

UPDATE ON ALBANY BRIDGE

Albany Bridge has failed a strength assessment. It is a type of bridge that is particularly vulnerable to deterioration. Therefore, there are traffic restrictions in place to ensure that the weak areas are not over loaded.

At the Elmbridge Local Committee meeting in June 2008 it was reported that the current restrictions on the bridge would need to remain in place until strengthening or reconstruction of the bridge was carried out. Members asked for a report on the programme for carrying out the feasibility for this work and also if the general appearance of the area could be improved.

Since the last meeting of the Committee, further design work has found that the current barrier system could be positioned on the footways to protect the weak edges of the deck. It will also be necessary to protect the central areas of the deck. It is anticipated that this can be done by extending the trief kerb arrangement used on much of the remaining length of Esher Road over the bridge. With these provisions in place to protect the weak edges of the bridge it will be possible to fully open both carriageways for both motorists and cyclists.

An interim scheme is currently being prepared for commencement in early 2009 that will include the specialist inspection of the reinforcement as well as replacement of waterproofing, surfacing, parapet painting and relocation of the current barrier system. This refurbishment will bring the bridge into a condition that is expected to last for at least 10 years without further maintenance or traffic restriction. During this time an individual management plan will be put in place to monitor the condition of the bridge and studies will be carried out to determine the appropriate course of action for its long term future.

The relocation of the current barriers will rely on the satisfactory outcome of the specialist inspection of the reinforcement. If there is found to be any serious deterioration then the assessment result may need to be revised and further restrictions may be necessary. However, a similar investigation carried out ten years ago found negligible deterioration. The planned investigation will revisit some areas previously examined and also look at new areas. A sensitivity analysis (how much reinforcement would need to be missing to change the result) has been carried out as an addition to the strength assessment to enable us to judge the effect of any deterioration. It is not expected that there will be a need to revise the assessment result and, therefore, there should be no need for a strengthening feasibility report at the present time.

The original traffic management layout has been revised on more than one occasion since installation and is now at the minimum required by the relevant legislation. Information signs have also been installed. Carillion have an instruction to maintain the area, which not only applies to the signs and cones, but also specifically requires that the area is kept tidy with sweeping and removal of debris, by hand methods if necessary.