
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting
Date: 20 October 2009
Subject: Petition for Weight Limit on Poynters Road Dunstable
Report of: Basil Jackson
Summary: To report to the portfolio holder on a petition received, requesting the implementation of a weight limit on Poynters Road in Dunstable and seek approval for inclusion in the 5 year Traffic Management Programme.

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
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Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Dunstable Downs
Function of: Council

RECOMMENDATIONS:

that subject to adoption of the Freight Strategy by Central Bedfordshire the proposal for a weight limit on Poynters Road be included in the 5 year Traffic Management Programme.

Background and Proposal

1. Central Bedfordshire Council have received a petition from residents of the Poynters Road area in Dunstable, requesting the implementation of a weight limit along this route. The route forms a key access for heavy goods vehicles travelling to and from the Woodside Industrial Area. The petitioners propose the use of Luton Road and Boscombe Road as an alternative access to the industrial areas for HGVs.
2. A total of 468 signatures are included on the petition, which claims that the HGVs are travelling in excess of the speed limits and are causing disturbance to residents and damage to the road and properties. A copy of this petition is included as background papers to this report.
3. Poynters Road is adjoined by a number of residential roads, primarily providing access to local residential areas. Boscombe Road, situated further westwards into Dunstable, is fronted only by industrial properties and the White Lion Retail Park. It is considered that the use of this route by heavy goods vehicles, as an alternative to Poynters Road would not have an adverse impact upon local residents.

4. The implementation of a weight limit along Poynters Road would automatically preclude HGV access to adjoining residential areas. Based on this philosophy, it is proposed that any weight limit aimed at banning HGVs movements on Poynters Road should be implemented on an area-wide basis. However, an area-wide weight limit would prove expensive. The costs of similar weight limits have been in the order of £80,000. A scheme of this magnitude would need to be included in the 5 year capital programme as a prospective scheme for future years.

Currently Central Bedfordshire has no adopted Freight Strategy. A framework document has been developed and is currently in the stage of being considered by officers prior to presentation to members for adoption. Any future freight management measures to be adopted should ideally be in accordance with adopted principles that are contained within that strategy. It is proposed therefore that the implementation of an area wide weight limit in Poynters Road be consequent upon that document being adopted and be in line with its contents.

5. It has been confirmed with the Highways Agency and with Bedfordshire Police that Poynters Road forms part of a diversion route from M1 in the event of the motorway being closed as a result of an incident. It is proposed that a weight limit could be 'over-ridden' by the police in the occasional event of the M1 being closed. Such an arrangement would be subject to further consultation and approval from Bedfordshire Police and the Highways Agency following development of a potential scheme.

Alternative Proposals

6. The provision of the proposed 'Woodside Connection' route from a new junction in the M1 to the north of Dunstable would provide an alternative route for HGVs to access the industrial area from the M1, particularly from the north. However, it is considered that this road is unlikely to be completed before 2016.
7. The proposed North Dunstable Zonal Travel Plan considered Freight Quality Partnershi which would seek means of rationalising the number of heavy goods vehicle movement accessing the Woodside Industrial area. However, the progression of this in connection with a Zonal Travel Plan is dependant upon future financial support from the Highways Agency and Central Bedfordshire Council, as well as successful engagement with local employers. In addition, it is considered that this would only reduce HGV movements by maximum of around 10%. It is hence likely that there will be continued demand for acce by HGVs along Poynters Road and Boscombe Road.

Conclusion and Next Steps

8. Requests for implementing area-wide HGV signing and restrictions need to take account of impacts upon the local road network in terms of maintenance, safety, noise and other environmental factors. The proposed weight limit along Poynters Road will need to be included in the 5 year capital works programme and be subject to the guidance contained within the Freight Strategy.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Make transport improvements to benefit the local environment for residents within Central Bedfordshire.

Financial:

The costs of similar weight limits are in the order of £80,000. A scheme of this cost will need to be included in the 5 year capital programme.

Legal:

None as a result of this report

Risk Management:

None as a result of this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None as a result of this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None as a result of this report

Community Development/Safety:

None as a result of this report

Sustainability:

Removal of HGVs from Poynters Road would result in some localised congestion relief.

Background Information

Copy of Petition from Residents of Poynters Road