the area within Cheshire East.

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 An experimental order only remains in force for up to 18 months at which point it must be either made permanent or lapses. Consultation must be carried out during this period and a formal decision be made as to whether the order becomes permanent.

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 At its meeting on 23rd April 2007, the Crewe and Nantwich LJC resolved " That a 7.5 tonne weight restriction on Englesea Brook Lane and Barthomley Road be progressed".

11.2 Such a weight restriction normally extends to junctions on the neighbouring A and B roads in order to remove the prospect of drivers suddenly arriving at a restriction sign and having to turn round. In this case it was considered that the restricted area should extend in to Staffordshire.

11.3 Interested bodies were consulted about the proposals and the following responses were received:

- Sustrans – Support the proposal
- Staffordshire Police – Do not agree to the proposals
- Cheshire Constabulary – Will support the proposal on the understanding that the limit will be enforced commensurate with the policing needs of the area as a whole.
- Barthomley Parish Council – support the proposal
- Weston & Basford Parish Council – support the proposal
- Staffordshire County Council - object to any such proposal.

11.4 An entry / exit count of vehicles over 7.5T carried out in 2004 indicated that there were no vehicles over 7.5T passing through Barthomley and Englesea Brook using these roads. It has to be remembered that to prosecute the offence, a restricted vehicle would need to be seen entering and then exiting the restriction without stopping.

11.5 A report to the LJC on 21st July 2008 recommended that the proposal does not progress. The decision was deferred to a future meeting.

11.6 A further survey was carried out on 1st October 2008 which again indicated that there were no HCVs passing through the area.

11.7 Environmental weight restrictions can be introduced where the local roads are too narrow or not appropriate for use by large good vehicles. They can be introduced where the numbers of vehicles over 7.5T using the road are significant, for instance where the road forms a convenient much shorter route to industrial areas compared to the adjacent higher class roads. It is a legal control and as such should be justifiable on the following grounds:

- To reduce danger to pedestrians and other road users
- To prevent damage to buildings, roads and bridges
- To preserve the character, amenity and environment of an area
- To reduce and manage congestion on the roads

11.8 The area that should be covered by the Order includes part of Staffordshire. Staffordshire County Council would be responsible for introducing the Order in their County and they object to the proposal. Similarly, Staffordshire Police, who would be responsible for enforcement, do not support the order

11.9 It has been suggested that an Order be made that just covers the areas of highway within Cheshire East Borough. Although not normal for the reasons in paragraph 11.2, it is possible with advance warning signs being placed at the entry to the effected roads. This would need the approval of Staffordshire County Council.

11.10 As there were no HCVs travelling through on those days that surveys took place it is difficult to justify the need for the Order. Local residents indicate that the main problem is when part of the surrounding road network is closed and at such times vehicles use Barthomley as an alternative route. As the volume of vehicles during these occurrences can not be easily recorded the only measurable way is to take the opinion of residents in to account. In this case it would be preferable to introduce an experimental Order and to consult local residents as to its effectiveness.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

12.1 None

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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