

New government-commissioned reports raise prospect of limited reopening of Hammersmith Bridge

- government publishes expert reports on Hammersmith Bridge's safety
- reports state that London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) should look again at whether a limited reopening is possible
- Baroness Vere calls on LBHF, following the findings, to redouble efforts towards reinstating pedestrian, cycle and river traffic as soon as safely possible

New [reports commissioned by the government and published today](#) (Thursday 10 December 2020) raise the prospect of a limited reopening of the Hammersmith Bridge to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic.

In September, the Department for Transport invited respected engineering consultants AECOM and Professor Norman Fleck of the University of Cambridge – an expert in fracture mechanics – to review engineering studies of the bridge's condition previously undertaken by consultants for the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF).

The reports, published today, looked in detail at the computer modelling and risk assessments undertaken to date by LBHF's consultants and of the bridge strengthening works proposed by Transport for London (TfL). They conclude that earlier risk assessments were conservative and, as there is now a better understanding of how the bridge might be behaving, suggest assumptions on its closure should be revisited.

The reports recommend LBHF and its consultants reconsider whether the bridge can be reopened, albeit with restrictions, in its current state to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic. Further mitigation measures will be needed. These include blast-cleaning the paint from the 2 remaining pedestals so that any hidden fractures can be identified, as well as potentially installing further monitoring equipment.

AECOM and Fleck's reports recognise that our understanding of the bridge's condition and behaviour has improved considerably since March of this year when the current risk assessment was prepared. The government is therefore calling on LBHF to review AECOM and Fleck's work and consider their rationale for a full closure of the bridge, with a focus on exploring all avenues for a partial reopening.

Transport Minister Baroness Vere said:

Today's reports set out that there is potentially a route to Hammersmith Bridge being partially reopened and without major works, which is something I know people in the area will welcome.

I'm therefore calling on Hammersmith & Fulham Council to seriously consider these reports so we can do right by people who have been impacted by this bridge's closure, and help people move around London easily again as soon as is safely possible.

We remain committed to finding a funding solution for the bridge's full repair and reopening to vehicular traffic.

The government has provided the funding for removing ornate cast-iron casings and blast cleaning 2 western pedestals via the extraordinary funding and financing deal agreed with TfL on 31 October 2020. This work is expected to be carried out by April 2021. The eastern pedestals have already been blast-cleaned.

Given any reopening before the stabilisation works have been completed will have to be restricted, we continue to work on delivering a ferry service across the river as a temporary measure. Also, as part of the extraordinary funding and financing package, TfL will establish and run this service using [active travel funding](#), alongside any local contributions. Public procurement activity for the ferry is underway, with service commencement targeted for spring 2021.