

**WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**

**THE WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (COTON BRIDGE, COTON  
ROAD, PARISH OF NETHER WHITACRE)  
(WEIGHT RESTRICTION) EXPERIMENTAL ORDER 2023**

**Background**

Coton Bridge, on Coton Road between Marston and Whitacre Heath, is a post tensioned structure which puts it at greater risk of sudden failure than other bridge types and because of this, it is subject to an enhanced regime of routine inspections. During an inspection, concerning defects were found with the tendons within the bridge's concrete beams. Most notable of these defects was several of the tendons were found to have become loose instead of being under tension as intended in its original design. As a result, a structural assessment has been carried out by the consultants on WCC's Professional Services Framework and this concluded that the bridge is no longer able to safely carry unrestricted vehicle loads. An earlier assessment found that the bridge's edges are understrength which led to the installation of the traffic signals and vehicle barriers that are currently in place to protect the weak footways from accidental loading. The assessment has found that the bridge's main beams, beneath the carriageway, are also under strength and a permanent 18 tonne weight restriction Order was made by Warwickshire County Council in 2022.

Warwickshire County Council has received a number of complaints due to the increased volume of HGV traffic travelling through the village of Whitacre Heath. As a result of these complaints, further investigations have been carried out into the structure of the bridge and a technical briefing note has been produced advising that Coton Bridge is structurally safe to carry unladen vehicles up to a tare weight of 18 tonnes.

**Proposals**

To reduce the volume of HGV traffic travelling through the village of Whitacre Heath, Warwickshire County Council has introduced an experimental 18 tonnes weight restriction, with the exemption for "Authorised Vehicles" for a period of up to eighteen months.

'Authorised Vehicles' will only be those empty vehicles with a tare weight of less than 18 tonnes who have applied and obtained written authority from Warwickshire County Council to cross Coton Bridge for the purposes of accessing or egressing from 'The Cedars' Industrial Park only.

The Order is experimental to enable Warwickshire County Council to monitor the effect (if any) on the structure of the bridge with specialist equipment.

The scheme will use the existing weight restriction signs, however, there will be an exemption for unladen vehicles with a maximum gross weight of 18 tonnes authorised by Warwickshire County Council. The restriction will help improve the environment for residents, pedestrians, and cyclists by permitting unladen authorised vehicles to use the bridge to access and egress from The Cedars Industrial Park, rather than travelling through the neighbouring residential area.

## **Statement of Reasons**

### Experimental 18 Tonne Weight Restriction

To avoid danger to persons or other traffic using Coton Bridge or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising, an 18 Tonne structural weight limit is proposed for Coton Bridge.

## **Schedule**

### Experimental 18 Tonne Weight Restriction

Coton Bridge over the River Tame, Coton Road, between Marston and Whitacre Heath.

## **Alternative route for vehicles over 18 Tonnes, except authorised vehicles**

A4097 Kingsbury Road – A446 Lichfield Road – B4114 Birmingham Road / Blythe Road – Station Road – Coton Road (see plan ref. MWT22 171)

## **Existing orders to be suspended**

The Warwickshire County Council (Coton Bridge, Coton Road, Parish of Nether Whitacre) (Weight Restriction) Order 2022.

## **Priority**

High