Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
WESTCOTES

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

CABINET **11th JULY 2005**

BOWSTRING BRIDGE

Report of the Corporate Director, Resources, Access and Diversity

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek Cabinet authority to instruct the Bridges Section of the Regeneration and Culture Department to arrange for the demolition of the Bowstring Bridge (the Bridge, shown hatched black on the attached plan) and make safe both sides of the viaduct exposed by such demolition work.

1.2 Four options have been provided by the Council's Bridges Section and the estimated costs of such options are contained in a 'B' Agenda addendum report.

2. Summary

2.1 A report detailing the options for the Bridge was considered by the Property Sub-Committee on 9th January 1997 and it was resolved that the Bridge should be demolished.

2.2 The Great Central Way cycle and footpath route over the Bridge has been redirected to ground level, resulting in the Bridge being of no further purpose other than serving as a monument to Leicester's industrial heritage.

2.3 An application to spotlist the Bridge was rejected by the Secretary of State (upon English Heritage's advice) in October 2002.

2.4 Locked palisaded gates were erected a number of years ago to prevent public access to the Bridge and viaduct, however individuals have accessed the Bridge and viaduct in the past causing graffiti and, on at least one occasion known to the Council, have thrown stones through the rear windows of a nearby house.

2.5 Following the decision referred to in 2.1 above, various proposals (which, by their nature, have been complex and, unfortunately to date, unsuccessful)

have been pursued in an attempt to have the Bridge demolished in conjunction with the disposal of adjoining land at Duns Lane.

2.6 Eight years have now passed since the original decision was taken to demolish the Bridge and its condition, whilst having been regularly monitored and various maintenance works undertaken, has continued to deteriorate.

2.7 In March 2005 Cabinet agreed the Capital Programme for 2005/06 to 2007/08 which contained a sum for the demolition of the Bridge.

2.8 Property Services commissioned an inspection report from the Bridges Section of Regeneration and Culture (received in April 2005) which highlighted 4 options;

a) Bridge demolition (the cost of which is considered to be within the existing budget),
b) Adoption of Bridge by a 3rd party,
c) Bridge strengthening (to ensure it can continue to support its own weight and any loads from its use as a pedestrian/ cycle route) and
d) Full restoration to its original load bearing capacity (i.e. to accept fully loaded freight trains).

Bridges Section recommended that within 12 months from the date of their report the Bridge should either be demolished or adopted by a third party.

2.9 Having regard to past efforts involving third parties and the Bridge (see paragraph 2.5 above), adoption of the Bridge in its existing deteriorated condition would likely not be achievable within such a timescale and if it were, it is likely the Council would be required to pay a significant sum of money for any third party to accept future liability of the Bridge.

2.10 If Bridge adoption did not occur within the prescribed timescale then the options available (disregarding full restoration, estimated to cost £2.5million, due to there being no possibility of loaded freight trains ever travelling over the Bridge in the foreseeable future) to the Council would be to, swiftly, either undertake;

a) Bridge strengthening works, which would need to be reviewed in 3 years time. This would leave the Council with ongoing costs of regular monitoring, any repairs identified from such monitoring together with any required future strengthening works. The financial **disadvantage** of pursuing this option is that the total cost of such works, which would need to be reviewed in 3 years time, is currently estimated to be in excess of twice the cost of Bridge demolition. The funds allocated within the Capital Programme for 2005/06 to 2007/08 for the Bridge are not sufficient to cover the estimated strengthening costs. If this option is pursued, additional funds would need to be secured swiftly to effect the works within the prescribed timescale of 12 months from April 2005. Securing such additional funding may have a negative impact on the delivery of other projects.

b) or demolish the Bridge.

2.11 Retention of the Bridge for a further period of time would therefore be significantly more expensive than pursuing its demolition. Also, if development of the Council owned land and viaduct at Bede Street and Duns Lane (which adjoin the Bridge) was permitted with the Bridge in place, then in the event of any one off or ongoing activities on such property, which the Council considered would or had caused detriment to the condition of the Bridge, it may be very difficult to prove that such actions by adjoining owners were likely to or had actually caused its further deterioration. Retention of the Bridge may therefore either frustrate the regeneration of the adjoining Council owned property or (if such property was redeveloped) expose the Council to greater maintenance costs and risks in the future. In addition, unless a credible and permanent use was identified for the Bridge it would continue to attract individuals intent on causing graffiti and participating in other anti social activities.

2.12 It is therefore considered that the most appropriate course of action is to immediately instruct the Bridges Section of the Regeneration and Culture Department to arrange for the demolition of the Bridge and to make safe both sides of the viaduct exposed by such demolition works.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve:-

a) the immediate release of the funds allocated in the Capital Programme for 2005/06 to 2007/08 to undertake the demolition of the Bowstring Bridge and make safe both sides of the viaduct exposed by such demolition works,

b) authorisation for the Head of Legal Services to enter into all necessary contracts and agreements arising out of the proposed demolition works.

4. Financial and Legal Implications

Financial Implications (Steve Charlesworth)

Council approved the Capital Programme for 2005/06 to 2007/08 in March 2005. The demolition of the bridge was placed at the top of the Reserved Schemes List. This list contains schemes which can proceed subject to further approval by Cabinet with regard to the detailed implementation of the scheme, and subject to additional funding becoming available.

Whilst it was recognised that the Council would have to resolve the issue of the Bowstring Bridge, the scheme was placed on the reserve list until all other options for the bridge, including potential funding options, had been ruled out.

Resources are available, which would fund some of the Reserve Schemes. This sum, however, has been left uncommitted to deal with potential risk, particularly in respect of BSF and the Performing Arts Centre.

Demolition of the Bridge is the most economic option.

Legal Implications (Rebecca Jenkyn)

A competitive procurement exercise will need to be planned and advice sought on whether the EU Procurement Rules are applicable.

5. Officer to contact:

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Property Services
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DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Report

As set out in paragraph 2 of the Summary

2. Recommendations

As set out in paragraph 3 of the Summary

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

1. Financial Implications

See Summary report

2. Legal Implications

See Summary report

3. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	NO	
Policy	NO	
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	2.11
Crime and Disorder	YES	2.4
Human Rights Act	NO	
Elderly/People on Low Income	NO	

4. RISK ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/appropriate)
1. Cost of demolition greater than sum allocated in budget	M	H	Undertake competitive tendering of contract and only proceed if contract price is guaranteed not to be greater than the budgeted sum.
2. Urgent major repair work needed to Bridge before demolition contract is let	L	H	Bridges Section report states demolition or 3rd party adoption must take place by April 2006. In the meantime regular “walk through” inspections will be continued by Bridges Section to identify any repair/safety issues.

5. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

None, other than those referred to in the report (except for those referred to which are subject to either confidentiality or data protection).

6. Consultations

	DATE CONSULTED
Steve Charlesworth, Head of Strategy and Development, Financial Strategy, Resources, Access and Diversity	21.6.05
Rebecca Jenkyn, Team Leader, Commercial & Property, Legal Services, Resources, Access and Diversity	17.6.05

7. Officer to contact:

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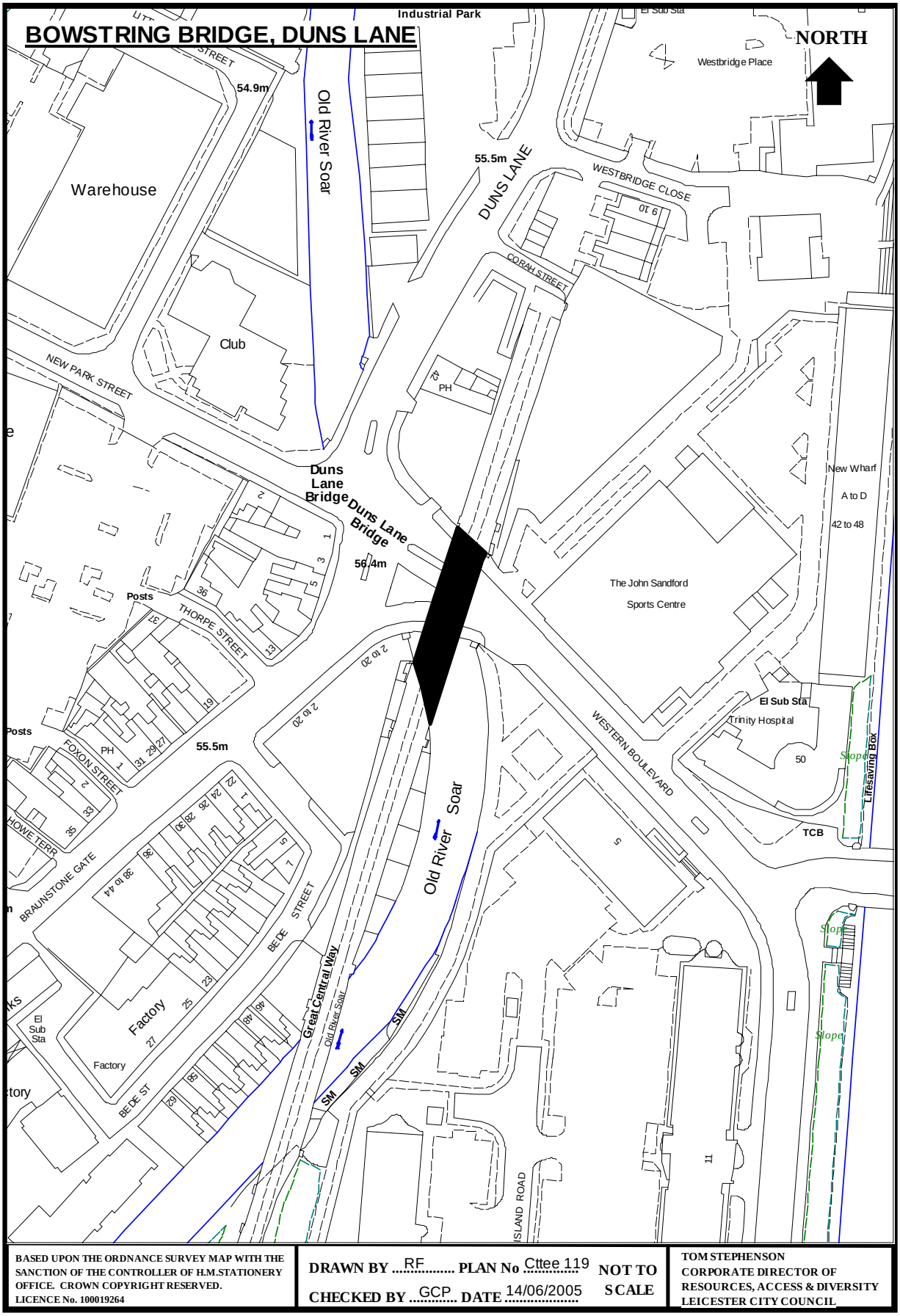
Tom Stephenson
Corporate Director of Resources, Access and Diversity



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DRAWN BY RF PLAN No Cttee 119 NOT TO SCALE

CHECKED BY GCP DATE 14/06/2005

TOM STEPHENSON
CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES, ACCESS & DIVERSITY
LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL