

Orwell Bridge Summit Minutes

Date:	Thursday 26 January 2017
Venue:	Ipswich Borough Council, Grafton House, 15-17 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2DE
Attendees:	<p> Martin Fellows (Highways England) Simon Amor (Highways England) Nigel Allsopp (Highways England) Mandy Thomas (Highways England) James Jackson (Highways England) Jack Tappin (Highways England) Zoë Lambert (Highways England - Secretariat) James Finch (Suffolk County Council) Peter Grimm (Suffolk County Council) Neal Evans (Suffolk County Council) Ryan De'ath (Suffolk County Council Press Officer) Alan Thorndyke (Suffolk County Council Highways) Paul Davey (Port of Felixstowe) Nick Burfield (Suffolk Chamber of Commerce) Tim Lusher (Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies) Steve Griss (Suffolk Constabulary) Russell Williams (Ipswich Borough Council) Sandra Gage (Ipswich Borough Council) Nick Burman (Project Manager for the Rt Hon. Ben Gummer MP) Keith Sullivan (Amey) Neal Evans (Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU)) Carolyn Barnes (Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council) Paul Wood (Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council) Anne Reeder (Ipswich Samaritans) </p>
Apologies:	<p> Tim Passmore (Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner) John Dugmore (Suffolk Chamber of Commerce) Brian Read (Association of British Ports) Terry Baxter (Inspire) Kristin Bernard (Chief Inspector, Norfolk and Suffolk Police) Jerry Coleman (Ipswich Harbour Master, ABP) Stephen (Anchor Storage) Graeme Mateer (Suffolk County Council) Catherine Johnson (Birketts) </p>

	Ben Gummer (Member of Parliament for Ipswich) Mark Stevens (Suffolk County Council) Sandra Graffham (Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner) Kevin Rawlins (East of England Ambulance Service)
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Discussion and Resolution	Action Owner
Introduction and purpose Martin Fellows Safety is our number one imperative. How can we work collaboratively to get the best performance from the bridge as it is a critical piece of infrastructure and a key regional asset? We are aware of the disruption when we close the bridge and need to take action going forward. We know that Highways England needs to get better at communication.	
Suffolk County Council Introduction Cllr James Finch Suffolk County Council hasn't been able to quantify the impact of the closure yet but we need to think about the broader picture not just our own concerns. We should engage with people affected but be realistic about the solutions because it's not going to be straight forward. We need to listen to the outcomes from the feedback groups. The procedure is clear and well documented and works when you stick to it, however we need to get closer to the press to help them help us. From this meeting we need an action plan to document what are we going to do differently and we will get this by having an open discussion, no finger pointing but use good scrutiny. People are prepared to help Highways England.	

<p>Bridge overview and operation</p> <p>Simon Amor</p> <p>The bridge is actually 2 separate bridges which carry a water main to Felixstowe. It expands by up 600mm due to thermal expansion. Changing bearings can be very challenging. The bridge is hollow and people are able to walk through it. We are due to carry out a detailed inspection in 2017 which will involve abseiling down the columns. Traffic management will be undertaken at night using lane closures.</p> <p>We implemented a safety scheme in July 2016 where we lowered the speed limit to 60mph and introduced average speed cameras. Initial views are that the scheme has been successful and collisions appear to be reduced.</p> <p>We will be carrying out a formal assessment of the scheme 12 months after its completion.</p>	
<p>The bridge in local infrastructure and economy</p> <p>Nick Burfield</p> <p>There was lots of feedback from business and members of the public which is outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff being late to work or not turning up at all which had knock-on effects, especially in the health service with financial and emotional costs. • Hauliers missed deliveries which could cause fines for lost delivery slots. • Vehicles were abandoned which causes issues on the roads. • Lots of feedback from Ipswich buses about lost journey miles. If people couldn't use public transport they would be a temptation to get in their car which will add to congestion. • There was 400t of asphalt dumped. • Suggestions from the public were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take out high sided vehicles ▪ Can small vehicles cross ▪ Can you implement operation stack ▪ We can't underplay the effect on people in the care system including home carers and meals on wheels. <p>People understand they don't want to put other people's safety at risk but would like better communication. Can HE use more</p>	

<p>discretion and take public safety into consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a balance of public safety versus public inconvenience. • Is closing at 60mph right? Is there any science behind it? Going forward with the size of vehicles getting bigger will 60mph be right? <p>Filtering vehicles: how do we communicate to drivers? This is very hard to do in practice. Traffic management at other bridges allows filtering to be done much easier because they lend themselves to it but Orwell doesn't. Could we use signage more effectively? The community is asking why high sided vehicles could not be split out without understanding the problems. If there is a study done jointly with stakeholders on this we need to publish the outcome otherwise the question will continue to be asked. Is there a case for a feasibility study on this using signage? Can we look at best practice in Europe?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stacking vehicles: We need a second catchment area west side of the bridge but how do we get lorries to use it when it's not enforceable? What do we do with the site when it's not in use. Look at options and a feasibility study. • Platooning: Staffing this option is a massive issue. Does lowering the speed actually make any difference? • Wind protection: This is a last resort and there aren't many examples of retrofit deflectors. Can we do a feasibility study? • Deployment of Incident Support Units and Traffic Officers to facilitate closure of the bridge. • Can additional traffic management be installed to help facilitate the closure of the bridge? <p>We need to keep these subgroups running to ensure outcomes are followed through.</p>	<p>HE</p> <p>HE</p> <p>HE</p> <p>HE</p> <p>HE</p> <p>HE</p> <p>HE</p>
<p>Discussions during lunch were picked up by Martin Fellows and summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quick win is to ensure the cascade contact information is up to date. • Test the communication plan to see how it performs. • Can we test the protocol every quarter? • If a potential closure looks likely out of hours how do we communicate this? Are there avenues of communication 	

<p>already open we could use?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we decide high sided vehicles cant cross we need to communicate why to the public. • Once decisions are made by a number of senior people we need to communicate the outcome. • Can we ask Radio Suffolk who their out of hours contact is? • We need to speak to people more rather than relying on email. • JT and RD to work together to open lines of communication. 	<p>JT and RD</p>
<p>Ipswich Samaritans</p> <p>Anne Reeder</p> <p>The Samaritans were established in 1953 by a vicar and now nationally have 201 branches with 2,100 volunteers and 5 million calls. There is a cry for help every 6 seconds. The Ipswich branch has 100 volunteers who provide emotional support for people who either call, text, face to face or email. 78% of people contacting the Samaritans are not suicidal but just need someone to talk to. Samaritans don't give advice they just listen but believe people have the right to die if they wish. Phone lines are open 24/7 with communications increasing from at risk groups such as prisons, the elderly, mentally ill and soup kitchens etc. They are in partnership with Ipswich Town Football Club and National Rail. In 2015 17,500 people contacted the Ipswich branch and they have noticed an increase number of calls from children. With regards to the bridge, there is a dedicated line but it is very rarely used. They would like to intercept people before they get to the bridge by using good signage.</p>	
<p>Suicide prevention</p> <p>Simon Amor</p> <p>HE will be improving the Samaritans phones making them easier to access and installing noise reducing hoods.</p> <p>HE are looking to close the laybys but will remain open for maintenance, service providers and Police access.</p> <p>HE are looking at the feasibility of installing barriers on the bridge to make it harder for people to climb over the parapets. If we add barriers we need to be mindful of the structural loading, cost and the aesthetics of the bridge.</p>	

<p>If we looked to add nets under the bridge they would be difficult to maintain.</p> <p>AT suggested Suffolk County Council Highways are strongly opposed to closing the footways and that they are currently developing a Coastal Path Walk which will potentially cross the Orwell Bridge</p> <p>Can we look at the flow of information about suicides from the Police to ensure our figures are correct?</p>	<p>TL / HE</p>
<p>Any other business</p> <p>Another meeting should be scheduled for September and Ipswich BC are happy to host again.</p>	