

**CABINET
2022**

23 November

**SHERWOOD ROAD FOOTBRIDGE, ASTON FIELDS – PERMANENT
CLOSURE OF FOOTBRIDGE, REMOVAL OF BRIDGE DECK AND
TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP TO SEVERN TRENT WATER LTD**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Margaret Sherrey
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans - Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services
Report Author	Job Title: Engineering Team Leader Contact email: pete.liddington@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 534108
Wards Affected	Aston Fields and Avoncroft
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green
Key Decision	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that: -

- i) The existing pedestrian footbridge in Sherwood Road be permanently closed, due to its current structural condition;**
- ii) After removal of the bridge deck, the remaining structure be declared surplus to Council requirements, and disposed of to Severn Trent Water Ltd at nil cost.**

1.2 The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND that: -

- i) A budget of £10k be added to the 2022/2023 Capital Programme to be funded from internal resources.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The footbridge (refer to Appendix 1) is owned by this Authority. It would seem that the footbridge was probably originally constructed for a joint purpose, by whom is unknown, serving both as a pedestrian route to the adjacent development, Sugarbrook Court, and as a structural support for Severn Trent Water Ltd's (STW) 675mm diameter combined sewer.

- 2.2 A recent inspection of this reinforced concrete structure has revealed significant structural failures, particularly with large cracks appearing in the concrete, exposing the steel reinforcement. In addition, there are Universal steel beams integrated within the structure, which are open to the elements, as opposed to being integrated within the concrete structure, which would have offered protection. As a consequence, these beams have degraded to such an extent that in some instances only the outline of these sections remain (refer to Appendix 2).
- 2.3 This pedestrian footbridge appears not to be a well-used pedestrian link, and it is currently obscured by overgrown shrubs and trees. There are other adequate pedestrian routes easily accessible. Once, the footpath's condition was known to us, we ensured it was immediately closed to all pedestrians and adequately fenced off. No comments whatsoever have been received from local businesses or the general public as to the actual closure.
- 2.4 In view of the apparent non-usage of the footbridge, it is considered practical that the permanent closure of this structure would be the best course of action on the Council's part. The anticipated full reconstruction costs, coming at a time when finance is particularly restricted, could not be fully justified. Obviously, the existing gravity sewer crossing is a necessity for STW, and therefore preliminary discussions have taken place with STW, with regards to the best way forward. Our proposal to STW, was that as they require the structure to be maintained as a structural support for their sewer crossing, this Council would be prepared to transfer the ownership of the total structure to STW, in its existing condition, and STW would then need to undertake and totally finance the necessary remedial/reconstruction costs. In view of the existing condition of the structure, it is recommended that no purchase price is levied against STW.
- 2.5 STW have provisionally agreed to this arrangement, subject to the bridge decking being removed and financed by the Council, in advance of the sale transfer, hence the need for the Capital budget approval.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of removal of the existing bridge deck is substantially less than the anticipated reconstruction works if the footbridge were to be kept for its original purpose. Indeed, a more detailed structural analysis could well result in proposing that it was more financially beneficial to demolish the complete structure and totally replace it.

- 3.2 The proposal to add an additional £10k to the Capital Programme needs to be recommended on to Council as this is a new addition to the budget.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Referring to the existing Conveyance and Deed, they are both silent in terms of providing a bridge or a structure for STW to span the watercourse to support their sewer. Therefore, on the basis of these two titles, the Council do not have an obligation to repair/maintain or provide such a structure.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 *Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green* – with adoption of the proposals included within this report, this structurally unsafe existing pedestrian footbridge will be permanently removed from use.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 There are no Climate Change implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are no Equalities and Diversity Implications

Operational Implications

- 6.2 Although the bridge deck will be removed from the structure, making it just a watercourse crossing for STW's sewer, there will of course be a possible incentive for individuals to try and traverse the remaining structure, as an inviting 'dare.' Consequently, as part of our works, a fence will be provided on each embankment to deter any such potential crossings, and STW will be advised to install safety fans, or similar, to supplement the deterrent. Such deterrents will be provided in conjunction with Community Safety.
- 6.3 The required budget for the works as described in 6.2, is arrived at utilising the Council's current Term Contract for Minor Civil Engineering and Ancillary Works. The budget of £10k will be sufficient to complete all the necessary works.

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- 6.4 It is anticipated that the works will commence in late January 2023 and will take approximately two/three weeks to complete. However, the actual start date will be dependant on the completion of the legal transfer of the structure to STW.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The removal of the bridge deck, together with the transfer of the remaining structure to STW, will eliminate any potential future Health and Safety risk for the Council.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- i) Appendix 1 – Footbridge Location Details
- ii) Appendix 2 – Existing condition photographs

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Margaret Sherrey	01 August 2022
Lead Director/Head of Service	Guy Revans Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	05 July 2022
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter Director of Finance	13 July 2022
Legal Services	Clare Flanagan Principal Solicitor	11 July 2022
Policy Team	Emily Payne Engagement and Equalities Advisor	13 July 2022
Climate Change Officers	Kath Manning - Climate Change and Energy Support Officer Anna Wardell-Hill	11 July 2022

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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	Environmental Policy and Awareness Officer	
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