

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)****DATE:** 17 JUNE 2015**LEAD OFFICER:** Maureen Robson, Senior Engineer, Infrastructure Team

SUBJECT: Network Rail Bridge in Westhumble
(D2530/810 Boxhill & Burford Railway Bridge)
Weight Restriction Issues

DIVISION: DORKING HILLS**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Network Rail-owned bridge over the railway in Westhumble has been the subject of a 7.5T weight restriction for many years. Recently both SCC and Network Rail have been informed by local residents that the weight restriction is not being observed and that vehicles with a gross weight in excess of 7.5T have been observed using the bridge.

The bridge is not adequate for usage by vehicles over 7.5T in weight and Network Rail have expressed their concern on safety grounds and requested that SCC address this issue and seek to prevent their bridge from being overloaded.

This report considers investigating the extent of the problem and various possible courses of action to address this issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to note:**

- (i) A traffic count with both video (1day) and automatic counting (7days) has been commissioned to record all traffic using the bridge and determine the extent to which the weight restriction is being disregarded.
- (ii) Structures Team will also request assistance from the local parish council/residents to safeguard the bridge by reporting any incidences of vehicles which appear to be overweight that are using the bridge.
- (iii) The details of offending vehicles will be passed onto the police/SCC Trading standards for enforcement action.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

These actions will confirm if the bridge is being used by overweight vehicles, the extent of the problem, and enable the bridge to be protected from overloading.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Network Rail are concerned that overweight vehicles are using the bridge. This increases the risk of damage to this cast iron structure. The bridge has no significant defects at present but the failure mode for cast iron is a sudden brittle failure, which occurs suddenly without any hairline cracks or deformation that can be picked up during inspection to provide a warning.
- 1.2 Enforcement of weight restrictions can be undertaken by the police or by SCC Trading Standards but the resources are limited and they cannot maintain regular patrols. The advance warning signs for the weight restriction are all present and satisfactory.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 .The problem being addressed is the reported overloading of Westhumble Railway Bridge which could damage the bridge over time and lead to a sudden partial failure and road closure.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The solution favoured by Network Rail is the imposition of a 3T weight restriction together with a width restriction which would physically prevent overweight vehicles from proceeding across the bridge rather than relying on motorists observing the restriction. This would give them confidence that the bridge was not being overloaded but is not recommended for reasons of highway safety. It would increase traffic on Chapel Lane/ Bagdon Hill which has a significant accident history and is narrow and steep in places. The bridge approaches do not have an appropriate alignment for width restrictions with the bridge being on a bend with limited forward visibility
- 3.2 Another alternative is for SCC to contribute towards the cost of replacing the weaker cast iron section of the bridge deck. As the weight restriction is historic, Network Rail's obligation is limited to the provision of a 7.5T bridge in this location. If the highway authority wish them to replace the existing deck before it reaches the end of its life with a deck that could take 40T vehicles, the contribution needed from SCC would be approximately £750K. The scheme has a low priority compared to other schemes on the current 5 year strengthening programme and so would not qualify to be funded from the Structures budget in the foreseeable future. SCC receives no funding for Network Rail owned bridges.
- 3.3 The recommended alternative is to seek to ensure that the restriction already in place is complied with as this will provide a resolution that suits the objectives of both the highway and the railway authorities.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Surrey Police and Trading Standards have been consulted to confirm that they could provide assistance with enforcement if offenders can be targeted by their time of offending or company name.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The cost of the traffic survey is approximately £1000 and will be funded from the Structures Budget.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 N/A

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 N/A

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	Set out below
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

8.1 Crime and Disorder implications

If offences are observed, the measures proposed may include the enforcement of a traffic order.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 The appropriate response to address Network Rail's and local residents' concerns about reported abuse of the 7.5T weight limit is to take steps to prevent the existing weight restriction being abused and to protect the bridge from overloading.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 A traffic count with both video (1day) and automatic counting (7days) has been commissioned to record all traffic using the bridge and determine the extent to which the weight restriction is being disregarded.

- 10.2 When the results of the traffic survey are available, Surrey Police/Trading Standards will be contacted to patrol the site at times of observed offences and/or approach observed offenders.

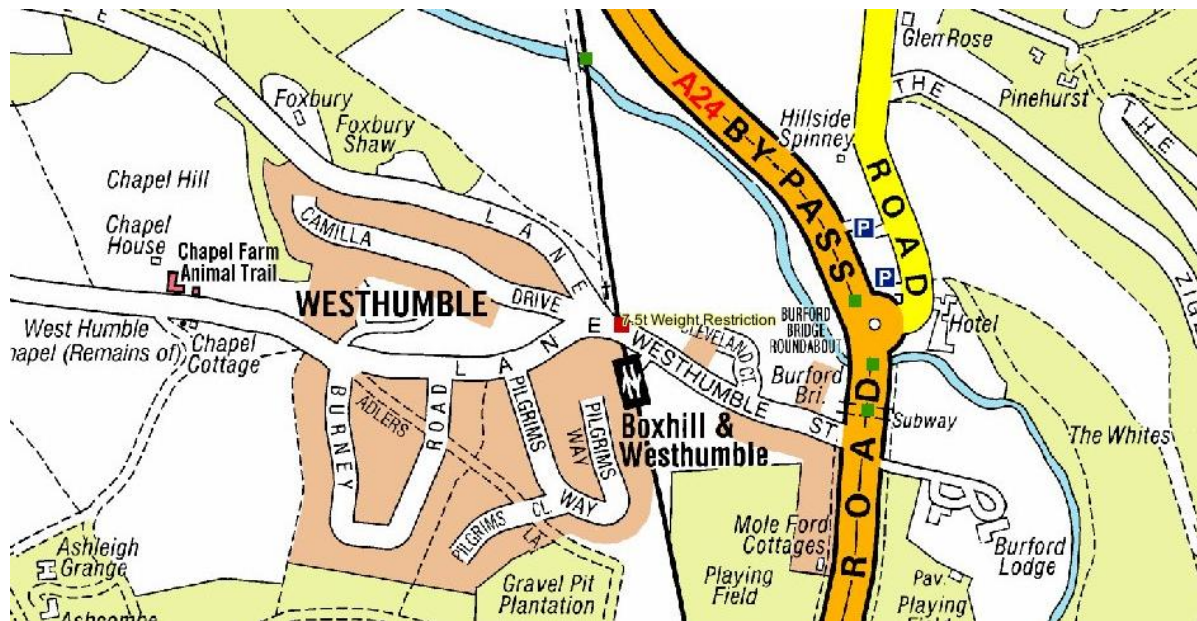
Contact Officer: Maureen Robson

Consulted: Surrey Police

Annexes:

Annex 1 : Location Plan and Photographs

Sources/background papers: N/A



Location Plan



View over Structure



Jan 2015 General Photograph



Jan2015 Inspection photograph