

Burford Experimental Weight Restriction – Appeal to OCC

Submitted on behalf of WiVTAG

Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group (WiVTAG) represents 19 town and parish councils, 1 district council and a growing number of businesses in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. We represent the community and commercial interests local to Burford and seek to cooperate with County Councils, in the planning, preparation and implementation of a better regional solution.

The current situation and our position are summarised as follows:

- **Overall detrimental effect of the scheme** The flow of international, national, regional, and local HGV traffic across and within our area was not properly assessed. OCC has underestimated the impact of the scheme on local communities, farms, and businesses.
- **Invalid Criteria for performance measurements** The approved criteria for performance measures have been invalidated by reductions in traffic flow and air pollution caused by pandemic impacts and the severe economic downturn. These additional factors distort the changes that could be attributed to the Burford scheme. Alternative success/failure measures for Burford are essential.
- **Contravention of Policy Commitments** The scheme contravenes the spirit of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and Freight Strategy Plan. Policies in LTP4 were intended to protect rural communities from heavy traffic. WiVTAG considers that these policies were not respected and should have provided sufficient reasons to reject Burford's scheme in the first place.
- **Councils to work proactively with businesses** OCC and GCC are encouraged to cooperate with and draw on the expertise of national and local haulage operators and the regional farming community in the revision and development of LTPs. By adhering to a hierarchy of motorways, trunk roads, A and B roads, and local roads benefits can be delivered to businesses and residents in urban and rural locations across the whole region.
- **Community attitudes to HGVs** All communities, including Burford, need to accept an appropriate level of HGV traffic, determined by the category, condition and grading of their local road network. Impacts can be mitigated with effective traffic management systems to ensure road safety, protection of historic property and the environment. Weight restrictions should be approved only where the adequacy of highway infrastructure requires protection and not as a convenient back door mechanism for communities to defend their patch.
- **Combative/Protectionist/NIMBY solutions do not work** The Burford scheme has diverted the heavy traffic into local rural communities, causing highways structural damage and risk to people and property. Regional businesses and farms are seriously affected. If other villages and towns seek or enforce additional local restrictions, what routes are left open to the HGVs?

We believe that any solution must begin with a revocation of the current Burford 7.5 t weight limit. We encourage OCC to consider an improved regional solution for HGV traffic. Arbitrary weight limit restrictions for any single town, village or bridge will not prove an effective answer to the Windrush Valley HGV problem.

