



## **CABINET - 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

**SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY STATION FOOTBRIDGE REVIEW**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This Report is provided for Cabinet to consider the options available regarding the future provision and alternative proposals of a pedestrian rail crossing at Caerphilly Railway Station.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 During a routine General Inspection of the existing Tubewright footbridge a number of precast units forming the stepped access at either side were noted to be rocking / moving when checked. A decision was taken to close the bridge in the interests of public safety on the 3rd July 2023, to prevent slips, trips or falls to any member of the public wishing to use the bridge.  
The footbridge was officially closed under a temporary footbridge order dated 20th July 2023. The closure was initially for a period of six months while the condition and feasibility of repairs is undertaken.  
Liaison with Transport for Wales (TfW) and their agents AMEY Infrastructure Wales to jointly gain full access for inspection was delayed due to the live rail track beneath the bridge. Discussions have continued and the rail closure and inspection date of Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024 proceeded, which was confirmed via Amey on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. A detailed Inspection Report will be provided by Amey in the coming weeks. The Bridge remains closed in the interim, in the interests of public safety.  
An extension to the closure has been granted until July 2024, however, there is a need to progress options for the future of the bridge as closure extensions cannot continue indefinitely and a way forward needs to be agreed.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the contents, options and capital requirements of this report and approve option 4 as the way forward. Removal of the bridge is the preferred option, as replacement/repair is not a cost-effective solution when alternative routes and proposals are available.

- 3.2 Cabinet is asked to agree that the £200,000 funding for the removal is made available from uncommitted capital earmarked reserves.

#### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Officers have reviewed the history and condition of the bridge together with the options and funding available. Officers have also consulted and reviewed options with local members. While local members understood the reasoning for the removal of the bridge, they were not fully supportive of the thought of losing this crossing point. Given the close proximity of alternative crossing provision the removal of the existing bridge is the most cost-effective solution.

#### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The original footbridge was constructed under a 1910 agreement whereby the Authority became responsible for future maintenance liabilities. The original footbridge was a multi span structure. This original structure was replaced in 1965 with the now existing two-span "Tubewright" footbridge. This existing Tubewright structure was typically designed with a 25-year design life (1990). The bridge was totally refurbished in 1997 and landings were replaced in 2009 and 2012. The central pier was also amended by Network Rail in 2012/13.

The Tubewright arrangement of the bridge is complicated for maintenance in lieu of its location. The Authority may have limited control over future maintenance costs due to the live rail line.

- 5.2 The footbridge in its current state is unsafe for public use. The current closure notice ended on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and the closure extension will expire in July 2024. A way forward needs to be determined to allow officers time to execute any decisions. Essentially there are only 4 options available to us.

1. Do nothing and leave the bridge as it is.
2. Refurbish and repair the structure.
3. Remove and replace the structure.
4. Make the existing structure redundant and remove it.

- 5.3 Option 1 – Do nothing.

- This is not an option as we have a duty to pedestrian and rail user safety.

- 5.4 Option 2 – Refurbish and repair existing structure – Indicative capital cost estimate £600k+

- This is the most inexpensive option to re-open the bridge, although limited future life expectancy is achievable due to the bridge being beyond its serviceable life.
- Refurbishment will improve the overall condition of the structure and maintain pedestrian access for a very limited period.
- No improvements will be made to allow for disabled access/inclusivity.
- There is a high risk that during repairs, the structure will require major works that are unforeseen at this time. This is because Tubewright structures generally rot or corrode from the inside out.
- Extensive operation that will require expensive rail line closures.
- Bridge will need to be removed off site for repairs to be undertaken.
- Current rail electrification plans may impact the design of the existing bridge.

- The complicated and onerous 1910 maintenance agreement with TfW will be maintained.
  - Future inevitable maintenance will become extremely difficult due to the proposed location of overhead line electrification apparatus.
- 5.5 Option 3 - Replace the existing structure – Indicative capital cost estimate £1.9m+
- This is the most expensive option.
  - New design would incorporate disabled access ramps as required by design standards, although the length of ramps required (approximately 140m each side) would make its use unfeasible compared to shorter alternative routes.
  - Pedestrian access would be restored, and the new structure would have an 120year design life.
  - Site topography, available space, and land ownership is not conducive to the construction of disabled ramps that would be required either side (approximately 140m length).
  - Options to progress without disability inclusive ramps would likely result in very poor publicity and loss of reputation for the Authority.
- 5.6 Option 4 – Make structure redundant and remove it. Indicative capital cost estimate £200k+
- This is the least expensive overall option.
  - It would remove maintenance liabilities and future costs from the authority.
  - Pedestrian access would be accommodated by using alternative existing access or proposed interchange facilities that are more inclusive for disabled users.
  - Minimal disruption to residents during decommissioning (all options will require over night and weekend working)
  - The alternate route is approximately 5m longer via the existing road bridge which would be shorter than using the disabled ramps of a new footbridge.
  - TfW are looking to implement an Access for All initiative within the newly proposed interchange that would aid crossing of the railway line and be an alternative to the existing road bridge.
- 5.7 An initial consultation meeting was held on the 26th of July 2023 with 3no. St Martins ward Councillors who were invited to discuss the options above. Only Cllr Fussell attended the meeting. Cllr Fussell found the meeting and presentation very useful and while he stated the removal of the bridge was unlikely to gain favour, he was able to understand the issues. A further meeting was subsequently arranged on the 20<sup>th</sup> November with Cllrs from St Martins, Morgan Jones and Van Wards due to the wider impacts the bridge may have on the community.
- 5.8 During the meetings the question was raised about raising funding via the interchange project. Officers had made this approach, but the proposal was rejected by TfW as the new interchange will already be incorporating their own DDA inclusive crossing funded via Access For All.
- 5.9 When considering the removal of the bridge the impacts were discussed. It was noted as part of the presentation that:
- Distance to Caerphilly town centre using existing crossing was 255m
  - Distance to Caerphilly town centre using existing highway 260m (extra 5m)
  - Distance to Caerphilly town centre using proposed inclusivity compliant new bridge 578m (extra 323m due to length of inclusive ramps)
- Please refer to appendix1 for further information  
The distance using new proposed interchange crossing was not calculable but is estimated to be broadly similar the existing arrangement.

## 5.10 CONCLUSION

The removal of the bridge was a highly emotive discussion in the member consultation meeting and a decision that was not favoured by some of the local Councillors. It was noted and agreed by some of the members present, that the condition of the bridge and the financial commitment required was not justifiable when a suitable alternative route was available together with the alternative inclusive route proposed within the new interchange. As the highway diversion route would need to be used until the interchange was completed, it was agreed that the route would be reviewed to ensure it was safe and suitable for all users.

## 6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made.

## 7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

7.1 [Link to IIA](#)

## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Capital funding will be required to facilitate the repair/replacement/removal of the bridge depending on the option chosen.

- Option 1 N/A
- Option 2 repair - £600k (only provides a short term solution)
- Option 3 replace - £1900k
- Option 4 remove - £200k

8.2 In light of the current challenging financial climate and the limited capital resources available, it is the recommendation of officers that £200k is allocated from uncommitted capital earmarked reserves to fund option 4.

## 9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The views of consultees have been incorporated and addressed within the report. The three St. Martins Ward Members have raised concerns during the consultation period, about removal of the Bridge.

One Member of the “relevant” Ward has confirmed support to remove the footbridge.

## 11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 There is no statutory power or guidance binding us as an authority to undertake the works, however, there is an agreement with railtrack dated 1910 that puts all

maintenance liabilities on CCBC.

Author: Chris Adams, Highway Engineering Group Manager

Consultees:

- Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways
- Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
- Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
- Julian Higgs, Principal Engineer / Structures Department
- Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
- Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
- Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Group Manager
- Gareth Richards, Highway Services Group Manager
- Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities, Welsh Language
- Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
- Sue Richards, Head of Transformation, Education Planning and Strategy
- Cllr Colin Elsbury, St Martins Ward
- Cllr James E Fussell, St Martins Ward
- Cllr Stephen Kent, St Martins Ward
- Cllr Anne Broughton-Pettit, Morgan Jones Ward
- Cllr Shayne Cook, Morgan Jones Ward
- Cllr James Pritchard, Morgan Jones Ward
- Cllr Elaine Forehead, Van Ward
- Cllr Christine Forehead, Van Ward

Appendix 1 – Pedestrian access Routes – This document is an Engineering Drawing and cannot be made accessible. Therefore, should anyone wish to discuss the content they may contact Chris Adams, Author of the Report on [adamsc@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:adamsc@caerphilly.gov.uk)