

18 October, 2018

07

Petition: Weight Restriction Barns Lane

Ward(s) Aldridge Central and South
Aldridge North and Walsall Wood
Rushall - Shelfield

Portfolios: Councillor Adrian Andrew, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder,
Regeneration

Executive Summary:

A petition containing in excess of 500 signatures was submitted to Council 17 September 2018 by Councillor Worrall. The petition requesting the implementation of weight restrictions was worded as follows:

“We, the undersigned residents of Rushall and Shelfield, call for a 7.5 tonne weight restriction: (a) between Tintagel Close/Westgate via Barns Lane to the A461 Lichfield Road at its junction with Winterley Lane; and (b) the length of Spring Road, Shelfield, to its junction with the A461, so as to divert increasing through HGV traffic away from narrow, congested routes through these densely populated residential areas to routes with lesser impact on local communities.

These alternative routes for HGV traffic are suggested:

- To/From the A461: Westgate - Wharf Approach - Stubbers Green Road - Brickyard Road - Boatman's Lane - A461
- To/From the A454 Walsall Road: Westgate - Dumblederry Lane – Middlemore Lane West - Bosty Lane - A454”

This report details the response of the Executive Director for Economy & Environment to this petition.

Reason for scrutiny:

The Council's petitions scheme requires that where a petition containing at least 500 but less than 1500 signatures is received by the Council, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of one of the Council's scrutiny and performance panels. The authority has determined that the response to such petitions must be given by either, the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Assistant Directors or Heads of Service.

Recommendations:

That:

1. Committee note the contents of this report and consider the implications of introducing the requested weight restrictions.

Background papers:

None associated with this report

Resource and legal considerations:

The Council has a statutory Network Management Duty imposed on it by the Traffic Management Act 2004 to secure the expeditious movement of Traffic. The introduction of weight limit restrictions have to be carefully considered and appropriately justified in order to not have a negative impact on the delivery of this duty.

Any proposal to introduce weight limit restrictions would be subject to the outcome of a statutory 21 day consultation period. The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, requires the Council to first publish any weight limit proposals, consider and determine any objections, prior to making a final decision on making the necessary Legal order required to introduce the proposed changes.

The introduction of weight limit restriction would require the placement of illuminated statutory signage to indicate the extent of the restriction.

Enforcement of any new weight restriction would require resource to be allocated by West Midlands Police as they are the only body holding the necessary enforcement powers.

The introduction of weight limit restrictions would not prevent roads being used by all heavy goods vehicles. The legal order would have to included exemptions for vehicles such as buses, waste collection vehicles and any other vehicle delivering or collecting from within the restricted zone.

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

The introduction of new weigh limit restrictions could have a negative impact on economic growth. Our business community relies upon an efficient and safe road network to transport goods and deliver services on a just in time basis. Additional delays created by increased journey time could encourage relocation and loss of local jobs.

The introduction of new weigh limit restrictions could have a positive impact on people where the most vulnerable are protected from avoidable harm, including treating and caring for people in a safe environment.

The introduction of appropriate weight limit restrictions could have a positive impact on the local community through reduced atmospheric pollution that contributes to improve long-term health of the population.

Citizen impact:

The introduction of weight limit restrictions would have a positive impact on citizens who are concerned with current levels of heavy goods vehicles using the roads near to where they live.

As a result of introducing weight limit restrictions, there will be a redistribution of heavy goods vehicles onto alternative roads. This has the potential for a negative citizen impact for those who currently experience lower levels of heavy goods vehicles using the roads where they live.

Environmental impact:

Local improvements in existing noise and air quality levels could be achieved by the introduction of weight limit restrictions. However, these concerns could simply be displaced to another location along the alternative routes available to heavy goods vehicles.

Performance management:

No direct impact as a result of this report

Reducing inequalities:

This report has no direct impact on those with protected characteristics

Consultation:

Statutory 21 day consultation would be required to be undertaken should a proposal to implement a new weight restriction be taken forward.

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Report

Barns Lane is an unclassified, local distributor road that is designed to carry all classifications of traffic to and from the A and B road network.

Barns Lane falls within a 20mph zone and has a good overall safety record with only 2 slight injury collision reported in the last 3 years, none of these related to the use of heavy goods vehicles.

Barns Lane is one of 6 routes that could potentially be used to link the A461 Lichfield Road to Aldridge Town Centre and the local industrial estates.

Access to the local industrial estates in Middlemore Lane and Westgate is only possible through use of the unclassified, local distributor road network.

The Council actively promotes through road signage, usage of the A and B roads network as the preferred general traffic routes between the A461 and the Aldridge area.

Given the overall volume of traffic making journeys from the A and B roads network to the industrial estates in Middlemore Lane and Westgate, it is necessary for each of the possible routes to carry a proportionate share of traffic.

It is acknowledge that given the close proximity of Barns Lane to the industrial estates, the route has historically been used by a moderate level of heavy goods vehicles. In response to this, in 2014 the Council upgraded a number of direction signs along the A461 Lichfield Road corridor which promoted other routes to the industrial estates as alternative to using Barns Lane, Spring Road and Stubbers Green Road. Additionally the Council also installed a number of direction signs within the industrial estates, encouraging heavy goods vehicles to use the A and B road routes, where possible, to reach the A461.

The Council has a statutory Network Management Duty to facilitate the efficient movement of traffic on the public highway. The introduction of weight limit restrictions have to be carefully considered and appropriately justified in order to not have a negative impact on the delivery of this duty.

Introduction of the requested new weight limit restriction on Barns Lane would result in increased usage by heavy goods vehicles along the proposed alternative routes. These alternative routes are all of the same road classification as Barns Lane, unclassified, local distributor roads.

Introduction of the requested new weight limit restriction on Barns Lane and implementation of the alternative route proposals, would require additional weight limit restrictions to be introduced on Stubbers Green Road. This additional restriction would further limit the overall number of available routes to service the industrial estates and increase the impact on the remaining available routes.

With the requirement to balance the overall usage of the available road network, I do not consider that the introduction of a new weight limit restriction on Barns Lane to be an appropriate measure to implement.

