

# **York's Bridge Consultation**

## **Summary of results**

**June 2019**



**Walsall Council**

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# 1 Introduction

1.1 Between 26 February and 5 April 2019, Walsall Council consulted local residents and other interested parties on detailed proposals relating to the replacement of York's Bridge Norton Road in Pelsall, which spans the Wyrley and Essington Canal by the Fingerpost public house. The proposed scheme involves building a new bridge adjacent to the existing brick built bridge. Information and plans detailing the scheme were provided as part of the consultation and respondents were encouraged to review the information before responding.



*Visualisation of the new bridge looking from the north-west*

- Information was published online at [www.walsall.gov.uk/yorks-bridge](http://www.walsall.gov.uk/yorks-bridge) together with the questionnaire which anyone could complete.
- Special interest groups were contacted and invited to respond.
- 10 drop in consultation events were held where attendees could speak to council officers about the scheme and have their say.
- Consultation packs including a covering letter, fact sheet, visualisations, plus a paper questionnaire, were distributed to residents and businesses in the surrounding area. A pre-paid envelope was included.
- By the closing date 1,051 responses had been received, made up of 910 paper questionnaires and 141 online responses. Based on the distribution of paper questionnaires alone this equates to a 6% response rate.

List of consultation events held:

Tuesday 26 February	2pm–4pm	Pelsall Community Centre
Wednesday 27 February	2pm–4pm	Moat Farm Estate
Friday 1 March	2pm–4pm	Leyland Croft
Monday 4 March	9am–11am	Ryders Hayes School
Wednesday 6 March	10am–12noon	Pelsall Village Centre
Monday 18 March	10am–12noon	Pelsall Community Centre
Thursday 21 March	1pm–3pm	Moat Farm Estate
Saturday 23 March	2pm–4pm	Pelsall Village Centre
Thursday 28 March	2pm–4pm	Pelsall Village Centre
Monday 1 April	3pm–8pm	Pelsall Village Centre

- 1.2** The consultation was promoted widely via the council's website and associated social media. The consultation was also covered by the local media and other community networks.
- 1.3** This report summarises the results from the questionnaire, which included a number of closed and open questions. Note that percentages may not total 100% due to questions being multiple response or computer rounding.
- 1.4** The response from 1,051 people is sufficient to provide a high level of accuracy in terms of reliability of results for the population surveyed, which covered the immediate vicinity of the proposed bridge as well as further afield.
- 1.5** To aid understanding all responses to open questions have been read, and where possible, coded into broadly common themes, which are summarised and presented in the main body of this report (Section 3). As individual respondents may have commented on multiple themes, the count of comments is far greater than the number of respondents to the survey. Some comments were coded as miscellaneous as they lacked relevance or their meaning was unclear.

## **2 Summary and topline findings**

- 2.1** Whilst there is widespread support for all aspects of the scheme, a small proportion of respondents strongly oppose the scheme.
- 2.2** Supporters feel that the scheme will bring great benefit in terms of safety and ease traffic flow along the route, and want to see the bridge built as soon as possible. The replacement of common land is seen as a viable compromise to provide a much-improved route along Norton Road.
- 2.3** Those who do not support the scheme are consistent in their comments. Most feel that the new bridge, which would be able to carry 44 tonne vehicles, would result in a significant increase in traffic, in particular HGV's, which is the greatest concern of all. There is a sense of needing to protect the village and retain its character, which many feel would be impacted by heavy traffic. There are calls for a strict weight limit to be imposed on the new bridge.
- 2.4** Many of those who do not support the scheme would prefer to see York's Bridge repaired and strengthened, whilst others say it should be demolished and the new bridge built in its location. There is the view that the current bridge offers a natural traffic calming effect.
- 2.5** There are expressions made regarding the impact of additional traffic at the Fingerpost Junction, with many saying that improvements need to be made in order to avoid queuing traffic and to reduce the risk of collisions. Some call for wider local network improvements, feeling that local lanes will become rat runs.
- 2.6** An increase in speeding, pollution and noise is an issue for many, in particular those who live close to the bridge.
- 2.7** The additional landscaping and registration of replacement land is welcomed and comments reflect a tone of excitement about this aspect. However, some say the location of the replacement land is disconnected from the rest of the common and offers little value. Many want assurances that the newly created woodland area is maintained, pointing out that other similar features in the locality require some attention.
- 2.8** The provision of car parking is generally welcomed however, some feel it will attract anti-social behaviour.
- 2.9** Incorporating visitor facilities, e.g; benches, bird hides and dog poo bins would bring additional benefits to the scheme.
- 2.10** With a potential increase in traffic, in particular HGV's, many feel that homeowners living close by and all local residents / road users will be adversely affected.

**2.11** The following charts provide the results from the closed questions in the questionnaire and should be considered alongside the detailed feedback summarised in the main body of this report (Section 3).

Fig. 1

Overall, do you support the proposals for the Yorks Bridge replacement scheme?

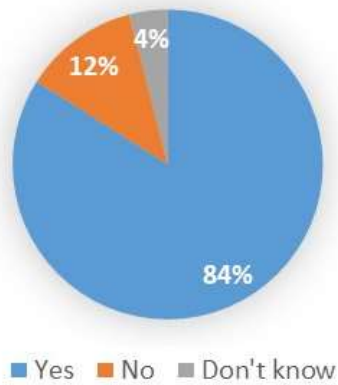


Fig.2

Do you support the proposals to create a direct pedestrian footway?

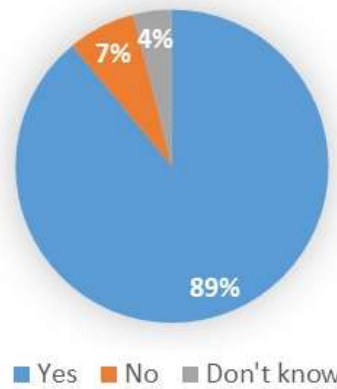


Fig. 3

Do you support the proposals to widen the highway on Norton Road?

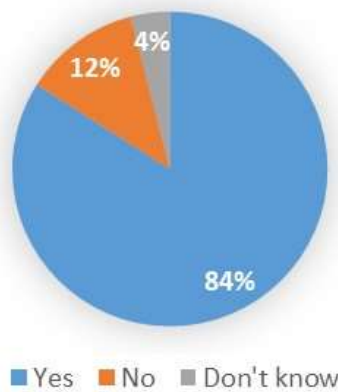


Fig.4

Do you support the proposals for the council to use a small amount of common land in order to construct the new bridge?

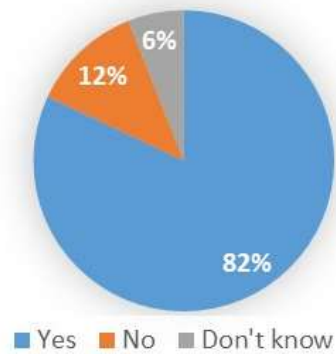
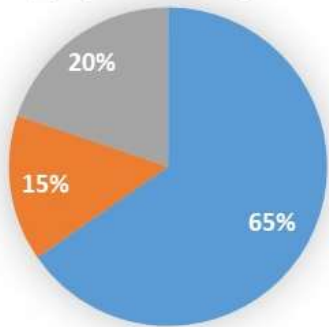


Fig. 5

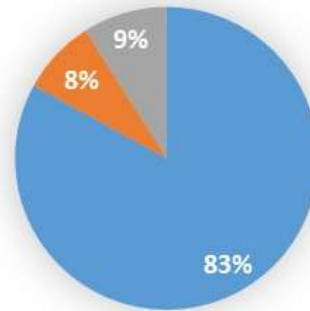
Do you think the identified replacement land at Lichfield Road is an appropriate exchange for common land?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Fig. 6

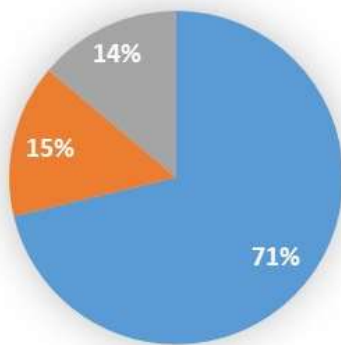
Do you support the proposals to create a new woodland area, landscaped pond and reed bed?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Fig. 7

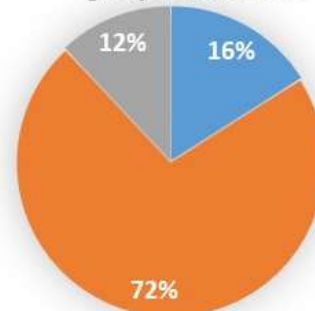
Do you support the proposals to create vehicle parking?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Fig. 8

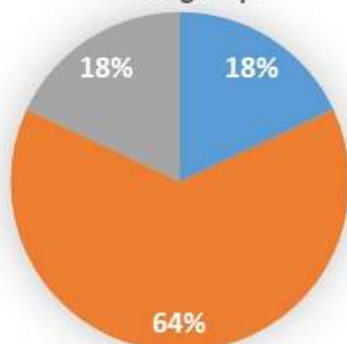
Do you feel the York's Bridge replacement scheme proposal would create any particular hardship for any group of road user?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Fig. 9

Do you feel the York's Bridge replacement scheme proposal would create any particular hardship for any other group?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Fig.10

How found out about the consultation

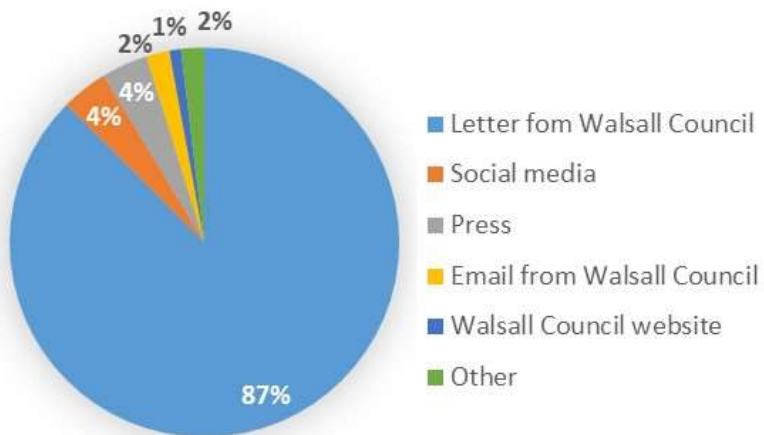
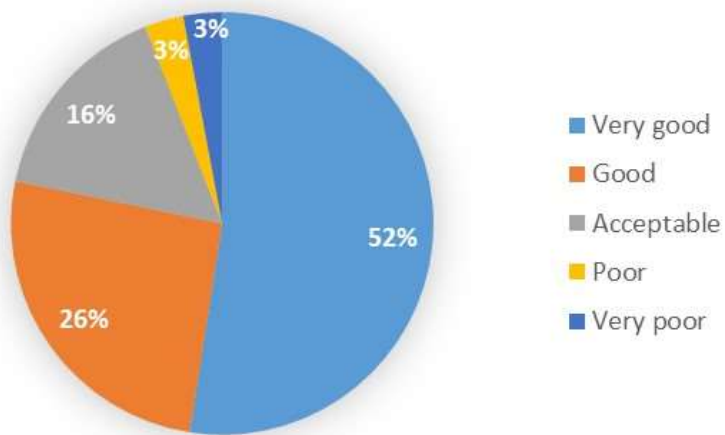


Fig.11

Quality of the consultation





### 3 Main findings - Views on the scheme overall

**3.1** The vast majority of respondents (84%) support the proposals for the York's Bridge replacement scheme. Just 12% do not support the proposals and 4% did not know.

**3.2** Respondents were asked to say why they do or do not support the proposals. The overwhelming reason behind supporting the scheme is the safety of all road users.

*"The present bridge is structurally unsafe and has a weight limit imposed. There is no footway and the road is of insufficient width for vehicles to pass safely. The present bridge is unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists."*

*"A new larger bridge to allow more two way traffic plus safer traffic in general."*

**3.3** Many respondents mention the poor visibility and the difficulty they have navigating the bridge, plus the danger to pedestrians with no footpaths and it being too narrow for two vehicles to pass.

*"The bridge is dangerous and you cannot see oncoming traffic ...amazed there has never been a major accident."*

*"The current bridge is too narrow and with the volume of traffic which passes over it each day, it is only a matter of time before a serious incident occurs. Looking at the proposed bridge visualisation it will be less of a hazard, especially for pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists using the proposed bridge."*

Table.1

Q2 Comments - Support the scheme overall	Count of comments
Safety concerns for all users	216
Currently poor visibility / dangerous / difficult to navigate / pass	162
Current lack of footpaths / needs widening / too narrow	105
Long overdue / much needed	94
Not fit for purpose / volume of traffic	85
Help traffic flow in the area / ease congestion especially at rush hour/ improve access	75
Needs updating / old / bad state / too weak	51
New bridge will look better / improvement / good scheme	25
Good for the village / area / economy / improved links	24
Potential bridge closure would have severe impact	9

**3.4** Many mention the scheme is ‘much needed’ and that the bridge ‘should have been done years ago’.

*“Has been needed for a long time - safety reasons.”*

*“Been much needed for many years. The bridge, as it is, is a safety hazard, you cannot see vehicles approaching from the opposite direction until you are virtually at the top, far too narrow.”*

*“It’s long overdue for replacement. It’s too narrow, very blind on approach and drivers often approach too fast. Few are courteous enough to give way. This is a dangerous bridge.”*

**3.5** Amongst those who do not support the scheme, most comments relate to worries about HGV’s and a general increase in traffic flow / heavier traffic that is felt will result once the new bridge is built.

*“It will increase large lorries using the road making the village roads very dangerous. The roads are not suitable for this heavy traffic.”*

*“Would allow very large vehicles through the village.”*

*“Don’t need lorries on road or through Pelsall - old bridge should be repaired.”*

*“Concerned about the extra volume of traffic this may bring to Pelsall. Especially bothered about the HGV’s.”*

Table.2

<b>Q2 Comments - Do not support the scheme overall</b>	<b>Count of comments</b>
Worries about HGV’s	69
Increase in traffic flow / heavy traffic	29
Create other traffic problems in particular locations / local network can’t cope	26
Speeding / safety concerns / accidents / pedestrian safety	26
Impact on common land / environment / air and noise pollution / wildlife	22
No weight limit / change to weight limit	18
Impact on character of local area / impact on village generally	12
Negative impact on residential properties	10
Rebuild / repair existing bridge	8
Install traffic lights instead	5
Impact of works taking place	3
New bridge unnecessary	3
Anxiety about further development to the North	3

**3.6** Other frequently mentioned comments refer to the scheme creating other traffic problems in particular locations e.g. the Fingerpost Junction and a general feeling that the local road network cannot cope with the increased traffic / HGV's.

*“The provision of a costly new bridge will, unless a weight restriction retains mean more HGV vehicles coming and going from A5 to Pelsall, Bloxwich and Brownhills via the fingerpost junction which is already a poor layout and could not cope with the volume of larger vehicles creating hazardous health and safety conditions.”*

*“Access issues at Charles Crescent access/egress is a nightmare will only compound the issue with HGV access/rat run - fingerpost lights not good enough.”*

*“No consideration appears to have been given to the wider infrastructure issues, e.g. 44 tonne lorries using what is essentially a country lane. Heavier traffic having to negotiate the already inadequate Fingerpost junction. Increased noise and pollution will be a major problem for residents in the immediate vicinity of the proposed new bridge.”*

**3.7** Worries about safety including speeding and pedestrian safety were also frequently mentioned.

*“The new configuration will only encourage motorists to travel faster, which would compromise the safety for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and wildlife. Also it would encourage heavy goods traffic in and around Pelsall Village.”*

**3.8** Amongst the 4% who do not know if they support the scheme or not, most comments reflect traffic related worries including speeding and HGV's.

*“I understand the need to strengthen the current York's Bridge however, I am concerned that this will increase the amount of HGV's that will inevitably then pass through the village centre.”*

Table.3

<b>Q2 Comments - Don't know if support the scheme overall</b>	<b>Count of comments</b>
Result in faster / more traffic and HGV's through the village	13
Don't use / no opinion / not interested	3
Concerned about impact at Fingerpost Junction	6
Road must remain open during construction / minimise disruption	2
Must incorporate traffic calming / weight limit	5

### 3.9 The creation of a direct pedestrian footway

**3.10** Almost 9 in 10 respondents (89%) support the proposal to create a direct pedestrian footway. 7% did not support this and 4% did not know.

**3.11** The majority of those who support the creation of a direct pedestrian footway do so because of safety fears. Many also mention that such a footway will improve access and that it is simply necessary.

*“There is no footway at present making it unsafe for foot traffic. A direct pedestrian footway will allow pedestrians to cross the bridge safely, maybe encourage more people to walk across and admire the local natural habitat.”*

*“A footway would be required over the bridge area for safety.”*

*“At present, cyclists' & pedestrians' safety is not catered for adequately.”*

*“Yes this would provide sheltered walkway for pedestrians and pet owners away from the road and enhance surroundings and access to the common.”*

*“If this bridge is widened then a direct pedestrian footway will be needed.”*

*“This is a much needed pedestrian footway.”*

Table.4

Q4 Comments - Support creation of direct pedestrian footway	Count of comments
Safety / dangerous (pedestrian and cyclists)	462
Good / easy access to canal / pub / common	92
Needs one is necessary / poor provision / important / sensible	75
Beneficial for exercise including jogging / walking / dog walkers / disabled	25
Good use of old bridge / happy old bridge being retained / separate crossing beneficial	23
Better for all	8
Benefits the local area / an improvement	7

**3.12** Those who do not support the creation of a direct footway feel that one is not necessary as few use the route and that the scheme overall should not be pursued or an alternative solution be implemented.

*“There is little need for this due to little pedestrian traffic.”*

*“I don't see any need for a specific pedestrian footway, I use this road regularly and hardly ever see anyone on foot beyond the bridge.”*

Table.5

<b>Q4 Comments - Do not support creation of direct pedestrian footway</b>	<b>Count of comments</b>
Not needed/ no evidence needed / few walk the route	28
Don't make any changes / alternative scheme	11
Two footpaths not needed	5
Alternative crossing points available	4
No accidents therefore not required	2

**3.13** Those the few people who do not know if they support the creation of a direct access footway, most comments query the need for a footway.

Table.6

<b>Q4 Comments - Don't know about creation of direct pedestrian footway</b>	<b>Count of comments</b>
Is there demand for a footway / is it needed	9
Depends on final scheme / alternative scheme	3
Can't comment / Don't know	2
Needs a weight limit	2
Safety / dangerous	1

### 3.14 Widening the highway on Norton Road

**3.15** The vast majority of respondents (84%) also support the proposal to widen the highway on Norton Road. 12% did not support this aspect of the scheme and 4% did not know.

**3.16** The supporters of the proposal to widen Norton Road do so because of safety reasons and it being too narrow and dangerous at present.

*“Why would anyone oppose this? - safety first.”*

*“To make the road safer for all user, yes please do anything that makes it safer.”*

*“Widening the road will give the space necessary for a free flow of traffic and improve visibility for walkers and residents accessing the new road from side roads.”*

*“Road currently very narrow, very difficult to see what is coming towards you at the bridge.”*

**3.17** Other comments mention that the new bridge will improve traffic flow and be more appropriate for modern traffic.

*“Norton Road is a busy road which is now clearly taking more traffic that it was originally designed to take, which has already been the case for many years now.”*

*“It needs to be widened for modern traffic to go over it.”*

Table.7

Q6 - Support widening of Norton Road	Count of comments
Safety / reduce risk of accidents	295
Too narrow / dangerous	68
Improve traffic flow / better for volume and type of traffic / enable two way traffic	68
Needs doing / good idea / about time / common sense / necessary	56
Better access / better for everyone	18
Improve visibility	15
Not fit for purpose	10

**3.18** The main reasons respondents give for not supporting the widening of Norton Road include the increase in traffic and its speed.

*“This will increase the volume and size of vehicle coming onto our village.”*

*“Present road width along this stretch of road helps to inhibit speeding traffic therefore make it safer. If widened to such extent it would provide an even “faster rat run” than it is now.”*

*“There is a 30mph restriction already which is rarely adhered to. Widening the road would only make this worse.”*

**3.19** Again there are worries about HGV's using the route through Pelsall.

*"...a wide road may encourage traffic to travel too quickly for the village. A wide road may also encourage large vehicles – lorries - which are inappropriate for our village."*

*"By widening the road this will allow HGV's to access Pelsall / Lime Lane easier and that will bring more noise and pollution and make more traffic in that area which is already congested at busier times."*

Table.8

<b>Q6 - Do not support widening of Norton Road</b>	<b>Count of comments</b>
Will result in more / heavier traffic / speeding	39
Weight limit needed to prevent HGV's / problem of HGV's through the village	24
New bridge not needed / don't change / wide enough	21
Protect the common / wildlife / environment	7
Will create issues at Fingerpost Junction / roads will not cope	6
Too close to properties	6
York's Bridge acts as natural traffic calming	3
Upgrade / strengthen existing bridge	2

**3.20** Comments from those who do not know if they support the scheme or not broadly reflect those made by who do not support the scheme.

**3.21 Deregistering common land**

**3.22** Deregistering a small amount of common land in order to construct the bridge was supported by the majority of respondents (82%). 12% did not support this and 6% did not know.

**3.23** Most comments refer to there being no other option and that safety takes priority over common land. Others point out that the loss of common land is only small and that the scheme will bring much improvement.

*"There is no other way of constructing a new bridge of sufficient size to maintain the safety of everyone."*

*"If the bridge is to be built there is no other way than to use that land."*

*"A wider highway would be much safer for cars and pedestrians. The current bridge has been crumbling for years so I support using common land to make the bridge safer."*

*"Not using a big area but its needed and overall will improve current situation."*

*"Safety is more important than a small piece of land."*

*"To allow the safer bridge to be built the long term benefits of losing a small amount of land is acceptable."*

Table.9

Q8 - Support deregistration of common land	Count of comments
No other option / needed / necessary	137
Safety / takes priority / agree	132
Only a small amount of land lost / more in return / fair / plenty left	89
Benefits the common and locals /low value land / not used / will improve it	81
Brings great benefit / worth the sacrifice	52
Appropriate / sensible / logical / fair	27
Will be restored / temporary / replaced	22

**3.24** Comments from those who do not support the deregistration of common land frequently express the need to protect it.

*“Common land should not be used for this purpose.”*

*“Common land is there for a reason, no building on it!”*

*“The common is the common and should not be interfered with.”*

*“All common land should be preserved for future generations.”*

Table.10

Q8 - Do not support deregistration of common land	Count of comments
Leave common land alone / preserve common land / protected	36
Don't build new bridge / no necessary / demolish or repair existing	18
Don't support the scheme	13
Too close to properties / noise / negative impact on locals	11
Might lead to further development / deregistration / sets a precedent	7
Replacement land of lower ecological value / separated	3
Not enough consideration for wildlife / impact on environment	3
Will lead to more traffic / don't want HGV's	2

**3.25** A number of comments also mention that a new bridge is not needed or should be built in the same location so not to encroach on existing properties.

*“Can be upgraded without using extra land.”*

*“The existing bridge should be repaired.”*

*“I believe that it will impact on the people who live in the adjacent houses.”*

*“Too close to local residents.”*



- 3.26** Amongst the small number of people who do not know if they support this aspect of the scheme, most mention the need to retain trees / protect wildlife and the environment.
- 3.27** **Alternative suggestions for how to construct the bridge and avoid the deregistration of common land**
- 3.28** Few specific alternative suggestions to avoid the deregistration of common land were made, with most simply stating that a new bridge is not needed or that the existing bridge should be repaired, strengthened or demolished instead.

*“Don’t construct a new bridge!”*

*“The existing bridge could be renovated/strengthened, traffic signals installed and a separate bridge for cyclists and pedestrians be built at the side which would have minimal environmental impact. Or, the existing bridge is demolished and a new bridge built as a direct replacement, adjacent to the Fingerpost pub.”*

*“Strengthen existing bridge, widen it to the right of the fingerpost pub and leave the common alone.”*

*“Strengthen the bridge & refurbish to accommodate pedestrians. No articulated vehicles.”*

Table.11

<b>Q9 - Alternative suggestions to avoid deregistration</b>	<b>Count of comments</b>
Don't need / want bridge / strengthen or refurbish existing	45
No alternative or other option / construct as per scheme /proposal looks good	27
Demolish York’s Bridge / build in same location	19
Concern about HGV’s / retain weight limit	13
Change / utilise wider road network / improve local traffic flow	12
Traffic light controlled	11
Buy pub / build on pub land	7
Change / add footpath / separate footpath	6
New bridge but smaller /narrower	2

- 3.29** Several comments mention that there appears to be no alternative and that the proposed scheme offers the best solution.

*“The bridge has to be straight for safety so I see no alternative.”*

*“I cannot give an alternative as it is a narrow bridge and needs replacing.”*

*“There isn’t no other alternative as this needs to happen it is a complete safety risk to the public and road users.”*

*“I think the proposed plans are very acceptable.”*

*“This seems to be the best solution.”*

### 3.30 Replacement land

**3.31** Two thirds (66%) of respondents think that the replacement land identified at Lichfield Road in exchange for the deregistered common land is appropriate. 15% felt that this is not appropriate and 20% did not know.

**3.32** Supporters of the proposed replacement land feel that it is appropriate, with many commenting that it will be an improvement and an overall net gain.

*“It appears to be a very fair exchange in the view of the benefits to the scheme.”*

*“Appropriate site in an appropriate position.”*

*“It seems a suitable replacement for wildlife and plants etc. to grow.”*

**3.33** Several comments are made about the identified land being unused and in a bad state, and that registering it as common land will be a welcome improvement.

*“The area proposed would benefit, it as it is at the moment not used and overgrown.”*

*“I think the improvement of the Lichfield Rd site will compensate for this loss.”*

*“The landscape will be improved in that area and the access from Ryders Hayes area to the canal in both directions, will be improved.”*

*“It’s currently an eyesore.”*

Table.12

Q11 - Land is an appropriate exchange	Count of comments
Appropriate location / position / fair / makes sense / needed / no alternative	81
Will be an improvement / it’s an eyesore / wasteland	46
Net gain / plenty of common land / small area lost	37
Good use of land / benefit to locals	29
Land not lost / must preserve / creates more common land	23
Good for wildlife / environment	23
Makes it safer / safety the priority	22
Opens up access / brings land into use as not currently used	21
Minimal impact	8

**3.34** Many comments from those who do not think the land offered for exchange is appropriate refer to the land being of little benefit, that it will not be used and that it is disconnected from the rest of the common.

*“It is too remote from the existing area designated Pelsall North Common.”*

*“The proposed replacement land is totally divorced from the common and will not be of any practical use or benefit.”*

*“What use is it there? No one is going to use it, it’s quite a way from the common.”*

Table.13

<b>Q11 - Land is not an appropriate exchange</b>	<b>Count of comments</b>
Replacement land of little benefit / won't be used / disconnected / remote / not accessible	46
Don't build new bridge / not necessary / demolish existing / HGV's	12
Leave common land alone / don't alter / impact on wildlife	11
Unsuitable location / busy road and bridge / poor quality / unattractive / ASB	9
No parking bays / will create congestion	6
Land better for housing	5
No point / serves no purpose	2
Will be an eyesore / needs to be maintained	2
Should be whole strip of land	2
Don't need more common land	2

**3.35** Amongst the few who are not sure, many comment that the land offered is disconnected from common / no benefit / will not get used and that it is unnecessary.

**3.36 Alternative suggestions for replacement land**

**3.37** Few respondents put forward specific suggestions for alternatives to that proposed in the scheme; however, the following comments were made.

*“Buy some land of a farmer to enhance existing common land.”*

*“Don't need to but if area is picked needs to be around Pelsall not as suggested in Brownhills area!!”*

*“Extend the common behind woodland on the south side of the canal gardens that have encroached on the common at wood lane being restricted would be a start.”*

*“I would have preferred Moat Farm Pool to have been eligible for exchange. As a valuable remnant of Pelsall's history, it needs the protection that Common Land status would give.”*

*“I would have preferred Moat Pool but this was turned down by the Inspectorate on an earlier visit. However, I will be doing all I can to make sure the pool is protected as it is a valuable heritage site in Pelsall and must not be lost under concrete!”*

*“If old bridge was demolished and re-built with use of land from the nearby pub - the taking of common land for this project would be minimized.”*

*“Improving the quality of the common land already by the pub.”*

*“Land adjacent to the proposed new bridge position.”*

*“Land opposite pub over canal on left towards Lime Lane.”*

*“Moat Farm pool (by the Fingerpost junction) is the favoured suggestion, although as it is not Common land and is accessible to the public, it is currently not an officially acceptable alternative. This medieval pool is a remnant of the ancient moat and it is important to preserve this heritage site. If Walsall Council could register it as Common land and transfer it as such, that would be acceptable to the ‘Friends of Pelsall Commons’ and a very welcome move.”*

### **3.38 Creation of a new woodland**

**3.39** 83% of respondents support the proposal to establish a new woodland area, landscaped pond and reed bed north of the canal to the east of B4154 Norton Road. 8% did not support this and 9% did not know.

**3.40** The vast majority of supporters comment that this aspect of the scheme will be good for wildlife and the environment. Many feel it will enhance the existing landscape.

*“Yes it will enhance the area and an encourage wildlife.”*

*“This would be a nice leisure space and enhance the environment on the north side of the bridge which does not get as many walkers etc.”*

*“It will enhance the otherwise drab piece of land, it should make a much more pleasant feature.”*

Table.14

<b>Q14 - Support creation of woodland area, pond and reed bed</b>	<b>Count of comments</b>
Good for wildlife / environment / habitat / important to protect and conserve	276
Improve and enhance the landscape / nice / good idea / needs tidying up / nice feature	138
Benefit locals / people / visitors	75
Compensates for the loss of land / carbon footprint / damage / suitable replacement	21
need more woodland and greenspace / preserve woodland	17
Yes but don't build the bridge	10
Must be maintained / restrict access	9

**3.41** It not being needed and apprehension about the new woodland area not being maintained are the most common reasons given for not supporting this aspect of the scheme.

*“Pelsall has many miles of this type of land. Why need more?”*

*“The pond by the fingerpost is not maintained - the same would be true of the new proposal.”*

Table.15

<b>Q14 - Do not support creation of woodland area, pond and reed bed</b>	<b>Count of comments</b>
Not needed / plenty in area	15
Worried won't be maintained / cost of maintenance	10
Cost / waste of money	8
Concerns about safety / dangerous	6
Don't change existing habitat / keep as is / proposal is artificial	5
Anxiety about fly tipping / unauthorised encampments / security	4
Don't build bridge / demolish / repair existing	4
Query access	4
Not beneficial	2

**3.42** Comments from those unsure about the creation of a new woodland are broadly similar to those made by people who do not support this aspect of the scheme.

### 3.43 Anything else that should be considered regarding enhancing the landscape?

3.44 Comments were made in response to whether there was anything that had not been considered regarding landscaping. Most comments suggested the addition of visitor facilities and that maintenance of the new area, including the maintenance of other similar areas locally is needed.

*“Maybe some seating areas using logs, trees off cuts etc.”*

*“A couple of benches perhaps and/or even a [bird] hide.”*

*“Ensure the area is maintained, including any footpaths, and add some benches.”*

*“I just hope that maintenance will take place to keep the area looking attractive and that it will not be allowed to deteriorate like the problem we have at present.”*

Table.16

Q15 - Anything else that should be considered regarding enhancing the landscape	Count of comments
Benches / litter bins and dog poo bins / bird hide / next boxes / walkways / notices and information /wildflower area	25
Maintenance of footpaths and area generally / maintain other pools in area	16
Not required / demolish and build on existing / don't destroy existing habitat	14
Access to the area - paths / disabled access / safety accessing	12
Heavier traffic / HGV's / weight limit / traffic calming	11
Fly tipping / littering / ASB	11
Sound barrier for residential properties / impact on local residents / views of residents	10
Unattractive proposal / not in keeping	5
Clean up Moat Farm Pool	5
Fencing to protect wildlife from road	4
Don't include car park / nuisance / ASB	4
More trees / shrubs	4
Cycle lane / cycle safety	3
Alternative land	2
Involve locals / children in planting scheme	2
Waste of money /cost	2

### 3.45 The creation of a car park

3.46 72% of respondents support the proposal to create parking for vehicles. 15% did not support this aspect and 14% did not know. Reasons for their answers were not sought for this question.

### 3.47 Perceived hardship for any groups of road users

3.48 Most respondents (72%) did not feel that the scheme would create any particular hardship for any group of road user. 12% did not know. 16% did feel the scheme would create particular hardship for certain groups of road users.

3.49 Most comments refer to an increase in traffic and HGV's as well as worries about safety and congestion at the Fingerpost Junction.

*"The people of Pelsall village - with heavier traffic at present many heavy lorries from Cannock cannot cross due to weight restriction."*

*"The widening of the bridge will increase the traffic in Pelsall therefore decreasing road safety to road users of Pelsall."*

*"Pedestrians/cyclists at the fingerpost junction as HGV's would restrict the flow of other road users."*

Table.17

Q18 - Hardship for groups of road users	Count of comments
All road users due to increased / heavier traffic / HGV's / busier / faster / congestion	55
Safety and congestion at Fingerpost Junction	26
Residents exiting housing estates	14
Cyclists	11
Local residents /all road users during and after construction	10
Local residents / village visitors	10
All road users when being built / if closed	9
Commuters / rush hour road users	8
Pedestrians	7
Older people / disabled	3
Local businesses / pub	2
Schools	2

### 3.50 Perceived hardship for any other group

**3.51** When asked if the scheme might create any particular hardship for any other groups, 64% felt that it would not, with 18% feeling it would. 18% did not know.

**3.52** Frequently mentioned groups included homeowners living near the bridge, local residents and Pelsall village generally, which people feel will be negatively affected due to an increase in traffic.

*“Yes - local residents and residents of Pelsall in general are going to have more traffic, more pollution, more noise, a busier and more dangerous environment for children too.”*

*“The people who live near the road, the Fingerpost crossroads and those on Moat Farm estate. For previously stated reasons of increased, faster and heavier traffic and increased pollution. These are not just selfish concerns, they will affect everyone who lives in the area and uses the road.”*

*“Increased volume of traffic running through Pelsall Village. Concerned about the increased volume of traffic especially from HGV’s in Pelsall. The fingerpost is already a difficult place to negotiate during Mon-Fri.”*

*“Local residents living close by. Due to road noise & speeding vehicles.”*

Table.18

Q20 - hardship for any other groups	Count of comments
Adjacent homeowners / those close by	45
Local residents generally	34
Pelsall village / residents and visitors	25
Local housing estates	17
Pedestrians	16
Users of Fingerpost Junction	13
Pub / local businesses	11
Wildlife	11
Everyone	6
Children	4
Commuters / regular road users	3
Cyclists	3
Canal users	3
Disabled / scooter users / those with life limiting illnesses	3



### **3.53 Is there anything else the council has not considered?**

**3.54** A wide variety of comments were made in response to whether there is anything else the council should consider in the development of the overall proposals. Most however repeated concerns already raised in earlier questions.

**3.55** Common themes included worries about HGV's using the route and the need to impose a weight limit on the bridge. A general increase in traffic and the impact this may have on surrounding roads and Pelsall village were also frequently mentioned.

*"I am deeply concerned that once completed, unless stringent restrictions are in place, more heavy vehicles will use the village as a run-through."*

*"I don't think the council have taken into consideration that having a new road will encourage heavy goods vehicles through the village unless a weight restriction is put in place."*

*"The council seems to have failed to consider the already overstretched roads through Rushall and the surrounding area."*

**3.56** Without any modifications, the Fingerpost Junction is seen as a particular congestion hotspot, with the increase in traffic / HGV's causing major issues at what is already viewed as a problem junction.

*"If these proposals were to go ahead to build a bridge with a 44 tonne capacity, could a lower weight limit still be enforced in order to prevent heavy goods lorries using this unsuitable route? The potential that HGV's will use the route through Pelsall village. The junction at the Fingerpost is already failing to deal with the ever increasing amount of traffic and the bridge development would only exacerbate this situation."*

Table.19

Q21 - Anything else the council has not considered	Count of comments
Weight limit / worried about HGV's	29
Increase in traffic locally / impact on surrounding lanes and roads / village generally	22
Impact on Fingerpost Junction / traffic congestion	15
Pollution / noise / screening	10
Preserve common land / protect wildlife	7
Repair / strengthen bridge / build in same position	6
Compensation for homeowners / impact on locals and property prices	6
Speed restriction	5
Traffic calming / speed cameras	5
Don't have carpark / ASB	5
Don't want quarrying and development to the north	5
Health and wellbeing of locals	4
Cycle lane	3
Traffic lights instead	2
Budget cuts / cost	2
Slacky Lane bridge / Black Cock bridge as well	2
CPO the pub	2
Design of bridge to reflect history / it's ugly / invasive	2
Impact on village	2
Impact on businesses / the pub	2

## 4. Respondent profile

Table.20

<b>Respondent</b>	
Local resident	89%
Other interested party*	11%
<b>Responding on behalf of an organisation / business / campaign group</b>	
Yes	1%
No	99%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	53%
Female	42%
Prefer not to say	5%
<b>Age group</b>	
16-30	4%
31-45	10%
46-65	36%
66-75	29%
75+	21%
<b>Disability</b>	
Yes	14%
No	77%
Prefer not to say	8%
<b>Ethnic group</b>	
White British	95%
Minority Ethnic Group	1%
Prefer not to say	4%

\*Other interested parties include; business owners, those employed locally, visitors to the area, commuters, not local but interested in the scheme and 'others' such as anglers, family / friends of those who live in the area, those who live outside the local area, former residents / commuters and dog walkers.

Responses were also made on behalf of organisations, businesses or campaign groups, these were:

- Secretary of 'Friends of Pelsall Commons
- APL-Coppice Side Industrial Estate
- Walsall Group of the Ramblers. (Ramblers Association). Also a member of the Local Access Forum
- Complete Solutions 40 Limited
- UNITECH
- Holford Farm Group

## **5 Incoming letters and responses**

- 5.1** A number of letters were received from residents and businesses following the consultation. Details of these are included in the following pages and also show the responses provided.
- 5.2** There were also a number of Freedom of Information requests submitted, the details of which are also included in this section. The law requires that these are answered in a certain timescale and the responses have been forwarded to the requester.

## York's Bridge Consultation Responses

Ref	Date	Query	Response
1	26/02/2019	1. It is stated in the 'Fact Sheet' included in the consultation pack provided to residents that, "If nothing is done the bridge will continue to weaken to the point where closure to all road traffic might have to be considered." This is an extremely woolly statement, which establishes no fact but rather poses one extreme scenario.	The existing York's bridge is owned by the Canal & River Trust and although the Trust is required to maintain the bridge structure they have no obligation to strengthen it. In such cases the Highway Authority is responsible for carrying out strengthening or replacement work to ensure that the structure conforms to current national highway standards.
1	26/02/2019	2. Why is the provision of full 44 tonne capacity considered to be essential? What are the overwhelming benefits given the environmental/ecological harm that this action would require?	As the acting Highway Authority in Walsall, the Council has a statutory duty to maintain the borough's highway network to national standards and to strengthen any 'weak' bridges so that they are capable of carrying the loads expected. Any new structure that crosses the canal has to be designed to the Highways Agency Design Manual for Roads and Bridges specifications, which require a minimum 44 tonne capacity for distributor roads.
1	26/02/2019	3. I note that the "Visualisation" in the consultation pack shows only two small cars and one cyclist using the new bridge. Was the omission of any HGV an oversight?	The visualisation is intended to provide the public with an overall 'picture' of the proposed development and various images of vehicles and pedestrians were added to provide a sense of scale. The omission of HGV's, PSV's, motorcycles or any other specific type of vehicle was not intentional.
1	26/02/2019	4. Why is the current 7.5 tonne weight limit considered to be unsustainable? This is fundamental to the justification of the project.	In addition to the weight limit, the existing bridge suffers from poor horizontal and vertical alignments. Substandard gradients on the approaches together with a carriageway that is not fully aligned with the approach roads results in poor forward visibility. The bridge has no footways or verges and narrows to approximately 5.15 m between parapets. The combination of these conditions means highway safety is unfavourably compromised.  A full structural assessment was carried out by Mott MacDonald consultants in September 2015 on the bridge. The assessment concluded that the structure was in a fair to poor condition and stated that the arch barrel could not accommodate the current 10 tonne weight limit. This resulted in the weight restriction being reduced to 7.5 tonnes in early 2017.  Despite traffic signing notifying the weight restriction it is known that vehicles above this limit continue to use the bridge, something which has the potential to cause further deterioration. The Council has long recognised the need to strengthen or replace York's bridge. The Highways and Public Works Committee first approved its inclusion in the Council's 1992/94 bridge strengthening programme. At this time there were many bridges with higher priority so the strengthening of York's bridge did not take place.
1	26/02/2019	5. What conservation options were considered to retain the existing bridge?	Strengthening the existing bridge might address the weight capacity issue however it would only be worth considering if the required minimum 44 tonne capacity could be reached. This option would also minimise the impact on the adjacent common land. There are two basic options for strengthening the existing bridge these being under arch strengthening and strengthening to the existing brick arch from above. Under arch strengthening might not achieve the required weight capacity and it would require some reduction of headroom to the towpath and canal which is unacceptable to the Canal & River Trust. Over arch strengthening would be capable of achieving the required weight capacity but in doing so would mean increasing the road level over the bridge to accommodate the necessary materials. Neither option would improve the highway alignment or provide safe passage for pedestrians. In fact, strengthening only could make the situation worse by allowing heavy vehicles onto a bridge that only one could cross safely at a time, still with no footways.
1	26/02/2019	6. What evidence is there to indicate the likelihood of further deterioration? If provided with suitable maintenance, notably repointing, replacement of damaged bricks and waterproofing most brick arch bridges have an indefinite life?	The existing bridge is owned by the Canal & Rivers Trust and it is in their remit to maintain the bridge. As the Highway Authority, it is the duty of Walsall Council to ensure that the highway crossing the bridge is safe, hence the current 7.5 tonne weight restriction.
1	26/02/2019	7. If a 7.5 tonne gross vehicle weight loading is indeed beyond the long-term capacity of the existing bridge, has a lower weight limit been considered e.g. 3.5 tonne GVW, which would affect only a small proportion of current users?	The reduction to 3.5 tonnes does not address the fact that the bridge is sub-standard for a local distributor road.
1	26/02/2019	8. If the deterioration originates from occasional usage by overweight vehicles what potential technology solutions have been considered to eliminate such occurrences and, if so, why have they been dismissed?	The fact that overweight vehicles are still using a bridge that has a 7.5 tonne MGW limit supports the need for a new bridge. Although advisory weight restrictions are imposed, it is impossible to enforce this 24 hours a day without the use of vehicle identification technology.
1	26/02/2019	9. For that matter, there is significant potential to enhance the signing of the weight limit particularly on the approaches to the A5 Turf Island and the A4124/B4154 Fingerpost junction.	If the new bridge is constructed there will be no weight limit imposed on the structure, therefore no signing would be required on the approaches to the A5 Turf Island or at the A4124 / B4154 Fingerpost junction.

Ref	Date	Query	Response
1	26/02/2019	10. The lack of pedestrian/cycle facilities could be addressed by providing a separate crossing of the canal for such users with a far lower environmental impact and a significantly lower cost.	<p>The provision of a separate crossing point for pedestrians/cyclists would not change the fact that the existing bridge is weak and has poor horizontal and vertical alignments. During the most recent 5 year period there have been five recorded personal injury collisions on this stretch of the B4154 of which three were specifically related to York's bridge. While only three incidents were recorded at the bridge it is certain that many more collisions or near misses occurred. There is a pattern of collisions which are directly attributable to the existing bridge layout.</p> <p>As part of Walsall's Speed Limit Review the collision rate was calculated at 76 accidents/100mv km which exceeds the national average for this type of route which is 52 accidents/100mv km. The speed limit from north of the bridge to the borough boundary was subject to the national speed limit (60mph) however following the speed limit review this was reduced to 40mph. South of the bridge a 30mph limit is in force. Both of these speed limits are well observed with average speeds of 42.3mph and 25.3mph being recorded north and south of the bridge respectively.</p> <p>The new design will incorporate a speed limit of 30 mph from the borough boundary to the Fingerpost Junction.</p>
1	26/02/2019	11. The hazards occasioned by the poor vertical alignment of the existing bridge (conflict between vehicles northbound and southbound on Lime Lane) could be addressed at far lower cost by the adoption of the solution used on the B5016 Station Lane bridge over the River Trent at Walton on Trent. That structure is subject to a (mandatory) 15 mph speed limit, a 3 Ton maximum gross weight restriction and, notably, a 7' 6" width restriction. The last of these is imposed by the use of substantial barriers to constrain the carriageway width. Traffic signals are provided to allow alternate unidirectional flow. It should be noted that the space created between the barriers and the bridge parapets have been used to provide a safe crossing route for pedestrians and cyclists.	The use of traffic signals to allow alternate unidirectional flow has been investigated and rejected.
1	26/02/2019	12. Have traffic counts been undertaken? If so where and when?	Not done at this stage
1	26/02/2019	13. Has a traffic model been created/run? If so what area does it cover? Does it, for instance include the A452 and B4152 (the roads from which traffic will divert onto the B4154)	Not done at this stage
1	26/02/2019	14. Has an economic assessment been undertaken? If so, what is the forecast Nett Present Value of the scheme? And from what factors do the benefits derive?	The scheme has been included in Walsall Council's bridge strengthening programme since 1992 but limited funds and higher priority bridges meant that it was not previously selected for replacement. The DfT funding for bridge strengthening is now allocated through the West Midlands Local Transport Plan rather than to individual Councils. The West Midlands bridge group meet to determine which bridges should be allocated funds and York's bridge is identified as a priority within the West Midlands region. Funding has been secured for design and construction work.
1	26/02/2019	15. Has an environmental assessment been undertaken? If so, what is its scope and what area does it cover? Specifically, does it consider impacts within Pelsall village.	<p>Environmental assessments including habitat surveys have been carried out on the release land only. This has identified various flora and fauna some of which requires translocation or replacement. The proposals include for environmental measures to replace or mitigate for habitats that will disappear under the new highway.</p> <p>In order to prepare for translocation of certain plants, reptiles and invertebrates work will be required on land that is currently part of the common but not required for the new highway. Since the status of the common would prohibit work of this nature it is intended that additional common land be temporarily deregistered. Upon completion of the scheme this land will be reinstated to an approved standard and re-registered as common.</p> <p>The release land (both permanent and temporary) is of poor quality as far as public accessibility is concerned. Much of the area consists of self-seeded shrubs and trees with dense undergrowth making walking in the area very difficult. The reinstatement will ensure the land will be more accessible to the public than at present and will be of higher condition value as common.</p>
1	26/02/2019	16. Has a Stage 0 Road Safety Audit been undertaken? If so, what roads have been included? What need for mitigation has been identified?	<p>A combined stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit (RSA) was carried out on the proposed scheme by Waterman Aspen consultants in May 2014 which covered the extent of the new construction works for the bridge and highway alignment along Norton Road. The Audit identified three potential problems with the scheme design which are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure, where possible, all street furniture is located behind the vehicle restraint system allowing an adequate working width distance.</li> <li>• provide clarification on overhead cables, and ensure if they are to remain in place adequate vertical clearance should be provided.</li> <li>• the vehicle parapet height should be increased to achieve a 1.4m height to accommodate for any cyclists that may be using the route.</li> </ul>

Ref	Date	Query	Response
1	26/02/2019	17. What does the traffic model say about changes to traffic volumes and patterns of movements on the A4124 Wolverhampton Road/Lichfield Road and the B4154 Norton Road/Lime Lane?	No traffic model used
1	26/02/2019	18. Specifically, what increased level of usage of Norton Road through Pelsall village by vehicles > 7.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight is indicated by the traffic model?	No traffic model used
1	26/02/2019	19. What is the economic justification for the scheme? What is the forecast rate of return and how much of this derives from the increased usage of Norton Road through the village?	Specific funding obtained from DfT
1	26/02/2019	20. What does the environmental assessment have to say about air quality and noise impacts on village roads?	<p>A comprehensive Noise Impact Assessment was carried out within the area of the new bridge and highway by Walsall MBC Pollution Control Department. The assessment was carried out to provide comparative road traffic noise levels and to gauge the extent of any adverse effects on persons residing in the immediate locality. The existing road suffers from poor gradients adjacent to the bridge and a 'noisy' road surfacing material. The proposed road will have improved gradients and will have a 'quiet' road surface material.</p> <p>The report indicates that predicted increases in noise levels only occur at two receptors (no's 15 and 16 Mallard Close) for a 0% traffic growth, with a 1 dB increase. A 10% growth in heavy vehicles gives an increase of 4 dB at these receptors with a 2 dB general increase at all other receptors. These figures still fall below the WNAP threshold limit and it concludes that there is no requirement for noise mitigation and that any increase in noise level to Mallard Close that might have been expected from positioning the road nearer to properties has been offset.</p>
1	26/02/2019	21. What does the Road Safety Audit indicate in terms of increased risk on the village roads and what mitigation measures are being proposed?	The RSA only covered the scope of new construction work on B4154 Norton Road
1	26/02/2019	22. Given that at times of peak demand, queues already extend back from the traffic signals at the Fingerpost junction to School Lane on Wolverhampton Road, to the Council Depot on Lichfield Road and to Highfield Road on Norton Road, what improvements are proposed to the junction to accommodate the increased traffic demand?	<p>there is a potential to install 7.5 tonne mgw signs to TSRDG 2016 Diagram 622.1A with loading restrictions if the traffic figures warrant this action and the volume of HGV's using the junction increases. These signs could be installed from the Fingerpost junction to the junction with Hall Lane and would prevent vehicles over 7.5 tonnes travelling along Norton Road through Pelsall.</p> <p>Other potential improvements could include the upgrade of the fingerpost signal junction to include green right-turning arrows on the signals or re-phasing of the inter-green timings.</p>
1	26/02/2019	23. Because of the legal parking outside the properties on Norton Road between Ryders Hayes Lane and Station Road, two buses find it difficult if not impossible to pass. Will the road be widened (by taking land from the Common) to allow two 44 tonne HGVs to pass? If not, have the consequent delays to vehicles been included in the traffic model and economic assessment?	There will be a review of the road layout and parking along this stretch of road and any adjustments to parking provision or alignment changes will be implemented where necessary.
1	26/02/2019	24. The same parking severely reduces visibility to the south from the mouth of Ryders Hayes Lane and Stackhouse Drive and requires that vehicles turning left from those side roads must cross the centre line markings on Norton Road (i.e. onto the wrong side of the road). This creates a safety hazard which will be exacerbated by the increased flow and change in classes of vehicles using Norton Road. Again, what mitigation is proposed?	There will be a review of the road layout and parking along this stretch of road and any adjustments to parking provision or alignment changes will be implemented where necessary.
1	26/02/2019	25. In light of the increased demand on Norton Road, are any additional measures being put in place to facilitate pedestrian movements between the Ryders Hayes Estate and surrounding area and the Pelsall Village Centre?	There are currently no proposed measures in place for improvements for pedestrian movements between the Ryders Hayes Estate and Pelsall Village Centre. There is currently a signalised pedestrian crossing at the 'Old House at Home' pub house and at the High Street junction on Norton Road. A refuge is also situated at the Highfield Road junction. Any further measures to improve pedestrian movement would depend upon the percentage increase in traffic and the assessment of pedestrian crossing desire lines.
1	26/02/2019	26. Lime Lane to the north of York's Bridge has several bends which suffer from sub-standard visibility and various sections are of less than desirable width. What safety mitigation measures are proposed to accommodate the new flows of > 7.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight vehicles?	The responsibility for the highway from the county boundary to the junction with the A5 is with Staffordshire County Council. Signs to TSRDG 2016 Diagram 513 are in place on Lime Lane at the approach of double bends and the new bridge over the Cannock Extension Canal is designed to current DfT safety standards. At no point does the width of the highway fall below the standard width required for a local distributor road.

Ref	Date	Query	Response
3	25/03/2019	<p>Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Impact Regulations 2004, I wish to request a copy of the <b>Economic Assessment Report</b> for the proposed York's Bridge Replacement Scheme.</p> <p>By this I mean the report produced which sets out, for each option considered, including the dominant option*, the proposed works, the costs of those proposed works and the economic benefits that will be derived therefrom over the assessment period and, from these, the calculated rates of return that will accrue and the conclusions as to the best performing option.</p> <p>I am aware of the exception provisions and, therefore, I am happy to receive the report in electronic format to save time and costs.</p> <p>I look forward to receiving this information within the time limit set by the Act/Regulations.</p>	<p>An Economic Assessment Report (EAR) was not carried out as explained in the minutes of the December 2017 cabinet report. The information you have requested is not recorded or held information and is therefore exempt from disclosure under Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act. However, other assessments were conducted which would include the information contained in an EAR. All reports are published on Walsall Councils website via the link below. <a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/yorks-bridge">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/yorks-bridge</a></p>
4	25/03/2019	<p>Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Impact Regulations 2004, I wish to request a copy of the <b>Environmental Impact Assessment Report</b> for the proposed York's Bridge Replacement Scheme.</p> <p>By this I mean the environment assessment report produced concerning the impact of the traffic changes that will arise consequent upon the implementation of the York's Bridge Replacement Scheme including, in particular, the noise and air quality impacts and visual intrusion that will be occasioned on the businesses and residential properties located alongside the B4154 Norton Road both north and south of the A4124/B4154 Fingerpost junction.</p> <p>I am aware of the exception provisions and, therefore, I am happy to receive the report in electronic format to save time and costs.</p> <p>I look forward to receiving this information within the time limit set by the Act/Regulations.</p>	<p>An environmental impact assessment (EIA) was not carried out as explained in the meeting minutes of December 2017 cabinet meeting (link available here) therefore the information you have requested is not recorded or held information and is therefore exempt from disclosure under section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.</p> <p>However, other assessments were conducted which would include the information contained in an EIA. All reports are published on Walsall Councils website via the link below.</p> <p><a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/yorks-bridge">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/yorks-bridge</a></p>
5	25/03/2019	<p>Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Impact Regulations 2004, I wish to request a copy of the <b>Traffic Impact Assessment Report</b> for the proposed York's Bridge Replacement Scheme.</p> <p>By this I mean the report detailing existing and forecast traffic flows, by class of vehicle, on the road network associated with the proposed York's Bridge Replacement Scheme, based on the existing and procured traffic data as processed through the Traffic Model developed for the scheme, including, in particular, the conclusions as to the operation of the junctions of the A452/B4154 at Rushall and the A4124/B4154 at Pelsall, the impact of the traffic flow changes on the B4154 through Pelsall and recommendations for mitigation of the adverse effects on free flow and safety.</p> <p>I am aware of the exception provisions and, therefore, I am happy to receive the report in electronic format to save time and costs.</p> <p>I look forward to receiving this information within the time limit set by the Act/Regulations.</p>	<p>An Impact Assessment Report (IAR) was not carried out as explained in the meeting minutes of December 2017 cabinet meeting (link available here) therefore the information you have requested is not recorded or held information and is therefore exempt from disclosure under section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.</p> <p>However, other assessments were conducted which would include the information contained in an IAR. All reports are published on Walsall Councils website via the link below.</p> <p><a href="https://go.walsall.gov.uk/yorks-bridge">https://go.walsall.gov.uk/yorks-bridge</a></p>



Ref	Date	Query	Response
6	25/03/2019	<p>Dear Sirs</p> <p>Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Impact Regulations 2004, I wish to request a copy of the <b>Structural Assessment Report</b> for the existing York's Bridge Canal Bridge.</p> <p>By this I mean the engineering report produced following the latest structural assessment of the existing York's Bridge Canal Bridge detailing its current condition and loading capacity, conclusions drawn regarding its long term viability, options for future maintenance, operation and/or replacement of the bridge (including costs) and the recommendation made by the engineers who carried out the assessment.</p> <p>I am aware of the exception provisions and, therefore, I am happy to receive the report in electronic format to save time and costs.</p> <p>I look forward to receiving this information within the time limit set by the Act/Regulations.</p>	<p>A structural assessment for the structure was carried out in 2015, (Attached) this identified the poor condition of the structure that meant it was necessary to reduce the weight limit to 7.5t a new assessment has been commissioned.</p>
7	01/04/2019	<p>Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I wish to request confirmation of the following information regarding the proposed York's Bridge Replacement Scheme:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the upgrade of the bridge to full 44 tonne capacity is a requirement of the Department for Transport (HM Government).</li> <li>2. That funding for the scheme (£3m) has been provided the Department for Transport.</li> <li>3. That the funding allocated to the scheme cannot be used for any other purpose.</li> <li>4. That if said funding is not expended on the scheme, it must be returned to the Department for Transport.</li> </ol> <p>and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. That no additional economic justification for the scheme is required other than certainty of funding.</li> </ol> <p>This information was provided to myself and other attendees by the 'Principal Engineer' representing your Authority at the consultation event held at the Pelsall Community Centre on Tuesday 26 February 2019.</p> <p>Should any or all elements of the above information be incorrect then I would further request confirmation as to the true facts. I look forward to receiving this information within the time limit set by the Act.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A' roads are Primary Route Network (PRN) and need to be 44 tonnes, Norton Road is a 'B' road the weight limits are set by the Local Authority, having said that the Department of transport are funding the bridge strengthening programme and would require any new structure to be designed to the current specification and standard to accommodate 44 tones.</li> <li>2. The replacement of the structure was identified in the Council approved Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2) as part of a programme of bridge strengthening across the West Midlands, with funding provide by the Department for Transport through Local Transport Plan applications.</li> <li>3. The funding is for bridge strengthening programme and York's bridge has been identified as the next structure requiring strengthening.</li> <li>4. The funding is for bridge strengthening programme, with approvals this could be used on other bridge improvements.</li> <li>5. Previous consultation exercises explored various options for the bridge replacement and or strengthening, eventually culminating in the proposed design (shown in the public consultation) which was approved by Cabinet on the 24th July 2013.</li> </ol>

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8	18/03/2019	This morning I went to the 'Consultation Road Show' event at Pelsall Community Centre but was utterly disappointed with the lack of substance and sincerity of the event. Instead of it being held in the Community Centre itself it was held in a 'Van' which was not at all professional in my opinion. I had taken a short list of my personal views on the subject but there was no-one to hear my views and I was told to 'send me an email' or 'fill in the form on line'. I pointed out that as I had already completed my list and had them there present with me, that surely I could leave them there. This time I was told that I could leave them but they would be treated as an individual comment rather than as part of the consultation. I felt that I was being deliberately ignored and that my views did not matter!. However I did leave my list and have attached a copy of it hereto. Having been down this same road previously I have made some very valid points amongst my comments, some with legal standing, which should not have been dismissed so lightly.	The consultation events were held within the Walsall One-stop bus, which is fitted out with the necessary facilities to undertake an event of this nature. At each event a number of staff were available to speak to and we are unsure why you believe your views were not heard.
8	18/03/2019	After all a consultation is not a consultation when the views of the persons concerned are ignored and/or dismissed and this point may be brought to bear if necessary.	Staff at the events were requested not to accept any material directly to prevent this being lost and to protect any personal information in line with General Data Protection Regulations, instead referring people to our postal or email address as shown on the consultation documentation.
8	18/03/2019	Due to congestion at the Fingerpost junction, vehicles use Charles Crescent and Abbey Drive as a 'short cut' and this increases the danger to local pedestrians, usually young children going to or from school with their mothers. The number of vehicles using this 'short cut' has increased by over 60% in the past 3 years! If the replacement bridge goes ahead the amount of traffic, which will then include HGVs, will increase dramatically at the Fingerpost junction and the number of vehicles using the 'short cut' will also then increase. This would obviously increase the dangers to local pedestrians.	At present the number of additional LGVs which will use the route cannot be predicted, and therefore the increase in congestion at the Fingerpost junction and vehicles using the 'short cut' cannot be measured accurately. We appreciate your safety concerns along Charles Crescent and Abbey Drive, and as part of the scheme the signalisation of the Fingerpost Junction will be reviewed in an effort to elevate the use of the 'short cut'.
8	18/03/2019	There is also an environment issue for no mention has been made of the environmental impact the work will have upon Moat pool by the sudden increase in traffic past that spot. The pool is already in very poor condition due to a lack of proper care and it is currently looking very neglected indeed. Was this overlooked deliberately or by neglect?	At present the number of additional LGVs which will use the route cannot be predicted, and therefore the increase in traffic at the Fingerpost junction cannot be quantified. The environmental impact to the Moat Farm pool is unlikely to be affected due to it's location directly adjacent to the junction where there is already significant traffic. The pool will continue to be maintained and conserved by the council.
8	18/03/2019	There is also the impact upon the local community and again no mention has been made about that aspect. How will local vehicles gain access from Charles Crescent into Norton Road towards the Fingerpost? Will we just have to wait there forever or shall we all just up sticks and move elsewhere, leaving our once pretty village sad and empty?	At present the number of additional LGVs which will use the route cannot be predicted, and therefore the increase in traffic on Norton Road cannot be quantified. Access to the Fingerpost Junction from Charles Crescent is available by either a right hand turn directly from Charles Crescent, or via a left hand turn from Abbey Road. As part of the scheme Walsall will review whether the installation of a yellow box junction at the junction of Charles Crescent and Norton Road will improve the ability to turn right onto Norton Road.
8	18/03/2019	Another important point is that the 'replacement' land which has been offered in place of that proposed to be used for this project is totally unacceptable and unsuitable because it is in the wrong location near High Bridges where it will not be easily and safely accessible. The location of the car park suggested would be in a dangerous position with access directly onto the main A4124 near to the High Bridges where the traffic travels very fast in both directions. To locate the car park there will definitely introduce a serious danger into that area with the undoubted probability of fatalities if it went ahead. Obviously this would not be in the interest of the general public and certainly not in the interest of local residents.	<p>The replacement land being offered by the council is within 1 km of the proposed exchange land and therefore is considered a fair exchange. Section 16 of the Commons Act 2006 requires that any replacement land serve the interests of the neighbourhood affected.</p> <p>Whilst 'neighbourhood' doesn't specifically set a distance for the replacement land to be within, a search for replacement land using the accessibility standards provided in the supporting text of Walsall's UDP Policy T11: Access for Pedestrians, Cyclists and Wheelchair users states that;  "7.51 .. Easy walking / cycling distance will depend on local circumstances, including the topography and the quality of the pedestrian environment: the maximum will normally be regarded as 1000 metres..... there should be unimpeded pedestrian approaches to buildings, and seating should be provided to allow people to rest as necessary."</p> <p>This parcel of replacement land will afford views of the canal at high bridge and provide another location for the public to enjoy. The location of the car park and access onto the A4124 will be subject to all necessary design requirements such as road safety audits to ensure that this complies with all necessary design standards.</p>

Ref	Date	Query	Response
9	01/04/2019	The only minor reservation we have is the absence of a pavement on the east side of the new road between the top of the canal access path and Moat Farm Way; otherwise IWA is content with the current plans.	WMBC to consider extending the pavement.
10	21/02/2019	Regarding the consultation road show events, why are there no evening events. My son is at work at all the times presented.  He would like to see the road show event's.  It's not fair that people at work are excluded from seeing these presentations. I can come as I'm retired. I suppose it's too late  set up out of hours presentations. 0 out of 10 for effort.	Following feedback from local residents an additional session on Saturday 23rd March (2pm to 4pm) was included and the session on Monday 1st April was extended from 5pm to finish at 8pm. These changes to the schedule were communicated to residents through the usual council channels, eg Council webpage, Twitter and Facebook.
11	25/03/2019	Further to meeting you on York Bridge event last week can you please answer the following questions and note some of my concerns.  1)From your plans can you advise the distance from my rear garden fence to the new proposed road ? (our property is 9 Mallard Close) 2)What is the present distance from rear fence to the road ? 3)How much higher will the road near our property be ? 4)The picture on the questionnaire shows a noise barrier (not shown on other plans) I think this is a definite requirement due to the increased traffic and heavy lorries. This would also provide greater privacy from the road. 5)Are the poplar trees to be taken down ? 6)Are all the trees and hedges to be removed at the rear of our property ? the trees provide privacy from the road, and wildlife use this area. 7)During the construction how will noise and pollution be controlled ? 8)New parking bays by the public house (which will be opposite our rear garden) may well cause noise, litter and unsociable behaviour. 9)How are speed restrictions going to be enforced ? (speed cameras are a necessity) 10)If permission is granted when is this scheme likely to start ?	1) At 9 Mallard Close the realigned road will move closer to the rear boundary of the property by approximately 5 metres in line with northern boundary and 4 metres in line with the southern boundary. . 2) We are unable to provide information on the distance that the realigned road will be from your existing rear fence as we do not have the formal land registry boundary plans at this location. 3) The level of the road adjacent to the boundary of your property will remain broadly the same. 4) A noise assessment has been carried out for the site and does not indicate that a noise barrier is required under current regulations, the council may however consider installing one as an improvement measure to the scheme should it be required. 5) A number of trees within the construction boundary will need to be removed as part of the scheme, the number and location of these has not been established at this point. 6) A number of trees and foliage within the construction boundary will need to be removed as part of the scheme, the number and location of these has not been established at this point. 7) Noise and air pollution during construction will be controlled by environmental restrictions within the construction contract. This will be agreed with the Environmental Health Officer at the council and will include permitted working times, noise limits and requirements to mitigate dust and airborne pollution during construction. These will be presented and agreed at the formal planning stage of the scheme. 8) At the new parking areas the council will provide appropriate facilities such as litter bins to prevent littering and suitable signage. The parking bays are considered to provide social enhancement to the area allowing better access to the Common, particularly for disabled people who may not be able to walk to the location unaided. 9) The council will monitor the speed of traffic along the route following construction of the bridge to ascertain if there is an issue with speeding motorists. The current speed limit from the county boundary to York's bridge will be reduced from 40 mph to 30 mph. Should there still be excessive speed, the council will inform the police who are responsible for enforcement of the law. The council will consider installing motion sensitive advisory signs to discourage speeding where appropriate. 10) The scheme has 4 stages to complete prior to work starting on site, which is therefore likely to be in summer 2020.
12	20/02/2019	Thank you for your communication and questionnaire regarding York's Bridge which we shall be completing in due course after attending one of the consultation meetings. Prior to doing that, however, we should appreciate having sight of a 'ball-park' break-down of the costings involved, since we have read in our local paper that the expected total is to be in the region of three million pounds. We need to see how this figure has been arrived at as we feel it will play a major part in our opinion forming.	The budget cost for the scheme has been formulated using industry standard practice based on the current detailed design of the scheme. This includes all necessary works including design, consultation and statutory undertakers' diversions. At this point the budget cost is an indication and until a tendering exercise has been carried out for the construction contract the actual cost of the scheme is not known.

Ref	Date	Query	Response
13	02/04/2019	<p>Review letter! The letter was handwritten with numerous photographs attached</p>	<p>The design of the new structure has been chosen working with Walsall Council and the Canal &amp; River Trust, several options for the design of the structure were reviewed and analysed against set criteria. These included whether the improved structure would be compliant with design standards, such as the carriageway width, visibility and stopping distances, along with potential disruption during construction and the cost of any future maintenance.</p> <p>The decision to build a new structure adjacent to the existing one was made due to a number of factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compliance with design standards</li> <li>• reduced disruption to road users during construction</li> <li>• heritage consideration of the existing structure remaining in place</li> <li>• providing and maintaining suitable access to the canal cottages</li> <li>• future maintenance costs</li> </ul> <p>Undertaking work to the existing structure to modernise this to current standards would need a significant amount of work, due to the constrained site it would be necessary to close the road to traffic for a long period of time whilst the works took place. The existing structure is non-compliant with current standards and poses a safety risk to road users in several areas, such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• load carrying capacity due to poor condition</li> <li>• carriageway width</li> <li>• pedestrian access with no verges</li> <li>• vertical alignment and stopping sight distances</li> </ul> <p>Whilst your proposed solution to widen the existing structure using additional pre-stressed concrete beams to the east would satisfy the carriageway width requirements this would not address the load carrying capacity or vertical alignment of the existing highway. The simple design of the arch bridge means that the depth of construction at the centre of the structure is minimal, any arch strengthening would either increase the construction depth or lower the headroom below, this would either worsen the already substandard vertical alignment or reduce the canal headroom which would need approval from the Canal &amp; River Trust.</p> <p>With modern technologies there are low thickness strengthening options that could be considered, however this would still not address issues with vertical alignment and stopping sight distance. In order to achieve the depth of construction required for the precast concrete beams at the centre of the bridge this would also increase the vertical curve over the structure, reducing the already sub-standard vertical alignment and stopping sight distances.</p> <p>The additional constraints of the existing structure, such as the locality of the public house, do not allow for the vertical alignment to be</p>
14	27/03/2019	<p>With reference to York's Bridge replacement scheme to which some literature was circulated earlier this year, I have a few questions that I would like to raise.</p> <p>As all of the roadshow events have been scheduled in normal working hours, I have not been able to get to one of the events to air my questions.</p> <p>In the documentation, you mention a required 44 Tonne weight Limit for the bridge. This is a significant increase over the current 7.5 Tonne limit and I am interested in the motive for this increase.</p> <p>Is it to attract (or to allow therefore lead to lead to an increase) in heavy traffic through the surrounding area? If so then as a local resident I would be concerned about this and the impact that it would have on the area. I would also question if the existing road network is suitable for larger / heavier traffic (particularly along Lime Lane and at existing traffic junctions).</p> <p>I am also interested in the consultation process.</p> <p>Background is that I had some involvement in the Pelsall to Bloxwich cycle path some years ago which the then Councillor Longhi supported. I understand the process to be that communication is sent out to residents and anyone one that does not raise an objection is classed as an acceptance of the proposal. This is my view is unfair as results can be skewed. Reason for my view is that some residents that are polled will not be affected therefore have no motive to object. For example, I understand that communication has been sent to addresses outside of the locality (eg Bloxwich) who probably would not raise an objection (as they are not immediately affected). These residents would therefore would be counted as an acceptance by default.</p> <p>In addition, some residents may not be in acceptance of the scheme but do not have the drive / wherewithal to submit an objection (eg the elderly / infirm).</p>	<p>In relation to the weight limit of the bridge, Norton Road is a 'B' road and under the requirements of the Highways England specifications outlined in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges the route should be capable of carrying 44 tonne vehicles. The Department for Transport has made funding available for local authorities to remove weight limits where imposed. The council has therefore applied for the funding to remove this constraint on the local road network.</p> <p>The route north of York's bridge is the responsibility of Staffordshire Council who have been consulted regarding the works to improve the weight limit over the structure.</p> <p>The consultation results will be based only on the responses received, there is no presumption that no response means acceptance.</p>

Ref	Date	Query	Response
15	18/03/2019	<p>Today, I have submitted a completed questionnaire to your representative at the road show event on the car park at Pelsall Community Centre, in which I expressed my concerns about the repercussions on traffic flows in the area if a new bridge is constructed with a 44 tonne weight limit to replace the existing 7.5 tonne limit. It was suggested that I send this e-mail to you to request a response to these concerns.</p> <p>Unlike other local residents, I do not have a sentimental attachment to the existing bridge, nor am I particularly concerned about the redesignation of common land. However I am very concerned about road safety in the area for the following reasons:</p>	
15	18/03/2019	1. Some years ago local residents, with the support of our local councillors, presented a petition to Walsall Council expressing concern about the dangers posed to pedestrians attempting to cross the Fingerpost Junction. After a consultation process, the final result was that nothing was done to ease the situation for such pedestrians. Hence the introduction of even more traffic onto this junction that would result from the raising of the weight limit on the bridge is a serious concern that should be addressed. Could any measures to improve pedestrian safety be considered again?	Walsall Council will continue to monitor traffic flows throughout the borough and will address any areas where highway improvements are considered necessary, including pedestrian crossings, refuges and new crossing facilities. Unfortunately, as there is little scope for carriageway widening at Fingerpost Junction then signal phasing may be the only option for pedestrian safety measures in this location.
15	18/03/2019	2. As the additional heavy traffic would no doubt then go on to travel along Wolverhampton Road from the Fingerpost, are there any plans to make this road any safer? It is very narrow with HGV'S literally driving over the drain covers in the gutter at the moment, surely any additional volume of such traffic would pose an additional safety risk to all road users from the Fingerpost to Bloxwich boundary, where the carriageway does become wider?	Should the final scheme result in increased traffic flows the council will address all issues that result, including carriageway widening, signal improvements, pedestrian facilities, etc.
15	18/03/2019	3. As I live in Coleridge close, as a motorist, I have a choice of two routes onto the main road system - either via Abbey Drive onto Wolverhampton Road, which is already difficult turning right, due to queues up to the traffic lights at the Fingerpost, or via Charles Crescent onto Norton Road, which again is getting more difficult to turn right due to queuing traffic up to the Fingerpost again. This situation would only deteriorate with this new bridge. Some yellow cross hatching at the junctions might help here at a small cost?	We welcome your views on the installation of a yellow box junction which will be considered as part of the scheme to mitigate queuing traffic blocking access onto Norton Road.
15	18/03/2019	4. Furthermore, your proposal seems to be the only one being put forward, on the basis that a new bridge has to conform to national standards re the weight limit. However it has been suggested locally that the existing bridge could in fact be strengthened sufficiently to make it safe for the existing weight limit to be retained and to allow barge traffic to pass underneath. If this consultation is to have any credence, surely an alternative scheme should be more fully considered and involving local residents having the opportunity to put their views to the engineers who have provided the advise to yourselves?	Strengthening of the existing structure was considered within the scheme, however this was discounted as this would not provide a fully compliant solution at this location. Strengthening of the existing structure would not provide a cross section wide enough for two vehicles and pedestrians and the vertical alignment would not provide a suitable stopping sight distance in accordance with standards. The arch strengthening would be required either below the arch impeding the headroom above the waterway, which may not be accepted by the Canal & River Trust, or above which would further reduce the stopping sight distance. During construction the road would also be closed for a prolonged period of time, affecting the local village.
15	18/03/2019	5. To conclude, I feel that this scheme will result in a lot of public money being spent which will merely move a safety issue from the bridge to the Fingerpost Junction and surrounding roads. Hence overall road safety in the area will not be enhanced at all, in fact with the extra traffic it may well lead to additional risks that are not present at the moment.	The reason for construction of the new bridge is not just from a safety aspect. The council acts as Highway Authority in Walsall and as such has a statutory duty to maintain the borough's highway network to national standards. The Council has a duty to ensure it maintains accessibility for local, commuter and commercial traffic, which requires that the highway is able to cater for traffic up to the national weight limit of 44 tonnes.

Anna King, Corporate Consultation Officer  
Business Change (Resources and Transformation)  
☎ 01922 652508  
✉ [anna.king@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:anna.king@walsall.gov.uk)

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