



Northumberland County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY SERVICE DIRECTOR - LOCAL SERVICES

Paul Jones - Service Director - Local Services

PROPOSED 7.5 TONNE WEIGHT RESTRICTION, C31 MILFIELD HILL

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle

Purpose of Report

To consider the results of the consultation exercise regarding a proposal to provide a 7.5t weight restriction on the C31 'Milfield Hill' road.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the proposed 7.5t weight restriction is implemented.

Link to Corporate Plan

Living - "We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for"
Enjoying - "We want you to love where you live"

Key Issues

The County Council has received concerns from residents of Milfield Hill Steadings about inappropriate use of the C31 road as a shortcut by HGVs.

The C31 is a narrow single track road with no passing places. There is a better alternative route available for HGV's with minimal diversion.

A 7.5t weight restriction is felt to be appropriate given the particular characteristics of this location. The consultation response was positive and the scheme will be funded through the LTP.

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Background

1. The County Council has received concerns from residents of Millfield Hill Steadings about inappropriate use of the C31 road as a shortcut by HGVs.
2. The C31 is a narrow single track road running north west from the A697 north of Millfield to the B6352 at West Flodden. The majority of the road is in open countryside, but there are 12 residential properties at Millfield Hill. The location is shown in Figure 1.

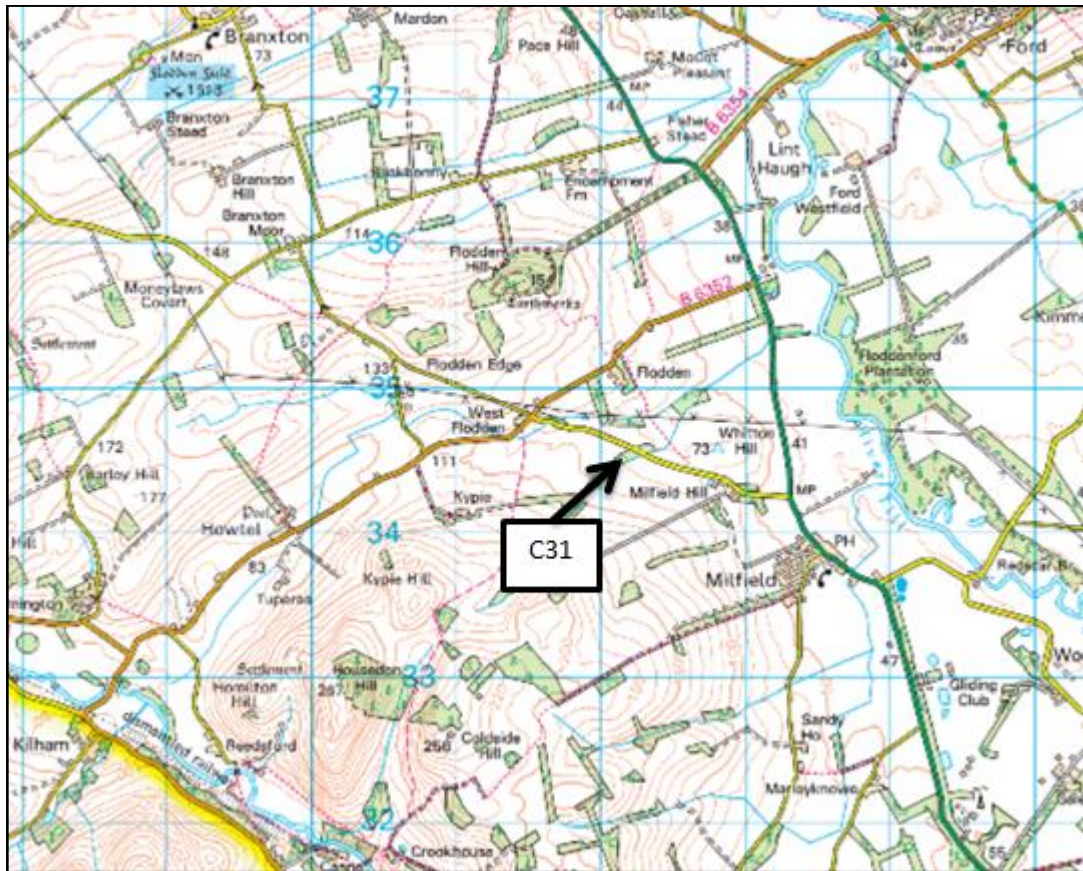


Fig.1. Location Plan.

3. The road varies in width between 3 and 4 metres (approximate). There are no formal passing places. Passing is possible informally using field entrances at certain locations. Figures 2 and 3 show general views along the road.

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Fig.2. Looking north west at Milfield Hill



Fig.3. A section of the road west of Milfield Hill, looking south east.

4. Residents have highlighted several issues including:

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- Vehicles being forced to reverse for long distances upon meeting HGVs.
- Vehicles damaged by passing HGVs.
- Damage to private accesses, gardens and buildings.
- Damage to road edges and verges.
- Road is used by walkers and cyclists.

Unsuitable for HGV signs have been erected in the past but have had no impact on usage.

5. The alternative route for HGVs is via the B6352 which joins the A697 north of the C31. This road is suitable for HGV traffic and is an agreed timber transport route. A view of the road is shown in Figure 4.



Fig.4. Looking north east along the B6352

6. The C31 is 1.2 miles in length. The route via the B6352 is 2 miles, a net increase of only 0.8 miles.
7. Following the concerns raised, residents and statutory consultees were consulted on a proposal to provide a 7.5t weight restriction to prevent HGVs from using the C31 unnecessarily. An 'except for access' exemption would be included to allow those HGVs with a legitimate need to enter the estate to do so, including agricultural vehicles and refuse vehicles. A copy of the consultation plan is shown in Appendix A.
8. Eight responses were received as follows:
 - For: 8 (100%)
 - Against: 0
 - Neutral: 0

A copy of the responses is shown in Appendix B.

9. Milfield Parish Council supports the proposal.

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10. Having considered the nature of the C31, it's narrow single track width over a long length with no passing places, the properties the C31 serves and the availability of a better alternative route involving a minimal diversion length, a weight restriction is considered appropriate at this location.
11. Given the outcome of the consultation it is recommended that the 7.5t weight restriction (except for access) should be implemented.
12. It is also recommended that the existing direction signage be reviewed to ensure that traffic is directed via the most appropriate routes.

Implications Arising out of the Report

Policy	It would not be normal practice for NCC to introduce a weight restriction on a road unless this was required due to the presence of a structure that required protection from overloading. However, given the particular circumstances of this single track road, the unsuitability of the road for HGV through traffic, safety concerns being raised and damage being incurred due to overrunning of verges and availability of an alternative more suitable route in close proximity, it is considered appropriate in these circumstances to introduce a weight restriction.
Finance and value for money	The scheme will be funded through the Local Transport Plan Programme.
Legal	None
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	The proposal is being implemented to minimise risk to residents and road users
Crime & Disorder	None

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Customer Consideration	Local residents and statutory consultees have been consulted.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Wooler

Background papers:

None.

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that relevant officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

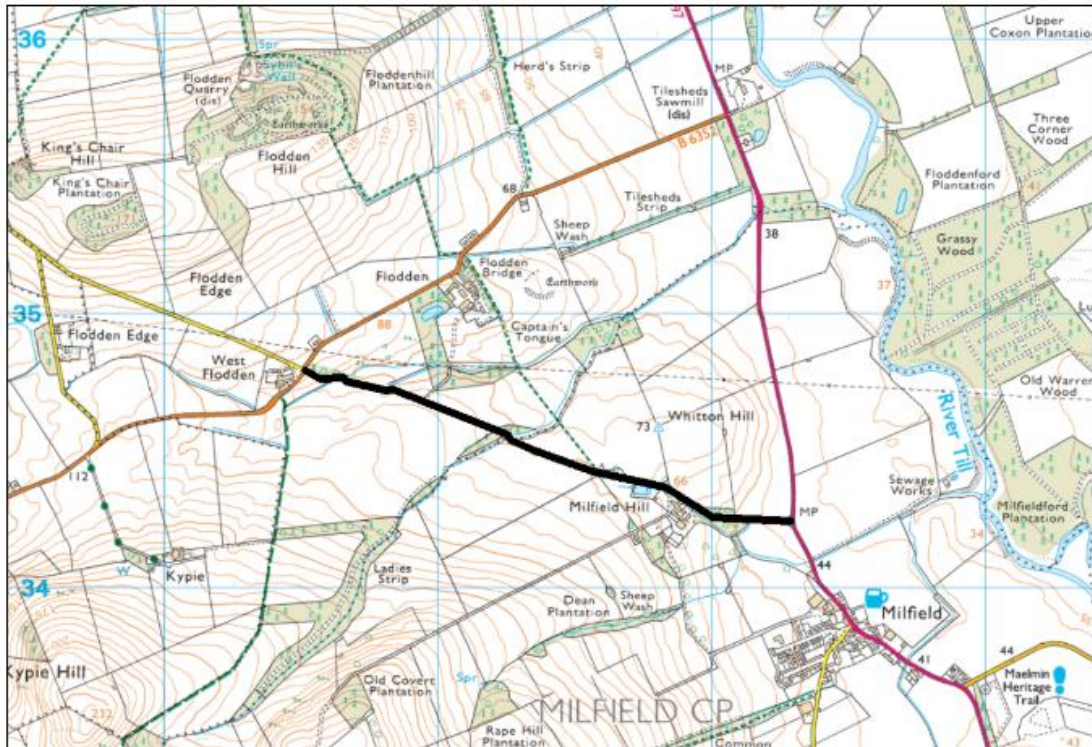
	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Director	
Portfolio Holder(s)	

Report Author

Report Author ***Richard McKenzie – Senior Programmes Officer***

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Appendix A - Consultation Plan



Proposed 7.5t weight restriction, C31 Milfield Hill

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Appendix B - Consultation Responses

F O R	A G A I N S T	N E I T H E R	Other Relevant Comments
1			I do support the above proposal wholeheartedly. I support this proposal because as I live on Milfield Hill Steading, I need to take my dog out twice a day, risking life and limb on this road. There are no paths along this road, so normally if traffic is coming, where you could at one time step on to the grass, now, because of huge lorries shortcutting along there towards Kelso, and the HGVs etc usually fill the whole road, they take away all of the grass at the side of the road leaving a muddy mess and steep banks so that people walking along there can't get off the road if they wanted to, especially near to the Steading where it is very narrow. Huge vehicles go along there at breakneck speed with no concern for people or other vehicles. There have been many close shaves because of the nature of the road (being so narrow and bendy). Where the road meets the grassed area there are deep drops that cars could drop into and also cycles which are very common along this road. Last week a cyclist was almost unseated from his bike because of these drops at the side of the road. The next road along from Milfield Hill, (the B6352) is a much more appropriate road for this size of vehicle and is not much further on for vehicles driving from the Milfield direction. All of the mud on the road along there especially in wet weather makes it very slippery underfoot and under wheels. Please accept this proposal as they use this road as if it is a motorway. I understand that farm vehicles and the councils bin vehicle need to gain access and other vehicles needing access, but these are normally not the problem.
1			This proposal will alleviate the disruption, damage to private property, and at times intimidation of residents by these huge lorries. Also the extensive damage to the road surface, edges and verges would I suspect diminish, potentially saving the Council much needed funds used for repairs elsewhere. I have supplies numerous photos and evidence.
1			We have lived here permanently over seven years. During that time the amount of HGV traffic using the road has steadily increased. The main users were logging lorries, however that has fluctuated over the years, but an increasing amount of general goods traffic has been noted. The straw that broke the camel's back has been a steady use of the road by tipper lorries over the last few months, which has resulted in mutilated verges, more potholes, several near misses with other traffic and at least one accident to my knowledge. A few weeks ago two tipper lorries tried to pass one another outside my house. The one going up the hill towards Howtel mounted my drive and the grass verge. Unfortunately I was out at the time, but my wife witnessed the incident, unfortunately she didn't get many details from the vehicle(s). I have made temporary repairs myself, but am going to have to get a builder in to sort it properly at an unnecessary expense to myself. So the sooner we can implement a Weight Restriction the better. I only hope that HGV users will adhere to it in future. Thank you for your efforts.
1			When two heavy vehicles (heavy farm vehicles esp) try to pass they push the verge / soil into the open drains that run down my property and the NCC JCB has to dig it out!! Very frightening to confront a fully laden timber lorry on this narrow stretch of road.
1			Can anything be done about increasing amounts of rubbish on the A697?? And the A1?
1			Milfield Parish Council supports the proposal subject to the usual exemption for agricultural machinery (such as combines).
1			The residents of Milfield Hill Steading use the C31 road for 1. walking exercise, 2. dog walking, 3. cycling, 4. walking down to Milfield village. This proposed restriction should help the grass verges recover. They are an important habitat for wildlife. Would it be possible to include a speed restriction out from Milfield village to beyond the entrance to Milfield Hill Steadings. We do have problems with speeding cars and vans on the narrow C31 especially when trying to visit from the Steading.
1			I fully support the proposal, we regularly have trucks travelling at high speed coming past our property and on occasion running along my garden (my property extends right to the curb) and causing damage.
8	0	0	

DECISION TAKEN

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**Title of Officer(s) and
Portfolio Holder (where
appropriate):**

Paul Jones - Service Director - Local Services

Subject:

**PROPOSED 7.5 TONNE WEIGHT RESTRICTION,
C31 MILFIELD HILL**

Consultation

- For: 8 (100%)
- Against: 0
- Neutral: 0

Decision Taken:

The proposed 7.5t weight restriction (except for access) should be implemented.

Signature of Director



Date

22nd June 2021

* delete as appropriate