

Report Statement

Report Purpose:

To update the Planning Committee on Canal Bridge 36 assessment

Author:

Admin and Governance Manager

Background

David Wilson Homes NW and Homes England are developing the former Fence Avenue Kings site for housing.

The canal forms a boundary to the southern side of the site with the towpath on the opposite side. The Design and Access Statement in 20/0246M indicates a key pedestrian link over bridge 36, yet this bridge is closed at the mid-point and does not have access to the towpath.

It is worth noting that the bridge is listed and that the height of the parapet is not currently suitable for cycling use.

Opening the bridge would provide a pedestrian link to schools and shops on Buxton Road and on Hurdsfield Road, supporting sustainable travel and promoting active lifestyles.

On 16/03/21, Cllr Wilson, Cllr Hutchison and Cllr Jackson MBE met virtually with representatives of the Canal & River Trust, David Wilson Homes NW, Homes England and the Kings School to discuss support for the opening of Canal Bridge 36 including costs for the survey and repair works, and the potential for funding and grant opportunities. All parties in principle supported the opening of the bridge but none was able to fund the work.

Further to that meeting, the Canal & River Trust reported a revised estimate of £2,300 plus expenses (excl. VAT) for the Trust's consulting engineers, Arcadis, to carry out an investigation for assessment (IFA), a MEXE assessment (a means of assessing the carrying capacity of arch bridges developed by the Military Engineering Experimental Establishment) and reporting. The cost assumes that there will be no requirement to undertake any intrusive investigation work or material testing, however this may still be required and can only be determined following the survey.

At Full Council on 20/09/21, it was resolved to:

- To fund an assessment of Canal Bridge 36 to a value of £2,300 excl. VAT.
- To fund expenses in support of the works to a value of £150.

The Admin and Governance Manager has been liaising with a Canal and River Trust engineer to progress the assessment.

Update

The survey was provisionally scheduled for December but has been rescheduled to a provisional date in late January. At the time of writing this report, the Admin and Governance Manager was waiting on confirmation of the date.