

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE : **Environment, Planning and Infrastructure**

DATE: **31st May 2012**

DIRECTOR: **Gordon McIntosh**

TITLE OF REPORT: **Report following Councillor Yuill's motion at the September 2011 E, P and I Committee to introduce restrictions that would prevent heavy or large goods vehicles from using Broomhill Road as a through route.**

REPORT NUMBER: **EPI/11/285**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report responds to Councillor Yuill's notice of motion "That given the ongoing difficulties caused by HGVs using Broomhill Road as a through route, Council instructs officers to report to the appropriate committee on the introduction of an "except for access" weight or width restriction on some or all of Broomhill Road between Holburn Street and South Anderson Drive" and to explore other options available, not excluding the introduction of an "except for access" width and/or weight restriction, to address the concerns of residents on Broomhill Road.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Committee:

1. note the contents of this report
2. agree that, given the strategic importance of Broomhill Road within the road network and the proportionately small percentage of HGVs that are using Broomhill Road as a "through route", restricting LGVs/HGVs along Broomhill Road would not be appropriate.
3. agree that no action be taken at this time

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for the recommendation. However, should the Committee agree to any measure to address the residents' concerns there will be financial implication which can be explained by officers at the committee meeting

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Implementing a restriction of this magnitude over a road of this importance will have significant implications for Bear (Scotland) and their ability to manage trunk road traffic under emergency conditions. Although in practical terms Grampian Police could over-rule any traffic restriction that is in place, consideration would have to be given to reforming the Major Incident Diversion Plan

It is likely that they will put forward an objection to this proposal.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 At the meeting of this Committee on 13th September 2011 a motion from Councillor Yuill was considered:

“That given the ongoing difficulties caused by HGVs using Broomhill Road as a through route, Council instructs officers to report to the appropriate committee on the introduction of an ‘except for access’ weight or width restriction on some or all of Broomhill Road between Holburn Street and South Anderson Drive”

This committee subsequently instructed officers to report on the terms of the motion to a future meeting of the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee which was presented to the EP & I on 31st January 2012 with the findings. The Committee instructed a further report detailing other options and their respective merits to be reported back at a future meeting.

- 5.2 Over the years there have been a number of residential complaints and inquiries regarding the volume of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) using Broomhill Road and the possibility of limiting their access. For the purpose of this report the term HGV will also cover Large Goods Vehicles (LGVs) that are not necessarily over the 7.5T weight limit but have a significant physical presence.
- 5.3 Surveys carried out in the past have shown significant usage of Broomhill Road by HGVs but that this is restricted mainly to the peak flow hours. Broomhill Road is a district distributor road linking to the city centre from the south-west serving a large residential area, but also providing access to a number of commercial and retail properties along its length. These retail premises require regular deliveries, some of which require HGV access ie vehicles over 11.5m in length. Although these vehicles would still be eligible to access these premises under the ‘except for access’ exemption, they will also form a significant proportion of the HGVs recorded in the surveys detailed in the table below.

- 5.6 Broomhill Road also forms part of the No 1 and 2 bus routes which travel from the City Centre and extends beyond the Robert Gordon University in Garthdee to Auchinyell Road. It caters for a large number of students attending the University as well as residents within the area. This service runs every 12 minutes throughout the peak travel times, on average 12 vehicles an hour. These buses, although exempt from the proposed restriction, form a significant percentage (approx 50%) of the recorded HGVs.
- 5.7 This road also has an important part to play in the recently formed strategic emergency traffic management plan, **“Major Incident - Anderson Drive - Diversion Plan”**. This plan results from work carried out with the emergency services, and Bear (Scotland) to identify diversion routes during major incidents on the A90(T), (North of the Bridge of Dee). These routes are required to ensure the free flow of traffic should the A90(T) be closed at any point along its length.
- 5.8 Broomhill Road forms a crucial part of a number of these diversion routes and as such is currently required to take HGVs from the A90, in both directions, should a major incident occur.
- 5.9 There are a number of vehicles currently using the Broomhill Road, Great Southern Road route south during the evening peak hours as a legitimate alternative route to avoid the congestion at the South Anderson Drive / Holburn Street / Garthdee Road roundabout. Of these vehicles, a percentage are HGVs, however, the numbers are relatively low in comparison to the total number of HGVs taking access to Broomhill Road to serve local premises.
- 5.10 To quantify the above information an additional, more detailed, sample survey was carried out on the 26th January this year. Wireless CCTV cameras were installed at both ends of Broomhill Road, one at Holburn Street looking towards Anderson Drive and one at the Anderson Drive roundabout end looking towards the city centre.
- 5.11 These cameras recorded all vehicles entering Broomhill Road, in both directions, over a 5 hour period, 8:00am to 1:00pm, on a Thursday morning. The weather conditions were good for the time of year and the temperatures moderate. There was no snow or ice on the road surface. The results of this survey are detailed in the table below:

BROOMHILL ROAD

Survey period: Thursday morning 8:00am to 1:00pm

	Total vehicles (averaged)	Total no of HGVs (including buses)	No of buses	No of HGVs	% buses	% HGVs	* HGVs taking access to the area as a % of the total vehicles	HGV travelling the full length of Broomhill Road as a % of the total vehicles
Eastbound	1347	73	35	38	2.6	2.8	1.2	1.6
Westbound	1009	52	24	28	2.4	2.8	0.6	2.2

* These HGVs were recorded as entering Broomhill Road at either end and not emerging at the other end. It was assumed that these vehicles were visiting premises on this street or using Broomhill Road as a means to accessing other streets in the vicinity.

5.12 The result detailed in the above table clearly shows a small percentage of HGVs using Broomhill Road as a through route, 1.6% eastbound and 2.2% westbound. In considering the low level of HGV traffic utilising Broomhill Road, officers do not feel that a restriction of HGV vehicles could be justified.

5.13 Further options to reduce the HGV movements along this road have been considered in line with the Committee's instruction.

5.14 There are four options that could potentially be introduced, two of which have already been discussed in the previous report and a further two that were not previously highlighted. In all cases there are potential problems with enforcement of the restriction.

5.14.1 "Weight restriction – except for access" – The vehicle weight must initially be confirmed to establish whether the restriction applies to that vehicle. With the exemption of "Except for access" being applied Police must then also establish whether legitimate access was being taken if the weight restriction applies. As there are no public weighbridges in the City Grampian Police have to use private weighbridges to enforce any weight restrictions that currently exist. These weighbridges are several miles away from the location in question. This would involve a considerable amount of travel and investigation work.

5.14.2 "Width restriction – except for access" – this restriction is slightly easier to enforce as, unlike the vehicle weight, the vehicle width is easily established. However identical problems will occur with establishing the right of the vehicle to be on this road taking legitimate access if the width restriction is exceeded.

5.14.3 Timed "Weight/Width restriction – except for access" – as for the above restrictions but limiting the restriction to times that are deemed to cause the greatest inconvenience

- 5.15 The above restrictions can only be enforced by Grampian Police through a police presence. There are no reasonable means of self-enforcement. For such restrictions to be adhered to there would be required a considerable investment of police resources. Failure to adequately enforce would render the restriction ineffective and contribute to bringing these types of restrictions into disrepute. Grampian Police have submitted a statement of their views on the possibility of introducing an HGV restriction to Broomhill Road. The statement is attached as **APPENDIX A**.
- 5.16 Should a restriction be introduced there would be an expectation from the residents that they would see a notable reduction in the numbers of HGVs on the street. Referring to the most recent survey this would be unlikely as the numbers that would not legitimately be able to use this road are very small and could well be within normal daily variations. In such circumstances it is likely that residents will not perceive a change in the level of HGV movement on Broomhill Road.
- 5.17 As with similar restrictions elsewhere in the city, restricting HGV access along one street results in drivers choosing alternative routes. It would be comforting to think that these drivers would then choose to use the trunk road and join the queue from the Holburn Street/South Anderson Drive/Garthdee Road roundabout and accept the extended journey time. The reality, however, is likely to be different and it would be counter-productive if these drivers then choose to use roads less suitable than Broomhill Road in a further attempt to reduce journey times.
- 5.18 This issue of an HGV restriction is reported to stem mainly from the desire of drivers, (in particular HGV drivers), to avoid traffic congestion at the Holburn Street/South Anderson Drive/Garthdee Road roundabout. It is worth noting that the traffic modeling, carried out as part of the assessment of the Western Peripheral Route, suggests a substantial reduction in the volume of traffic using the A90 and in turn the congestion at this roundabout. With reduced congestion it is reasonable to expect that there will be less need to find alternative routes whilst travelling south.
- 5.19 In summary, Broomhill Road plays a major role in the hierarchy of the roads network in Aberdeen. It serves as a distributor road providing access to the retail and commercial section in the centre of the city. It therefore services the access needs of HGV traffic at an appropriate level. A restriction on HGV access is likely to have far-reaching effects on the surrounding roads network and create problems elsewhere that will require further interventions.
- 5.20 Taking the above into consideration and also the more detailed survey results now available, it is recommended that no further action is taken with regard to any of the options put forward for Broomhill Road.

6. IMPACT

- 6.1 The content of the report meets with the local Community Plan objectives to continually improve road safety and maximize accessibility for all modes of transport

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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Consultees comments

Councillors

Callum McCaig - has been consulted

Councillor Ian Yuill - *Has been consulted and does not agree with the recommendations. He remains of the view Broomhill Road is not suitable as a through route for HGVs.*

Council Officers

Ciaran Monaghan – Head of Service, Office of Chief Executive – has been consulted

Barry Jenkins, Head of Finance, Resources – *has been consulted and has no comments*

Jane MacEachran, City Solicitor, Continuous Improvement - has been consulted

Gordon McIntosh, Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure – has been consulted

Hugh Murdoch, Head of Service, Shelter and Environment – has been consulted

Margaret Bochel, Head of Planning & Infrastructure, Strategic Leadership – *has been consulted and is in agreement with the recommendations within this report*

Mike Cheyne, Roads Manager - has been consulted

Dave Young, Account Manager, Service, Design and Development - has been consulted

Anne Ross, Service Co-ordinator

Allison Swanson, Committee Services

From: "McDonald, Mike" <Mike.McDonald@grampian.pnn.police.uk>
To: <Ruth.Milne@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
Date: 19/04/2012 15:00
Subject: Traffic Management Proposals - Broomhill Road, Aberdeen

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Response from;

Mike McDonald

Traffic Management Manager

Grampian Police

Nelson Street,

Aberdeen

AB24 5EQ

I refer to the above subject and understand that the Local Policing Team (LPT) Inspectors are aware of historic dialogue and an informal proposal by the local Community Council on behalf of a small number of members, to restrict the number of Large Goods Vehicles (LGV's) using the Broomhill Road corridor. However it is my understanding there are no records to be found which would support wider community concerns in this regard. I am also aware of the Aberdeen City Council Road safety and Traffic Management Unit's current position on the subject

Grampian Police is an evidence-based organisation and invariably seeks to gather evidence to support the justification for taking, or in some cases for not taking action.

Through research I have established the collision history for Broomhill Road, which shows 16 road traffic collisions have occurred there over the past 5 years. These were all "damage only" collisions and of the 30 or thereby, vehicles involved, all were motor cars with the exception of 3 buses and 1 LGV, the circumstances of which indicate that the driver was not personally at fault. From a road safety and also an intelligence-led perspective, it is my view that 16 minor, non injury collisions recorded over a 5 year period is almost insignificant.

Despite the presence of signage or other traffic management measures, any restriction proposed to limit the weight or width of vehicles using Broomhill Road will require to be enforced by Grampian Police. If this restriction was to be approved, there would be an expectation from local residents that it would be regularly enforced.

In relation to LGV's currently using Broomhill Road, I am advised there are naturally daily variations in their numbers. Many of these vehicles would have a valid reason for being there and it is unlikely that, given the number of LGVs that would currently access Broomhill Road legitimately, any reduction through enforcement is likely to be minimal.

Given the apparent lack of evidence to justify such a restriction, competing demands and limited Police resources would invariably mean that enforcement of any width restriction, is likely to become a low priority.

In practical terms, the enforcement of legislation with an "except for access" exemption, is notoriously difficult to enforce, and

would be so in respect of a location like Broomhill Road. Experience from similar situations in other areas indicates this would be challenging to police effectively. For example most LGV drivers, if challenged, would be able to provide a perhaps dubious but otherwise valid reason or an acceptable excuse for being there. Therefore any restriction would become almost unenforceable.

Again, if this route was restricted, would it not simply displace the LGV "problem" to another route in the same or possibly the neighbouring area? If so, it is likely we would then see the local Councillor for that Ward petition to have the LGV issue, which would be created there, displaced again and cite Broomhill Road as an example and reason for doing so.

Such action has the potential to create an unwelcome ripple effect in respect of traffic management across the West End and in the strongest terms, this is a precedent we do not want to set.

It is also our belief that if an LGV restriction was implemented on Broomhill Road, displaced traffic would probably use Great Western Road, Cromwell Road, Union Grove or even Queens Road. Great Western Road is an area around which Local Councillors already have concerns, particularly in respect of the junction with Anderson Drive (turning right against the red light and pedestrian phases from Great Western Road). Therefore additional displaced traffic volume at this junction would not be helpful.

Grampian Police appreciate constituents and members of the Community Council may not welcome large goods vehicles or buses using the thoroughfare outside their homes but whilst understanding their position, if a resident makes the choice to live along a busy urban street, such traffic using the carriageway outside their property, should not be unexpected.

Since 2007 there has been no record of correspondence through the Road Policing Department relating to LGVs or buses creating traffic management issues or traffic noise on Broomhill Road. Further research via the other recording systems within Grampian Police also failed to identify any related complaints.

There is little doubt that when the AWPR is finally built, and it is appreciated that may be some time away, traffic pressure on a great many roads in the city, including Broomhill Road, will be alleviated to some degree.

In conclusion, and having consulted the LPT Inspectors, past and present, the Road Policing Inspector for Aberdeen City and the Force Head of Road Policing, it is the position of Grampian Police that we would not be in favour of such a proposal and fully support the Aberdeen City Council Road Safety and Traffic Management Unit view.

Mike McDonald
Traffic Management Manager
19 April 2012

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