

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Our Ref: MGLA140819-0114

10 September 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information which the GLA received on 13 August 2019. Your request has been dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004.

You asked for;

act, correspondence between the Mayor of London's office and councillor's Wesley Harcourt and Stephen Cowan at Hammersmith and Fulham Council regarding Hammersmith Bridge between March 1 2019 - August 13 2019.

Our response to your request is as follows:

Please find attached the information that the GLA holds within scope of your request.

Transport for London (TfL) is the Mayor's transport authority and is responsible for implementing the Mayor's Transport Strategy, and for the day-to-day operational running of transport services. You may wish to send a further request to TfL at foi@tfl.gov.uk.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Information Governance Officer

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA's FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>

[REDACTED]

From: Alexander Heidi [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@london.gov.uk>
Sent: 18 June 2019 16:51
To: Cllr Stephen Cowan
Subject: Re: Hammersmith Bridge - Tour

Useful to know - thanks Stephen

Heidi

From: Cllr Stephen Cowan <stephen@thecowanreport.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 18, 2019 8:55:40 AM
To: Heidi Alexander
Subject: Fwd: Hammersmith Bridge - Tour
We're doing tours to show residents what's wrong with the bridge

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Lea Sharon: H&F [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@lbhf.gov.uk>
Date: Tue, 18 Jun 2019 at 07:03
Subject: Fwd: Hammersmith Bridge - Tour
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@lbhf.gov.uk>, Cllr Stephen Cowan <stephen@thecowanreport.com>, Cllr Cowan
Stephen: H&F <stephen.cowan@lbhf.gov.uk>

Hi as requested by the Leader the first tour by the Hammersmith Historical Society of the bridge has been arranged and can now be promoted.

Regards

Sharon Lea
Strategic Director of Environment
Environment Department
Hammersmith & Fulham Council
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] H&F <[REDACTED]@lbhf.gov.uk>
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2019 4:10 pm
To: Lea Sharon: H&F; [REDACTED] H&F
Subject: FW: Hammersmith Bridge

Hi both

A tour of the bridge, as requested, to take place in August.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Environment Department

Hammersmith and Fulham Council

[REDACTED]@lbhf.gov.uk

www.lbhf.gov.uk

Join your neighbours on Nextdoor –

www.nextdoor.co.uk

From: [REDACTED]: H&F

Sent: 17 June 2019 14:54

To: [REDACTED] H&F <[REDACTED]@lbhf.gov.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED]@westminster.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]: WCC <[REDACTED]@westminster.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Hammersmith Bridge

[REDACTED]

The Fulham & Hammersmith Historical Society will be organising a history walk on the 6 August.

The details have just been given to me and I will meet with the organiser(s) to see how I can support them via our Social Media accounts. If it's a success then we can see if they want to do more.

A Walk Around Hammersmith Bridge, Tuesday, 6 August at 7pm.

Hammersmith Bridge, statutory listed Grade 2*, is hot in the news and looks as if it may be closed to traffic for up to 3 years due to structural defects. We will look at the bridge and our Chairman will tell us about its history and designer Sir Joseph Bazalgette, Chief Engineer to the Metropolitan Board of Works.

There was a previous bridge suspension bridge built in 1827 and there is another 'Hammersmith Bridge' in existence in Buckinghamshire and a much larger version in Hungary ! Come along and find out where it is. We will then take a walk along Lower Mall and look at the many period houses along here. Afterwards, if you wish, sojourn to a local for refreshment.

Hammersmith Bridge Road, a short walk from Hammersmith Broadway.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Archivist

Libraries and Archives

Environment Department

Hammersmith & Fulham Council

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RE: Hammersmith Bridge Closure

"[REDACTED]@lbhf.gov.uk)

To: [REDACTED] ; Mayor (mayor@london.gov.uk) ; "Cllr
Cowan Stephen: H&F" (stephen.cowan@lbhf.gov.uk)

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email.

You are correct that the bridge has been neglected in the past. When I took on this job in 2014 the bridge had been poorly maintained for decades and there was no refurbishment plan in place. So, in 2015 I commissioned the most comprehensive investigation into the bridge's structural integrity in its history. In April, those investigations revealed 2 hairline micro-fractures in the cast iron casing around the pedestals that hold the suspension chains in place.

Cast iron can shatter so the micro-fractures were a huge concern. H&F Council and Transport for London (TfL) were also concerned we might find dozens more. So on safety grounds, we had no choice but to close the bridge to motorised traffic. It's still open to pedestrians and cyclists. H&F Council and TfL have hired world class, specialist engineers to work through the complex engineering challenges that fixing this 132-year-old suspension bridge presents and they have advised us that they can have Hammersmith Bridge re-opened and in full working order within three years. We are of course very aware of the inconvenience this vital refurbishment is causing residents which is why my team and I are pushing them to get it opened sooner.

This 6-minute video tells you more:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=ueEE8o82mQ4

Thanks again for getting in touch.

Best wishes

Cllr. Stephen Cowan

Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
Hammersmith Town Hall, London W6 9JU

Labour Councillor for Hammersmith Broadway

Phone: 020 8753 6585

Local News: www.TheCowanReport.com

Councillor Wesley Harcourt

Cabinet Member for the Environment
The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham,
Hammersmith Town Hall, London W6 9JU



1 August 2019

Greg Hands MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Hands

You have made a number of claims about Hammersmith Bridge via Twitter and in Parliament that are untrue and quite clearly designed to do no more than inflame public discord. You have not taken any reasonable measures to understand what has happened to Hammersmith Bridge so I can only conclude that the misinformation you are disseminating is deliberate.

I'm writing to correct your misrepresentations and encourage you to take a more responsible course of action that puts the needs of local residents and businesses above your other obvious motivations.

- **On May 21:** you claimed on Twitter that the closure of Hammersmith Bridge is linked to the ending of tri-borough services. This is untrue. The management of the bridge was never part of a tri-borough service. At the time you wrote your comment our Highways team was a bi-borough service operating out of Kensington & Chelsea Council.
- You also claimed that since 1998 the bridge had been closed for weekend works only. This is also untrue. I can provide details of several week-long closures, on request, should you wish to be availed of the facts.
- Further, you claimed "the Conservatives did proper maintenance" of the bridge. That is untrue. Highways officials advise that prior to 2014, the bridge was inadequately maintained. It was only after 2014 that the current administration introduced weekly safety checks along with a full structural integrity review to look at the health of our 132-year-old suspension bridge. Sensors were also installed to diagnose the structural stresses on the bridge. And it was only in 2015 that tough restrictions on bus numbers were enforced.
- **On May 13,** on Twitter, you claimed that a row between H&F Council and TfL was causing delays to the works. That is untrue. The Mayor of London, the Deputy Mayor for Transport and TfL are working closely with H&F Council on all aspects of the programme necessary to restore Hammersmith Bridge fully and quickly. So far, TfL have invested over £5million on the structural integrity review alone.
- **On April 14,** on Twitter, you suggested there was a "massive blame game" between H&F Council and TfL. Again, that is untrue.

- **On June 13, in Parliament**, you repeated your claims that H&F Council and TfL are in conflict – describing H&F Council and TfL as “warring authorities”. In so doing you misled Parliament and your constituents.

The Nolan Principles of Public Life require all holders of public office to be truthful. Your statement to Parliament did not meet that standard.

On 18 June, the Borough’s relevant Policy and Accountability Committee held a public meeting to set out what had happened to Hammersmith Bridge and what is being done to quickly restore it. A number of residents attended and were able to question officials and politicians and make suggestions. Council officers and politicians set out the facts. It is a shame you were not there.

As you know from your time as Chief Secretary to the Treasury, you and your colleagues significantly cut funding to the public sector, including to this Council and other local authorities, as part of your austerity programme. That means your constituents in the LB of Hammersmith & Fulham have had their Council’s budget cut by 59% since 2010.

While my colleagues and I have been able to take a series of measures to mitigate these huge cuts, it rings hollow and is untrue for you to allege that insufficient funds have been invested in maintaining our bridge in recent years. For the record, over the last five years H&F Council and TfL have invested significantly more into reviewing and maintaining our bridge than over the whole of the ten years before 2014.

I therefore urge you, as the local Member of Parliament, to work with us as we rise to these challenges. Together with our partners at TfL, we have made representations to the Treasury about the likely need for government investment to ensure we fully restore our Grade II* listed, 19th century suspension bridge, safely and as quickly as possible.

I would welcome a more mature approach from you – one that puts the needs of residents and businesses above your other considerations.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Wesley Harcourt
Cabinet Member for the Environment

Cc

- **Cllr Stephen Cowan**, Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Cllr Sue Fennimore**, Deputy Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Cllr Bora Kwon**, Chair of the Community Safety and Environment PAC for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Heidi Alexander**, London’s Deputy Mayor for Transport and Deputy Chair of Transport for London
- **Ms Kim Smith**, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Ms Sharon Lea**, Strategic Director for the Environment for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Councillor Wesley Harcourt

Cabinet Member for the Environment
The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham,
Hammersmith Town Hall, London W6 9JU



4 July 2019

Cllr Ravi Govindia
Leader of the London Borough of Wandsworth
Wandsworth Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
London
SW18 2PU

Dear Cllr Govindia

On June 21, several inaccurate statements about H&F Council were published by your cabinet member for transport on the Wandsworth Council website. These included the assertion that there has been a lack of transparency on the part of H&F Council with regards to issues around Hammersmith Bridge.

Then on 2 July you published an article and a film on the Wandsworth Council website in which you also make a variety of false and deliberately misleading assertions.

These articles are clearly designed to support the local Conservative Party's political campaigning on this matter rather than support the residents and businesses of Wandsworth.

It is a concern that you have not taken any reasonable measures understand what is happening with Hammersmith Bridge.

I, my colleagues and officers have received no correspondence from you or Wandsworth Council requesting information about Hammersmith Bridge. Nor have you sought to work together with us to support the residents and businesses affected. This is in stark contrast to other neighbouring councils who have been actively involved in supporting and informing residents and working collaboratively.

Indeed, on 19 June 2019, my colleagues and I attended two public meetings in Barnes which were organised by Richmond Council following a request from Cllr Gareth Roberts, Richmond's Leader. TfL officials and H&F council officers gave presentations, answered questions and took up suggestions - as did H&F's Leader. The combined audience numbered hundreds of local residents. I mention this because I understand many of the Richmond officers in attendance at that meeting are also officers of Wandsworth Council. A number of Wandsworth councillors also attended. We have also organised other public meetings.

You may find the videos and the Q&A on LBHF's website insightful - you can view them here:

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/articles/news/2019/05/hammersmith-bridge-being-restored-its-victorian-splendour>

There is no doubt that Hammersmith and Fulham Council has been transparent with regards to the joint plans it has with TfL to fully restore and re-open Hammersmith Bridge, so I am dismayed that you have chosen to try and make party politics out of this issue.

Further, your assertion that you had managed to control the Nitrogen Dioxide pollution levels on Putney High Street is a false reading of the statistics. You have been

Wandsworth's Council Leader for 8 years. During your tenure the air quality on Putney High Street has remained some of the worst in Europe and has frequently breached legal levels but there's been no ambitious or effective strategy to seriously change that.

I would urge you to work with us to discuss ways we might tackle these serious issues together rather than seeing this as an opportunity for party politicking. If you'd like to meet me to discuss ways forward, I'd be happy to welcome you to Hammersmith Town Hall.

Since it is clear that the statements on your website are political campaigning, in clear breach of Section 2 of the Local Government Act, I am including Wandsworth Council's Chief Executive and your monitoring officer with an expectation that those statements and the film will be immediately retracted.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Wesley Harcourt
Cabinet Member for the Environment

Cc

- **Cllr Stephen Cowan**, Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Cllr Sue Fennimore**, Deputy Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Cllr Bora Kwon**, Chair of the Community Safety and Environment PAC for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Heidi Alexander**, London's Deputy Mayor for Transport and Deputy Chair of Transport for London
- **Cllr Fleur Anderson**, the London Borough of Wandsworth
- **Cllr Claire Gilbert**, the London Borough of Wandsworth
- **Cllr Jeremy Ambache**, the London Borough of Wandsworth
- **Ms Kim Smith**, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Ms Jo Rowlands**, Strategic Director for the Economy for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Ms Sharon Lea**, Strategic Director for the Environment for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Paul Martin**, Chief Executive, the London Borough of Wandsworth
- **Mr Jon Evans**, Monitoring Officer, the London Borough of Wandsworth

Councillor Stephen Cowan

Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
Hammersmith Town Hall, London W6 9JU



4 June 2019

Mr Zac Goldsmith MP
Member of Parliament for Richmond Park
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Goldsmith

Thank you for your email sent on 24 May. I have received only one other piece of correspondence from you about Hammersmith Bridge which was sent on 20 November 2017. I have also seen some of your public comments so understand your positions.

You will be pleased to know that our officers and councillors have had a series of meetings with Richmond Council and that I have had a number of phone calls with Cllr Gareth Roberts, the Leader of Richmond Council, along with a very constructive meeting last week during which we discussed how our boroughs support the residents and businesses in Barnes and across the borough of Richmond - which you can read about here:

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/resident_needs_are_hammersmith_bridge_priority

I appreciate the inconvenience caused to people since the bridge was closed to motor traffic. That had to happen once we discovered micro-fractures in the cast iron pedestals that secure the suspension bridge. That problem is a new problem which was only discovered because we have undertaken the most comprehensive review of the bridge's structural integrity since the 1970s.

The works that we had previously been discussing with our colleagues at TfL had to be postponed once we discovered the micro-fractures. I hope this section on our website is useful to your constituents. It sets out what we're doing to ensure the bridge is fully restored and re-opened as quickly as possible:

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/articles/news/2019/05/hammersmith-bridge-being-restored-its-victorian-splendour>

When we arrived in office in 2014, there was no budgeted refurbishment plan for Hammersmith Bridge. Indeed, in 2012 the former administration cut a proposed £900,000 minor refurbishment budget to just £250,000.

As you can see via the link, by 2015 we had a plan to improve the decking, refurbish the bolts, re-paint the bridge and make the bridge fit for modern single-decker buses. TfL agreed to fund those £25 million refurbishment works. That year, we also began a thorough weekly review of the whole structure which is ultimately how we discovered the current problems.

As you know, the 132-year-old bridge was designed for a very different type of 19th-century traffic but until 2015 (when we limited bus numbers) the bridge took 22,000 motor vehicles a day including 1,800 buses. I am confident that the actions we're taking with our partners at TfL will see the bridge fully restored and safe for generations to come.

Cllr Roberts and I are in the process of arranging a public meeting in the next couple of weeks during which we will detail the issues and go through all the actions we have taken together for our residents. We will of course send you the details. It would be useful if you liaise directly with the Leader of Richmond Council on all your constituents' problems and concerns as we work together to do our best to cater for their needs.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Stephen Cowan

Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

CC

- **Heidi Alexander**, Deputy London Mayor for Transport and Deputy Chair of Transport for London
- **Cllr. Wesley Harcourt**, Cabinet Member for the Environment, the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Cllr. Gareth Roberts**, Leader of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
- **Kim Smith**, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- **Sharon Lea**, Strategic Director for the Environment for the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.
- **Ian Hawthorn**, Assistant Director of Environmental Projects and Highways