



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (TANDRIDGE)

D431/1015 GRANTS LANE BRIDGE

7 September 2012

KEY ISSUE

A strength assessment of Grants Lane Bridge has found that it only has capacity to carry vehicles of 3 tonnes gross vehicle weight. The original temporary Traffic Order implementing the 3 tonne weight restriction and 6' 6" width restriction, required to protect the bridge from over-weight vehicles, expired on 30 August 2012.

SUMMARY

Committee approved the temporary order for the 3 tonne weight restriction and 6' 6" width restriction at the 14 December 2010 meeting. For the bridge to remain open to permitted vehicles until a permanent order is in place, an extension to the temporary order is required.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Tandridge) is asked to agree that:

- i) The existing temporary weight restriction of 3 tonnes combined with a 6' 6" width restriction is extended, retrospectively, for a further 6 months.
- ii) A permanent weight restriction of 3 tonnes combined with a 6' 6" width restriction be imposed on Grants Lane Bridge on expiry of the extended temporary order.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Grants Lane Bridge is situated to the east of Hurst Green and carries Grants Lane over the railway next to Hillview Farm. It is owned and maintained by Network Rail.
- 1.2 The bridge has failed a strength assessment and the committee approved the imposition of a permanent 3 tonne weight restriction and 6' 6" width restriction at the 5 March 2010 meeting. Committee requested that if objections to the proposed restrictions were received they be reported back to committee.
- 1.3 Eleven letters objecting to the proposed restrictions and diversion route were received, which were reported to committee at the 14 December 2010 meeting. Committee agreed that the order be amended to temporary and that Cabinet and the Chief Executive be requested to a) "bring urgent pressure on Network Rail to repair the bridge in view of the inadequacies of the alternative routes" and b) "to proceed to legal action against Network Rail in view of their inaction over the last year".
- 1.4 The temporary weight and width restrictions were imposed in March 2011. The order implementing the restrictions was for the maximum initial duration of 18 months and expired on 30 August 2012.
- 1.5 The county has written to the Secretary of State requesting an extension to the temporary order of a further 6 months, the maximum extension permitted, to allow the restrictions to remain in place whilst alternative options are considered. Approval has been received for a extension on the temporary order to 28 February 2013.
- 1.6 At the Cabinet Member Decision Meeting on 16 March 2011, the Cabinet Member for Transport considered the committee's report and agreed revised actions. The Cabinet Members response to the committee's report is contained in Appendix 1.
- 1.7 Enquires have been made regarding the letter to be sent to Network Rail, including a reply, however a thorough search of the county's records has so far not located these documents.
- 1.8 The Network Rail investment programme is based on a five-year control period. The current programme ends in 2014 and is fully committed. Officers have been advised that the first year programme of the new control period is fully committed. The earliest start date at the present time is 2015/16. It should be noted that the reconstruction of the bridge will require a closure of the railway for a period. The requirements of the Office of the Rail Regulator are that approximately three years notice is required, depending on the circumstances, before a closure can take place.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 For public safety the current 3 tonne weight and 6' 6" width restrictions must remain in place until the bridge has been strengthened.
- 2.2 Following approval from the Secretary of State to extend the existing temporary order, committee's agreement to the extension is requested to allow the bridge to remain open.
- 2.3 An extension of the existing order will enable officers to consider possible options for the future should Network Rail's programme for strengthening the bridge remain unchanged, whilst consulting with local residents and businesses to reduce possible objections should it be necessary to impose a permanent restriction on the bridge. This would be rescinded on completion of the strengthening works.
- 2.4 If the current temporary order were not extended the existing restrictions would have to be removed. Allowing unrestricted use of the bridge by vehicles that could have a gross vehicle weight of up to 40 tonnes would create an unacceptable risk to both road and rail users. In these circumstances it would be necessary to close of the bridge to vehicles.

3 OPTIONS

- 3.1 Do nothing – the restrictions would have to be removed on expiry of the temporary order. For public safety the bridge would have to be closed to vehicles.
- 3.2 Permanent Weight Restriction – Network Rail's current programme for bridge strengthening indicates that works will not start before 2015/16. The imposition of permanent weight and width restrictions, to be rescinded on completion of strengthening works, will enable to bridge to remain open to permitted vehicles.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Emergency services have been consulted during the preparation of the earlier proposed traffic orders and raised no objections.
- 4.2 Eleven objections have been received from members of the public as a result of publication of the previous proposed Permanent Traffic Order, conditionally approved by committee at the 5 March 2010 meeting. Copies of the objection letters are appended as Annex A to the minutes of the 14 December 2010 meeting.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of extending the temporary order and introducing a permanent order will be financed by the Structures Capital Maintenance budget, and recharged to Network Rail.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The recommendations would apply equally to all road users without disadvantage to any minority group.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The recommendations are not perceived to have any significant impact on crime and disorder.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that the existing temporary order for the 3 tonne weight and 6' 6" width restrictions be extended by six months.
- 8.2 It is recommended that on expiry of the extended temporary order the 3 tonne weight and 6' 6" width restrictions become permanent until the bridge is strengthened.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 As a scheme of this nature is likely to take several years to be completed a permanent order is requested which will protect the structure until work can be carried out.
- 9.2 Although objections have been received to the proposed orders, the issue is one of public safety. The bridge has been assessed at 3 tonnes and it would be unacceptable to allow continued use by unrestricted traffic that can have a gross weight of up to 40 tonnes.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 Traffic orders will be sealed with the weight and width restrictions expected to be in force at the beginning of 2013.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Local Committee Reports : March 2010, December 2010