

ITEM 10 – A336 (Southampton Road through Cadnam & Bartley and Ringwood Road through Netley Marsh) – Proposal to HCC Highways for a 7.5 tonne Weight Limit

Background

At the March 9th 2021 Council meeting, a resident of Netley Marsh spoke in the public session about a proposal being presented to Netley Marsh Parish Council seeking their support for a 7.5 tonne weight limit on the A336 through Netley Marsh. Given that the A336 continues westwards from Netley Marsh through Bartley and Cadnam, similar support was sought from Copythorne Parish Council.

Current position

Netley Marsh Parish Council has confirmed it's support and we have been provided with a copy of the document giving full details of the proposal that will be submitted to HCC Highways (Appendix 1) to this report.

(Note:- In the first paragraph of Section 2 (Introduction) of the document reference is made to the proposal being "supported by Netley Marsh Parish and Copythorne Parish Councils on behalf of the residents of the impacted villages." The support of Copythorne Parish Council is being requested and has not yet been agreed.

Key Points to consider

- i. Such a weight limit would greatly reduce the level of larger vehicles using the Southampton Road through the Parish.
- ii. A 7.5 tonne weight limit is already in place from the A336 roundabout with the A326 ("Goodies") through to the centre of Totton.
- iii. The limit would not apply to vehicles requiring access to businesses etc. along the route, such as to the saw mill at Bartley, the garden centre at Cadnam, school buses, etc.

Proposal

That Copythorne Parish Council adds it's support to that of Netley Marsh Parish Council to the proposal for a 7.5 tonne weight limit on the A336 from the A336/A31 roundabout at Cadnam to the A336/A326 roundabout at West Totton.

Cllr Graham Chillcott
March 2021



A336 7.5t Weight Limit Proposal

On behalf of Netley Marsh and Copythorne Parish Councils

April 2021

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This proposal recommends the implementation of a **7.5t – Except for loading** weight limit on the **A336** between Netley Marsh and Cadnam.

Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) are increasingly using the A336 as a cut-through to and from the A31, instead of using the Hampshire County Council (HCC) recommended route; the purpose built **A326**, to junction 2 of the M27. The reason appears to be a modest fuel/time saving.

A recent local survey showed that up to 90% of HGV journeys along the A336 are not local. The vast majority are fuel and gas tankers (Fawley Refinery), waste haulage HGVs (Marchwood Industrial Park) and container transporters (Eling Wharf and Southampton Docks). This is exactly the traffic that the **A326** was built to accommodate, away from residential areas.

The risk of HGVs joining the A31/M27 at junction 1 is that both on-slips are uphill and are accessed from a standing start at the Cadnam roundabout. The A31 access merges onto a pinch point where the M27 ends and 3 lanes converge to 2, whilst leading directly on to an uphill section. This inevitably leads to the slow merging of HGVs directly into the path of heavy, speeding traffic, presenting an obvious and predictable risk of serious accidents on this major strategic route.

The A336 runs within the New Forest National Park and within a conservation area. Buildings designated as 'Heritage Assets' by the New Forest Park Authority (NFPA), are not built to withstand the ground vibrations caused by the large number of HGVs now using this route. Residents are also woken up several times during the night by these vibrations. The road is in need of major repairs but, as a non-primary route, it is not considered to be a priority for resurfacing by HCC.

Planned expansions at Fawley and Marchwood will see increased levels of HGV traffic. Hampshire County Council's Waterside Transport Strategy commits to huge investment in upgrading the **A326** to a dual carriageway past its junction with the A336, but unless the A336 is given the requested weight limit protection, it is feared that HGVs will still choose, in increasing numbers, to use the A336.

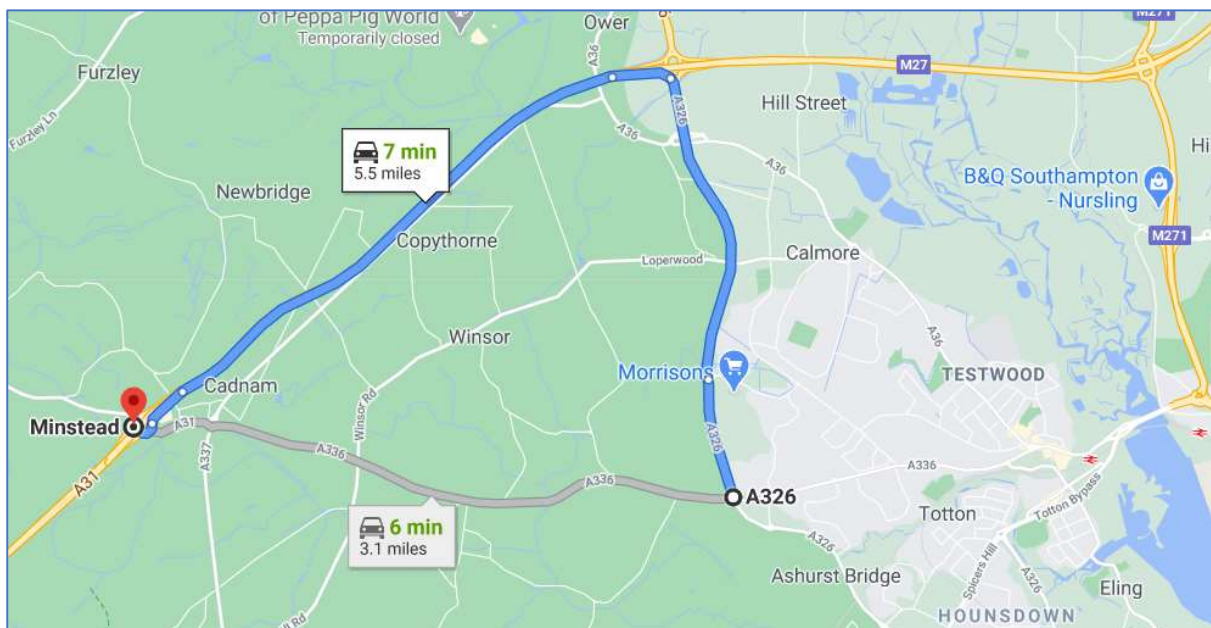
It is recommended that Hampshire County Council grants the request for a **7.5t – Except for loading** weight limit on the **A336** on safety grounds and to make it legally enforceable for HGVs to use HCC's preferred route along the **A326**.

2 INTRODUCTION

This proposal requests a **7.5t – Except for loading** weight limit on the non-primary **A336**, between its westerly roundabout junction with the A31 and its easterly roundabout junction with the A326. This is supported by Netley Marsh Parish and Copythorne Parish Councils on behalf of the residents of the impacted villages.

Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) are increasingly using the **A336** as a cut-through to and from the A31, instead of using the Hampshire County Council (HCC) recommended route; the purpose built **A326**, to junction 2 of the M27.

The Google map below shows the modest fuel/time saving that might be achieved by HGVs using the **A336** as a cut-through to the A31 westbound, rather than using the recommended route along the **A326** to M27 junction 2.



HCC has recognised that HGV traffic restricted from using the A337 to Lyndhurst, will inevitably take a short-cut along the A336 and has erected a sign on the A31 eastbound, advising HGVs to access Lyndhurst via the A326 at M27-J2. Unfortunately, this is not legally enforceable and does not recognise the volume of pass-through HGVs heading for other New Forest destinations.

HCC recommends that all HGV traffic bound for New Forest locations, including Marchwood and Fawley, or Southampton Docks, should use the A326 (M27-J2) or the M271 (M27-J3) as appropriate, but there is currently no legally enforceable signage to this effect in place.

There are very few businesses requiring HGV deliveries or collections along the A336 route, but legitimate deliveries would be exempt and not impacted by the **7.5t - Except for loading** restriction. It is demonstrated in the survey data contained in this document, that HGV through-traffic accounts for approximately **90%** of HGVs using this route.

3 ROAD SAFETY RISKS AND ISSUES

HGVs using the A336 create road safety risks not just to the local community, but also on the nearby strategic road network.

3.1 A31/M27-J1 STRATEGIC ROUTE SAFETY

There are significant accident risks presented by HGVs joining the A31/M27 at junction 1. The slip roads in both directions are uphill, but the westbound route is of particular concern. It joins the A31 just after the point where the M27 ends and 3 lanes of motorway speed traffic have reduced to 2 lanes. HGVs begin their uphill climb from a standing start at the Cadnam roundabout, which inevitably leads to slow HGVs trying to merge directly into the path of fast moving traffic, effectively blocking the inside lane and further reducing traffic flow to a single lane. This presents an obvious and predictable risk of serious accidents and serious incidents at this difficult section of the A31, particularly if fully laden fuel tankers are involved.

<https://www.sabre-roads.org.uk/wiki/index.php?title=A31>

Sabre Roads Extract: A31. Section 2.

The section of road between Cadnam and Stoney Cross (around 2 miles) was first to be dualled in the mid-1960s. The westbound carriageway of this section is the original road, as shown by the narrow lanes and tight bend. At Rufus Stone, there is also an at grade junction which usually has long tailbacks as people try to cross the eastbound carriageway.

HGVs joining the A31 via the M27 at junction 2, benefit from the downhill slip road onto the 3 lane motorway, with the flat terrain affording them the best opportunity to blend seamlessly with other traffic and achieve optimum driving speeds before the lane reduction and hill on the A31. This is a realistic opportunity to reduce accident risks at a difficult stretch of the A31.

The easing of the first Covid lockdown in 2020 saw unprecedented levels of summer traffic heading to the south coast. In 2021, UK residents are being urged to take their holidays in the UK, which suggests we can only expect traffic to further increase on the M27/A31, so is it vital that HCC takes immediate action to control HGV journeys along the A336.

Traffic in the New Forest area is set to increase in the near future, with the planned development of a new town at Fawley Waterside. HGV traffic is also set to significantly increase with the ExxonMobil expansion at the Fawley Refinery and port expansions at Marchwood. The recent Government announcement regarding the creation of the Solent Freeport zone has the potential to further increase HGV movements in the area.

Hampshire County Council's Waterside Transport Strategy will see a huge investment in the improvement of the A326, upgrading it to a dual carriageway between Marchwood and the M27 at junction 2, to improve the capacity.

Strategy: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transport/WatersideTransportStrategy.pdf>

Decision document: <https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s60606/Report.pdf>

Given the expected increase in HGV traffic, it is essential that the **A336** is given the protection of a **7.5t – Except for loading** weight limit, to establish that heavy goods vehicle on through journeys must join the strategic road network at M27 junction 2. Without this, it is inevitable that many will re-route down the A336, putting westbound traffic on the A31 at risk.

3.2 A336 LOCAL ROUTE SAFETY

HGV traffic causes daily misery for local residents, with the unacceptable risk of an accident in a residential area that includes school crossings. The potential for a major incident resulting from an accident involving one of the huge waste haulage trucks or a fuel tanker is unthinkable (please see **Appendix A**).

The large numbers of pass-through HGVs have damaged and continue to deteriorate the A336, creating significant potholes, causing unpredictability of vehicle control for all road users. Consequentially this puts cyclists and pedestrians at risk of injury. Hampshire County Council occasionally fills in potholes, but this patching approach just creates new undulations and impact points, so just moves the problem slightly further along the road. As the A336 is not considered a priority for road resurfacing by HCC, so there is unlikely to be any significant improvement in the foreseeable future.

4 HGV TRAFFIC SURVEY

A representative survey conducted on behalf of Netley Marsh Parish Council yielded the following results, demonstrating that the introduction of a weight limit on the A336 could reduce overall HGV traffic by approximately 90% and could totally remove the disturbance caused to residents by HGV night-time movements.

High Level Data:

HGV category	Day 23/02/21 06:00-18:00	Night 28/02/21 18:00-06:00	Totals	% of Total
Sawmill (local traffic)	24	0	24	10.21%
Tankers (petrol & gas)	48	20	68	28.93%
Waste Haulage	32	0	32	13.62%
Container Transporters	18	3	21	8.94%
Flatbed HGVs	36	1	37	15.74%
Curtain Sided HGVs	10	0	10	4.26%
Rigid Sided HGVs	37	6	43	18.30%
Totals	205	30	235	100.00%

Notes:

- HGV traffic was present throughout the night, but with highest activity occurring up to 10pm and starting again from 4am.
- The survey was conducted during lockdown, so traffic was lighter than might normally be the case.
- The BSW Sawmill is the only local business with regular HGV deliveries, which were easy to identify.
- It is reasonable to assume that a proportion of the flatbed HGVs were in fact unladen container transporters on return journeys.
- Photographs of some of the most frequent pass-through HGVs are shown in **Appendix B**.

As demonstrated by the survey data, the majority of HGV journeys are without doubt through-traffic, consisting predominantly of petrol and gas tankers, container haulage (laden and unladen return journeys), waste haulage moving between Marchwood and Poole, car transporters, major supermarket HGVs and Royal Mail HGVs. Local deliveries are primarily to the local sawmill.

5 A336 LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

The A336 connects the villages of Cadnam, Bartley, Winsor and Netley Marsh.

5.1 NATIONAL PARK IMPACT

The A336 runs within the boundary of the **New Forest National Park** and within its **Forest North East** conservation area. Designation as a conservation area seeks to ensure that the rural qualities and character of the area are preserved and that historic and architectural features are retained. The New Forest Park Authority (NFPA) has a duty to ensure that the character of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced.

<https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/conservation-areas/map-conservation-areas/>

<https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/app/uploads/2018/03/fneforweb.pdf>

The area contains a number of properties considered to be 'Heritage Assets' by the NFPA, 14 of which are situated on the A336, along with the Grade II listed St. Matthew's Church.

<https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/conservation-information/buildings-local-interest/>

<https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/02/New-Forest-Non-Designated-Heritage-Asset-local-list-2021.pdf>

HGV through-traffic does not enhance or protect the impacted villages, putting heritage buildings at risk through the ground vibrations they cause, thereby challenging New Forest Park Authority commitments.

5.2 VILLAGE SETTINGS

The villages along the A336 comprise of residential housing, infant and junior schools, a local convenience store, a garden centre, a carpet shop, a sawmill and 3 public houses. There is not a huge demand for HGV deliveries during the day and certainly not at night.

Where the A336 runs through the middle of the villages; school crossing patrols provide some safety at either end of the school day for the children of Bartley Juniors and Netley Marsh Infants, but for the rest of the time, residents of all ages must fend for themselves in crossing from one side of their community to the other; to access after school clubs, social clubs at the village halls, or to visit friends or the local public houses.

The A336 is widely used by the local community and the residents of the local town of Totton, not just for work and social access, but also for wellbeing activities, including walking, cycling and horse riding. These activities are part of the character of New Forest National Park.

5.3 GEOLOGY

The area consists predominantly of clay soil. A study published in 2017 shows that clay is particularly susceptible to ground vibration transmission.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320202266_Modelling_of_Ground_Borne_Vibration_Induced_by_Road_Transport

Abstract:

Ground-borne vibrations induced by road transport is a common source of environmental problem for residents living near roads. Any irregular unevenness of road surface increases the transport induced ground borne vibrations. Calculated soil particle acceleration near the vibration source was highest in Clay soil (34,3 mm/s²).

These vibrations not only cause night-time disturbance to residents but also have the potential to cause structural damage to properties; particularly the previously mentioned 'Heritage Assets' of the New Forest National Park, which were not built to withstand the HGV traffic of today.

6 WEIGHT LIMIT ENFORCEMENT

It is understood and totally accepted that HGVs cannot be eradicated from the A336, as there will continue to be a number of local deliveries; primarily to the local sawmill; but any genuine loading/unloading journeys would not be impacted by the introduction of a 7.5t weight limit.

Following the introduction of a 7.5t weight limit, it should be expected that the majority of drivers will obey their legal obligations by not using the A336, but using the Hampshire County Council advised route along the A326 instead.

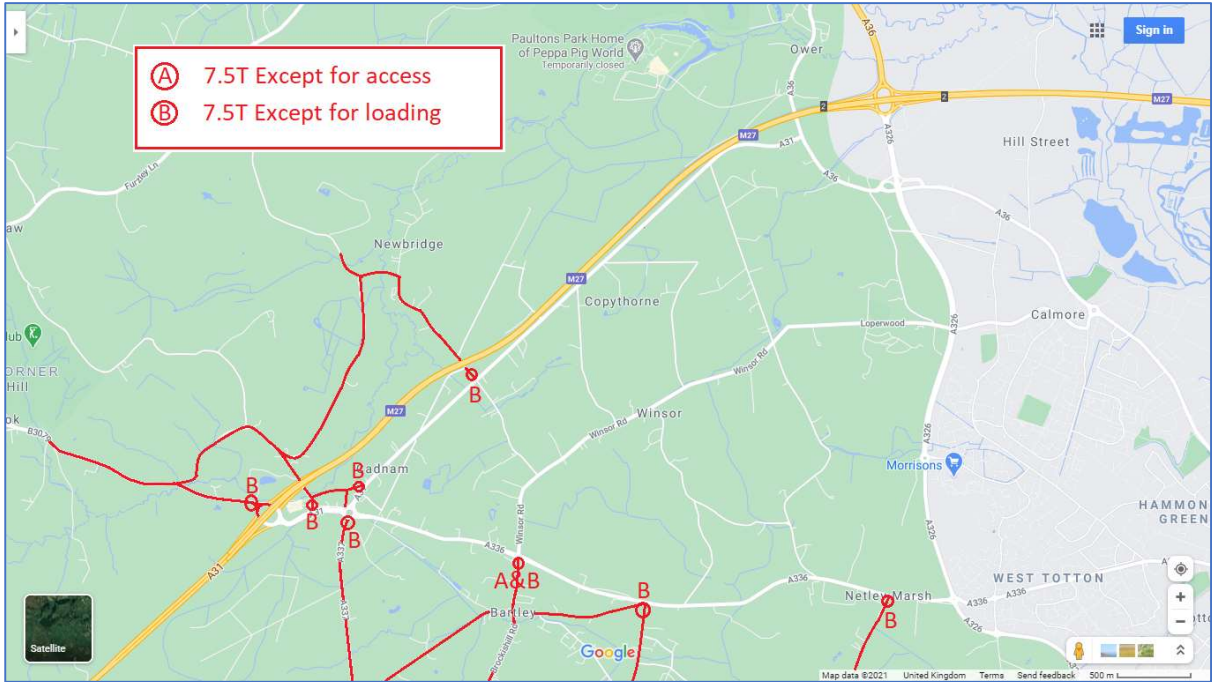
As shown by the survey data; the vast majority of non-local HGV traffic is easily identifiable, which presents options to encourage compliance that do not require the support of formal policing. Members of the public can take photographs and note dates and times of weight limit breaches. They can then either contact the offending companies themselves or, for regular offenders, they can request the local parish councils to do it on their behalf. Company transport managers are responsible for ensuring their fleets do not break regulations and only use routes legally open to them, so it would be appropriate to apply pressure using this option. If compliance is still not achieved then, by agreement with the local police on individual cases, it might be possible to ask one of the regular Speed Watch patrols to assist. As these already operate regularly, it should not involve additional resourcing costs.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

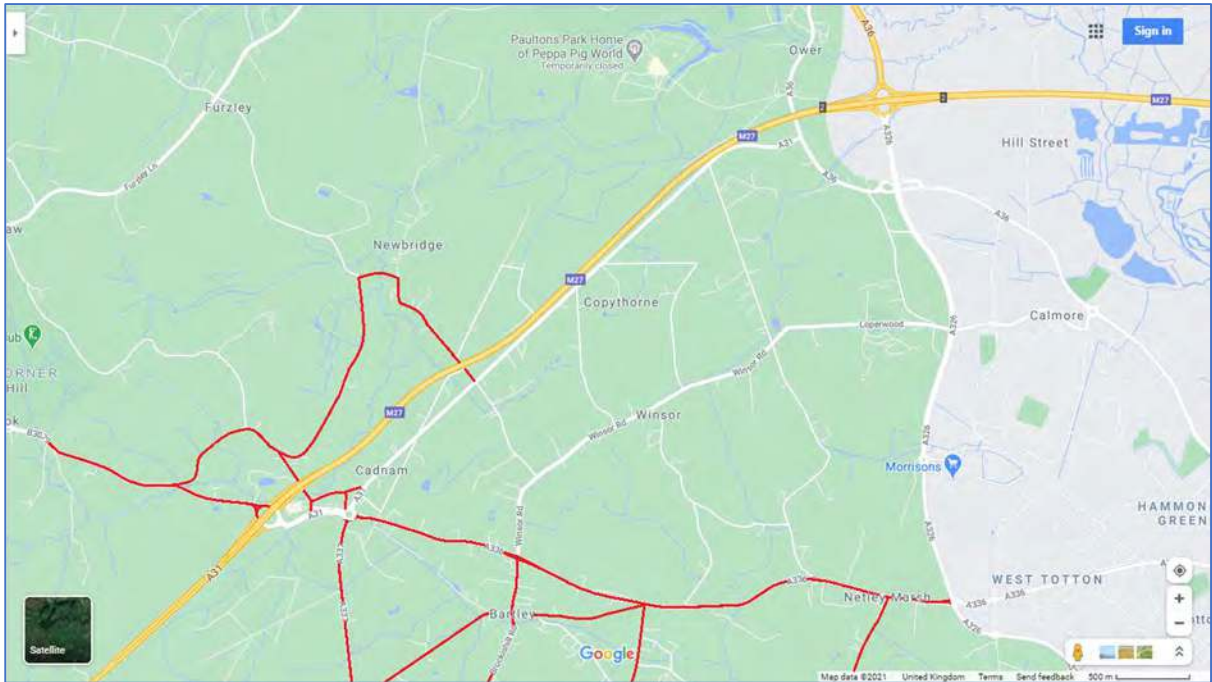
The proposed **7.5t – Except for loading** weight restriction should be granted for the A336 between Netley Marsh and Cadnam on grounds of safety and adherence to current Hampshire County Council preferred route advice. Local HGV deliveries will be exempt from the restriction, so only through traffic will be affected.

There is no risk that a weight limit would cause HGVs to look for alternative routes through the immediate area, as none would offer them a fuel/time advantage over taking the Hampshire County Council preferred route along the A326 to M27-J2.

Current weight restrictions (shown in red)



Proposed addition - A336 weight limit



APPENDIX A – HGV FIRE AT BARTLEY 26TH MARCH 2021

The photographs below show the unacceptable risk of HGVs passing through a residential area and in close proximity to a junior school.



Photograph 1 shows the proximity of the HGV fire to residential property.



Photograph 2 demonstrates how easily this could have been a major incident, if the fire had occurred when the HGV carrying gas cylinders was passing.



Photograph 3 show the proximity of the HGV fire to the school crossing at Bartley. If it had happened a bit later, children would have been arriving from all directions on foot, on bicycles, by car and in school buses.

APPENDIX B – EXAMPLE HGV PHOTOGRAPHS ON A336

These are all examples of recent pass-through HGV journeys on the A336





