

**Briefing Note – Response to Parish Council Complaint regarding the Closure of Gayton
Road Bridge – 2nd June 2026**

Dear Ms Palmer

Thank you for your letter regarding the continued closure of Gayton Road Bridge. We fully acknowledge the frustration expressed by the Parish Council and local residents, and we recognise the significant and ongoing impact this situation is having on communities, including increased traffic, safety concerns, and disruption to daily journeys.

We are sorry that the situation has reached this point and accept that communication and visible progress have not always met expectations. We are committed to improving both.

Current Status and Actions Taken

Since structural concerns were first identified in 2018, the Council has taken a number of steps to manage the safety risks associated with the bridge and to work toward a long-term solution. These include:

- Implementation of temporary traffic management measures to maintain safety
- Ongoing structural assessments and liaison with Network Rail (as structure owner)
- Development of a detailed engineering design to repair the highway approaches
- Continued review and refinement of proposals in response to technical feedback

The bridge itself is owned by Network Rail, while the highway approaches fall under the Council's responsibility. Both elements must be aligned to deliver a safe and compliant solution.

We have recently received detailed technical comments from Network Rail on the proposed design. Our engineers are actively reviewing and responding to these to ensure the scheme meets all required standards. This is a critical step to ensure that any solution is safe, deliverable, and durable.

Funding Position

The Council has identified a preferred repair solution. Due to the scale of the works and wider financial pressures, external funding is required to deliver the scheme.

We are actively pursuing funding opportunities and have submitted a bid to the Department for Transport's Structures Fund. In parallel, we continue to review all potential funding sources. While funding has not yet been secured, this remains a key focus area and is being actively progressed.

Impact on the Community

We fully recognise the consequences of the bridge closure, including:

- Increased traffic on unsuitable rural routes such as Birds Hill
- Road safety risks and deterioration of diversion routes
- Extended journey times for local communities

- Impacts on access to schools, services, and local facilities

These impacts are being monitored, and we are working across relevant teams to assess what proportionate interim measures may be possible. We will continue to review this as the situation develops.

Governance and Responsibility

We acknowledge concerns about unclear accountability. To be clear:

- Network Rail is responsible for the bridge structure
- West Northamptonshire Council is responsible for the highway approaches and delivery of the repair scheme

The Council is leading on progressing the overall solution and coordinating with Network Rail to ensure all elements are aligned.

Next Steps and Commitment

Our immediate priorities are to:

1. Progress design agreement with Network Rail
2. Secure funding to enable delivery
3. Continue monitoring and managing the impact on the local network
4. Improve communication with stakeholders

While these steps are actively underway, it is not yet possible to provide a confirmed construction start date. However, we are committed to progressing the scheme as quickly as reasonably possible within the constraints we face.

Conclusion

We fully understand the Parish Council's concerns and do not underestimate the impact this prolonged issue is having on the community. While there are constraints outside of the Council's direct control, we are taking active steps to progress a solution and will continue to do so with urgency and transparency.

Thank you for your continued engagement and patience while we work to resolve this complex issue.

Regards

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