

Report to: Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
Date of meeting: 22 June 2015
By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
Title: Petition calling on the County Council to introduce a 7.5 tonne weight limit on the B2100 from Marks Cross to Rotherfield village centre.
Purpose: To consider the introduction of a Heavy Goods Vehicle ban on the B2100 between Marks Cross and Rotherfield.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Advise the petitioners that the County Council are currently investigating measures to improve Heavy Goods Vehicles' movements in the centre of Rotherfield as an alternative to a 7.5 tonne weight limit; and
 - (2) Agree to the implementation of a 12 month trial traffic management scheme in the centre of Rotherfield; and
 - (3) Authorise the making of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to improve traffic flow conditions that will remove two parking spaces in Rotherfield High Street.
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1 Background Information

1.1. On 10 February 2015 Councillor Bob Standley presented a petition to the Chairman of the County Council stating:

"We urge ESCC Highways to introduce a 7.5t weight limit on this route to protect our historic buildings with exceptions made for Public Service Vehicles and vehicles accessing the waste site at Castle Hill."

1.2. A copy of the petition is available in the Members Room. Standing Orders provide that where the Chairman considers it appropriate, petitions are considered by the relevant Committee or Lead Member and that a spokesperson for the petitioners be invited to address the Committee.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 There has been a history of incidents of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) striking the Kings Arms Public House, Rotherfield as they make a right turn from Station Road (B2100) into the High Street in the direction of Crowborough. In April 2013 the County Council agreed to investigate what could be done to prevent these incidents by reviewing the signing strategy for HGVs within the area. The location plan in Appendix 1 shows the area under investigation.

2.2 An Origin/Destination survey was undertaken between 7am and 7pm on 22 June 2006 on HGV traffic travelling through Rotherfield. This showed that there were 156 HGVs travelling through Rotherfield along the B2100 in both directions. In addition, data provided by the Department for Transport (who carry out their own surveys of HGV traffic along the B2100) was evaluated and this showed that between 2007 and 2012 an average of between 128 and 147 HGVs travelled along the B2100 each day. Both sets of data confirm that a large number of HGVs are travelling through the village.

2.3 An HGV signing strategy was developed for Crowborough in 1999 to introduce a coherent policy on signing within the town. This led to the introduction of signs at strategic locations outside

the town indicating directions to the main Industrial Estates of Millwood and Jarvis Brook via the A26. Further improvements to this signage could possibly be made to deter HGVs from travelling to these Industrial Estates via Rotherfield.

2.4 To ascertain the extent of the problem of HGV's making the right turn at the High Street, a CCTV camera was installed in February 2014 overlooking the junction. This highlighted a few instances in which HGVs had difficulty making the right turn, but unfortunately it was not clear from the footage as to why.

2.5 Between June and July 2014 a temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was in operation to facilitate building repairs being undertaken within the High Street. The traffic management within the High Street during these works included a ban on HGVs making the right turn from the B2100, a ban on parking in the High Street and the introduction of temporary traffic signals at the junction. Although the Parish Council had some concerns about the traffic signals they were supportive of a HGV ban as the alternative route identified for HGV's, (via the B2101), appeared to work well in terms of traffic flow.

2.6 A County Council policy exists relating to the control of HGV's within the county. Policy PS4/5 was established to reconcile, as far as possible, the conflicting demands of the transport of goods and the impact of HGV traffic on the wider environment. One of the specific considerations is that "A" and "B" class roads should form the main routes to be used by heavy lorries. Also, before any ban can be considered, a suitable alternative route for heavy lorries must be available. The County Council are concerned that the available road network that can be used by HGVs is not overly reduced as there are few strategic routes in the county suitable for use by HGVs. Sussex Police have been approached regarding enforcement of any HGV ban and they have confirmed that they would enforce the ban if an offence was observed but they could not be expected to be proactive in any enforcement activity. A HGV ban should therefore only be considered as a last resort.

2.7 Details of the Origin/Destination Survey undertaken in 2006 are shown in Appendix 2. In summary a high proportion of HGV's travelling through the village are on local business (35%) and not classified as "through traffic". If an HGV ban was introduced this would have a negative impact on that local business for which HGVs legitimately travel through Rotherfield. Although an HGV ban could be implemented between Marks Cross and the village with the exception of those needing access between these two locations, all HGV traffic travelling beyond Rotherfield would be subject to this ban, with no exceptions. This would apply to those vehicles accessing the Castle Hill waste site.

2.8 Given the experience of the temporary traffic management measures that were in operation in the High Street last year, measures are currently being investigated to try to ease HGV movements through Rotherfield instead of introducing an HGV ban. Should these measures not improve the traffic flow in Rotherfield then the situation will be reviewed. Details of the measures proposed are set out in Appendix 3. These measures could be implemented relatively quickly through the introduction of an Experimental TRO. In summary the measures are as follows:

- Extend the existing double yellow line on the eastern side of the High Street to remove the two parking spaces to enable better traffic flow.
- Provide a "Keep Clear" box near the narrow section of the B2100 outside the Kings Arms car park entrance. This will prevent vehicles from progressing towards the junction until the way ahead is clear.
- Review the HGV signage (directing HGV's to the main Industrial Estates in Crowborough) to make it more prominent.

These measures should make it easier for HGVs to make the right turn from the B2100 into the High Street without being impeded by other traffic.

2.9 Experimental TROs can operate for a period of 18 months, during which a decision would need to be made as to whether the measures contained in the TRO should be made permanent or revoked. Objections to the TRO can be made within the first six months from the date that it is made. Any objections to the Experimental TRO must be considered before any order giving permanent effect to its provisions can be made. It is therefore proposed that a 12 month trial be undertaken. It is proposed to start the trial in the Autumn of 2015. The cost of implementing an Experimental TRO with the required signing and lining is estimated to be about £5,000.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Lead Member advises the petitioners that proposals are currently being developed to better manage HGV movements through Rotherfield as an alternative to the introduction of a 7.5t weight limit. It is proposed that these measures are introduced on a 12 month trial under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to assess whether they will have been successful or not in improving the flow of traffic through Rotherfield. Implementing an HGV ban may be considered at a later date but this would have implications on local businesses and may not be possible due to potential safety issues on the only alternative route for HGVs (i.e. the B2101).

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LOCAL MEMBERS

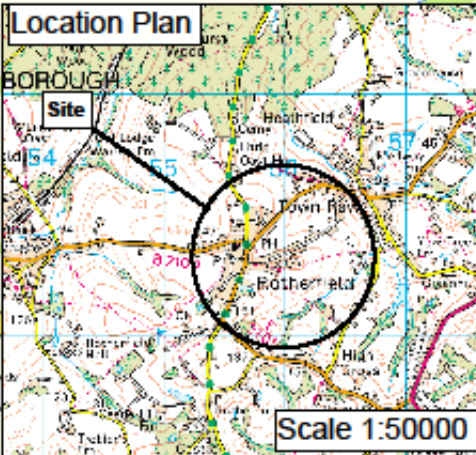
Councillor Standley

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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Appendix 1 - B2100 at Rotherfield



Scale 1:8,000

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 Director of Communities,
 Economy and Transport
 East Sussex County Council

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RESULTS OF ORIGIN/DESTINATION SURVEY IN 2006

A survey of HGV movements through Rotherfield was undertaken in 2006 to determine the number of HGV's travelling through the area and the purpose of these journeys. This survey was undertaken as a roadside interview with drivers being stopped and asked a number of questions. These included the purpose of the journey (i.e. business or travel to work) and the starting and finishing points of the journey. From the origin/destination information a judgement was made as to whether the journey was considered local or not. A total of 156 HGV's were included in the survey.

The following tables show the information identified from the analysis of the 2006 survey.

HGV's travelling Westbound

No. of HGV's	Local	Through	Business	Other
80	40 (50%)		32 (40%)	8 (10%)
		40 (50%)	30 (38%)	10 (12%)

HGV's travelling Eastbound

No. of HGV's	Local	Through	Business	Other
76	47 (62%)		22 (29%)	25 (33%)
		29 (38%)	11 (14%)	18 (24%)

Of the total of 156 HGV's travelling along the B2100 through Rotherfield, some 54 (35%) could be classified as being local business trips.

PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING HGV MOVEMENTS IN ROTHERFIELD

RATIONALE

The County Council Policy PS4/5 was established to reconcile, as far as possible, the conflicting demands of the transport of goods and the environment. One of the specific considerations is that "A" and "B" class roads should be used for heavy lorries as the County Council is concerned that the available road network that can be used by HGV's is not reduced as there are few strategic routes in the county suitable for use by HGV's. Also should any ban be considered, a suitable alternative route for heavy lorries must be available.

Before an HGV ban can be considered, a number of factors need to be taken into account. These include the characteristics of the road (e.g. width, pinch points, hilliness and local development), traffic flow (i.e. volume, %HGV) and injury accidents. A scoring system is used for each factor and a score of 55 or more indicates that a ban may be justified subject to other conditions (of the policy) being met. From an initial assessment of these factors for Rotherfield, a score of fewer than 50 was achieved.

Another factor when considering an HGV ban there must be an alternative route. An alternative route along the B2101, via Argos Hill, was used over a period of a few weeks during the building refurbishment that took place in Rotherfield High Street in June/July 2014. However there are two issues relating to this route. Firstly it is unlikely that the residents along the B2101 would support the additional HGV's on a permanent basis. Also, the visibility at the junction of the B2101 and Mayfield Road is limited and this could present a safety problem resulting in there being no viable alternative route. Based on policy PS4/5 it is considered that an HGV ban on Station Road is not justified at the present time. The banning of HGV's should be considered as a last resort.

Although there are a large number of HGV's travelling through Rotherfield, 35% of these movements are local and related to businesses in the area. A blanket HGV ban (with the exception of access) will impact on these businesses. The local authority has to comply with Department for Transport regulations with regards to road signage and markings. These regulations do not allow for a ban with exceptions for certain types of HGV. Without legal backing, enforcement will not be possible.

Sussex Police are of the view that the County Council should not introduce a ban on HGV's using the B2100 if it relies solely on enforcement to make it work. It is not the case that the police would not necessarily support a ban but they would not be able to dedicate resources to enforcing it. The concern of Sussex Police relates to the difficulty with weight and width restrictions; a vehicle has to be seen travelling from start to finish and they would have to counter any defence that the use was to access a property etc. The length of road from Marks Cross through to Rotherfield and beyond is quite lengthy and to police any ban would be resource intensive for something that may not happen very often. In short, Sussex Police would enforce the ban if an offence was observed but they could not be expected to be proactive in any enforcement activity.

From an evaluation of the CCTV footage taken in February 2014, it may not necessarily be the presence of the HGV's that is the problem but the conditions within the High Street preventing traffic flowing that is the issue. It is suggested that there are two causes of congestion that result in HGV's having difficulty negotiating the right turn out of Station Street. The first relates to the parked vehicles between the Compass House and Gatts Inn at the narrow part of the High Street. Drivers passing these parked vehicles block traffic coming out of Station Road, see photos 1 and 2 below:

PHOTO 1



PHOTO 2



The second cause of congestion relates to vehicles being unable to reverse should they be prevented from making the full right turn into the High Street.

THE PROPOSALS

It is proposed that three simple measures be progressed to alleviate the causes of congestion in the High Street and reduce unnecessary HGV traffic within the village. These are as follows:

1. Extending the existing double yellow line on the eastern side the High Street to remove two parking spaces to enable better traffic flow. Sufficient parking is available nearby.
2. Provide a "Keep Clear" box near the narrow section of the B2100 outside the Kings Arms car park entrance. This will prevent vehicles from progressing towards the junction until the way ahead is clear.
3. Review the HGV signage (directing HGV's to the main Industrial Estates in Crowborough) to make it more prominent.

These measures should make it easier for HGV's to make the right turn from the B2100 into the High Street without being impeded by other traffic.

It is proposed that the measures detailed above be subject to a 12 month trial to identify if they have been effective at reducing the impact of HGV's in the centre of the village. During this trial the public will be able to provide feedback to the County Council who can implement alterations if necessary. Should the trial be unsuccessful then a further review of options will be considered.

THE WAY AHEAD

Should the proposals identified above be acceptable then it will be possible to implement the measures proposed relatively quickly with the introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order.

Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders can operate for a period of 18 months, during which a decision would need to be made as to whether the Order should be made permanent or revoked. Objections to the Order can be made within the first six months from the date that it is made. Any objections to the experimental order must be considered before any order giving permanent effect to its provisions can be made. It is therefore proposed that a 12 month trial be undertaken.