

18 August 2020

Dear Heidi, (cc: internal and Cllr Harcourt of LBHF)

National Government Funds for Hammersmith Bridge

This is just a brief note to make the obvious point that the full closure of Hammersmith Bridge places even more emphasis on the need for all relevant authorities to work collaboratively to minimise the impact on people's lives.

Like you, we recognise that the present impact of Covid-19 has reduced TfL's financial reach and has now made it necessary to fund Hammersmith Bridge's repairs via national Government funds. Richmond Borough stand ready to make further representations to Government as necessary. We all have a responsibility to work tirelessly to ensure that the funding shortfall is filled and that delays to the repair are kept to an absolute minimum.

No Charges for a Temporary Bridge for pedestrians/cyclists:

I separately note the increased importance of the planned temporary bridge for walking and cycling. With the Hammersmith Bridge presently closed to pedestrians and cyclists as well as motorists, the severance issues for Barnes, Mortlake, East Sheen and the wider Richmond community is exacerbated. We understand that the financial uncertainties around TfL resources were a key reason for your decision to pause further work on the applications necessary to expedite a temporary structure's construction.

Richmond Borough consider rapid progress toward the construction of a temporary foot and cycle bridge is now crucial for our residents.

As a result, our Council's planning team are ready and willing to re-engage with your officers to that effect following what I understand to have been a number of good and constructive conversations on the planning aspects of the proposals some weeks back (before the process was paused).

As a sign of our support that this planning process be re-energised, please note that I have agreed that Richmond Council is also willing to reimburse our element of the planning fee payable. In process terms the fee must be paid by the applicant in order to comply with statutory regulations around the validation of planning applications received. Nevertheless I can assure you that Richmond's charges associated with the application will be reimbursed with immediate effect. As such we have removed a financial impediment to further planning progress.

Can I suggest that the TfL officers dealing with the temporary bridge application liaise with our Director of Environment, Paul Chadwick and our Planning Case Officer for Major Applications, Lucy Thatcher and they will do all they can to assist in progressing the application at a pace that is in line with its high priority. They are copied into this.

I hope that this gesture might yet enable TfL to progress matters with its plans for the temporary cyclist/pedestrian bridge. We understand further capital funds will be necessary to bring the temporary bridge into being, but we want to move this project as far forward as possible, so that once enabling funds are found, we can rapidly assemble this important lifeline for our community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexander Ehmann', written over a horizontal line.

Cllr Alexander Ehmann

Deputy Leader of Richmond Upon Thames Council & Chairman of the Transport and Air Quality Committee