

Record of Meeting 31st March 2022

Discussion on proposed Broxbourne Bridge works and the impact on Nazeing & Broxbourne.

Attendees:

Councillor Karen Carter (Chair to Nazeing Parish Council); Community Liaison Dawn Warwick, Councillor Andy Judge and Councillor David Stock (Nazeing Parish Council), Councillor Chris Whitbread (Leader of the Council EFDC & ECC cabinet member for Finance.

Charles Baker Network Rail Public Affairs Manager (NR); Murphy's (MC) PR representative, Project Manager & Site Manager

Summary of discussion points:

- The meeting was well received by all parties, conversation was purposeful and had value for the issues raised.
- Cllr Carter provided a background to the anxiety & frustration that this project has raised amongst the residents and business owners of Nazeing.
- The presence of Cllr Chris Whitbread provided strong back-up to questions being asked and he reinforced the need for a re-think (reflection) as well as a more thorough consultation with Nazeing residents, businesses, Essex Highways and the relevant Essex County Councillors prior to any works commencing. None of this has been done by NR or MC to date.
- Cllr Whitbread asked the question who they had contacted with Essex County Council or indeed Essex Highways or any other relevant Essex service? The response was that they had only selected a number of names that THEY felt were relevant to the project.
- Cllr Whitbread pointed out that they had not contacted anyone with regard to this project at either EFDC or Essex Highways. He requested that they provide him with the details.
- NR & MC advised they had emailed the Parish council. They were informed that only 1 email to the PC had been received, which was the same as the letter sent out to residents in the EN10 postcode. Having seen the list of recipients it was suggested that they had cherry picked contacts to reduce reaction to their project & had not been diligent or resourceful in ensuring that the correct personnel had been made aware in order for the process not to be scrutinised or challenged.
- Representatives of NR and MC were also made aware today that their diversionary route via Dobbs Weir would be using a 6.5ton width restricted bridge, which although recently refurbished is already in need of repair. The expectation that this route can withstand 18 – 40ton vehicles is unacceptable, they seemed happy to risk this, even though the Broxbourne bridge in its current condition is far more capable. They made **NO COMMENT** on who would pay for any further works as a result of the damage incurred during the closure period.
- NR & MC were presented with the scathing report from Hertfordshire Highways on all aspects of their project? To our surprise they had no awareness at all of Hertfordshire Highways

condemnation of their project., even though it is already listed as a response on the planning application with Broxbourne Borough Council. We provided them with the document to read they had **NO COMMENT.**

- It was highlighted that their Prior approval (Suis Generis) application had been submitted to Broxbourne Borough Council on the 22nd of March.
- Despite the comments from Herts Highways NR & MC had commenced sending leaflets to parts of Broxbourne stating that “it would be a 7-day / 24-hour operation with excessive noise levels”.
- Broxbourne Environmental Health have responded to the application advising of their protocol of normal hours of working and to maintain low levels of noise. Yet again NR & MC were unaware of this response and could offer no explanation for the distribution of leaflets to residents prior to their planning application. When it was reiterated again that they had **NOT** been diligent in raising the awareness of these works to Nazeing stakeholders, they could offer no explanation and made **NO COMMENT.**
- The Murphy’s project manager was asked why he was unaware of the above?
NO COMMENT WAS MADE!
- The question ‘why now’ was posed to them, as it seemed to be a very rushed and uncoordinated effort to gain prior planning approval.
NO COMMENT
- They were asked to respond as to whether this was a financial decision? If the budget was not spent at this time, would it be reabsorbed or could it be ring fenced to be spent next year for example. This would allow for better planning in all aspects of the project, especially for stakeholders, who would struggle in many ways to do this in a matter of weeks! The response was that they had a 5-year budget and if they didn’t spend it on this bridge, they would struggle to fund any emergency works (makes no sense)!
- Has anything changed so drastically with the condition of the bridge in the last few months that dictates that these works must be carried out now? It was noted that no mention was made with the condition of the bridge being under any more stress than it had been in ten years.
- What other options for repair were considered before this project was decided on? Why can no other form of repair could be undertaken, ie adding plating to the existing beams or adding beams?
They stated that they didn’t have the knowledge to respond to these questions.
- They were asked why they had not shown any previous reports spanning back possibly 10 years to show strength loss and deterioration over time rather than this limited excuse for a report?
They replied that they would be happy to supply the reports.
- We responded that we would be happy to receive them and have them reviewed. But if their intention was to start the main construction works in 6 weeks’ time? Then this was not sufficient

time in order for the reports to be received and reviewed. Would they therefore bulldoze the project through without allowing for any further scrutiny or challenge to take place?

- It was felt that the whole approach to this project was to prevent any reasonable consultation before it started with the hope that there be no challenge until the contract had commenced and by then it would be too late. **No comment was made**
- It was highlighted to them again during the meeting that NR & MC had not consulted any Essex County officials or Essex Highways or meaningful stakeholders other than those representatives in Hertfordshire.
They stated that only contacts on their system were approached for consultation.
- We requested that NR & Murphy's show us the designated pedestrian/cycle route they had proposed for stakeholders.
- The route was deemed unacceptable and inappropriate on many grounds:
 - i. No lighting of route that satisfies BS5489:2020 or that has been independently reviewed under ILP guidance.
 - ii. No health and safety protection provided to the public from works vehicles and materials.
 - iii. No consideration to the condition of surrounding environment.
 - iv. No consideration to the current condition of the foot tunnel leading from the carpark under the railway line to the railway station from the carpark
 - v. No consideration of crimes that have been committed against any person in such a vulnerable location, in particular Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG).
 - vi. No consideration for DDA compliance.
- We asked the representatives if they would be comfortable for a member of their family to walk or cycle this route?
NO, they would not and need to consider what needs to be done
- The condition of the bridge has not concerned Network Rail enough to stop or restrict access for heavy goods vehicles for many years. What has changed so suddenly, if the deterioration is so dangerous why have you not put other measures in place to preserve its integrity?
There was no comment.
- It was asked why they intended to increase the bridge loading to 40 tons? Something that had NOT been highlighted on the leaflet. Had sufficient consultation engaged Nazeing/Broxbourne residents, they might not look at it in a favourable manor as the area already suffers considerably with traffic consisting of heavy loads, with the main road (B194) already in a terrible state of disrepair. A 40ton lorry driven at a speed of 30mph causes considerable drag and when pedestrians, children and cyclists use the pathways along the B194 through Nazeing it will be very frightening and may even sweep them off their feet.
Yet again, they made NO COMMENT.

- We provided the representatives with the most recent (May2021) traffic survey data, highlighting that during this period we were still in lockdown. Even with reduced traffic, Nazeing still recorded a million movements in a period of 1 month, with average daily vehicle movements of 6-8k and an average speed of 37.5 at Broxbourne bridge, which has a speed limit of 30 mph! Cllr Whitbread added that you could add 45% to that figure in normal times.
They had not conducted their own more recent Traffic management survey and could not say why and had no knowledge of the data that we presented them with.
- They were provided with information on the demographics of Nazeing, which is predominantly aging. Many of the aging residents access services based in Broxbourne and Hoddesdon, having visited the local sheltered accommodation, we are aware of how anxious the residents are over this closure. At least 45% of our aging residents receive visits up to 4 times a day for home care and there were grave concerns whether that would put in jeopardy if carers routes were diverted via Dobbs Weir. Councillor Judge advised them that his father receives care every day and he was very concerned for his welfare as when the Glassworks Bridge closed carers were unable to get to his father on a number of occasions.
- We also highlighted further concerns of the closure and the effect on our Charity bus C392 and school bus pick-ups for Robert Barclay Academy, John Warner, St Mary's, and others. Our school age children (primary & secondary) are only just readjusting to a normal school routine. This closure brings more anxiety for them, getting to and from school with long diversions, exams coming up in May & June, only adding to the pressure they are already under.
- Having corresponded with some local schools it has become apparent that they have not been contacted at all about the closure of the bridge? DW is chair of governors and confirmed that schools had not been contacted.
Murphy's representative advised they had emailed one school the day previous to the meeting taking place and that he had no idea that there was another secondary school in the locality!
It should be noted that he was also unaware of the primary school that was just yards from where we were standing!
- We advised the representatives that through our own research not one business on either Nazeing Glassworks site or Hillgrove business park (employing over 1500 people) had received any communication or consultation, with regards to the closure of the bridge. The local area is also home to the biggest glasshouse food suppliers in the UK/Europe and we anticipate major problems with their large articulated lorries being diverted. A worst case scenario could result in major loss of business and closures for many smaller businesses who have already been impacted by the pandemic and have not yet had a substantial period of recovery.
No comment was made
- They were asked to explain how they planned to start the works on the stated date, when they had not yet had any planning or licences for the works or prior works approved by any authority, for example scaffolding. The next date for a Broxbourne borough planning committee was not until 13th April and they state in their letter that they will start some works on the 11th!!!! Are you

planning to carry out the works regardless of any local authority recommendations, regulation or consultation under the railway act 1907?

No comment was made.

- What contingency plan do they have if approval is not made, in order for their schedule to be implemented it needs to be on the agenda for the 13th and must meet the demands made from the Herts Highways Authority as stated in their response letter and as yet they have not submitted any forms of management plans to date!

No comment yet again!

- NR & MC project managers were asked, had they actually carried out any form of due diligence for this project. It was obvious by the project team's response that they had not done any research and had no prior knowledge of the area and the issues that concern its stakeholders.
- At the end of the discussion two of our Parish Councilors AJ & DS provided a guided tour of Nazeing with two of the representatives. They drove the proposed diversion route via Dobbs Weir, this included the current works impeding the flow of normal day to day traffic!

To conclude:

- NR & MC were advised that whilst we all understood the need for remedial works. They should reflect on their practice to date and consider the following: -
 - i. Full consultation with all stakeholders and consider carrying out their project in 2023.
 - ii. Provide alternative methods of repair rather than demolishing.
 - iii. Provide alternative access for vehicles and pedestrians. Any diversion routes must be sufficiently signposted with local knowledge to reduce vehicle traffic to locations during works.
 - iv. That the current access route is unsafe for pedestrians, the elderly, children and other stakeholders and therefore they could not be reasonably or safely controlled by Network Rail or Murphy's Construction.
 - v. The designated route has already been identified as a local area of interest by police (Herts & Essex) due to a series of sexual assaults, robberies, anti-social behaviour and suicides.
 - vi. Look immediately to reduce the width of the bridge to only allow cars and vans in order to preserve the integrity of the current bridge structure.
 - vii. To allow sufficient recovery time for ALL stakeholders and residents to have respite from 2 years in lockdown.
 - viii. To liaise with correct personnel across both Hertfordshire and Essex counties.

On a personal Note,

I would like to thank Dawn Warwick, Richard Basset & Stephen Clarkson for their research, local knowledge and support which allowed us to attend this meeting well prepared. I would also like to thank CC Chris Whitbread for his input which brought considerable strength and support to the discussion.

Councillor David Stock - Vice Chairman to Nazeing Parish Council