

Meeting 12th May 2022 (Teams)

Replacement of the Nazeing New Road Bridge, spans 2 & 3 (Network Rail NR)

Attendees R H Halfon MP

Chris Whitbread, Area County Councillor & Leader of EFDC.

Richard Bassett, EFDC Councillor, Lower Nazeing.

Mary Sartin, EFDC Councillor, Roydon

Janet Ballard & Anna Taylor (RH Halfon MP).

Charles Baker, Public Relations Manager, Network Rail

Simon Milburn, Infrastructure Director, Network Rail

Following on from the meeting held on 14th April, SB outlined again why the bridge needs to be replaced now. Temporary works are not possible and would be as disruptive – a diversion would still be required due to the utilities buried in the structure. The new bridge will be able to take 40 tonne vehicles and the ‘bend’ on the Essex side will be improved as much as it can be. Implementing a weight restriction to prolong the life of the bridge would be very difficult. It was also mentioned that NR has engaged with Herts County Council to see if it wishes to replace spans 1 & 4 (which it owns) at the same time and has offered short term financial support to the county if required – these spans are not as corroded as the NR two because maintenance access has been easier, but they will need replacing in the future possibly with another bridge closure.

NR insists that planned works are better than a reactive closure and whilst the organisation will try and mitigate inconvenience there will undoubtedly be issues.

RH wanted to know what NR is doing to help residents and following on from the previous meeting, NR advised that the pedestrian access under the bridge, criticised as being difficult to use, has been improved with vegetation cut back, additional lighting (RB - not enough) and graffiti removed (shortly).

NR is looking at additional weight limit signage in the Dobbs Weir area but it was also mentioned that HGV’s need to be told from the official diversion route (A10, M25, M11) that they should not enter the area as through traffic. NR will take this away to look at (with Essex Highways/Highways England?). The Dobbs Weir residents have made some suggestions which may help with local traffic flows and these will be forwarded to NR.

RB, with Epping Forest Community Transport, is looking to continue running its 392 bus service, possibly with a second bus on the Hertfordshire side – could NR financially contribute to this? This will allow people to get to the station and schools.

Whilst a confirmed works programme is awaited, a reduction in the closure timetable is being looked at with the utility companies. The closure is likely to be moved back to the beginning of July but with no programme extension.

RB advised that the promised stakeholder meetings need to move forward as there are many rumours surrounding the closure. This was taken on board – there will be a project website and further newsletters/leaflet drops.

A further meeting will be scheduled alongside the stakeholder meetings.

End JB