

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Decision to not introduce a Weight Restriction along U93400 between its junctions with A49 & A4110, Wellington to Westhope, Herefordshire.
Date of decision:	16 th February 2024
Decision maker:	Service Director for Environment and Highways
Authority for delegated decision:	Economy and Environment Scheme – Highways and Transport 75. To act on behalf of the council in respect of the legislation specified in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The authorisation limit is within the financial procedure rules and is sufficient for the decision and that the officer has authority under the contract procedure rules.
Ward:	Queenswood & Weobley
Consultation:	A Formal (Statutory) Consultation process was undertaken from 29 th November 2023 to 22 nd December 2023, whereby an initial consultation letter and accident data was sent to all Statutory Consultees via email. It was explained that following feasibility investigations, it had been decided that a full TRO was not required, but the potential to enhance existing Traffic Engineering Measures was being considered. During this process, no objections to the TRO investigations being ceased were raised. A summary of the responses received during the Formal (Statutory) Consultation process is included as Appendix B.
Decision made:	Following a site audit and assessment and the completion of vehicle classification surveys, the implementation of a new weight restriction is not considered an appropriate course of action. It is felt that the impact would be very limited due to the low amount of HGVs currently using the road as a through route. Additionally, “Unsuitable for HGVs” signage should be installed to discourage larger vehicles from using the route unless accessing local properties or businesses. These will have a similar impact to a TRO without incurring the same financial costs.
Reasons for decision:	<p>This scheme originated as a result of a request from Wellington Parish Council in 2016. Concerns were raised regarding the volume of HGVs that were using the route. HGVs were said to sometimes be travelling at excessive speed, raising safety concerns. As a result, the request was submitted to the Herefordshire Council TRO prioritisation list, which it reached the top of at the start of 2023.</p> <p>An on-site assessment was undertaken in September 2023. During the assessment, officers considered the appropriateness of a weight restriction, taking into account the surrounding environment and road layout. During the site visit, it was agreed that the implementation of a weight restriction TRO may not be the best course of action. It was suggested that the installation of “Unsuitable for HGV” signage at the start and end of the route would likely have a similar impact on traffic movements, whilst avoiding the costly TRO process having to be undertaken. This would also avoid the need for costly enforcement by the Police or by ANPR camera. Consequently, it was agreed between officers and the Pyons Group Parish Council representative that this was the most suitable way to proceed. The investigation area passes through two parishes, hence Pyons Group Parish Council’s attendance at the site audit.</p> <p>Vehicle classification surveys completed in October 2023 showed that the number of vehicles using the route that had a vehicle classification of 3 and above (vehicles likely to be over 7.5 tonnes) are very limited. There were only 2 days where more than 10 vehicles with a classification of Class 3 and above passed over survey detection loops in the same direction. Over a 7-day period, an average of 3.5 vehicles with a classification of 3 and above passed over each survey loop in each direction. An average of 13 class 2 vehicles passed over the survey detection loops each day. Class 2 vehicles</p>

are defined as 2-axle HGVs (including tractors). Vehicles with a higher classification have more axles or are buses/coaches. The vehicle classification surveys therefore suggest that there are a very limited number of HGV's using this section of road (potentially as a shortcut) and the small amount that are using it are likely using it to access local rural properties.

Another key consideration was the number of recorded accidents along the route involving Heavy Goods' Vehicles. Accident data obtained suggests that between January 2018 and August 2023, only one accident had occurred. No HGVs were involved in this accident.

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Considering regulations, according to the Road Traffic Regulation Act (RTRA) 1984, it is the duty of a highway authority to 'manage their road network' and 'to improve road safety'. Section 122 of the RTRA 1984 states that local authorities must, so far as is practicable, exercise their functions under the RTRA so as to 'secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic'.

In conclusion, it is evident from an on-site assessment and meeting with a representative from Pyons Group Parish Council, as well as vehicle classification surveys that were later completed, that a Weight Limit Restriction Order should not be progressed any further.

The above recommendation is in alignment with guidance set out by Department for Transport and would not be of detriment to the council's duties under section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.



Appendix A.pdf



Appendix B.pdf



Appendix C - EINA.pdf

Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:

Community impact

The recommendation not to implement a weight restriction on the U93400, but instead to install "Unsuitable for HGVs" signage may have a slight impact on the local community as it will potentially alter a handful of HGV movements each day. This may slightly improve road safety and lessen the chance of any accidents occurring that involve HGV's. There will be no legal detriment to HGV drivers that wish to use the U93400 to access property along the route or as a through route.

Environmental Impact

Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public, and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.

The adoption of these recommendations will not have a negative impact on the environment.

Equality duty

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

	<p>The recommendations set out in this report are considered to be low impact with regards to equality. The restrictions aim to maintain road amenity and safety, thus paying regard to the council’s duty according to the Equality Act 2010 as set out below.</p> <p>section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows: A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. <p>Any impact as a result of the scheme will be equal to all parties.</p> <p>See Appendix C of this report for Equality Impacts and Needs Assessment (EINA).</p> <p>Resource implications The cost of the implementation of new signage is approximately £4000. This cost has been identified from this year’s existing budgets in the current Annual Plan.</p> <p>Legal implications The introduction of a new TRO is not recommended as part of these proposals.</p> <p>There are no further legal requirements in not making the TRO, even if objections are made. It is at the discretion of the Council as the Highway Authority whether to make a TRO dependent on the justification for doing so.</p> <p>Risk management The Local Transport Plan sets out to reduce the number and severity of casualties on the highway network in Herefordshire and provide a highway network that is safe and efficient. A Key Performance Indicator is contained in this Local Transport Plan and details a locally set target for a reduction in fatal or serious injuries on the highway network. The adoption of the recommendations in this report would have no impact to the objectives in the Local Transport Plan.</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>To implement a weight restriction between Wellington and Westhope – This is not recommended as vehicle classification surveys have shown that the number of HGVs using the U93400 is extremely limited. Additionally, enforcement of the restriction would be extremely challenging. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras would be required to continually enforce the restriction. The route has several different entry and exit points adjoining it via narrow country lanes, which makes enforcement even more difficult. Additionally, during the site meeting, the Pyons Group Parish Council representative raised that the scheme request was several years old and consequently, their support for the weight restriction was not overly strong.</p>
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>None</p>

Signed..... Date:

Please ensure that signatures are redacted before publishing.