

Jayne Charlton
Area Manager
Area 1 - Richmondshire & Area - 2 Hambleton Districts
North Yorkshire County Council

The Beeches
Front Street
Topcliffe
YO7 3RJ
7th October 2022

Dear Jayne

We all met this week to discuss your replies to our last two letters and our response is as follows.

Firstly we want to stress that since we first started our discussions with you on 19th March 2021, now over 18 months ago the HGV traffic in Topcliffe and Asenby has if anything increased slightly and as the Dalton development continues is likely to get significantly worse.

Last week one of our councillors monitored HGV traffic coming from Dalton, travelling down Long Street past Asenby. During one working day 17 HGV's clearly travelling illegally through the TRO were reported to the police. We are extremely grateful for the Trading Standards Enforcement days but they are nowhere near enough and we regularly see lorries coming through who we believe have been caught by your team. They basically know the chances of being caught are at present very slim.

Trading Standards have told us on several occasions that the size of the TRO , together with current signage makes it difficult to secure a prosecution in any case

We are also aware that in the last few months Sharrow, about 3 miles from our villages has received a major enhancement in HGV traffic restriction signs , road chicanes and cameras. I have attached a few pictures for all to see what has been done. Put simply this is the sort of thing we need.

Given our current position could you please explain how the Sharrow scheme was done and funded, plus we would like to understand why our villages cannot have the same.

Your letter responded to our 3 requests

Signage

You have confirmed that £45,000 is available now in S106 funds for signage improvements.

You also confirmed that signage improvements have been designed for all approaches to the TRO and that the majority of the signage would be on the A168 thus requiring National Highways permission.

We would like to see the signage plans now to comment on. I would be grateful if you could arrange this urgently.

Signs are clearly necessary on the A168 but the majority of signs would be on the local roads under your control and as such could be actioned now.

If a signage improvement plan is available then almost by definition budget costs must be available which we would also like to be made available to us. We can then identify if there is a funding gap that needs to be filled.

We do not accept that for signage under your control a time scale of sorts cannot be provided.

Enforcement

You confirmed that £50,000 was available in S106 funds for enforcement. As above this is available now .

It is clear that Trading Standards do not have the manpower to create a sufficient deterrent. We also experience HGVs, out of hours (eg. during the night) when they know officers will not be working. We have said that we believe a APNR camera system is the real answer to enforcement.

We would like to see a study with quotations for an enhanced camera system with automatic monitoring . This really needs to be done now. Technology has moved on significantly in this area and it is perfectly feasible to install ANPR cameras at the 3 entrances to the TRO (Crab and Lobster, A168 and Busby Stoop). The cameras are intelligent and can monitor travel times, HGV's and/or cars all linked directly to you. These cameras are in use now in places like Leeds in their green zones, congestion zones, on road works etc. and maybe Sharrow (the signs certainly imply this)

According to your email the £50,000 will be available on 1st April 2023 which is not far off. I also suspect it could be available earlier if needs be. Hence the need for the investigations now. We are happy to work with you on this.

TRO Consultation

There are a number of points to be made

1. The fundamental issue here is that NYCC is not achieving its own policy. The TRO was put in place in 1999 to protect the Topcliffe Conservation Area from HGV traffic. On 19th March 2021 the Director stated that he accepted that the current TRO was no longer fit for purpose given the changed circumstances of the industrial development taking place within the TRO boundary. He agreed that action needed to be taken to address this issue. We are now 18 months on and you propose to take no action and to ignore the impact of the HGVs on the Conservation Area. We do not agree that this is acceptable. It is not acceptable that the wishes of a small number of businesses, mainly to protect 3rd party HGV operators, should outweigh the needs of local communities and citizens.
2. The consultation documents were sent out on 1st April 2021 by Graham Hind. We immediately asked to be involved and wrote to you to point out that the suggested changes to the TRO were flawed because they excluded Catton from the proposed zone.(Catton are in the existing Zone and is clearly a village were HGV vehicles should be excluded from.

No action was taken from this at all and clearly prompted a number of comments opposing the change to the zone.

We were not included in the consultation and had no opportunity to challenge this. Both Parish Councils represent over 1100 residents who really were not able to express their views at all.

This is clearly unfair and to give you an idea of the strength of feeling 42 residents wrote expressing their concerns about HGV traffic relating to the Dalton development. Today that number would increase. Had they all been allowed to comment on the proposal you would have had many comments in favour of the proposed change.

3. *"Whilst I do appreciate that the Parish Council expressed an interest to be involved in the consultation as the Highway Authority we must to?? a balanced view based on engineering judgement. We cannot be influenced by other parties and therefore it was appropriate for us to conduct those consultations separately. We also must comply with procedures set out in the Traffic Regulation Act to ensure any possible changes to the current restriction are legal and enforceable. Attached is a brief outline of all the responses received."*

This is an extract from your email 26th of August informing us that no action would be taken to change the TRO

Our view would be that judging by the responses you sent us you were very influenced by other parties and in particular local business. Can you please explain to us why local businesses were consulted and over 1100 local residents were not.

4. Many of the comments you received are just wrong or misinformed.
 - *"The lifting of parts of the existing weight restriction is undesirable and unnecessary due to road widths; possible rat-running/short-cutting by heavy vehicles; heavy traffic transferred to currently quiet routes used by cyclists/walkers and where on-street parking occurs. Comment in summary : "this proposal should be abandoned"*

This clearly refers to concerns in Catton which should have been included in the proposed zone in line with the suggestion we made as part of our consultation response.

- *"Separate restrictions may lead to heavy vehicles missing the various legitimate routes then attempting to turn and damaging verges etc or just carrying on along inappropriate or restricted routes, breaching the restriction."*

Clear Signage as requested would solve this problem. Additionally, the request we made on 19th March was not for separate restrictions but simply to move the TRO from Busby Stoop to the northern perimeter of Topcliffe Village.

- *"The proposals are of great concern and would have the potential to impact upon future employment and occupation levels. Strongly object to any proposals which would restrict access from the A168 to the south and that would be likely to impact upon future employment and occupation levels and the viability of the businesses. The additional 15km*

mileage added to journeys to/from the south would also lead to increased pollution and a higher consumption of fuel".

All the business response was along similar lines. There are several comments here

Can you explain how it would impact employment levels?

Traveling to or from the A168 from or to the north would result in 15km of extra distance. However for vehicles travelling on the A1 North or South this would result in less than 1 mile of extra travelling, (based on the Potter Eggs and Plant base) and is easily verified using Google maps. This is the vast majority of the traffic.

Everyday we see vehicles coming past the Crab and Lobster meaning they have travelled from the A1. This is convenience rather than a business necessity or 15km extra distance.

Furthermore, the majority of HGVs coming through the TRO are not owned and operated by the local businesses. Only 25 HGV vehicles have operating licences based within the TRO, linked to 3 local businesses. We know that these mainly access the A1 and not the A168/A19. The vast majority of the problem is 3rd party HGVs delivering to the businesses, or just abusing the TRO. We do not see how this would affect local business viability of success.

In relation to the concern of local businesses about access to the A168/A19 north the ANPR camera systems could easily identify local vehicles and if implanted we would not have an objection to local vehicles using the zone to travel to / from the A168 north

What we now request is that we work together, and with the local business operators, with a purpose to design a change to the TRO which will achieve the Councils policy of protecting the Conservation Area and villages, whilst balancing the legitimate needs of those businesses based within the TRO and operating HGVs from those bases. We then consult fully, including local people, on that Proposal. Alternatively we request that you consult fully on the suggested TRO boundary we proposed to you in response to the 1/4/2021 Consultation (including Catton in the TRO) with all local businesses, Councils and people. I have attached this for your ease of reference.

I would just like to remind you of the impact of the HGVs on our community. Please see the photos below. Do you really believe that this is acceptable, either as an engineering judgement, or in protecting the Conservation Area and the people who live within it?

In your last email you suggested we met to discuss the situation. We said at the time we could be available anytime and that you could suggest a date and time etc. We still do not have a date for a meeting which we believe to be essential.

Jamie Moores

On Behalf of

Topcliffe Parish Council

Asenby Parish Council

Sharrow



Topcliffe





