

**Councillor Stephen Cowan**

Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham  
Hammersmith Town Hall, London W6 9JU



28 October 2019

Dear Neighbour

**Hammersmith Bridge – an update**

As promised, this is the second update about the actions being taken to fully restore Hammersmith Bridge.

**Why was Hammersmith Bridge closed to motor vehicles?**

Last April, several hairline micro-fractures were discovered in the cast iron casing around the pedestals that have held the suspension chains in place since 1887. Cast iron can shatter so the micro-fractures were an immediate safety risk. We therefore immediately closed the bridge to motorised traffic.

The micro-fractures were only discovered because we undertook the first on-going comprehensive structural integrity review of our 132-year-old suspension bridge in decades. It began in 2015. No work of any significance had been undertaken for many years prior to that.

We've installed high-tech sensors to examine and monitor the health of every part of the bridge and brought in world class engineers from around the world. They have discovered a large amount of unchecked corrosion throughout the suspension structure.

**Repair work has begun**

We've considered all options. Building a new bridge would cost as much as fully restoring our beautiful 19<sup>th</sup> Century bridge. Both options are expensive. We are lobbying government to fund the repair of this vital piece of London's road and bus infrastructure.

So, the first stage of work to repair the pedestals has now begun.

The Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL) have been extremely helpful with TfL making a £25million contribution to the final bill. The work is expected to take approximately three years.

**A temporary new bridge for pedestrians and cyclists**

TfL and our engineers are currently reviewing the feasibility of installing a temporary foot and cycle bridge next to the existing bridge. It isn't feasible to build anything that could take motor vehicles. A temporary bridge would enable the major works programme to be completed in the quickest possible time.

I'll be writing again to everyone living close to the bridge with more details about the works schedule and how we plan to work with local people and minimise disruption.

**What will it cost?**

Early estimates indicate the next phase could cost £120million, although this includes a significant contingency fund because of the complexity and challenge of repairing the Grade II\*-listed structure.

We're clear that the residents of Hammersmith & Fulham **will not** be paying for the bridge's restoration. The bridge is a strategic part of London's road and bus network and should be a priority for funding from government, which recently announced a £25billion package for strategic road networks.

**Supporting residents on both sides of the bridge**

TfL have listened to residents, so they've re-routed buses, changed traffic light phasing and expanded their dial-a-ride scheme. For more details on dial-a-ride, please visit: [www.lbhf.gov.uk/dialaride](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/dialaride)

I'm grateful to Cllr Gareth Roberts, the Leader of the London Borough of Richmond, and his team, who are working hard with our highways engineers and TfL to minimise disruption and get the bridge re-opened as quickly as possible.

For more details about Hammersmith Bridge, visit:  
[www.lbhf.gov.uk/bridge](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/bridge)

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Steve'.

**Cllr Stephen Cowan**

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