

Cabinet – 18 March 2009

Strengthening of Leamore Lane Railway Bridge

Portfolio:	Councillor Anthony Harris - Transport
Service:	Neighbourhoods - Engineering & Transportation
Wards:	Birchills Leamore
Key decision:	Yes
Forward plan:	Yes

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 As part of an ongoing programme of bridge strengthening works funding has been allocated from within the Maintenance block of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) to strengthen Leamore Lane Railway Bridge (See **Appendix A**).
- 1.2 It is considered that the most cost effective and secure method of undertaking this work is for Network Rail to be engaged to both procure and implement this scheme on behalf of the Council. This report seeks the necessary authority to engage with Network Rail to facilitate the strengthening of this bridge.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 This report seeks authority for the Council to enter into an Agreement for Network Rail to procure and implement the strengthening of Leamore Lane Railway Bridge
- 2.2 That authority is delegated to the Neighbourhoods Executive Director to agree with Network Rail the terms for this work in accordance with nationally negotiated Agreements, including any estimated and final costs, so long as these costs fall within the available budget. Whilst the wording of the Agreement will be agreed in consultation with Legal Services, the formal Agreement document will be signed and sealed by them.

3. Background information

- 3.1.1 The carrying capacity of this bridge was assessed in 1999 as part of the Bridge Assessment and Strengthening Programme and it failed to reach the 40 tonne assessment live loading required to comply with The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 and any subsequent amendments to these Regulations.

In December 2000 the General Manager (Engineering & Transportation) reported to the Highways & Transportation Committee the priority order that had been determined for strengthening of bridges which had failed to meet the assessment criteria. Despite significant delays due to lack of funding several of these bridges have been strengthened. This bridge has now become the highest priority and, following allocation of the necessary funding, work can progress with its strengthening.

Although the bridge is currently owned and maintained by Network Rail they meet their liability as defined by the Transport Act 1968 and therefore there is no requirement for them to strengthen this bridge.

Network Rail had initially indicated that they wanted a 17 tonne weight restriction imposed on the bridge but accepted the Council Engineer's alternative of monitoring the bridge pending the acquisition of the funding to strengthen it. Now the necessary funding has become available there is a need to undertake these works before Network Rail insist on the imposition of the weight restriction.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

- 4.1.1 Funding for this scheme is through the grant element of the LTP, although this is spread over two financial years. Sufficient funding has been allocated from within the current year 2008/09 and 2009/10 programmes. The allocation for the current year is covered by the global Capital Finance Report for the Capital Programme.
- 4.1.2 Network Rail has estimated the cost of the design and construction works, including their internal costs, to be £1.03m. The Council's project management costs are estimated at £60k. A breakdown of the total anticipated scheme costs is shown below:-

	in £000s		
	2008/09	2009/10	Total
Network Rail	200	830	1030
Council	20	40	60
Year Total	220	870	1090

As Network Rail have no liability to contribute to the strengthening of this bridge the total cost of this work is to be met from the maintenance block of the Local Transport Plan.

- 4.1.3 It is considered that the proposed method of procuring and implementing the works gives the Council the best possible protection against significant increases in final scheme costs.

4.2 Legal:

- 4.2.1 The Council, as the Highway Authority, has a duty to protect the safety of users of its bridges.

4.3 Staffing:

- 4.3.1 The Council will need to commit staff resources to this project, but this will all be funded from the allocated budget within the current Transportation Capital Programme and is as indicated in the table above.

5. Citizen impact

Failure to strengthen this bridge will result in Network Rail requesting a 17 tonne weight restriction which would severely impact on commercial road users, especially those wanting to access the adjacent industrial estates leading off Leamore Lane.

6. Community safety

The strengthening and widening of the existing railway bridge will provide safe vehicular access to key businesses within the Birchills and Leamore area and improve the pedestrian footways along the route.

7. Environmental impact

Failure to strengthen the bridge would result in the implementation of traffic diversions for vehicles over 17 tonnes which in turn would increase heavy goods vehicle (HGV) movements on the adjacent highway infrastructure and increase journey times. The less obvious consequences of these traffic diversions would be increased pollution and long term damage to the carriageway surfacing in utilising roads which were not designed for use by HGVs. This damage would inevitably lead to increased highway maintenance costs.

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 Risk:

- 8.1.1 The scheme risks have been mitigated as follows:

- Financial – Majority is transferred to Network Rail, however, as the final cost is met by the Council, a small residual risk inevitably remains. The overall scheme costs will be closely monitored by Council Officers strictly in accordance with the terms of the Agreement with Network Rail. The work will be undertaken by Network Rail's framework Contractor. Using the proposed method responsibility for future maintenance of the bridge remains with Network Rail.
- Design – All design risks are transferred to Network Rail.
- Track possessions and technical approvals - All risks are transferred to Network Rail who have better access into their internal systems. The risk of

cancelled track possessions is beyond Network Rail's or the Council's control and the impact of any short notice cancellations would be an extension to the road closure. The road closure process will be managed and monitored by Council Officers.

8.2 Performance management:

- 8.2.1 This issue will have minimal impact as the proposed method of procurement and Implementation, transfers this issue onto Network Rail. The timing of the works is agreed with the Council as an integral part of the Agreement.

9. Equality implications

None arising directly from this report but the improved footway provisions would improve facilities for disabled and partially sighted people. Network Rail propose the use of their Framework Contractor to undertake the work and embodied within this Contract are relevant clauses in respect of equalities.

10. Consultation

There has been no direct consultation on this proposal but the result of not undertaking the strengthening works is a weight restriction which is not negotiable. Advance notification of need for the strengthening works will be given to adjacent land owners and businesses by Network Rail as an integral part of the implementation process. Advance signs will be erected informing vehicular traffic of the impending road closure.

Background papers

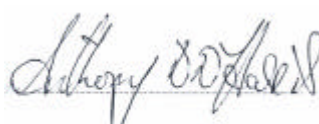
1. County Surveyors Society/Network Rail Agreement dated September 2004 (currently under review)
2. Network Rail estimate dated December 2008

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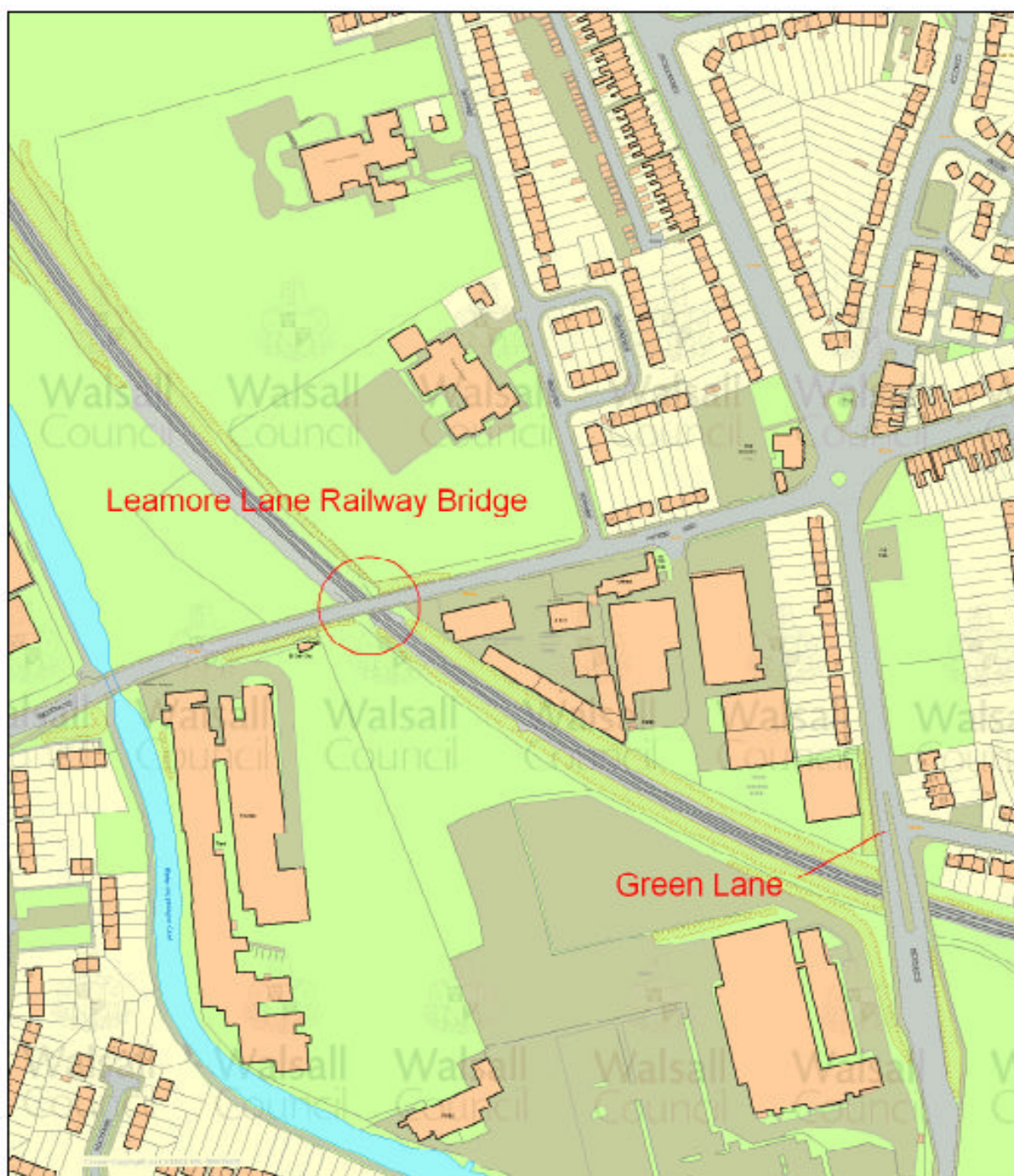


Councillor Anthony Harris
Portfolio holder Transport

9 March 2009

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Leamore Lane Railway Bridge - Location Plan



Scale 1/1840

Date 18/2/2009

Centre = 359391 E 300338 N

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