LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 06/07/2026

Subject: Hammersmith Bridge Restoration Programme

Report of: Councillor Nicole Trehy, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Travel

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Responsible Director: Bram Kainth, Executive Director of Place

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SUMMARY

This report updates Cabinet on the current position of the Hammersmith Bridge Restoration Project. Following the successful completion of the Phase One stabilisation programme, the bridge main deck fully reopened to pedestrians and cyclists in April 2025.

The Council has spent £54m on the bridge from its full closure in April 2019 to the end of the financial year 2025/26. This includes the stabilisation works, ongoing safe operation of the bridge, and essential programme works in preparation for full restoration of the bridge.

To put that sum into context, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government figures detail how between 2010 to 2021 all London councils spent a total of just £100m on the maintenance and repair of all London road and river bridges. Even then, most of that money was eventually paid by Transport for London (TfL) or the Government.

The Hammersmith Bridge restoration works are extensive. They essentially require a brand-new bridge to be built as all of the Grade II* listed heritage structure needs to be replaced or strengthened or restored. The cost of a full restoration of Hammersmith Bridge to allow its use for motor vehicles is now estimated to be £300m.

An unprecedented three-way equal split was imposed on the Council by the Department for Transport (DfT) in the TfL financial settlement of 1 June 2021, whereby each party should contribute one-third towards the bridge's repair.

The Council's position – in line with this one-thirds principle – is that it is still owed money due from TfL, primarily, and DfT towards the £54m that has been spent on the restoration project.

Furthermore, the significant impact of the most recent medium-term financial settlement from Government on the Council's General Fund from 2026/27 means that there are no options within Council funds for repair of the bridge.

The 139-year-old bridge, however, remains officially designated as a substandard structure that requires further major repairs in order to remain safely open for pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic below. Without significant investment, the bridge is likely to have to fully close again on safety grounds in the short to medium term.

In the meantime, the Council faces annual costs of approximately£1.5m from 2026/27 to meet its ongoing statutory and safety obligations for monitoring, inspection and routine maintenance of the bridge as a substandard structure.

In these difficult circumstances, the DfT has stated that the bridge would be a “good candidate for investment” from the Government’s new £1bn Structures Fund for repair of major structures including roads, bridges, flyovers and tunnels. The Structures Fund criteria states that the latest date for programmes to reach completion is 31 March 2030, which precludes full restoration.

Following discussions with the DfT, it is recommended that the Council submits a bid for a phased repair focused on the most critical life-expired elements of the structure, with the immediate aim of keeping the bridge open and safeguarding access for pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic. The DfT has confirmed its preference for this phased repair bid to the Structures Fund. There is no financial option available that would allow its full restoration.

The report asks the Cabinet to confirm the strategic direction to be taken in restoring the bridge and sets out the policy to build on Hammersmith Bridge’s active travel record and base future decisions about motor traffic returning to the bridge on objective travel and traffic flow information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the Governments Spending Review settlement secured a £1bn Structures Fund to repair run down roads, bridges and other infrastructure across the country. This is the only funding option available at this time to repair Hammersmith Bridge and if a bid were successful, it would provide a phased repair approach focused on the most critical life-expired elements of the structure, with the immediate aim of keeping the bridge open and safeguarding access for pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic.

2. To endorse phased repair as the Council’s current strategic approach for Hammersmith Bridge, with the immediate objective of safeguarding continued access for pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic while minimising the Council’s future liabilities.

3. Cabinet approval is required before any actions are taken to pursue funding to achieve strengthening that would permit motor vehicles to use the bridge. Any consideration about strengthening must be taken based on an objective assessment of transport need including traffic flow information and build on the bridge’s active travel success.

4. To authorise the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Travel, to approve the Bid for phased repair through the Structures Fund.

5. To delegate to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member to determine what, if any, local funding should form part of the bid.

6. To delegate to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member the completion of a procurement strategy to enable delivery of any successful bid to the Structures Fund.

7. To approve an annual revenue budget of £1.5m from 2026/27 to meet the Council's ongoing statutory and safety obligations for monitoring, inspection and maintenance of Hammersmith Bridge as a substandard structure, unless and until external funding is secured that removes or materially reduces this requirement.

8. To note the continuing discussions with the DfT and TfL regarding recovery of contributions previously expected from those parties in respect of stabilisation and related bridge costs already incurred or committed by the Council, and to require a further report to Cabinet on the outcome of those discussions.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	**Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Corporate Plan and the H&F Values**
Building shared prosperity	The bridge remaining open to pedestrians/cyclists will continue to promote the confidence of residents and businesses that are based in H&F and neighbouring boroughs, as well as supporting future economic growth.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Every effort will be made to recover the share of costs committed by DfT/TfL and to minimise future commitments. Any phased repair works will be subject to competitive tender.
Taking pride in H&F	The bridge is an iconic symbol of London and a national landmark as indicated by its Grade II* listed status. Its continued use by pedestrians/cyclists will be a source of great pride locally.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Any future procurement of repair works will consider how to minimise their impact on carbon emissions and their broader impact on the environment.

Financial Impact

LBHF, as a single authority, has never had the financial capacity to fund the upkeep or refurbishment of Hammersmith Bridge on its own. Following the most recent medium-term financial settlement from Government, this position has become even more acute. The Council's medium-term financial position cannot absorb costs of the scale set out in this report.

Against this background, LBHF cannot fund further bridge works. Moreover, it is even more pressing that Transport for London (TfL) and central Government honour the previously discussed equal one-thirds funding arrangement and reimburse their share of works to date.

The Council has incurred significant expenditure, at risk, of £54m to the end of 2025/26. This comprises £37m to ensure the continued safe operation of the bridge and progress stabilisation works, and £17m for pre-restoration works in preparation for full restoration of the bridge. These works include the production of the Outline Business Case for full restoration; removal and diversion of the two gas mains from the bridge; the planning application for the innovative truss option; geotechnical works; and further development of the contract and procurement process for full restoration. The pre-restoration works will help ensure that any future bridge repair project can be delivered more efficiently and effectively, while reducing technical and financial risk.

A further £4m, funded by the DfT, is expected to be spent to complete the permanent repair of the central hangers, bringing the total forecast expenditure to £58m.

Under the terms of the funding settlement made by the DfT with TfL on 1 June 2021, it has always been the Council's understanding that all costs incurred would be shared equally between the Council, the DfT and TfL, with the Council's share ultimately to be recovered through a road user or toll charge once the bridge reopened to vehicles. However, this report notes that funding availability means a phased repair approach is now being pursued that priorities the most immediate life-expired elements. As this approach would restrict the bridge to pedestrians and cyclists in the foreseeable future, the Council would be unable to recover its share of costs through a road user charge. The Council has always made clear that it could fund its one-third share only on that basis.

The June 2021 funding settlement stated that TfL and the DfT would fund two-thirds of the total project costs, to be formalised through a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Despite the Council's work to draft the MoU, it was never signed. The contribution payments would have been formally triggered once the Outline Business Case for the full strengthening works had been approved and the Full Business Case agreed. However, because the previous Government failed to make a decision and the current Government has since changed direction, the position is now uncertain.

To date, the Council has received contributions of £15.96m from the DfT and TfL, excluding sums spent by TfL before the stabilisation works commenced. Based on the current forecast, the Council is therefore due a further £22.9m from the DfT and TfL, as set out in the table below. The Council is requesting that these previously

agreed contributions be paid in full. Officers remain in discussion with the DfT and TfL about how their share of costs is to be recovered by the Council.

	Current Actual Funding Contribution	Target 1/3s Funding Contribution	Funding Due from DFT/TFL
	£m	£m	£m
DfT	13.03	19.45	6.42
TfL	2.93	19.45	16.51
H&F	42.38	19.45	(22.93)
Total Forecast Spend	**58.34**	**58.34**	**0**
Pedestal Casing Estimated Future Liability	**10.00**	**3.33**	6.66

In the current Spending Review period, the DfT has committed £1bn through its Structures Fund to support investment in highway structures that local highway authorities and third parties cannot afford to maintain or restore to full functionality. It is proposed that a Structures Fund bid be submitted for Hammersmith Bridge, and officers are working with consultants and specialist contractors to develop a programme of works with a high-level budget estimate of £128m, including the pedestal casings and optimism bias. However, the final bid figure will not be determined until a full assessment has been completed in line with the Structures Fund requirements. Structures Fund grant applications are open to all local highway authorities in England, so competition for funding is likely to be significant. The criteria states that the latest date for programmes to reach completion is 31 March 2030, which rules out a full restoration of the bridge for use by motor vehicles, as the required works are plainly not achievable in that timespan. Hence the decision to proceed with a phased repair bid. There are also a number of risks associated with any bid: applications are expected to include funding commitments, with higher local contributions assessed more positively; the risk of any overspend sits with the local highway authority; and any grant awarded must be spent by 31 March 2030.

If the Council's bid to the DfT Structures Fund is successful in full, and the Council accepts the award, it is anticipated that—depending on the amount of work assessed as achievable before the programme deadline—this could fully fund the works necessary to keep the bridge open to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic for the foreseeable future and remove the immediate financial burden from the Council.

The tables below set out the indicative financial impact on the Council depending on whether the phased repair works proceed. Only the costs of the existing bridge works are included in the Council's current budget plans. Any match-funding requirement associated with a Structures Fund bid would therefore require additional funding to be identified. The table below assumes a 10% contribution (£12.8m) based on a total bid of £128m. However, this amount will change depending on the

final bid submission and, most importantly, the DfT's funding decision, which could be at a much lower level than the amount requested. In that event, the Council's percentage contribution would reduce accordingly. Based on a £12.8m contribution, the additional funding requirement would be as follows:

Cost Implications if the Phased Repair Works Go Ahead

	Worst Case £m	Best Case £m	Assumptions
Spend forecast	58.34	58.34	
Funding Recovered from DfT/TfL	(15.96)	(38.89)	2/3 of total costs recovered
Phased repair approach (subject to successful Structures Fund bid)	12.80	0	Assumes 10% match funding of £128m
Total H&F Funding Required	**55.70**	**19.45**	
H&F Budgeted Spend*	42.61	42.61	
Funding Gap	**13.09**	**(23.17)**	

**The Council has accounted for £42.61m of H&F funding in its capital and revenue budgets to 2026/27 (mostly funded from borrowing). Any surplus external funding would enable the partial repayment of debt incurred to date.*

Cost Implications if the Phased Repair Works Do Not Go Ahead

If the phased repair is not fully funded through a successful Structures Fund bid, or if the Council decides not to proceed with these works, it will be required to meet maintenance and inspection costs estimated at £1.5m per year to keep the bridge open to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic and to ensure public safety. There is currently no approved funding for these ongoing revenue costs, and hence this will need to be added as a growth requirement to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy process. This annual maintenance requirement is also likely to need significant capital expenditure at various points in the future as elements of the bridge begin to fail and present safety risks.

Additionally, preparing the information required for a Structures Fund bid will require specialist bridge and project management consultants at an estimated cost of £200,000, depending on the level of input needed. These specialists will develop the repair proposals, programme and cost estimates, and prepare the supporting business case. It is expected that these additional one-off costs will be met from the existing capital programme and/or corporate contingencies, as appropriate.

Kellie Gooch, Head of Finance (Place), 4 June 2026

Verified by James Newman, Director of Finance (Deputy S.151 Officer), 23 June 2026

Legal Implications

Under the Highways Act 1980 the Council is responsible for the maintenance of Hammersmith Bridge which forms part of the public highway. The allocation of an annual revenue budget will ensure that the Council is able to meet its legal obligations under the Act.

Further legal advice will be provided as any future proposals for the Bridge are developed.

Glen Egan Assistant Director of Legal Services 4 June 2026

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None.

BACKGROUND

1. Hammersmith Bridge opened in 1887 on the foundations of the original bridge built in 1827. It is one of the world's oldest suspension bridges and London's earliest surviving suspension bridge over the River Thames. The bridge is Grade II* listed.

2. The bridge has a unique design and is constructed from pre-modern materials, mainly wrought iron, with the suspension structure supported by cast iron pedestals. Because cast iron can fail suddenly, the bridge is the weakest of London's bridges designated for vehicular traffic. Its unusual construction also makes maintenance significantly more expensive than for other Thames crossings.

3. In 1985, when the Greater London Council (GLC) was abolished, responsibility for each bridge was transferred to the London borough that shared its name. No professional assessment was made of the condition of the bridges or of their differing maintenance costs, and no funding arrangements were put in place.

4. When the bridge opened, it was designed for a maximum vehicle weight of 15 tonnes. As traffic volumes increased, the weight limit was reduced. In 1999, following limited refurbishment works, the limit was lowered to 7.5 tonnes, with an exception for single-decker buses and emergency vehicles.

5. In 2015, further weight restrictions were introduced to exclude heavy vehicles and limit the number of Transport for London (TfL) buses permitted to cross at any one time.

6. In 2015, LBHF carried out the first Comprehensive Structural Integrity Review in the bridge's history. This was a more detailed inspection than the routine principal and general inspections used to assess bridge conditions. Subsequent monitoring identified hairline micro-fractures in each of the four cast iron

pedestals supporting the suspension structure, indicating a risk of catastrophic collapse. The bridge was therefore closed to motor vehicles in April 2019.

7. On 13 August 2020, following a five-day heatwave, the micro-fractures in the pedestals widened rapidly, creating a risk of imminent collapse. The bridge was immediately evacuated and closed to pedestrians while detailed analysis was undertaken.

Government Taskforce

8. In September 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) established the Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce, chaired by Baroness Vere and involving the main stakeholder groups. Its purpose was to bring together the technical, operational and financial information needed to determine how the bridge could be safely reopened and what temporary measures would be required in the meantime.

9. At first, there appeared to be an expectation within Government that the bridge could reopen quickly following further engineering assessment and monitoring. However, LBHF's assessment of the scale and complexity of the engineering issues was soon accepted by DfT engineers. In October 2020, Baroness Vere confirmed that LBHF, as bridge owner, should take responsibility for developing the repair plans.

10. The final DfT Taskforce meeting under the previous Government was held on 25 November 2021.

The Hammersmith Bridge Restoration Project

11. LBHF, as the owner of Hammersmith Bridge, is responsible for determining the preferred engineering solution.

12. In November 2020, a Temperature Control System was implemented on the bridge to reduce the risk of catastrophic failure, and approval was given to proceed with Advanced Stabilisation Works, including the removal of the pedestal casings, funded by TfL. LBHF also unveiled a new plan for a temporary double-decker crossing (the truss) within the existing structure of Hammersmith Bridge, developed by Foster & Partners and COWI ("Foster-COWI"), which would allow traffic and pedestrians to use the crossing while the bridge was repaired off site.

13. On 17 July 2021, Hammersmith Bridge reopened to pedestrians and cyclists on a temporary basis, subject to certain conditions, following further detailed assessment by the Board for the Continued Case for Safe Operation (CCSO).

14. The work needed to reopen Hammersmith Bridge and permanently restore full access was developed as two packages.

    - **Work Package 1 – Stabilisation Works:** the design and works required to stabilise the pedestals, reduce the risk of catastrophic collapse, and enable the bridge to remain in medium-term use by pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic.

- **Work Package 2 – Strengthening Works:** the design and works required to strengthen the bridge and restore full access, allowing it to reopen to vehicular traffic on a long-term basis.

Funding and Approvals

15. In June 2021, LBHF was informed by Baroness Vere of a funding arrangement agreed between the Government and the Mayor of London/TfL. Under this arrangement, LBHF, the Government and TfL would each contribute one third of the bridge costs, and LBHF was asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding. This represented a much larger contribution than boroughs are usually expected to make, so it was recognised that LBHF would need to fund its share through a toll or road user charge.

16. In the TfL extraordinary funding and finance package agreed on 1 June 2021, the Government committed to contribute funding for the project, noting that: *"HMG, TfL and H&F will pay a share of the cost to fund the reopening of the bridge—initially to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic and, depending on cost, to motorists. Repair costs are to be led by H&F and TfL. HMG will not directly contribute more than one-third of the costs."*

17. This commitment was repeated in the TfL Long Term Funding Settlement dated 30 August 2022, in which the Secretary of State for Transport also stated: *"We expect to finalise a Memorandum of Understanding between HMG, TfL and the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to ensure all parties 'commitment to the permanent reopening of Hammersmith Bridge—initially to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic and, depending on costs, to motorists."*

18. The Secretary of State for Transport's letter to TfL, dated 30 August 2022, states:

"Any funding from HMG will be conditional on the following:

a. all parties must scrutinise and agree the cost of the project through the submission and scrutiny of Green Book-compliant business cases for each stage of the project;

b. each party agrees to pay a share of the cost as agreed in the Full Business Case. Repair costs are to be led by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and TfL; HMG will not directly contribute more than one-third of the costs; and

c. the independent board responsible for the case for continued safe operation, reporting to London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, will conduct regular assessments for controlled and limited opening of Hammersmith Bridge to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic. London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham should share the assessment with HMG and TfL."

19. The funding commitments made by the DfT and TfL were subject to a number of conditions. These included submission by LBHF of an Outline Business Case for its preferred option, independent validation of the proposed engineering solution, and scrutiny of the project costs.

20. Completing the stabilisation and strengthening works was estimated to cost £250m at that time.

21. To put that sum into context, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government figures detail how between 2010 to 2021 all London councils spent a total of just £100m on the maintenance and repair of all London road and river bridges. Even then, most of that money was eventually paid by Transport for London (TfL) or the Government.

22. The contract for the stabilisation project was awarded by Cabinet on 6 December 2021. Further essential works leading to the full strengthening of the bridge were approved by Cabinet in March 2022. In October 2022, Cabinet approved the procurement process for the full strengthening of the bridge. All of these costs, together with those historically incurred in ensuring the continued safe operation of the bridge and developing the future strengthening works, were expected to be funded equally by the DfT, TfL and LBHF, with LBHF's share ultimately to be recovered from bridge users through charges, as described below.

Full Strengthening Works

23. The Stage 2 Outline Business Case for the full strengthening works was first sent to the DfT for review in December 2022 and was formally submitted on 31 March 2023.

24. On 7 March 2023, Cabinet authorised expenditure of £3.5m for project development, traffic modelling and design work to progress the Foster + Partners/COWI full strengthening scheme, including the temporary truss solution.

25. The Outline Business Case (OBC) was presented to the DfT's Investment Portfolio Delivery Committee (IPDC) on 19 June 2023. Following requests for further information, it was revised and resubmitted for consideration at the IPDC meeting on 20 November 2023. Three days before that meeting, LBHF was informed that the OBC had been removed from the agenda because of "more time-critical decisions". It was then rescheduled for the meeting on 8 January 2024 but was again withdrawn because DfT officials had not met the "conditions" requested by the IPDC. Despite officers pressing for the OBC to be considered, there was no further engagement on it with the previous Government.

Road User Charge

26. Because most motorists using the bridge come from outside the borough, it would be inequitable and unaffordable for LBHF residents alone to bear the Council's share of the cost. A road user charge or toll was therefore proposed so that bridge users would contribute to LBHF's share of the restoration works, together with future management and maintenance costs.

27. On 6 November 2023, Cabinet agreed to:

    - approve the legal instruments required for a toll order or Road User Charging Scheme (RUCS), so that funds raised through a RUCS or toll

order could be used to amortise capital expenditure, meet maintenance costs, and build an endowment for future repairs;

- undertake a process of non-statutory consultation, at the appropriate time, on a toll order or RUCS to inform decisions and gather public feedback; and

- approve tolls to be chargeable by a concessionaire if a toll order were made.

Bridge Restoration Progress

28. In early 2024, the hanger bearings were found to be seized. This prevented the bridge deck from moving as designed in response to temperature changes and loading, placing excessive strain on the central hangers and making them particularly vulnerable during cold weather. Emergency measures were therefore implemented in October 2024 to install a hanger bypass system and reduce the risk of failure and collapse of the bridge deck.

29. Stabilisation works to the pedestals were completed in February 2025, and the bridge reopened to pedestrians and cyclists on 17 April 2025 following DfT-funded resurfacing works to the bridge deck.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND RISKS

Reconvening of the Taskforce

30. On 30 January 2025, the Minister for Local Transport, Simon Lightwood MP, reconvened the Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce so that key stakeholders could review progress on the restoration project and consider next steps as the stabilisation works neared completion. The discussion took a ‘back to basics’ approach, with no viable option ruled out.

31. The Taskforce did not reach a conclusion on the way forward, but the Minister has since confirmed that he intends to convene a further meeting of the Taskforce to discuss next steps once funding arrangements for the Structures Fund (discussed below) have been confirmed.

32. There is no indication the Outline Business Case will be considered as a route to full restoration at this time.

Strategic Options

33. Following completion of the stabilisation works, the bridge remains a substandard structure. Several key components are beyond their design life and require major refurbishment or replacement. Until this work is carried out, LBHF will continue to incur significant annual costs to monitor the bridge and ensure it remains safe for users and river traffic below.

34. There is likely to be only a limited period before inspections identify the need for further major and costly works, or before the bridge may need to close fully, including to river traffic below. Restoring the bridge without strengthening it for

motor traffic has previously been assessed as costing almost as much as restoring it for motor vehicles, at around £250m. This would be unaffordable for the Council unless a road user charge were available or grant funding were secured from the DfT and/or TfL.

35. The only funding available from the Government is via a Structures Fund which could provide a phased repair approach focused on the most critical life-expired elements of the structure, with the immediate aim of keeping the bridge open and safeguarding access for pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic.

36. A review of the traffic impact on adjacent bridges since the closure of Hammersmith Bridge was chaired by the DfT as an outcome of the Taskforce discussions and involved LBHF, TfL, and Wandsworth and Richmond councils. The review was unable to draw firm conclusions because of both the absence of detailed seasonal traffic data and wider changes to the road network and user behaviour, not just the removal of motor traffic from Hammersmith Bridge, that may have affected traffic flows on adjacent bridges.

37. However, LBHF's analysis of the limited motor vehicle count data set provided by TfL, comparing 2024 with 2018 and based on manual classified counts undertaken in June/July, shows:

    - Kew Bridge – a slight reduction in motor vehicle volumes, from 38,000 to 37,700 per day.

    - Chiswick Bridge – a significant reduction of approximately 8,000 vehicles per day, from 40,200 to 32,300.

    - Wandsworth Bridge – a very significant reduction, from 45,500 to 34,000 vehicles per day.

    - Putney Bridge – a slight reduction, from 38,000 to 37,200 vehicles per day.

38. The limited evidence suggests that motor vehicle volumes on adjacent bridges have reduced overall since the closure of Hammersmith Bridge, which is consistent with published DfT data. All crossings also show a significant increase in cycle use.

Current Bridge Condition

39. Following the repair and strengthening works to stabilise the pedestals, the bridge carriageway reopened to pedestrians and cyclists in April 2025, at which point the Case for Continued Safe Operation ceased to apply. However, until the remaining substandard components are addressed through further strengthening and restoration works, the bridge will remain substandard and must therefore continue to be managed under bridge assessment code CS470, which applies to substandard highway structures.

40. The Council's technical advisers have produced a CS470 assessment reflecting the bridge's current condition. This sets out the mitigation and monitoring required until further major strengthening and refurbishment works are undertaken. It requires regular structural monitoring and assessment, management of the monitoring systems, and regular inspection of vulnerable

bridge components. From time to time, this process is likely to identify additional urgent works needed to keep the bridge open. Annual monitoring and assessment costs are estimated at around £1m, excluding any repair costs.

41. The CS470 assessment requires the number of people on the bridge to be limited at any one time, and this limit may reduce if no further restoration takes place. Technology has been installed to monitor pedestrians and cyclists and trigger alerts if the limit is approached, so that the bridge can be closed if necessary. For this reason, the bridge will continue to close during events such as the Boat Race, when crowd loading may exceed the permitted level.

42. Therefore, even if the bridge remains closed to motor vehicles, substantial additional strengthening and restoration work will still be required in the medium term to keep it open to pedestrians and cyclists and to keep this section of the River Thames safe for river traffic. This includes works necessary to ensure safety and preserve the historic features of this important Grade II* listed asset such as the pedestal casings.

Pedestal Casing Liability

43. The ornate casings around the four pedestals were removed, at a cost of approximately £10m funded by TfL, to enable the stabilisation works to the pedestals. Their removal was discussed with Historic England, and temporary planning consent was granted on the clear expectation that they would be returned to the bridge, as they are an important historic feature.

44. When the cast iron pedestal casings were removed, LBHF expected that they would be reinstated as part of the full restoration works, funded through a road toll. They were not returned once the stabilisation works were complete because the future restoration approach remained uncertain. This therefore remains a future liability arising from the stabilisation works. Until the casings are reinstated, their storage costs LBHF around £120,000 a year. Temporary structures have been installed around the pedestals to protect them in the meantime.

45. The planning consent for removal of the casings has now lapsed, and a decision is awaited from both planning authorities (Richmond and LBHF) on an application to extend consent for a further five years. However, if there is no reasonable prospect of the bridge being repaired by the time this amended consent expires, it is possible that continued consent for removal of the casings could be refused. For this reason, it is proposed that an application be made to the Structures Fund to support restoration of the pedestals.

Phased Bridge Repair – Structures Fund

46. On 25 March 2025, the DfT confirmed funding of £4.7m to LBHF to repair the seized central hanger bearings. This included £1.5m to reimburse the cost of the hanger bypass system that had already been funded and installed by LBHF.

47. In June 2025 the Government announced a £1bn Structures Fund as part of its 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy. This fund is intended to support repairs to roads,

bridges, tunnels, flyovers and other ageing transport infrastructure across the UK. The DfT has indicated that Hammersmith Bridge could be a strong candidate and that LBHF should apply for phased repair funding through this route.

48. The phased repair approach for the bridge would prioritise restoration of those elements that are life-expired and present the greatest risk to the integrity of the structure.

49. Details of the Structures Fund application process were formally announced in April 2026. Highway authorities were invited to submit pre-applications by 25 May, with full submissions due by 3 August. LBHF has submitted a pre-application for works estimated at £128m. This covers repairs to the elements most at risk of forcing closure of the bridge if left unaddressed and includes the reinstatement of the architecturally important pedestal casings.

50. The terms of the Structures Fund include the following stipulations, which must be considered:

    - Fund awards are expected to be announced in autumn 2026, and all works must be completed by March 2030. This leaves a little over three years to deliver the approved works, so the time needed for design, obtaining planning consent and procurement will significantly affect how much can be completed within the programme period.

    - The highway authority must fund any cost overruns on the approved scheme. This represents a significant risk because experience from the stabilisation works has demonstrated the complexity of repairing this Grade II* listed structure, which can give rise to significant unexpected costs.

    - There is no minimum or maximum amount of funding that can be requested. However, most highway authorities in the UK are expected to apply and, if funding is distributed widely, the average award is likely to be well below the level indicated by LBHF in its pre-application.

    - A local contribution must be included in the submission, and proposals with a higher contribution will be assessed more positively.

51. Cabinet is asked to approve submission of a bid to the Structures Fund, which will require an estimated £200,000 of unbudgeted expenditure to prepare the information needed due to the required input from specialist bridge and project management consultants.

Continuing Financial Pressures in Managing a Substandard Structure

52. The Council has a legal duty to inspect its assets regularly to protect public safety. The inspection regime required for a substandard bridge structure is significantly more extensive than that for a structure in good condition.

53. To comply with the inspection regime required under CS470, the Council will incur annual costs of around £1m. Inspections are also likely to identify urgent maintenance works needed to keep both the bridge and the river below open

safely. These inspection requirements will continue even if the bridge is closed to pedestrians and cyclists. However, a significant proportion of these costs would be reduced if the most critical elements of the bridge were repaired, at an estimated cost of £128m.

54. In addition, H&F will continue to incur unavoidable operational costs of approximately £500,000, including £120,000 a year for the storage of the cast iron pedestal casings.

55. All these costs are currently unbudgeted.

Reasons for Decision

56. Considering the Government's funding option requiring a phased repair approach, that:

- A bid is submitted to the Structures Fund with the aim of progressing a phased repair approach focused on the most critical elements of the structure, with the immediate aim of keeping the bridge open and safeguarding access for pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic.

- The Council will continue to seek its share of costs incurred in pursuing full restoration and the submission of the OBC.

- A road user charge or toll cannot be implemented under the phased repair approach. This removes the option of the Council recovering its one-third share of committed and future costs through a user charge unless motor traffic were restored to the bridge at some point in the future.

- The Council will need to fund regular safety inspections of this substandard structure, and further funding is also likely to be required in the short to medium term if the bridge is to remain open to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic below.

Risk Management Implications

57. The risk review has identified a significant number of programme-wide and potential strategic risks. The following points summarise the overarching themes and are in addition to those described above.

58. There is a high financial risk that the costs of maintaining and repairing the bridge will continue to rise because of further unforeseen issues, with consequential pressure on budgets for other services. This risk should be accepted, but it is recommended that it be closely monitored, that a ceiling be placed on costs, and that a secondary cost strategy and budget be developed in advance of costs exceeding available budgets.

59. There is a high financial risk that funding from the DfT or TfL could cease because of financial pressures, including rising bridge maintenance and repair costs, or because of a political decision. In that event, LBHF would be required to bear the costs alone. This risk should be accepted, but it is recommended that it

be closely monitored, that a ceiling be placed on costs, and that a secondary cost strategy and budget be developed in advance of costs exceeding available budgets. This should include an exit strategy.

60. There is a high reputational risk that the management of the bridge could result in adverse press coverage or public criticism. It is recognised that much of the dissatisfaction with the management and repair of the bridge comes from outside the borough or is directed at TfL and the DfT. Nevertheless, any negative national coverage could still be damaging to LBHF. It is therefore recommended that a communications and update plan be developed in advance so that it can be implemented quickly if required.

61. There is a significant operational risk that the programme for maintaining the bridge could become overly complex or unclear in its intended outcomes and therefore fail to provide clear direction or effective oversight. This risk must be reduced. A new organisational structure is now in place to manage bridge maintenance. That structure should be open to scrutiny and supported by a regularly updated programme risk register, programme and project support documents, a change management process, a communications plan with regular reporting, and defined and tracked benefits and disbenefits. Together, these measures will help guard against external criticism of management failures.

Jules Binney, Risk and Assurance Manager, 4th June 2026

Procurement implications

62. This report provides an update on the current position and seeks agreement to the proposed approach and associated budget. Separate procurement strategies will be required for any further works to the bridge. These must be progressed through the usual internal gateway checks to ensure compliance with the Procurement Act.

63. These items should be added to the Council's procurement forward plan and included in the pipeline notice for new procurements. Officers will need to work with the Procurement and Commercial Team to progress the procurement process and record the associated details on the e-tendering system for both procurement activity and transparency reporting.

04/06/2026 by Jo McCormick, Director Procurement, Commercial, Digital

List of Appendices

None.