

# WEST PARK BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE

## AGENDA ITEM No. 10

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**MEETING: RECREATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024**

**REPORTED BY: WORKS AND ENVIRONMENT MANAGER**

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### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members regarding the improvements undertaken to the pedestrian bridge at West Park, and to request consideration of further improvements for essential future maintenance of the bridge and lakes.

### 2.0 Current Situation

2.1 The wooden bridge surfacing was identified as being in need of replacement last year and GAMP funding was secured of £13,935 to resurface the bridge with a durable metal durbar surface and an additional metal substructure to further strengthen the bridge.

2.2 Work commenced in late July to dam the upper lake above the bridge, so that the area under the bridge could be drained for improved access for both the bridge reconstruction and to clear the substantial build-up of sludge which had previously been inaccessible.

2.3 Once the dam was effective, work to get the sluice open was undertaken and the section under the bridge drained. The surface of the bridge was removed, and access gained to remove a considerable build-up of sludge of over 18 inches, which was disposed of.

2.4 Aycliffe Fabrications installed a strengthening galvanised framework before installing the new 5mm durbar surfacing and then repairing the rusted barrier posts and repainting the repaired areas.



2.5 The top retaining steel plate had become detached over recent years but could not be fixed due to water levels, so whilst the water levels were lowered this plate was repositioned into its original position.

2.6 Vegetation growing in or on the wall and surrounding structure was removed and treated so it cannot regrow.

- 2.7 During the draining of the lake it became apparent that there was a diagonal crack through the weir. Works operatives ground out the crack and filled it with epoxy resin to seal the crack on both sides of the dam to make the structure safe and watertight.
- 2.8 A mesh grid was installed over the inlet of the sluice to avoid larger debris entering the sluice system to reduce the risk of it getting blocked in the future.
- 2.9 Two removable lockable bollards have already been purchased with a view that they will be installed either side of the bridge to prevent vehicular access over the structure.
- 2.10 Coping stones protecting the walls of the surrounding brick work will be replaced to ensure the area looks more presentable.

### **3.0 Matters for Further Consideration**

- 3.1 Due to the large volume of organic waste build-up, it was determined that the creation of a lockable maintenance hatch would be useful within the new bridge surface to allow future access mainly to the inlet pipe of the sluice. However this would need to be retro fitted.
- 3.2 It was further noted that it was difficult to extract much of the silt under the bridge due to the presence of twigs and litter. After careful consideration it was agreed that raking screens set at 60 degrees, attached to the upper side of the bridge with flat metal long edges, would be useful to prevent larger debris getting under the bridge; allowing rakes to be used to lift debris from the water onto the bridge for removal. A 100mm steel plate would also be installed along the bottom of this screen, so that small buildups of silt can be removed above the bridge before it gets into the silt catchment area under the bridge and weir.
- 3.3 To aid this operation consideration was also given to adapting the bridge fencing on this upper side to create a lockable gate system that can be folded back to allow better access with rakes, rather than having to lift debris over the barrier.
- 3.4 All of the additional proposed works can be completed without the area being drained again, but would require the identification of further funding.

### **4.0 Policy Implications**

- 4.1 This report complies with the Council's Strategic Aims 2 and 3: -

*Aim No. 2. - To manage the Council's Finances and Assets in a Responsible Manner.*

*Aim No. 3.- To provide accessible, affordable leisure facilities and opportunities.*

### **5.0 Staffing Implications**

- 5.1 Works staff completed the establishment and removal of the dam, drainage of the works area, removal of the rotten timber surfacing boards, clearance of the sludge, and improvements to the weir and surrounding area.

## 6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Quotes have been sought for the additional proposed works from the fabrication company which completed the bridge improvements, as they have a good understanding of the alterations required as they were part of the reconstruction process and informed the reasoning behind the alterations.
- 6.2 To retro fit a lockable hinged maintenance hatch of 630mm square into the new metal bridge surface will cost £1,502.
- 6.3 To fabricate and install a raking screen bolted to the existing frame at 60 degrees resting on the floor made of 40 x 6 flats on edge, fully galvanised, will cost £3,402.
- 6.4 Rather than adapting the existing guard rails on the bridge which are showing signs of damage, it is more economically viable to fabricate replacement sections off site and install a new barrier with integrated hinged access panels. It would be fully galvanised and powder coated in green to provide long lasting durability. This would cost £5,301 for the upward side of the bridge.
- 6.5 This would appear similar to the existing structure but would be made of more durable materials to the current structure which is welded untreated box steel.
- 6.6 The rails to the other side of the bridge could also be replaced with prefabricated panels such as in 6.4. However, this is not required at this stage for functional purposes and so doing this would simply be ensure both sides are of the same aesthetic construction. There is no reason why this second side could not be done when required, with the assumption that funding is retained within the West Park Lakes Capital Budget in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 6.7 Officers would recommend that additional spend is considered to improve the bridge for access and maintenance at an additional cost of £10,205 (as summarised in the table below). If agreed, this could be funded via the West Park Lakes Capital Budget provision of £75,000 currently set aside in the 2027/28 year in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Permission to bring this budget forward would need to be referred to and approved by the Policy and Resources Committee.

Description	Amount
Maintenance Hatch	£1,502
Raking Screen	£3,402
Adapted Guard Rail	£5,301
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10,205</b>

## 7.0 Crime and Disorder Implications

- 7.1 The metal bridge is less likely to suffer vandalism due to its robust metal construction.

## 8.0 Equal Opportunity Implications

- 8.1 Access across the bridge has been safeguarded for many years to come due to the robust construction of the new bridge.

## 9.0 Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change Implications

- 9.1 None

## **10.0 Risk Assessment**

- 10.1 It is not considered that the matter contained in this report poses a risk to health and safety of staff or to the financial or public standing of the Council to a degree that a risk assessment should be appended to this report.

## **11.0 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**

- 11.1 Is any personal or sensitive data required for this proposal which may have any implications for GDPR? **NO**

## **12.0 Recommendations**

- 12.1 It is recommended that Members:
- a) Receive the report.
  - b) Members consider the officer's recommendation to fund further bridge adaptations to aid future management of the bridge structure and surrounding area of the lake, from the West Park Lakes Capital Budget currently set aside in the 2027/28 year in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, to include the retrofitting of a maintenance hatch at £1,502, installation of a raking screen at £3,402 and the replacement adapted guard rail at £5,301, a total cost of £10,205.
  - c) Agree to seek approval to bring this budget forward from the Policy and Resources Committee.
  - d) Note that the guard rails to the other side of the bridge and potentially the remaining railings could also be upgraded in the future, but at this point it is the officer's recommendation that this is not required at this time.

**Works and Environment Manager**