PROPOSED 7.5T MGW WEIGHT RESTRICTION FOR MILE LANE AND NEWTON ROAD PENRITH

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report advises members following the advertisement of a Traffic Regulation Order to impose 7.5T maximum gross vehicle weight (except for access) restrictions on two lengths of road in and around Penrith. This is part of the ongoing Highways Capital (formerly Annual Package of Measures) programme.

1.2 Members are asked to consider the recommendations and indicate whether the relevant order should be confirmed or alternatively not confirmed as advertised.

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 Highways network management is key priority for the Highway Authority. The effective movement of people and goods and the guiding of traffic to the most appropriate routes is key in maintaining an effective and useable network.

2.2 The imposition of targeted weight restrictions will contribute to the achievement of safety related targets and promote those routes for sustainable travel to work, school, and for cycling as well as improving longevity of network assets.

2.3 There are no equality implications arising out of this report.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that members agree to bring into operation, as advertised, The County of Cumbria (B5288 Norfolk Road and U3484 Mile Lane, Penrith) (Prohibition of Heavy Commercial Vehicles over 7.5 tonnes Maximum Gross Weight Except for Access) Order 20><, having taken into consideration the matters contained in Section 122(2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 which are more specifically referred to at paragraph 7.2 of this Report.
3.2 This will allow 7.5t weight limits to be imposed on the following lengths of road - (See plans in Appendix 1).

(a) The length of the B5288 Norfolk Road from it's junction with the mini roundabout at Cromwell Road to it's junction with Gillwilly Road;

(b) The entire length of the U3484 Mile Lane;

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Newton Road is a main artery into Penrith from the west and at it’s western end are the Penrith Industrial Estates. The majority of the road frontage is residential properties and at the eastern end the road crosses over the West Coast Main Line railway. Lengths of the road are narrow and twisty and it is used by many HGV’s as a short cut to the get to the north and the A6 and M6.

4.2 The preferred route for HGV’s is through the Industrial estate on Haweswater Road and to Junction 40 of the M6. Large vehicles needing to access the town centre should use Ullswater Road and Brunswick Road as opposed to Newton Road.

4.3 Evidence from the residents in the Castletown area indicates some large vehicles are getting lost in Castletown or taking wrong turns and causing disruptions and delay. Evidence also suggests that residents feel unsafe with large vehicles attempting tight turns and straddling lanes along the route.

4.4 On Mile Lane the issues are slightly different. Routine highway inspections have shown damage being caused to the highway edge through overrunning and to the central area (in places the central crown of the road is now depressed with water standing in this central area). Remedial work including surface dressing has been undertaken to mitigate this damage over the past couple of years. However the road construction is such that it was never intended to carry a substantial amount of Heavy Goods Vehicles.

4.5 Following a consultation exercise in August and September 2011 no comments were received.

4.6 A draft order was advertised in November 2011 (Appendix 2). The advertisement period closed on 3rd December. In response 71 objections have been received (a copy of all objections will be available to members at the Local Committee).

4.7 An initial letter was received from Optima Highway Solutions. This letter objected on the basis that a large number of HGV movements would now transfer onto busy local and residential roads and junctions. This would increase noise vibration and potential conflict with vulnerable highway users.
4.8 Additionally they feel there has been inadequate consultation and that the County Council should maintain the highway to a standard necessary and not reassign HGVs onto another route.

4.9 In response to these comments the following should be noted. Haweswater Road is a highway constructed to a suitable width and depth to allow use by large numbers of HGVs it is therefore the approved and signed route for HGV traffic. The route does not pass the frontage of a residential property.

4.10 Consultations were held with our statutory consultees, including the Chamber of Trade, the Road Haulage Association and Freight Transport Association, the major representative organisations of the haulage industry. No replies or comments were received.

4.11 It should also be noted that the distance to the plant from the roundabout on the A66 at Rheged is actually marginally shorter via junction 40 (M6), Ullswater Road and Haweswater Road than via Mile Lane. The restriction will have an except for access exemption allowing large vehicles to access properties as normal along Mile Lane.

4.12 Following this initial letter a subsequent 70 objections were received by Legal Services. Many of the objection letters base their objections on potential congestion, highway safety and danger to local residents adjacent to the route. Although there would be an increase in HGV traffic on Haweswater Road it is felt this road is of a sufficient standard to cope. In addition there are wide footways along nearly the full length with dropped crossing provision and a 30mph speed limit.

4.13 Exact figures on the number of HGV’s that will transfer onto Haweswater Road are unknown. Should the order be approved then a period of monitoring of both HGV movements and safety concerns will be undertaken to ascertain any issues.

5.0 OPTIONS

5.1 Members can resolve to bring into force the order as advertised. OR Members may also choose not to bring into force part of the order as advertised.

6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Any physical works relating to the changes proposed are to be funded from the Highways Capital programme (formerly the Annual Package of Measures) funding stream which is controlled by this Committee. It is anticipated that these works will be funded from this year’s allocation. The estimated cost for the works is £5,000. This includes for changing of signing on the A66 trunk road in advance of the proposed restriction on Mile Lane.
7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The County Council, as Traffic Authority, having taken into consideration the matters contained in section 122(2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("the 1984 Act") detailed below at paragraph 7.2, considers that it is expedient to agree to the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order referred to at paragraph 3.1 of this Report, for the reasons specified at sections 1(1)(a) and 1(1)(b) of the 1984 Act, namely for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road(s) or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising; and for preventing damage to the road(s) or to any building on or near the road(s).

7.2 Under Section 122(2), the matters which were taken into account in exercising that duty are: -

(a) The desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises;

(b) the effect on amenities of an area;

(c) the national air quality strategy prepared under section 80 of the Environment Act 1995;

(d) the importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles; and

(e) any other matters appearing to the authority to be relevant.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 These proposals are intended to remove heavy goods vehicles from a couple of stretches highway to the west of Penrith. On Mile Lane damage has been noted by inspectors and to reduce this ongoing maintenance burden a restriction is proposed that will make drivers of HGVs use a route more suitable for large vehicles.

8.2 Newton road is a residential area with some tight turns and narrow roads. For HGVs not accessing premises along this section of road there are more suitable alternative routes, which will take HGVs away from residential areas improving safety.

Andrew Moss
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Proposed restrictions location Plans
Appendix 2 Copy of Advertised Order
IMPLICATIONS

Electoral Division(s): Penrith West

Executive Decision

Key Decision

If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?

Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?

If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?

Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny? If so, give details below.

Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?

Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?

N.B. If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and the Head of Member Services and Scrutiny has obtained the necessary approvals.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS [including Local Committees]

Nil

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

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