



Cllr John Furey
Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment
Surrey County Council
County Hall
Penrhyn Road
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 2DN

Friars Bridge Court
41-45 Blackfriars Road
London
SE1 8NZ

14 August 2014

Dear Cllr Furey,

Compton Road Bridge

Following our meeting on Friday 8 August, we thought that it would be helpful to write to reflect some of the key discussion points at the meeting.

Delay to works of two years

As you know, Network Rail was in a position to start work this August for a period of three months. To complete this work we had to book what is known as a 'possession' on a timetable of works that is planned to take place on the railway up to two years in advance. Missing this possession in favour of a six months postponement, the suggestion arising from the meeting, means that, even if funding can be found at the end of the six month period, we are unlikely to be able to undertake the work for two years.

Likelihood of a weight restriction very high

While the delay of two years is not insurmountable, the condition of the bridge is already poor and will only deteriorate in that time. This means that the likelihood of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction being put in place during that period is extremely high. This would need to be enforced by width restrictions, which would effectively mean that cars would be the largest type of vehicle that could use the bridge. We would appreciate an acknowledgement from each of the local authorities that they are content with this approach should the condition of the bridge deteriorate so as to warrant a weight restriction. In a worst case scenario, there is the possibility of that the bridge might even need to be closed because of the level of deterioration. If such action be required we would welcome a joint announcement from Network Rail and each of the local authorities to the public.

We will be sure to share the information with you about the condition of the bridge and we will be conducting further monitoring of its strength. However, we would also welcome recognition that the decision about if or when a weight restriction is required is a matter for Network Rail, given that it holds the risk and liability for safety at the bridge.

It is worth reiterating the point, that if we were to complete the work that we had planned in August there would be no risk of a weight restriction needing to be put in place. Further, should funding be found to widen or improve the bridge, this could be accommodated easily by the new structure without extra costs.

Funding of enhancements to the bridge

We would welcome Surrey CC, with the other local authorities, exploring funding for enhancements to the bridge. As we said at the meeting, we are happy to provide further detail on options for enhancements at the bridge and could deliver the works should funds be found. We can provide information on options that would allow for greater pedestrian or cycle access or a widening of the carriage way.

Network Rail will contribute the circa £750K for the replacement of the current bridge to bring it up to modern strength standards. Yet, we are not responsible for the highway that runs over the bridge, and as such we are not funded to provide enhancements for the benefit of road users. This responsibility lies with the local highways authority and councils. However, if there is anything we can do to provide feasibility options for an enhanced bridge, we are happy to help.

Inclusion of Office of Rail Regulation

We would also like to include the Office of Rail Regulation in the next meeting in November, if this is acceptable. The ORR oversees the work Network Rail does to improve safety on the railway, including on structures. It may also be helpful to their input on issues of risk and liability.

At the meeting, there was mention that one of the local authorities was collecting data on the usage of the bridge by vehicles. We would be grateful if this data could be shared with us please and sent to Nick Tedstone (nick.tedstone@networkrail.co.uk) and Rebecca Wells (rebecca.wells@networkrail.co.uk).

I hope this letter is useful. I have included the presentation that we gave at the meeting on 8 August for your information.

Yours sincerely,



Sam McCarthy
Commercial Director
Network Rail/South West Trains Alliance

CC :

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Anne Milton MP
SCC Councillor for Godalming North: Steve Cosser,
SCC Cllr for Shalford: George Johnson
SCC Head of Highways - Jason Russell
SCC Senior Structures Engineer Maureen Robson
GBC Cllr – James Palmer
WBC Planning Officer – Barry Lomax
WBC Cllr Nick Williams
GTC David Hunter
Compton Parish Council Chairman Fiona Curtis
Shalford Parish Council Chairman Bill Birkett
Artington Parish Council Chairman Roger Musson + Vice Chairman George Smith,