

## **York's Bridge Replacement**

### **Summary of Consultation Feedback**

Consultation has been carried out on the York's Bridge replacement scheme and the following notes summarise the feedback received from the drop-in events and response forms.

#### **Consultation Background**

Consultation was carried out between 5 March 2013 and 19 April 2013. Consultation comprised information on the York's bridge web site, the distribution of information brochures at sites throughout Pelsall and a series of manned drop-in events held in various locations around the Pelsall area.

The scheme which was consulted showed a new bridge constructed immediately adjacent to the existing York's bridge on the east side. The existing York's bridge was to be retained under this proposal.

#### Web Site

The updated web site went live on 5 March 2013. It contained general scheme background and information along with plans and an interactive comments form.

#### Information Brochures

Approximately 1500 brochures were circulated around the Pelsall area. The brochures contained much of the same information that was on the web site as well as a tear out comments form. Brochures were left at community buildings, public houses, local shops and children's centres. Some door-to-door drops were also carried out in the Ryder Hayes and Leyland Croft areas to encourage attendance at the local drop-in event. Brochures and a covering letter were hand delivered to all houses on the Moat Farm Estate.

#### Drop-In Events

Nine drop-in events were held at which the public could express their views directly to staff and ask any questions they had about the scheme. The events were manned by engineering staff (to explain the scheme in general), environmental officers (to address any specialist questions about the environmental impact), Countryside Services (to answer questions about the management of the common). The area manager also attended several events to pick up any wider issues. The events were held, between 13 March 2013 and 16 April 2013, at the following locations:

- Pelsall Community Centre – 2 events
- First Stop Bus on Moat Farm Estate – 2 events
- Leyland Croft Community Centre – 1 event

## **York's Bridge Replacement**

### **Summary of Consultation Feedback**

Ryder Hayes School – 1 event (to coincide with parents' evening)  
Pelsall Village Centre – 3 events

### **Feedback Summary**

#### Web Site

Since going live, on 5 March 2013, numerous visits have been made to the web site. Unfortunately it is not possible to report the actual number of visits but it is apparent from feedback and comment at the drop-in events that the site has been (and will continue to be) a valuable source of information. As of 30 April 2013, 7 interactive response forms have been completed. The responses on the forms have been logged and included in the summary data below.

#### Information Brochures

A total of 38 tear out response forms have been received. The information has been logged and included in the summary data below.

#### Drop-In Events

Approximately 155 to 160 people were recorded as attending the nine drop-in events. Allowing for a number of people who attended more than one event it is estimated there were 120 to 130 unique visitors. The events proved very useful in gathering the views and opinions of people that could not otherwise be expressed clearly on the response forms. The views expressed were wide ranging often covering issues that are not directly related to the bridge replacement scheme. While the recorded views do not fit neatly into set questions and answers a series of main themes emerged. These are included in the summary data below.

#### Summary

The response forms sought feedback on 6 general topics, which were:

- the overall scheme
- provision of parking for the common
- retention of the existing bridge
- ecology issues
- suggested registration of Moat Farm pool
- any other concerns/issues

The drop-in events were less structured and the format was more one of general comments, questions and advice with people giving their views on a wide range of issues. Records were taken of the main points raised, which, for the purposes of this summary, have been allocated to one of the above topics.

## **York's Bridge Replacement**

### **Summary of Consultation Feedback**

#### Overall Scheme

The large majority of people understood the need for a new bridge and were generally supportive of the project, although strong concerns were raised relating to the location and the traffic impact of the new bridge. The concerns are covered under 'Other Concerns' below. Several people were strongly in favour of the project particularly from the view point of improving safety for traffic and pedestrians. There were some people who were not in favour of any replacement project but these were a significant minority.

A number of people expressed their suspicion that the scheme was only being carried out to facilitate the extraction of coal and china clay from the land to the northeast of York's bridge. Officers advised that this was not the case and that there were no proposals in place or expected for this extraction activities.

#### Provision of Parking

Views on the provision of parking to serve the east side of the common were reasonably balanced between those for and those against. Information taken from the response forms show 18 for parking and 25 against. Most of the objections to parking related to concerns that it would lead to gatherings, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping. Those in favour recognised that parking would help encourage use of the common by people who live further away and also that it would help alleviate indiscriminate parking in roads adjacent to the common. Of those that were in favour all except one person thought that at least 6 spaces were needed with four people expressing a view that more the 10 spaces should be provided. People living to the west of Norton Road were mostly in favour of parking facilities while those to the east were generally against. Almost half of those against live in Mallard Close, which would be opposite the parking as it was shown on the consultation plans.

#### Retention of Existing Bridge

Views on the retention or removal of the existing bridge are evenly split. Information taken from the response forms show 21 in favour of retention and 22 against. Feedback from the drop-in events indicates approximately 28 in favour of retention with approximately 60 against. The numbers against retention at the drop-in events is skewed due to several people with objections to the scheme who attended more than one event. When this is factored in the numbers wanting the existing bridge removed would be roughly equal to those wanting retention. There were many visitors to the events who were not concerned whether the existing bridge remained

## **York's Bridge Replacement**

### **Summary of Consultation Feedback**

or not and some who expressed a wish to retain the bridge understood the objections of those who lived immediately adjacent to the site.

Most people who wanted the existing bridge removed said so on the grounds that they wanted the new bridge built closer to the existing alignment; i.e. closer to the Fingerpost public house and further away from properties in Mallard Close. This issue is covered in more detail under 'Other Concerns' below.

### Ecology

There were surprisingly few concerns raised about potential impact on the ecology of the common. Where issues were raised these were easily dealt with by the Ecologists who attended the drop-in events.

### Moat Farm Pool

Information taken from the response forms shows a strong support for the registration of Moat Farm pool as exchange land for the loss of common; which is inherent to the bridge replacement scheme. The forms indicate 34 people in favour, 10 people against and 1 person who did not express a view.

Closer reading of the comments of those against the suggestion to register the pool shows that in most cases this is aligned with a wish to see the new bridge built in the same position as the existing bridge. This suggests that the person either feels that there would be no loss of common, (in which case there is no need to identify compensation land), or that by not registering the pool as compensation land the council would be forced to adopt a bridge position which minimised impact on the common. Either way, that would achieve the objective of relocating the new bridge further away from properties in Mallard Close.

### Other Concerns

A number of other issues have been raised both on the response forms and at the drop-in events. These can be broadly categorised into (1) Issues related to the position of the new bridge, and (2) issues related to traffic. Some of these issues are directly relevant to the replacement project but others relate to existing issues or the perceived exacerbation of existing problems.

### Bridge Location

Some strong views have been expressed, both on the response forms and at the drop-in events, regarding the positioning of the new bridge. The scheme taken to consultation has the new bridge situated alongside the existing, which enables the existing bridge to be retained. However, this means that the new bridge and road are closer to properties in Mallard Close than the existing and residents there have

## **York's Bridge Replacement**

### **Summary of Consultation Feedback**

strong concerns over the impact this will have on their day to day lives and the value of their properties. A petition concerning this matter was raised by residents and received by the Council on 3 April 2013. The residents' view is that the existing bridge should be demolished and the new bridge built as close as possible to the existing bridge position.

While constructing the new bridge closer to the line of the existing is quite possible there are implications to doing this which need careful consideration. The pros and cons of the alternatives are set out elsewhere.

### Traffic Issues

There were several issues falling into this category as follows:

- Widespread concern about significant increases in heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and other traffic.

Officers do not believe that the construction of a new bridge will directly lead to a significant increase in traffic. The weight limit on the existing bridge only restricts vehicles over 10 tonnes and lighter traffic is therefore able to use the road freely. The construction of a new bridge, capable of carrying heavier traffic, is unlikely to encourage a noticeable increase in the overall number of vehicles.

It is accepted that there could be a rise in the number of HGVs using the new bridge but, again, officers do not believe this will be significant.

- Widespread concerns about increased traffic speed.

It is recognised that the existing bridge acts as a throttle to traffic speed and that the wider bridge and improved road surfacing could lead to faster speeds. Officers are reviewing a range of options to control speed.

- Widespread concern about the impact of increased traffic at the Fingerpost junction.

The operation of the Fingerpost junction has been under review for a number of years with the conclusion that noticeable improvement can only be achieved by widening of the junction. The funding available is for the strengthening or replacement of bridges and it is unlikely that spending for significant work to the junction can be justified.

- Some concern about an increase in HGVs passing through Pelsall village, south of the Fingerpost junction.

**York's Bridge Replacement**  
Summary of Consultation Feedback

This issue is closely linked to the first bullet point above. Consideration is being given to applying for an environmental weight limit for Pelsall centre.

- Some concern about vehicles using Abbey Drive and Charles Crescent as a rat run to avoid delays at the Fingerpost junction.

This is an existing problem which locals feel will be exacerbated by increases in traffic and HGVs once the new bridge is built.