

Notes of 9 January 2015 meeting, chaired by John Rhodes, to discuss progressing proposals for a new cycle-pedestrian bridge over the Trent in the Trent Basin - The Hook (Ladybay) area, and held at the River Suite, River Crescent, Nottingham

Present:

Hugh McClintock, Pedals, and Chair, Nottingham Local Access Forum (HMCC)
John Rhodes, Trent Park Developments (River Crescent), Nottingham Civic Society, and Pedals (JR)
Matt Easter, Regional Director (East Midlands), Sustrans (ME)
Keith Morgan, Nottingham City Council (Transport Strategy) (KM)
Kevin Sharman, Nottinghamshire County Council, Environment and Resources Dept., (KS)
Cllr. Richard Mallender, local Councillor for Ladybay, Rushcliffe Borough Council, and
Chair of the West Bridgford Local Area Forum (RM)
John Barnwell, River Crescent Residents' Association (JB)
Bill Dixon, River Crescent Residents' Association (JB)
Alan Morris, River Crescent Residents' Association (AM)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Tom Huggon, Nottingham Civic Society and Nottm Local Access Forum, etc. (TH)
Nick Ebbs, Blueprint Regeneration / Igloo (NE)
Cllr. Steve Calvert, West Bridgford Central and South Division, and Vice-Chair,
Transport and Highways, Nottinghamshire County Council (SC)
Mike Taylor, Nottingham Regeneration Ltd. (MT)

Proposed Feasibility Study:

It was agreed that preparing this was an urgent task, to demonstrate soundly the case for the bridge, and that this was the best of the various possible suggested locations, taking account of the wider context. The study had to be independent and robust as ME emphasised from Sustrans broader experience of promoting such projects bearing in mind that there were always lots of competing demands for expenditure.

The general feeling was that there was already extensive good relevant detailed information and that we did not need to start this exercise from scratch, especially as this would be much more costly, We should also make full use of the wide relevant local knowledge of those involved, and make sure that this was carefully documented and presented to reinforce our case for the bridge and the pros and cons of the different site options, with a clearly justified recommendation of our preferred site.

It was therefore agreed that JR and HMCC should soon take the lead on starting work on the feasibility study, using relevant information to be sent through by KM and KS on previous proposals, and including details of the wider context and approaches of each possible site option. It was important also to sell a vision, as ME stressed.

To help ensure that the study covered all the ground required, and the relevant difficult questions were raised and answered adequately, this draft should then be made available for other interested parties to challenge and contribute. If there was then a feeling that the draft study needed to be subject to more rigorous external scrutiny before finalisation we might then wish to commission Sustrans or some other outside organisation to assess it. ME advised that this would probably cost between £5-10,000 in the case of Sustrans. We would take a later decision on this which we knew just what further work was required and its exact cost, as well as deciding on how to raise funding for it.

ME also advised that we might wish to organise a further consultative event as part of the feasibility study preparation process. While aiming to come up with a clear preferred option, based on a thorough case, it was, he said, also important to be flexible about new opportunities to help secure funding and make progress towards implementation.

JR said that he had already been in touch with several companies able to supply prefabricated bridges (modified according to special local site conditions). These included Nusteel Structures, Kent, Mabey Bridge Ltd, Chepstow and CTS Bridges, Huddersfield.

ME offered to put him in touch with other such companies with which Sustrans had experience of working on such projects. From the enquiries already made JR estimated that the cheapest suitable ready-made option would be a cable stay bridge, and including a main span of about 85 metres and a width of 3 metres, the minimum for safe shared use by cyclists and pedestrians (based on Sustrans experience, ME stated). On the Trent Lane side the area available for the bridge landing was more confined than on The Hook side though there were almost important nature conservation aspects to take into account in this more open area, RM mentioned.

Canal & River Trust and Environment Agency

ME advised that it was important to consult both these agencies. As a member of the regional board of the CRT he had in fact already mentioned to them the revived interest in this project. The CRT would want to consider carefully how such a bridge would impact on other access to the river, especially by boat traffic.

ME recommended that we consult the EA after the completion of work on the feasibility study, to take account of their views on flood risk and water storage. JR said he had a contact at the EA whom he would approach.

Funding possibilities:

Section 106 Agreements developer contributions from the following:

- 13,500 new homes recently approved by Rushcliffe Borough Council south of the river, in line with their recent Local Plan decision.
- Development of the Park Yacht Inn Site by McCann Homes
- Development to the rear of the Park Yacht Inn
- Next phase of the Blueprint development around the Trent Basin

With regard to potential contributions from major housing developments south of the river KS emphasised that we should be aware there were many other claims on these, and ones relating to definite proposals not just proposed schemes like this one. He also said that they were time-limited. It was therefore important to complete the feasibility study as soon as possible to help convince the County Council and RBC that this was a serious proposal and therefore with a legitimate claim on such funding.

As regards potential funding from developments north of the river, on the Blueprint (Trent Basin and McCann Homes (Park Yacht Club) sites, there was, JR thought, a good possibility for obtaining substantial contributions but he would need soon to follow this up with Jim Rae.

Local authorities:

Bridge Estate Fund, Nottingham City Council

JR said that the informal soundings already carried out by TH suggested that there was a very good chance of getting some funding from this historic fund since it clearly met the exact aims of this charity. However, given the other potential claims on this fund we would need to be very careful in taking this further, with lobbying of all the fund trustees, many of whom were understood to be City Councillors.

Nottingham City Council

KM said that most of their current funding for cycling had come from their successful bid to the DfT under the Cycling Ambition Grant scheme and that this was all earmarked for particular schemes, especially improved on-road provision in 4 corridors connecting to, from and across the City Centre. One of these, the Eastern corridor, included Daleside Road, close to the north end of the proposed bridge via Trent Lane, so this funding would complement a new bridge and extend its value for commuters.

Notts County Council

KS confirmed, as Cllr. Steve Calvert, had already made clear, that in the current financial circumstances any direct capital support from the County Council was very unlikely, particularly as they had not recently benefitted in the same way as the City Council from DfT special funding for cycling

Rushcliffe Borough Council

RM mentioned that a new West Bridgford Economic Development Board was being set up (similar to one already operating in Cotgrave), to be chaired by Cllr. Simon Robinson. He recommended that we make them aware of this developing project, to help encourage further RBC support. HMcC said he would follow this up, with a letter to Cllr. Neil Clarke, Leader of Rushcliffe BC, copied to Cllr. Robinson etc.

Other possible sources:

Central Government grants for regeneration and National Lottery.

These looked unlikely, it was agreed. However, it was important to get interest from the LEP (Local Economic Partnership), D2N2, ME advised contacting David Ralph, their CEO.

Sustrans

ME made clear that Sustrans was heavily dependent on other sources of finance, especially from the DfT, and that the only chance of their being able to contribute directly to this project was if they were successful in their current efforts, coordinated with other organisations such as CTC and Living Streets, to get increased funding for cycling from the DfT. The current DfT cycling funding was all for specific projects, already agreed.

Aldi

JR said he had a good contact with Aldi who were soon to develop a new store on Daleside Road and he would now approach them, emphasising the extra custom a new bridge could bring them.

NFFC and the NWSC

It was agreed that a bridge could be of potential great benefit to nearby major sporting sites including NFFC and the National Water Sports Centre, on the grounds that this would make it easier to reduce the traffic problems associated with their major events. Agreed that we should approach them soon for support, once we knew the best contacts to approach

Crowdfunding.

This was an increasingly important source of funding for many different schemes and we should investigate this further, while at the same time recognising that it was unlikely to generate more than a quite small proportion of the total funding required. Alan Morris (AM) agreed to look into this and report back.

(postscript to meeting, in italics)

His initial exploration suggested that crowdfunding might well be an option for raising relatively modest sums, such as that required for an independent feasibility study. He then proposed to pull something together along the lines of:

- *Summary*
- *Basic definition/description*
- *Case study/studies*
- *Outline approach that we would need to take, with component steps, timeframe, etc*

This will hopefully give us all an idea of what crowdfunding could do for the project, and what we'd have to do to make it happen.

Public Relations Strategy to promote further public support for the bridge.

Agreed that it was best to leave this until we had completed the feasibility study, as we could then make more of a story of its completion and recommended option. It might also be best to leave this until after the local elections in May, it was suggested

Meanwhile, we should continue to seek further support from community groups and individual people, especially high profile figures such as Sir Paul Smith who JR had recently approached.