

Notes of 4 March 2015 Proposed Trent Lane to The Hook foot-cycle bridge Steering Group meeting, held at the River Suite, River Crescent, Nottingham

Present:

Hugh McClintock (HMCC) (Chair), and Chair, Nottingham Local Access Forum, and representing Pedals
John Rhodes (JR), Chair, River Crescent Residents' Association, and representing Nottingham Civic Society Environment Committee,
Alan Morris (AM), River Crescent Residents' Association
Bill Dixon (BD), River Crescent Residents' Association
Tom Huggon (TH), Nottingham Civic Society
Keith Morgan (KM), Nottingham City Council
Alec Hamlin (AH), Blueprint Regeneration Ltd.
Lawrence Geary (LG), Lady Bay Community Association

Apologies for absence from: -

Paul Hillier, Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr. John Hartshorne, Nottingham City Council
Jim Rae, Nottingham City Council
Cllr, Richard Mallender, Rushcliffe Borough Council
Howard Gill, Bite Design Ltd,
Hugh McCormack, Mc2 Market Research

Draft feasibility study (as circulated by email last week): comments and further work needed, and timing

It was agreed that good progress had been made with this, especially with regard to demonstrating the case for a bridge at this site, and that it would appear that with some further work there was now a good chance of completing this within the next month or two, depending on the extent of further comments, particularly from the local authorities.

KM said that he had been away on holiday last week and therefore only had time so far to skim the draft but would later let us have his main comments.

Paul Hillier from the County Council had hoped to come to the meeting but had sent his apologies at the last minute after his car broke down, and so his comments were still awaited.

Further work required, in addition to taking up the detailed comments already made on this draft by various people including Alan Morris and John Rhodes, included:-

- Information from bridge suppliers to help give a 'ball-park' figure for likely costs (JR and BD)
- Predicting bridge usage, taking into account advice from Andy Cope, Head of Sustrans Research and Monitoring Unit, which was still awaited
- The economic case for the bridge, taking into account the comments from KM that the draft had given these relatively little attention compared to the health case, especially bearing in mind that it was unlikely that there would be any health funding to contribute to its costs. He pointed out that the support of LEPs (Local Economic Partnerships) was now crucial in attracting funding for any transport schemes.
- It would be useful if possible to add something on likely economic benefits in terms of increased land values arising from the bridge and making residential properties more attractive.
- a reference to the endorsement already received from Sir Paul Smith.

- Expand the material on possible future arrangements and responsibilities and endowments for maintaining the bridge (mentioned by TH) including different ownership options such as a City-County Partnership, the City Council alone (as with Trent Bridge), a special Trust etc.

To help assess the information from bridge suppliers, taking account of all the work required included associated civil engineering work on abutments and further analysis of ground conditions, associated land needs and services such as electricity supply, it was agreed that it would be very useful as a first step to arrange a meeting with Chris Capewell, the Bridge Engineer at the City Council. HMCC agreed to contact him.

HMCC said that he intended to start work shortly on a further draft, with a view to having this ready for discussion at the Greater Nottingham Cycling Development Group meeting on 26 March. This would be a good opportunity to get further feedback from the City and County Councils, and Sustrans, etc.

He said that he would also give updates to the next meeting of the West Bridgford Local Traffic and Transport Group on the evening of the same day and at the next meeting of the Nottm Local Access Forum on Wed 8 April

Update on survey of local attitudes to the proposed bridge carried out by the Lady Bay Community Association

HMCC reported on the results of this survey sent to him a few days earlier by Cllr. Sue Mallender, local Councillor for Lady Bay Ward on Rushcliffe Borough Council and carried out by her and Cllr. Richard Mallender.

In this survey on residents of Holme Road, Holme Grove, Adbolton Grove and the sections of Julian, Gertrude and Mona Roads between Holme Road and Trent Boulevard they asked people about their views on the proposed foot and cycle bridge. The results were: 60.08% in favour, 33.08% against and 6.15% don't know. She also said that they would now continue carrying out the survey in the rest of Lady Bay.

It was agreed that this results were generally encouraging and that we looked forward to the results of the rest of the survey. It was possible that some of those who said they were against the bridge could perhaps be won round if in our further work we could satisfy them that their particular concerns, e.g. about the design of the bridge, perceptions of increased crime, or motor cycle abuse, were being taken seriously and considered carefully.

Update on possible funding sources with particular reference to the City Council's Bridge Estate fund.

TH reported on the latest information he had obtained about the prospect of our getting financial support from the Bridge Estate Fund. This he said now seemed very unlikely, at least in the foreseeable future, mainly because of unexpected demands from urgent repair work needed on Trent Bridge.

HMCC then reported on the uncertain prospects of obtaining developer contributions funding. Jim Rae from the City Council had advised him that this now looked very unlikely from developments on the north bank because of various viability issues.

JR said that he was still unsure of the attitude to the Bridge of McCann Homes who were now the owners of the site north of the Nottm Yacht Club but that he would try to find out more as this was also very important.

HMCC said that he had raised the prospects of obtaining Section 106 funding from the major housing developments in the Tollerton-Gamston area at a recent meeting that he had had with Paul Hillier and Jan Witko of the County Council. In this they made clear that this too would not be easy, given the early stage of these plans, the many other demands on such funding, and other issues of timing in relation to possible funding of contributions both towards the bridge and improving approaches to it south of the river.

However, as a first step, he agreed with them to update the Pedals 'wish list' for the Rushcliffe area, with particular reference to strategic routes and suggested priorities, including ones related to bridge access. This would help to ensure that such claims were taken seriously as would completion of the feasibility study. We would also need to pursue this matter with Rushcliffe Borough Council, e.g. at the proposed meeting with their Leader, Cllr. Neil Clarke.

There was considerable discussions about other avenues of funding which we should pursue, including:

- Raising the case for the bridge with other key City Councillors, e.g. Cllr. Nick McDonald, Cllr Jon Collins and Cllr. Jane Urquhart, particularly in view of the fact, as JR pointed out, that the City Council had included a reference to the concept of the bridge in their presentation to the MIPIM property investment meeting in Cannes, taking place next week. He said that we should encourage and build on this clear City Council interest and its potential for them to deliver as part of an inducement to encourage developers to invest in the Waterside Regeneration, KM said that although there was no chance of funding for the bridge from the current DfT Cycling Ambition Grant the City Council were hopeful of negotiating with the DfT for further substantial levels of funding for cycling over several years and that this might help to make our scheme viable in the medium to longer term.
- Possible contributions from developers who would benefit from such a bridge, e.g. adding an amount of £200 per house to help finance it.
- 'Allowable solutions'. AH mentioned the changes from 2016 to the Building Regulations to help reduce carbon generation from new development and this new category which might provide a possible source of funding.
- Other local businesses such as Aldi who were soon to build a store on Daleside Road and where JR had contacts who he said he would now sound out.
- Setting up a trust, with a loan from e.g. the City Council, secured against income from increased property values.
- Tolls for bridge use. This had been suggested by Cllr. John Hartshorne, but the general feeling was that this would be counterproductive and deter usage of the bridge.
- Having a definite scheme ready to go, in case of unexpected funding becoming available, as had happened a few years ago with the A46 dualling scheme, LG pointed out, and as Matt Easter of Sustrans had mentioned several months ago occasionally happened with DfT cycling funding on which Sustrans now relied a lot. In such cases it helped much to have a scheme with broad support worked up and ready to be implemented.
- HMcC said that with the recent news about the poor prospects of funding from the Bridge Estate Fund, we might now have to think more in terms of the project as one for the medium and longer term for implementation, once a package from different funding sources had been identified and secured.

Next steps including proposed meetings and encouraging further organisational support

JR said that he was already in touch with Mark Jenkinson of the Nottm Sailing Club and hoped to arrange a meeting in the next few days, to discuss our proposals with him before their next Committee meeting on 11 March.

Other priority meetings agreed were:-

- Meeting with Cllr. Neil Clarke, Leader of Rushcliffe Borough Council, (as mentioned above). HMcC to arrange.

- Meeting with Chris Capewell, Bridges Engineer, City Council (as mentioned above). HMCC to arrange.
- Meeting with Cllr. Nick McDonald, City Council: JR to arrange.

Other important meetings which we would need to arrange included:

- Nottinghamshire Police
- Canal and River Trust,
- Notts Wildlife Trust
- Friends of the Hook etc.

Agreed that it was also important to encourage further support from other major local organisations including NWSC, Experience Nottinghamshire, and NFFC. Although the NWSC, for example, might not stand to benefit directly in financial terms from a bridge it could help them to alleviate the substantial traffic congestion generated by some of their major events, and also reduce the need for investing in expanding car parking.

TH reported that the Nottingham Urban Wildlife Scheme had recently agreed to support the bridge in principle so they could be added to the list of local groups in the appendix of the next revision of the feasibility study. This was very much welcomed.

Proposed bridge design competition

Agreed that although this could be useful as a way of continuing further local consultation and ensuring that the design of the bridge was locally acceptable it was still premature to think in terms of arranging this until we knew more about the design constraints and the budget range, etc.

Possible further local community meetings, e.g. in the Sneinton area

HMCC pointed out that we had still not acted on the suggestion for a local public meeting in the Sneinton area put forward some months ago. However it was agreed that it might now be best to leave this until after the local and national elections. AH said that as a local resident of Sneinton he would be happy to help arrange this, in coordination with our other supporters in that area such as Tom Hughes of Sneinton Academy and Cllr. David Mellen.

PR strategy and media interest, including possible involvement of local media cyclists

Agreed to defer this until the feasibility study was complete. TH emphasised the need in such efforts for coordination and a single point of contact with the media, to reduce the risk of confusion and conflicting messages being given out.

AM agreed with this and said that it would also need to be carefully planned.

Next steps including offers of technical and marketing support (including Howard Gill and Hugh McCormack)

These offers were much welcomed though we might not to take them up for some time. However, JR said that he thought that Howard Gill might well be able to help fairly soon with the work needed to investigate in more detail the constraints at the north end of the proposed bridge, once we had met Chris Capewell at the City Council.

Date of next Steering Group meeting

Agreed to leave this open for now.