



North Yorkshire County Council

Thirsk and Malton Constituency Committee – 3 July 2019

Update on the Experimental 7.5T Weight Restriction – Norton Level Crossing

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the recommendation to be taken to NYCC Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services and the BES Executive Members on the continuation of the Experimental 7.5T weight restriction at Norton Level Crossing.
- 1.2 To provide Members with the opportunity to provide formal representation to NYCC Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services and the BES Executive Members on the continuation of the Experimental 7.5T weight restriction at Norton Level Crossing.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 On 9 February 2018 an Order was made for the prohibition of heavy commercial vehicles with an operating weight exceeding 7.5 tonnes for an experimental period of eighteen months.
- 2.2 The experimental weight limit Order cannot be extended in time or amended in any way. It must be made permanent or revoked.
- 2.2 While the statutory six month period for objecting to the indefinite continuation of the Order expired, NYCC agreed to take any further representations up to 1 May 2019.
- 2.3 An on-line consultation via the NYCC website has also taken place between the 3rd and 24th May which sought public views and reasons as to whether or not the weight limit should be made permanent.
- 2.4 The views were also sought from key stakeholders such as, Ryedale DC, Town Councils, Local Members, Parish Councils, Haulage Operators, Emergency Services and Network Rail.

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 As previously reported to the Committee 18 responses containing objections were received to the weight restriction.
- 3.2 The main issue raised is the impact of the HGV Traffic which has been displaced onto Highfield Road/Pasture Lane with 12 of 18 responses raising concerns which can be summarised as follows –
 - Detrimental impact on the two primary schools (pollution, noise pollution, road safety, intimidation)

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- Narrowness of road at the Old Malton end causing blockages and undesirable reversing movements back onto Old Malton Road.
 - Traffic jams as HGV's have difficulty manoeuvring around parked cars particularly at the start and end of the school day.
 - Damage to the road.
 - Detrimental impact on residential properties (pollution and noise pollution when HGV's rattle over the speed humps)
 - Damage to residential properties caused by the vibrations of HGV's as they rattle over the speed humps).
 - Difficulty for resident's crossing over the road due to increased numbers of HGV's.
 - Speed of HGV's.
- 3.3 Three Hauliers who have responded have identified the difficulty HGV's have turning right from Old Maltongate into the B1257 at Butcher Corner due to the tight radius often resulting in mounting the footway. Their other comments have been –
- HGV's are being forced to use unsuitable roads e.g. Highfield Road and the roads through Settrington and Scagglethorpe.
 - The restriction defeats the object in terms of air quality as HGV's still need to travel through the centre of Malton.
 - Increased travel time and transport costs.
 - HGV's are now one of the lowest polluting vehicles on the road.
- 3.4 Other comments received identify the following issues –
- Detrimental impact on Harton Village and the Howsham and Brasenthwaite bridges.
 - Quarry traffic having a detrimental impact on Welham Hill/Moor Hill through Burythorpe then Westow and Howsham.
 - Detrimental impact on roads through Settrington and Scagglethorpe.
 - Increase in traffic on Scarborough Road.
- 3.5 129 Responses were received to the on-line consultation (1% of the population of Malton/Norton). Of these 33 were in favour of the restriction being made permanent and 96 against. Of the 96 against the restriction 24 (25%) were from the area around Highfield Road/Pasture Lane.
- 3.6 The responses from stakeholders and the on-line consultation are summarised in Appendix A
- ### 4.0 Enforcement
- 4.1 The weight restriction has been monitored by NYCC Trading Standards Team. The monitoring regime has been over and above any monitoring undertaken elsewhere in the County. The Trading Standards Team have had to divert staff from other duties to provide an enhanced programme of monitoring at the crossing.
- 4.2 To date there have been 36 prosecutions for contravening the restriction.
- ### 5.0 Air Quality
- 5.1 Information provided by Ryedale District Council identifies that concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels at all monitoring sites within the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at Butcher Corner have shown a general downward trend since 2012/13.
- 5.2 Monitoring of NO₂ levels during 2018 has demonstrated that:

- The health-based annual mean NO₂ objective of 40 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³) was not exceeded at any monitoring location.
- The highest annual mean concentration of NO₂ was 33 µg/m³ on Wheelgate and Yorkersgate.
- 7 locations monitored lower concentrations in 2018 than in 2017. The greatest improvement was seen on Wheelgate, where there was a 15% reduction in annual mean NO₂ concentration between 2017 and 2018. Minor increases in NO₂ were observed at Old Maltongate and Yorkersgate, where levels increased by 3% and 9% respectively. On average, concentrations of NO₂ decreased by 4% across the AQMA.
- The number of exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ objective in the AQMA has gradually fallen between 2012 and 2018 (7 exceedances in 2012, 3 in 2013, 2 in 2014, 1 in 2015 and no exceedances in 2016, 2017 or 2018).
- Although there have been no exceedances since 2015, Ryedale District Council have stated that they intend to keep the AQMA under review. This is due to the anticipated increases in queuing related congestion at the level crossing as a consequence of the proposed doubling of the rail service.

6.0 Traffic Flows

- 6.1 Traffic surveys have been undertaken on a 3 monthly basis since the Order was implemented.
- 6.2 Impact on Butcher Corner
- 6.2.1 Flows along Yorkersgate have remained more or less constant during the Order period. The likely reason could be due to the fact that the weight restriction has not caused HGV traffic to significantly re-route, it has just required HGV's to travel straight ahead onto Old Maltongate instead of turning right onto Castlegate.
- 6.2.2 Old Maltongate has shown an increase in HGV traffic in both directions, (11% towards town, 28% out of town). The likely reason could be that HGV traffic at Butcher Corner can no longer turn into Castlegate from Yorkersgate or Wheelgate. Also, Old Malton Road/Old Maltongate is the alternative route into Malton from the A64 instead of travelling over the level crossing and via Castlegate.
- 6.2.3 Flows on Wheelgate have shown a reduction in both directions, (49% into town, 58% out of town). This is likely due to HGV vehicles which would usually travel south towards Butcher Corner and onto Castlegate, re-routing along Pasture Lane/Highfield Road to access Old Malton Road and the A64. Similarly HGV vehicles which would usually enter Wheelgate from Castlegate are likely diverting along Highfield Road/Pasture Lane from Old Malton Road to avoid making a tight right turn at Butcher Corner.
- 6.2.4 Flows on Castlegate have fluctuated over the period of the restriction. HGV traffic appears to have decreased southbound towards the level crossing (50%). However, travelling north towards Butcher Corner surveys have only recently shown an identifiable decrease in HGV vehicles (15%). Trading Standards have also reported that over recent weeks recently there has been an identifiable decrease in infringements at the level crossing.
- 6.2.5 The increase in HGV traffic on the Old Maltongate arm of the AQMA is offset by the reductions on Wheelgate. Whilst there has been a reduction in HGV traffic heading south on Castlegate from the AQMA, HGV traffic heading north has only recently shown a reduction. With HGV traffic on Yorkersgate being largely consistent, it

appears that the overall impact of the experimental Order is only now showing a reduction in HGV traffic on the roads adjacent to the AQMA.

6.3 Impact on other routes in Malton/Norton.

6.3.1 Highfield Road/Pasture Lane

Counts undertaken in September and December showed a significant increase in HGV traffic along this route (24% increase). However it must be borne in mind that Taylor Wimpey and Linden Homes are undertaking significant residential development off Pasture Lane, there has also been an extension to the Primary School. Many of the HGV trips along this route are likely contributable to construction traffic, particularly in relation to the significant off-site highway improvement works which were undertaken. The latest counts indicated an increase of just 2% over the baseline data. This may be a result of the off-site highway works being complete.

6.3.2 Welham Road

Counts have revealed a reduction (33%) of HGV traffic heading north towards the level crossing and an increase (12%) of HGV traffic heading south away from the level crossing.

6.3.3 Church Street

Counts have revealed a reduction in HGV traffic along this section of road (16% fewer travelling towards Castlegate and 8% fewer heading away from the junction).

7.0 **Other considerations**

7.1 Rail service frequencies are due to increase to two trains per hour in each direction from December 2019, therefore doubling the number of trains stopping in Malton each hour. This will result in the level crossing barriers being down for a greater overall duration across the hour which has the potential to create significant queuing, impacting on journey times, creating congestion and resulting delay.

7.2 The recent Malton & Norton Infrastructure and Connectivity Study identifies a set of priority interventions that could potentially be taken forward to reduce levels of congestion within the two towns. This included an "Internal Junction and Traffic Signal Strategy", to look at the impact of measures to change how the road network currently operates. There is also the need to fully understand the impact of the increase in rail usage, and related traffic growth, on the network performance of the two towns. A micro simulation Model was identified as being necessary to accurately reflect the impact of such changes will have on the highway network.

7.3 At the time of writing the Traffic Model is approaching completion.

8.0 **Conclusion**

8.1 The experimental weight limit should not be considered in isolation but must be included as part of a bigger picture in terms of the planned increase in rail services and any potential alterations to the operation of the existing highway network.

8.2 The traffic model will be used to test alterations to the highway network and how these may affect HGV routing.

8.3 Whilst no exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ objective have occurred within the Malton AQMA for the last 3 years Ryedale District Council have stated that they intend to keep the AQMA under review. This is due to the anticipated increases in queuing related congestion at the level crossing as a consequence of the proposed doubling of the rail service.

- 8.4 Whilst it is acknowledged that the experimental weight restriction has created some issues elsewhere on the network its contribution towards improvements to air quality, particularly on Wheelgate and Castlegate cannot be ignored. To revoke the weight restriction before the implications of the increased rail service have been fully appraised could be considered premature.
- 8.5 However, the issues which have been raised surrounding the HGV restriction, such as HGV vehicles being displaced onto unsuitable routes are also important points to consider.
- 8.6 An extension to the existing experimental weight limit may have been considered the most practical solution in order that the impact of the increase in rail service can be fully appraised. However, as stated in 2.2 above, it is not possible to extend the experimental weight restriction order past the date it is due to expire on 9th August 2019. It must either be revoked or made permanent.
- 8.7 Taking everything into consideration, officers are of the opinion that the recommendation to be taken to NYCC Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services and the BES Executive Members should be that the Order is made permanent but on the understanding that it will remain under review. A further decision as to whether or not the restriction should remain in force would then be taken when the implications of the increased rail service are fully appreciated.
- 8.8 This recommendation is to be reported to the NYCC Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services and the BES Executive Members on 26 July 2019 for a decision.

9.0 Recommendation

- 9.1 Members to note the contents of this update.
- 9.2 Members to provide a formal representation on the officer recommendation regarding the Experimental 7.5T weight restriction at Norton Level Crossing which will be reported to the NYCC Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services and the BES Executive Members on 26 July 2019

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Stakeholder Response

Consultee	Make Restriction Permanent	Additional Comments
Ryedale District Council	TBC Prior to publication of Report	
Norton Town Council	Yes	Address problem affected areas, specifically Highfield Road.
Malton Town Council	Yes	Address negative impact on Highfield Road, Town Street, Old Maltongate, Pasture Lane and Yorkersgate.
Settrington Parish Council	No recommendation	Plans for development between Beverley Road and Norton Ind. Estate to include a "through road" Improve Brambling Fields roundabout to make more amenable to HGV's. Upgrade gritting route through the village to a P1 status. Assess strength of Settrington road bridge and consider weight limit.
Network Rail	Yes	
County Councillor Lindsay Burr	Yes	Improve signage and address issues on Highfield Road
NFU	No recommendation	Agricultural Vehicles not affected

On-Line Consultation

Against Making the Restriction Permanent	For Making the Restriction Permanent
96 (74%)	33 (26%)
Total Number of Respondents	- 129 (1% population of Malton/Norton)

Reasons Against Making the Restriction Permanent	
Impact on Highfield Road	51
Moved the problem elsewhere/unsuitable roads	26
Longer Routes for HGVs	13
No Improvement	15
HGVs now use Cleaner Fuel	8