Abbey – Chesterton bridge Questions & Answers

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Bridge location and access routes

- **Why would the proposed bridge have to be so far from the railway bridge?**
  The distance between the rail bridge and the foot / cycle bridge will have to be agreed with Network Rail, but we are conscious that there is a desire and benefit to locate the bridge as close as possible to the existing railway bridge. Access for maintenance operations such as re-painting both the existing and proposed bridges would be needed. In lifting in a new bridge next to an existing one, a gap would be needed to ensure that the new bridge being lifted in does not strike the existing one. A conservative figure of 30 metres was quoted initially. Working with Network Rail we hope to reduce this to around 10 metres or less.

- **What route will the approach paths to the bridge take?**
  This is not yet fixed but will be informed by the early architectural study and the work coming forward on the Chisholm Trail.

- **What about re-routing the bridge access all the way around Ditton Meadows?**
  The aim of the scheme is to encourage sustainable transport either by foot or cycle. Re-routing will add additional time and distance to journeys and therefore not encourage people to walk or cycle.

Timescales

Please note the timescales below are indicative, earliest possible dates and subject to change. They are based on the assumption approvals are granted without hold-ups.

- Architectural study: 2015
- Planning and design stage: 2016
- Planning application submitted: 2016
- Earliest start date for construction: 2017
- Earliest date for bridge opening: 2018
• **What are possible hold-ups?**
  Planning stage: Planning issues, land issues, funding issues  
  Constructions stage: weather conditions, limitations imposed by the Environment Agency, events on the River Cam

**Bridge details and accessibility**

• **How wide and high will the bridge be?**
  The path over the bridge will be a minimum of 4 metres wide and the bridge will be of a similar height as the adjacent railway bridge.

• **How would the bridge be divided between cyclists & pedestrians?**
  Path width will be determined during the design stage. Options include a minimum 4 metres wide shared use or perhaps segregation by level difference. If segregated the pedestrian side would overlook the meadow.

• **The total size of the bridge is a real concern in terms of length of ramps?**
  The ramps will be designed to minimise visual impact as much as possible.

• **What will be done to help disabled people use the bridge?**
  The ramp access will need to be fully compliant with current accessibility standards this can be as steep as 1:12 with landings/rest points, however 1:20 is the best practice option. We are working with the Cambridge Disability Forum and other groups. The design will meet all design standards relating to ramps, surfaces, hand rails etc. Our intention is to build a crossing that meets the needs of all users.

**Construction compound and site access routes**

• **Where will the construction compound be?**
  The compound will likely be on the Abbey side of the bridge. We will be able to confirm the exact location of the compound, once we fully understand the type of construction, materials, and location of the bridge.

• **Where will construction traffic access the site?**
  Site access is likely to be via Abbey ward possibly via Wadloes Road.

• **Why not build a compound on the Chesterton side of the bridge?**
  There is insufficient space for equipment on the Chesterton side of the bridge and there would be a greater impact on private dwellings in terms of noise, dust and general disturbance. Also, this area is privately owned and being prepared for development.

• **Can we be assured that any access route for construction traffic takes the shortest route to minimise the effect on the meadow?**
  We will work closely with those constructing the bridge and local interest groups to ensure that disruption is kept to a minimum. The shortest route would probably be the cheapest and the one requiring least reinstatement afterwards.
Impact on Towpath/existing wooden walkway

- **How will congestion on the towpaths be addressed?**
  The links are being looked at as part of the Chisholm Trail and will be evaluated by user counts and review prior to trail design and consultation.

- **How could the ramp on the Chesterton side avoid clashes with the towpath and users?**
  This issue will be considered as part of the design, but it looks possible that the ramp could wrap around the pill box area and it looks as if there is scope to widen the towpath in this vicinity.

- **Will the existing wooden walkway underneath the railway bridge still be suitable?**
  The wooden walkway is a concern and will be looked at to see what improvements are possible. However, the project team consider that there will not be significant increased usage on the boardwalk as we anticipate most traffic will be travelling in a north/south direction.

- **Are you expecting an increased usage of the boardwalk?**
  Users from Cambridge city direction wanting to cross the river would probably use Green Dragon Bridge and there is not likely to be an increase of people coming from Fen Ditton direction. The additional walkway users would be from Abbey direction (Chisholm Trail) or from the new station/Chesterton.

Environment & impact on Ditton Meadows

- **How will it be possible to restore the damage caused to the meadow?**
  We will work with ecology and environmental experts to ensure the right mitigation measures will be put in place to reduce any damage and restore areas damaged as a result of the work.

- **How will you ensure that the natural habitat is not compromised by the lighting which will be necessary to prevent accidents?**
  Lighting is still under consideration, along with the use of solar studs inserted into the ground. Clearly there is opposition to street lamps type lighting, though from a public safety and security perspective some form of lighting may be a planning condition.

- **What are you doing about possible flooding during construction?**
  Flooding will be considered as part the design and construction methodologies and will be evaluated during planning as part of the statutory process.

- **Will the building of a bridge threaten the meadow area in the future?**
  This is a beautiful and precious green space. The provision of a bridge and a foot and cycle path should not imply subsequent development other than an opportunity for non-motorised traffic to use this area.

- **Are you aware Ditton Meadows is a designated conservation area?**
  The design team is aware of the planning legislation impacting upon the area, including Conservation Area designation and its impact. There will be reference to this status in the planning application.
• **Is an ecological survey planned?**
  Extensive ecological surveys are planned. An initial ecological walkover survey confirmed various habitats being present. The initial Architectural study will report on these and its impact.

• **Can you ensure there is no threat to endangered species?**
  A full ecological survey will be carried out in due course. Should any endangered species be found, measures will be put in place to mitigate any impact. The exact measures will depend on the species found by the survey. We will be in a position to advise further once the ecological survey has been carried out.

• **What type of mitigation can be provided?**
  Mitigation measures will depend on the outcome of the ecological survey. They will be proposed as part of a planning application and will be open to public scrutiny. For Riverside Bridge the mitigation included bird and bat boxes and the creation of a planted up wetland vegetative margin adjacent to the river.

**Funding**

**Where will the funding come from?**
Funding will be from developer contributions, and the Department for Transport (DfT)

**What will the bridge cost?**
The estimated cost of the bridge is expected to be less than £4.5m

**Tunnel instead of bridge**

• **What are the reasons for not having a tunnel instead of a bridge?**
  - Costs will likely be more than a bridge option, as will the construction risks.
  - Engineering difficulties associated with working below the river and water table, including managing flood risk to the tunnel/adjacent properties and expensive de-watering.
  - Difficulties in finding enough land on the north side for the tunnel to exit, as approaches will be longer than for a bridge option. This will be further complicated by the logistics - working around utilities, existing houses and railway.
  - Personal security concerns
  - Future operating costs for CCTV, pumping, lighting, and any ventilation or fire detection/suppression measures required.
  - Potential for long term effects on groundwater flow.
  - A tunnel would require significantly more soil removal than a bridge, resulting in more trips by barge on the River Cam or by tipping lorries across the meadows.
  - People would be able to enjoy the views of the meadows and the river much more by using a bridge than a tunnel.
Chisholm Trail

- **What is the Chisholm Trail? Where will it go?**
  The Chisholm Trail is going to be a cross-city foot and cycle route connecting the Cambridge Biomedical Campus in the south to the Science Park area in the north of the city. The exact route is still be determined, but it is expected that the trail would loosely follow the railway line.

- **Could the Chisholm Trail approach the bridge alongside the railway at railway level?**
  This is not possible without extending the railway embankment out into the flood plain and rerouting the stream from Coldhams Common. The expense of this makes this a non-starter.

- **What are the timeframes for the Chisholm Trail and the bridge?**
  The Chisholm Trail is likely to be a series of projects delivered as sections that make up the whole. This is dependent on planning where appropriate, and Network Rail access, however we are aiming at delivery within a similar timescale to the bridge.

Consultations

- **Will comments from previous consultations be carried forward to planning to avoid need to resubmit?**
  A formal statement of community involvement will be issued to planners as part of the planning process and comments and questions are considered by the project team throughout the project.

- **How wide was the initial consultation?**
  We are currently in early pre-design stages of consultation. We have spoken to various stakeholders as part of this engagement. The consultation events were advertised through our website and the local press. Leaflets were delivered to an extensive area. Nearly 900 responses were received, which is a very good response compared with other schemes.

- **Will there be further consultations?**
  We are planning to consult again during the design stage of the project, before any plans will be submitted for planning application. This is likely to be in Autumn 2015.

- **Have detailed studies and consultations taken place to show the need for a bridge?**
  The County Council has an adopted Transport Strategy in place. The City Council has a local plan. These documents set out the strategy for developing land use and transport in the city. Both documents were subject to extensive consultation.
Other

- **What consideration will be given to safety at the level crossing and to prevent accidents on Fen Road?**
  Users would be directed from the bridge to the towpath to access Fen Road to the west of the crossing. Therefore, we do not anticipate the bridge adding to the number of users to the level crossing.

- **What will be done to prevent motorised vehicles using the bridge?**
  In the first instance this will be looked at in design any further risk will be evaluated as the project progresses. The problem is there is no easy solution to this that will not also make it difficult for some other users such as wheelchairs, buggies, and trikes.