

Restoration of Friar Gate Bridge

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to develop a detailed phased scheme to improve both the maintenance and appearance of Friar Gate Bridge; an iconic grade II listed structure that forms one of the main gateways into the city. An initial allocation of £260,000 towards this project is included in the 2015/16 capital programme.
- 1.2 It also highlights to Members that the Council seeks to agree its priorities for Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) which could play a major part in funding the various phases of this project. Once a revised scheme is worked up for the bridge (informed by the Council's HLF priorities) this will be brought back to Members for their consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve the development of a detailed phased scheme and initial implementation programme for Friar Gate Bridge and to bring the details of this back to Cabinet for approval;
- 2.2 To request that work is progressed to enable the Council to develop its priorities and outline bids for Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) and set up a meeting with the regional HLF team to get their guidance and advice regarding these projects;
- 2.3 To continue the dialogue with the landowner of Friar Gate Goods Yard, the adjacent Agard Street site, the Friends of Friar Gate Bridge, the Heritage Lottery Fund and any other potential funding body to help secure the long term sustainability of the bridge.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Friar Gate Bridge is an iconic Grade II listed structure that has struggled to secure an alternative use since it was decommissioned and there is a need for its future use to generate the revenue funding needed for its future on-going maintenance.

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| SUPPORTING INFORMATION |
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Background

- 4.1 Friar Gate Bridge is an elegant Grade II listed structure, decorated with ornamental cast ironwork. It was built in the 1870s to carry the Great Northern Railway across Friar Gate in Derby, and was cast in Derby by Andrew Handyside and Company.
- 4.2 The bridge is owned by the City Council and although robust structurally, it has a poor visual appearance with many of its decorative elements in a poor state of repair. This resulted in the installation of safety netting several years ago to both protect passing pedestrians and vehicles and to help retain the original features of the historic bridge ready for repair and renovation to take place. The permission for the netting has come to an end and a new application for its retention will need to be considered.
- 4.3 Routine general inspection of the bridge is carried out every two years and as a result of these inspections minor maintenance works have been carried out for safety reasons. These minor maintenance works were managed and funded out of resources held at the time.
- 4.4 Friar Gate Bridge is identified as a priority in the Regeneration Framework and is identified as one of the most important gateways into the city in the Council's draft City Centre Masterplan.

Work to date

- 4.5 To help decide what can be done with the bridge and how much it would cost a study was commissioned by the Council. The concluding report consisted of two parts. The first part identified a variety of schemes of repair and restoration work to the bridge together with the associated costs (based on 5, 10 and 10+ years, taking into account works as necessary to accommodate different uses on the structure). The second part was an options appraisal for possible uses and which analysed the costing options.
- 4.6 The repair and restoration work options considered by the Study limited itself to the metal bridge elements. It excluded the stone abutments or units (which are owned by Derby City Council) and other elements such as; drainage improvements under the

bridge, the clearance of trees, vegetation, rubbish and other debris along with the removal of the safety netting.

- 4.7 The three main repair work options considered in the first part of the study have been brought together with other maintenance works to provide more comprehensive estimates as follows:

Option 1: Do Minimum Works(circa £81,000) - a short term holding operation to make the Bridges safe and allow the netting to be removed from the outside faces. Decay is managed but not generally halted.

Option 2: Stabilise condition for the medium term (circa £413,000) - with 5-10 year paint coatings life, extendable with maintenance. Improves aesthetic appearance by painting and returns the structures to a condition in which they could be used for light loadings.

Option 3: Restoration for the longer term (circa £1 million) - with 10 + years coatings life, extendable with maintenance. Improves aesthetic appearance and returns the structures to a condition in which they could be used for medium loadings.

The findings in the first part of the Study by the expert metalwork consultant, recommended that in relation to the restoration works, Option 2 would be the best option at this time.

- 4.8 In setting the 2015/16 capital programme a figure of £260,000 has been allocated to enable the design and development of this important restoration project to progress, with the confidence that funding is available for some significant works.
- 4.9 The use options appraisal in the second part of the Study considered a number of possible commercial and recreational uses for the long term sustainability of the bridge. These were intertwined with the potential access arrangements for getting on to the bridge from Agard Street and / or Friar Gate Goods Yard. An Officer Project Team (consisting of officers from Planning Services - Development Management and Conservation - and Regeneration Services) has since been formed which will review and progress this work.
- 4.10 The long term preservation of the bridge is reliant on the structure forming part of wider redevelopment plans capable of bringing it back into some functional use with access being provided onto it. This makes its long term preservation reliant on the current challenging development market conditions in this area being overcome.
- 4.11 There are proposals to develop the sites at both ends of the bridge. On the southern end of the bridge planning permission has been granted for development of the Friar Gate Goods Yard and warehouse, but this development has been deferred by the developer pending more suitable commercial conditions. To the north end of the bridge the first phase of Friar Gate Square has been built and planning permission for a revised second phase was refused, however alternative proposals are currently being explored with the developer.

- 4.12 Access onto the bridge will be a key factor in identifying an alternative use for this structure which is currently through the Friar Gate Goods Yard site. The potential development of the Friar Gate Goods Yard could provide some unique opportunities to bring the bridge back into use. Negotiations will continue with a range of organisations including the landowner of the Friar Gate Goods Yard to identify a suitable use for the bridge within the wider area in order to safeguard its long term sustainability.
- 4.13 Recent meetings have been held with the landowners/developers on both sides of the bridge to talk about their current plans and how these might support the long term preservation of this structure. No obvious solution has arisen to date but on-going meetings are planned to try and facilitate both developments coming forward which would potentially unlock a sustainable use for the bridge.
- 4.14 A meeting was also held with officers from the HLF on the 23rd February to discuss the potential projects coming forward from the Council including Friar Gate Bridge. It was confirmed at this meeting that the bridge and the wider Goods Yard present an excellent story to attract funding from this important source of external funding. Because of the complexities presented by this site, the Council has been advised to start small and to build up to a much bigger project once the land issues on either side of the bridge have been resolved. The Council now needs to decide what priority it places on Friar Gate Bridge compared to other projects in the city including the Market Hall.
- 4.15 Following the meeting with the HLF a meeting was convened with representatives from the Friends of Friar Gate Bridge to update them on progress. The group are very keen to work closely with the Council to work up a funding proposal for the HLF if this option is pursued (the HLF advised that this group would need to be actively involved in any funding proposal). They are also keen to fund raise separately through, for example, approaching potential sponsors.

Way forward

- 4.16 It is proposed that a detailed scheme is worked up by the Council's Structures section (based around options 1 and 2) that incorporates all the costing omitted in the consultants original report including the stone abutments which are an integral part of the structure. The detailed scheme needs to attain an appropriate balance between essential maintenance and aesthetic improvement to improve the appearance of this much loved iconic structure. Drainage will be a key priority to address in the short term with water ingress adversely affecting the stone abutments and the adjoining building, formerly known as the Cob Shop.
- 4.17 The Council also needs to be clear about the relative priority of the bridge with regards to HLF funding because any works to improve this structure could weaken its claim for funding compared to other more needy projects. If considered a priority any proposed scheme needs to be devised to maximise the full benefits of the Council's capital contribution taking into account the match funding requirements of the Heritage Lottery Fund that could, if successful, bring a great deal more funding and associated benefits to this part of the city. The Council needs to consider its HLF

priority projects and discuss these with the local HLF team for their comments and advice. It is proposed that this exercise is run in parallel with working up a detailed scheme for the bridge.

- 4.18 Once a revised scheme is worked up (informed by the Council's HLF priorities) this will be brought back to Members for their consideration. It must be acknowledged at this stage that £260,000 will only fund a limited number of interventions that will be needed to bring the bridge back to its former glory. The detailed scheme will be worked up as a much bigger project with a series of discrete, but interrelated phases, some of which could be packaged as an HLF bid if this is considered a priority. On-going dialogue will however continue with the landowners on either side of the bridge to identify any new development opportunities as and when they arise.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The report considers three main options for conserving the bridge outlined in section 4.7.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

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| Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s) | Amanda Fletcher Liz Moore Steve Sprason Christine Durrant |
| For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices: | Andy Hills - 642014 - Appendix 1 – Implications |

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| IMPLICATIONS |
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Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The £260,000 for capital works has been included in the capital programme for 2015/16 and was approved by full Council on 4th March. Funding to cover any costs over and above the £260,000 has yet to be identified.
- 1.2 Due to the nature of the scheme, some of the costs incurred may be revenue rather than capital. The value of these revenue costs cannot currently be quantified and a source of revenue funding has not yet been identified.

Legal

- 2.1 Owners of listed buildings are not as a direct result of its listing under any specific statutory obligation to maintain their property in a good state of repair; however there are situations where the Secretary of State or the Local Planning Authority may intervene to require repairs to be carried out. It is usually in any event in the owners interests to maintain their properties, if only at least to prevent escalating costs as a result of increased deterioration.
- 2.2 The Council will need to ensure that the bridge is maintained to an extent so as not to expose the public, employees or others to dangers, failing which it could open the Council to compensation claims and also to breaches of its duties under Occupiers Liability and Health and Safety Legislation.
- 2.3 The Council as Local Planning Authority has responsibilities and powers enabling it to secure the protection of listed buildings within its area. Failing to adequately protect its' own heritage assets could have reputational issues.

Personnel

- 3.1 The overall project including the preparation of the HLF bid will mainly be managed internally with £10,000 identified in the 2015/16 capital programme for any specialist support that may be needed. The specific repair works to the bridge will need to be managed and overseen by the Council's Structures section.

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- 4.1 None directly arising.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Any future access onto the bridge will take into account the requirements of the

Equality Act 2010. An Equalities Impact Assessment will also be undertaken when considering the future use of this structure.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 These are covered in section 2.2 above.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 Friar Gate Bridge is a grade II listed structure which makes a significant contribution to the city's rich heritage.

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 None directly arising.

Risk Management

- 9.1 Failing to adequately protect its' own heritage assets could have reputational issues. There are also considerable risks associated with not securing the long term future of Friar Gate bridge.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 The conservation of Friar Gate Bridge falls within the priority 'An inspiring place to live'.