

We are now moving forward with the implementation of the 3tonne restriction, to prevent any further deterioration to the condition of this historic Grade II listed structure.

The works programme for installation of weight limit of North Bridge

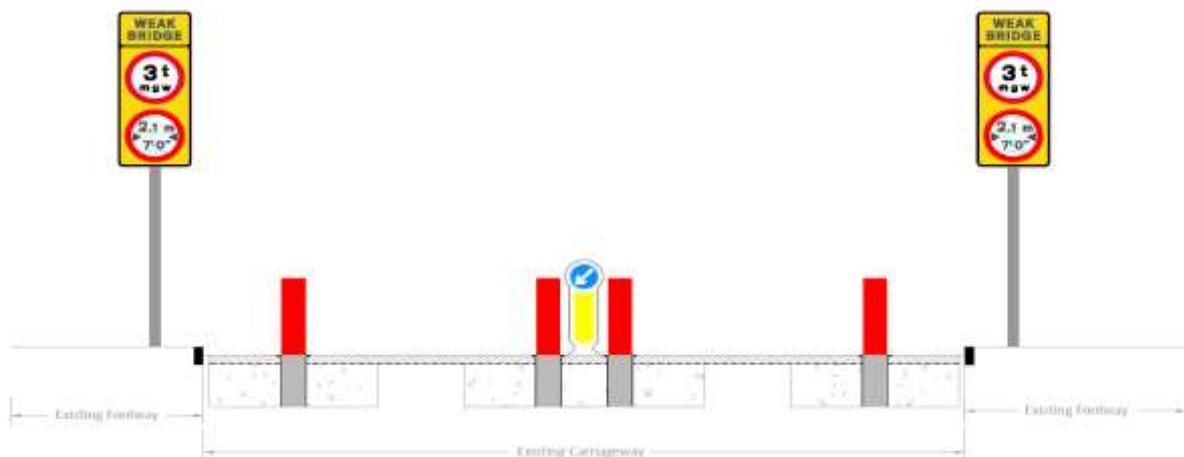
21st January 2019 - Install weight restriction signage

18th February 2019 - Width Restriction and Traffic signals works start for approximately 4 - 6 weeks

Traffic Restriction

It is important to note that the restrictions on North Bridge will only apply to vehicles in excess of 3tonnes and all standard car/motorcycle traffic will not be affected. The 3tonne restriction would allow 2 way car traffic to continue over the structure, minimising traffic disruption and delay, only vehicles more than 3tonnes would be excluded.

The proposed restrictions were originally within the confines of the Grade II listed structure, therefore we were required to obtain Listed Building Consent from East Northamptonshire District Council. As there were a number of objections to the application, the restriction was redesigned so that it is off the structure itself and is more sympathetic to the historic surroundings.



The proposed 3tonne restriction will be “self-enforcing”, via the use of a traffic width restriction of 2.1m at each end together with appropriate signage from either direction. Similar to the system previously used on South Bridge Oundle.

A605 / Barnwell Road Signalisation

As part of the mitigation works it has been agreed to signal the junction at the A605 / Barnwell Road, this will help ease access on to the A605 which can be difficult at the best of times. The signalised junction will be monitored upon completion so that, as much as possible, it does not have an adverse impact on the A605 / Well Lane junction at Barnwell.

Traffic Modelling and Rat Runs

We are currently reviewing what mitigation works maybe required following the proposed traffic restrictions on the structure.

Traffic data is being collected around Oundle to fully understand the likely diversion route impact following the restrictions being imposed on North Bridge.

A modelling team is assessing the suitability of many options as part of this works and we expect their report and recommendations by the end of December.

These options will be reviewed fully and recommendations implemented if appropriate which may include a one way system(s).



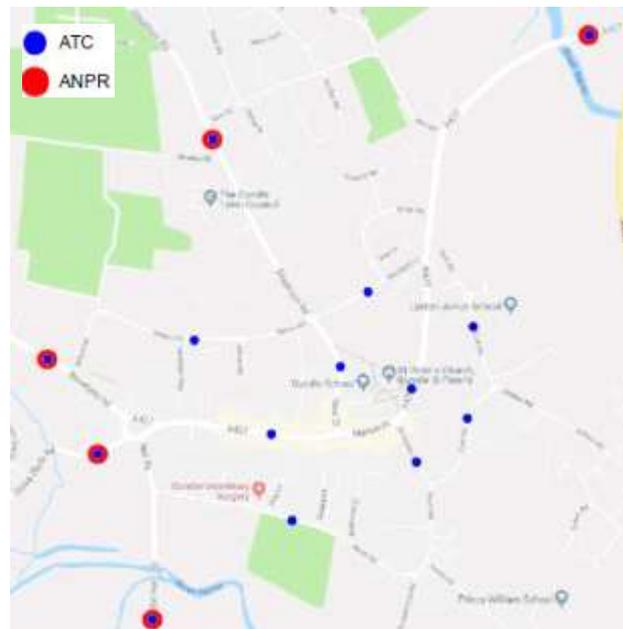
Traffic Management

Please be assured we are fully considering all options in regards to diversion routes around town.

A working group has been set up to discuss the implication of the 3tonne prohibition on the traffic movements in the area with Oundle Town Council and the surrounding parishes.

Our objective is to make sure that the traffic flow through Oundle and the surrounding parishes flows as smoothly as possible. We are currently looking at all the options.

The A605 is a Primary Route within Northamptonshire and as such is not suitable for traditional traffic calming techniques, due to vehicle volume and speed. Mitigation works may include a reduction in speed limit amongst other options but these cannot be fully considered until the assessment review has been undertaken.



Frequently asked questions

We have been made aware of many different stories about what is going on regarding North Bridge Oundle and would like this opportunity to add clarity.

Northamptonshire County Council cannot afford the works – It is widely publicised the County Council is facing significant financial challenges. Some difficult decisions have been made to ensure this bridge is addressed. Other proposed schemes have been moved down the programme to provide funding for this from the existing capital allocation.

We have explored alternative funding and have had dialog with the Department for Transport to support our case for exceptional funding. We have been successful in securing funding via the recent £420million announcement.

The cost of the mitigation works; signalisation, traffic counts and modelling, revocation of 18tonne restriction, additional signage and civils works is significant, we do not have a bottomless pit of money to continually dip into to facilitate what will be, with the exception of the signalisation, temporary works that will be removed when the bridge is strengthened.

If you now have the funding why do you still need to implement the 3t restriction? – The condition of the structure is deteriorating and whilst there is not an immediate risk of collapse which would result in a full closure, action does need to be taken in the short term to prevent more damage. We also need to reduce the amount of traffic using the bridge when we undertake the works otherwise we would need to close the bridge.

Why can there not be a 7.5tonne limit? - we have explored what we can do and carried out two methods of analysis.

The deficiency of the loading capacity of the arches is caused by a combination of circumferential cracks limiting the load distribution of the arch barrels and ring separation limiting the effective thickness of the arch barrels.

The only reason that the arches can still support 3tonne Assessment Live Load is the fact that, unlike Farthinghoe Bridge on the A422 where we have been forced to close the road, we have enough fill material above the arches on North Bridge to redistribute the loading.

The bridge is unable to carry anything more than 3tonnes.

You knew about these failings in 2012 – Not true, what we do know is that the bridge is deteriorating, we carry out inspections on a regular basis which identify issues and these issues have been dealt with. The inspections led us to commission an assessment.

Oundle North was assessed, to determine its load carrying capacity, in October 2014. The bridge assessment concluded that 7 of the 13 arches of this Listed Grade II structure were deficient in their loading capacity; the viaduct was assessed to have a capacity of 3tonnes.

Over the years numerous repairs have been carried out to the structure, this on-going approach of carrying out discreet repairs has not addressed the underlying issue.

Works will have to be carried out to the structure now to address the fundamental causes of the loss of capacity.

Why did you not act sooner? Structural Assessments are an iterative process, initial structural assessments are generally carried out using simple but conservative analytical methods. Where the adequacy of a structure cannot be confirmed, or falls short of requirements using simple methods, progressively more precise and advanced methods are used to determine capacity.

We have been gathering data and undertaking further testing to substantiate the assessment results, added to which the structure has been monitored, over recent months the bridge is showing increased signs of distress, as borne out in the latest Principal Inspection. We have used a remote camera to detect the type and size of vehicles causing the distress, however this has found to be unreliable.

Northamptonshire Highways carried out works on the A605 in summer 2017 and this impacted and accelerated deterioration due to increase vehicle usage on diversion – Not true, our supply chain partners were specifically instructed not use the bridge for access. We also installed CCTV to deter and monitor HGV usage over North Bridge.

Information has been poor – We have been liaising with the town and Parish councils since April 2018. The process of implementing a permanent restriction requires that we notify affected parties of our intention. We have had the statutory consultation (started 19th April 2018) and have carried out further consultation, which was published in the Nene Valley News (3rd November 2018).

Why haven't local businesses been consulted? Discussions have been with the Town and Parish Councils / working groups.

You did not advertise the notices about the weight limit - We publicised in the local press and notices were installed on site early November. We notified all the Statutory Consultees that the public notices were advertised, this includes town/parish councils, Cllrs, bus companies etc. Twitter @nnhighways was also used to direct followers to the advertisement in the Nene Valley News. We are speaking with NCC to add a page for notices so that, going forward, they are available to view at Northamptonshire.gov.uk

What will happen with buses? - There are four bus and coach services that use the structure along with twelve to eighteen school buses. Discussion is on-going with the bus and coach companies on how to mitigate the effects of the proposed 3tonnes weight limit on their service.

We need a one way system around Oundle - We are currently collecting a various traffic data from around Oundle to fully understand the likely diversion routes and increased traffic following the restrictions being imposed on North Bridge. A modelling team is assessing the suitability of many options as part of this works and we expect their report and recommendations by the end of December. These options will be reviewed fully and recommendations implemented if appropriate which may include a one way system.

The difficulty, should we implement a temporary one way system whilst the bridge is restricted, is that unlike when events are held in Oundle, we must keep West Street open to traffic for access to businesses.

The Town Council has also requested that two way traffic flow is maintained. Due to this we cannot force vehicles to utilise any one way systems to the north and south of Oundle as they will still be able to travel along West Street freely. The proposal to consider South Road as a one way would ensure a smooth passage for large size vehicles if West Street was to become congested. South Road is currently difficult to navigate by large vehicles with the current two way operation and parking along the route.

What is happening with South Bridge? - Key to the movement of traffic in and around Oundle is South Bridge, whilst South Bridge is under signal control there is no physical width restriction currently in place to prevent larger vehicles using the bridge. The existing 18tonne amenity restriction on South Bridge is there to discourage HGVs but South Bridge can take up to 40tonne vehicles.

When the amenity restriction is revoked Northamptonshire Highways will monitor South Bridge to assess the impact of an increase in HGV traffic movements over it.

Please be assured that the safety of all users will be fully reviewed and considered at the Barnwell Junction, as part of the mitigation proposals of the North Bridge restrictions.

How do you propose to strengthen / repair the structure? The structure requires 7 spans to be strengthened to increase their arch capacities to current traffic loading of 40tonnes.

We continue to progress options for strengthening, these options will ensure that the existing carriageway level is maintained and that the external appearance of the structure stays unchanged, which should satisfy the requirements for Grade II listed structures.

The structure also requires general maintenance/refurbishment activities to be undertaken at the same time as the strengthening works, again these will not change the external appearance of the structure.

Of the various options considered, those requiring the complete closure of Oundle North to all traffic for the duration of the works or pose an archaeological risk to the works were discounted and only two options are being considered for further development both of which are both proprietary systems.

When do you expect to start the strengthening / repair works? – We aim to complete the work by December 2019. We will endeavour to bring the works forward as quickly as possible. Our priority is to keep the bridge open as best we can and to carry out full refurbishment and repair as soon as we are able to.

1093 Oundle North

Northamptonshire Highways

We will continue to update on the Northamptonshire.gov website and provide updates on twitter @nnhighways.

For more information please email NorthBridgeOundle@kierwsp.co.uk