

From: Michael Rand Ashendon

With the increase in traffic to and from Westcott Venture Park, we as a Parish feel there should be a weight limit imposed on the C66. Can the Parish please have one?

We would like to see the new permanent access opened up to the north of Westcott for all the Venture Park traffic?

Comment from Ashley Riddell

Please find attached the last count we have at the junction of the A41 and the C66, and two-way history files of all motor vehicles and HGV's at Cannons Hill Crossroads.

The data shows that HGV flows are pretty static.

All motor vehicles actually show an increase of just over 9% entering the Cannons hill junction, but the C66 Ashendon side fell in 2008.

The next time a count is scheduled is March subject to the Built Environment contract and Funding levels etc.

Ashendon's problems with HGV's is not dissimilar to many other rural villages in the County and until we have a countywide strategy it is difficult to prioritise the limited resources we have, both staff and financial.

I have a concern as to HGV restrictions in the area. With banning HGV movements on the C66, you then put more onus on the C57 through Upper Winchendon and Waddesdon, or the C64 and C3 through Easington, Chilton, Dorton, Wotton and Kingswood if drivers are forced to seek alternative routings to Westcott of which no route is of any better standard than the C66.

HGV's are a limited problem in Chilton presently, but as the whole area is predominately a farming area, most of the farms are serviced by the 'necessary' lorries. In my opinion the bigger, wider and heavier farm vehicles are more to blame for the appalling state of village roads, than the very low level of HGV's seen! Banning traffic on one road will just push the problem elsewhere. Rural life would not exist without the Lorry, but common sense does need to play its part.

Comment from Louise Whitney on County progress on a Freight Strategy

Buckinghamshire County Council, through its Second Local Transport Plan, has committed itself to developing a freight strategy to manage HGV's travelling around the county.

The freight strategy is being developed in line with Network Hierarchy work making sure we identify the strategic routes that are appropriate for all types of vehicles to travel and that within our maintenance of the road network, roads are identified to take heavier vehicles. This will assist in measuring where and why freight movements occur on the network i.e. local traffic generated by local business/demand or cross county traffic and developing strategies for routes and locations to mitigate this appropriately.

The number of true HGV's 12 tonne to 44 tonne is generally declining across the county. There is an increase in Light Goods Vehicles (LGV's) and large white vans. This is argued to be because of changes in the distribution patterns with raw materials being transport by large HGV's and finished goods being distributed in LGV's. However we still want to manage the proportion of HGV's entering the county as these are seen to impact on the rural areas such as Ashendon and Westcott and are noticed more by residents due to the size, noise and vibration caused. Statistics for domestic freight moved nationally by commodity in 2007 show that agricultural products and live animals provide 7% of freight moved, foodstuffs and animal fodder provide 23% of freight moved and fertilisers provide 1 % of freight moved. As such freight is an important part of daily life, even in rural parts of the county.

Buckinghamshire County Council's main aim is to keep vehicles on the most appropriate routes. However, the County Council has very limited influence on freight operators and routing of the vehicles. The use of Sat Nav by HGV drivers can also lead to problems. Buckinghamshire County Council has done some work with the Sat Nav companies to prevent HGV's using inappropriate roads however this does depend on particular types of software being used that can adapt the routes being used to the size/weight of vehicle, which some companies do not employ.

Any concerns related to freight, particularly local and operational issues, are investigated and dealt with by the Area Traffic Management teams whilst the wider strategy issues will be dealt by the Transport Policy & Strategy team as they develop a formal freight strategy.

Weight restrictions

Where the weight limit is being applied for structural reasons, the people maintaining the structure will assess the structure and if found to be weak, will calculate the safe working load which the structure can carry. On most roads access by HGVs will always be required for delivery wagons to local shops, refuse vehicles, skip wagons to residential properties and to service local businesses. By imposing a weight limit, many people would be affected, and local businesses and shops could suffer. In some areas, an "except for access" clause has been built into the Traffic Regulation Order, but this is totally reliant upon enforcement and it is almost impossible to distinguish between local HGVs and HGVs using it as a through route. As a consequence, environmental weight limits are seldom used unless there is an acceptable diversion route and there are no local businesses or shops in the restricted area.

Thames Valley Police enforce weight restrictions. However, the Police have limited resources to enforce this type of restriction. Restrictions with "except for access" clauses quickly fall into disrepute and are notoriously difficult to enforce. However these are needed to permit HGV access to local shops, businesses, residential properties for deliveries/removals, farm deliveries etc. For this reason, enforcement commands a low priority and therefore, where possible, physical measures should be introduced to prevent any abuse of the restrictions, the installation of signs alone are wholly ineffective. Restrictions will not be used if there is no suitable alternative route for the displaced traffic.

Comment from Ian Marshall on Planning arrangements

BCC will be seeking to secure a suitable HGV routing agreement with the Bioganix applicant where traffic will be expected to arrive and depart via the A41, subject to

capacity assessment and any highway improvements that may be necessary. We will also consider HGV routing as part of the forthcoming application for the redevelopment of the solids area within Westcott Venture Park.

In addition to the above, goods vehicle routing is something that will be considered as part of any planning application in this area that has the potential to result in an increase in goods vehicle movements. The most appropriate way of securing routes that are agreed will of course be considered and as part of this process additional weight restrictions could be identified where they are appropriate and necessary.

Background to Ashendon letter

BCC recently installed 'Unsuitable for HGV Signs' at Winchendon crossroads where the C66 leads through Ashendon to the Westcott Venture Park. There has been a decrease in HGV's but insufficient not to cause disruption and hold-ups when large lorries pass through the village especially when two meet head-on. You may be aware that in places two cars cannot pass, let alone two lorries, or even one lorry and a car.

Westcott Venture Park has recently seen several Planning Applications;

1. A new Warehouse with proposed parking for 18 lorries
2. An oil distribution depot relocating from Long Crendon.
3. A tower crane storage depot.
4. Open storage for piling and drilling rigs.
5. The current application for the in-vessel composting unit.

All of these applications will not only increase the amount of traffic movements, but as you can imagine will be predominantly HGV's. As a result, Ashendon is becoming very concerned for the future disruption and inconvenience, not to mention safety. Hence the request for a weight limit on the C66.

Finally, the In-vessel composting application, which was made by Biogranix plc. Proposing that the present temporary gateway to the north of Westcott will be used for their permanent access. Ashendon Parish Council is concerned that all of these traffic movements will not be added to the movements recorded through the existing main gate the opposite end of Westcott and would therefore detract from the trigger level when a new permanent access for the complete Venture Park will have to be constructed on or near the A41 north of Westcott.

With all this newly generated traffic Ashendon Parish Council and, we are sure Westcott Parish Council would not object, would like to see the new permanent access opened up to the north of Westcott for all the Venture Park traffic, especially as the majority of the newly generated traffic will be HGV's.

This would enable a weight limit to be imposed on the C66 through both Westcott and Ashendon.
