

[REDACTED]
Riverbridge Cottage
46 forge mews
Bassaleg
Newport
Np44 2DE
May 3rd 2026

The Planning Department &
cc/Head of infrastructure
Newport City Council
Civic Centre
Newport
NP204UR

**RE: Support for Outline Planning application – Alternative Bridge Scheme
At Forge mews bassaleg . Outline planning application 26/0261**

Dear Sir/ Madam

I write , regarding the above and to confirm the following.

As you are aware I, like other residents of Forge mews have , since your closure of this bridge we have been without access to our house. As a result we have been severely affected , suffered stress, anxiety and the significant loss of house value and inability to sell and been in limbo.

Being denied access for this amount of time is unlawful. It is common knowledge, documented and fact (also covered by the local press that this bridge was never structurally inspected / checked to the required Welsh Government guidelines/timescales, presumably due to insufficient personel within your Structures department. This lack of inspection over such a long time culminated in the sudden failure of the bridge from a severe weather event. It was *not* as you stated publically *the* cause of the failure so at best you were misleading the public in stating this.

Despite what is clearly negligence over the failure of the bridge inspections there has never at any time been, any admission of error, apology to me or the residents of Forge Mews or more importantly willingness of Newport council (specifically, from your head of Infrastructure Mr Stephen Jarett) to meet us at any time despite our requests which is totally unprofessional remiss of you as public servants and frankly appalling. All you have done in your limited communications is thank us for our continued understanding in the matter which is , in light of the matter is just condescending.

When the bridge was closed your officers / Councillors had several initial options on the table to be considered (detailed fully in the Council minutes).

These included but were not limited to, a "Bailey/pontoon" bridge which would have given us immediate access, and compulsory purchase.

At that time, and seeing as it directly impacted us , it would have been reasonable of you to have offered to meet me/the residents regarding to discuss these options and allow us the opportunity to convey our concerns and preferences.

This however was not done and you / Councillors simply discounted /disregarded options yourself (some of which were preferred by residents) without any rational documented explanation or reasoning why.

You chosen options wear also substantially more costly to the taxpayer.

After years of delay and providing no solution internally for a solution you then engaged consultants to provide a scheme / solution.

Your consultants confirmed that the existing bridge was NOT repairable and was structurally unsafe. They proposed a two lane replacement bridge , next to the original one costing at an eye watering £11 million. (Application no 25/0792). Despite having no funding for the bridge. Residents had requested a simple single lane lower cost option be looked at . Myself and residents again repeatedly sought meetings with you to discuss this which again were refused.

We also understand that just your costs and fees to date are in excess of £900k which alone is far higher than the original costs for a replacement bridge originally suggested but discounted by you 5 years ago.

By accepting this expensive option you have (either knowingly or not) significantly reduced any possibility of getting Welsh government funding as this , your only option costs approximately 10% of the whole allocated funds (£100 million) available for all the required projects for Wales, as such, it was never going to be granted funding by Welsh Government.

It also now raises serious questions of your consultants why they confirmed the bridge was *not* repairable when this has been proven to be incorrect? And if the existing bridge was declared unsafe, why have you allowed pedestrians and school children to use it for several years ? and then spent taxpayers money installing superfluous things like fencing and planters on it to make it look pretty..

Finally you agreed to a first meeting with us in January this year, (5 years after the closure). Andrew Brookes - service manager highways and Rhian Howells -NCC cabinet member Infrastructure met with us at the residents meeting.

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Finally you agreed to a first meeting with us in January this year, (5 years after the closure). Andrew Brookes - service manager highways and Rhian Howells -NCC cabinet member Infrastructure met with us at the residents meeting.

It appears Stephen Jarett , who as head of Infrastructure should have attended form the council was either not available or chose not to attend.

This meeting only took place because of the hard work and persistent requests from our local community councillors having waited so long.

In this meeting you disclosed your replacement bridge scheme (application 25/0792) Naturally , without being consulted I learned that this scheme ran directly towards the side of my house and directly over my allocated parking spaces which your consultants refuted even existed

We also raised and sought answers regarding the Traffic Management organised last year along the Risca -by pass. This finally allowed us day to day access but was then withdrawn suddenly without warning or explanation to us .

That you had not provided a permanent right hand access visibility splay on the by-pass which would have also given us safe access into and out onto the dual carriageway (possibly cheaper than your TM costs) You simply stated it was not possible or safe but provided no explanation, particularly when “Walters” (between J28 and bassaleg school) enters and exits directly onto Forge Lane which is a faster 60 mph designation road .

Following this meeting (also minuted) a further one was promised in the hope to continue the dialogue and agree a way forward specifically regarding your application. You cancelled this however and we have been left none the wiser as to what us happening.

Residents and I were advised in March to wait and see if funding from Welsh Government would be given for your scheme , however we were less than optimistic.

Following the refusal (anticipated) of any funding we were then simply asked to wait another year to see if any would be granted in 2027 ! (this would be our 6th year with no access to our homes) and in your most recent letter of 20th March from your head of infrastructure you simply state “ We will take some time to review our position” .

5 years of waiting is more than enough time to have resolved this by now and it is clear that there has been a calamity of errors by the council in this matter with none seemingly taking charge , giving any direction or willing to accept any liability for the way this matter has been handled.

To concluded, it is perfectly evident that after 5 years on you have no practical or workable solution you can offer to end this matter and allow us access.

Your only scheme - (a two lane replacement bridge) was not needed and is so expensive that it will never get funding. Any solution has to be kept as simple and low cost to obtain funding.

You also discounted the other original more suitable options at the outset without explanation or consultation with residents, which were nowhere near the costs being discussed now and if chosen would have resolved this and allowed us access years ago.

I would welcome an explanation from the council to understand where you think this leaves myself and the residents. It is reasonable, based on the history of this matter that the Council do not care and simply expect us to wait year after year.

This isn't fair, reasonable, or acceptable as I am now 68 yrs old in severely poor health and am unable to sell my property and move on.

Following the recent confirmation of no funding or solution I had had enough so sought legal advice. Following positive feedback from a solicitor and barrister I started legal action, namely for the 5 years on inconvenience suffered having no vehicular access, impacting on my deliveries and visitors etc. The significant reduction in my house value, the increased mortgage premiums paid due to reduced products and the inability to sell due to the road access.

The associated stress, anxiety and significant decrease in wellbeing suffered by me since 2021 in connection with day to day amenities – late and lack of refuse collection, where refuse bins were (without consultation with me) were all placed outside the top end of my property then not emptied regularly (causing a rat infestation), the lack of regular highway cleaning (resulting in blocked drains directly outside my house).

The final straw for me however was in the last 6 months which, despite any prior contact or communication threatened me with Enforcement action accusing me of causing the rat infestation in Forge Mews. You ordered me to clear my garden of all vegetation/ planting which would have seriously affected my rear garden privacy from the street. You then also accused me of a breach of environmental policy for burning wood , twigs etc in a safe combustion bin!!

On both occasions I was fortunate my local councillor resolved these quickly

I wish to express my full support for the application submitted by John Blackwell for a single lane replacement modular bridge at Forge mews which offers a safe, realistic, affordable/lower cost and alternative deliverable solution together with the following clear benefits :-

- It maintains pedestrian access throughout construction.

- It can be delivered more quickly and with less disruption.

- It represents a sustainable and more proportionate solution.

It avoids river works and ecological disruption.

It will restore much needed vehicular access for me at a fraction of your £11 million costing and will stand a significantly higher chance of getting funding.

It is a detailed design in line with national standards and full consideration to local needs.

It uses the existing abutments and structural supports reducing environmental impact.

I respectfully request the Council assess this proposal alongside the existing application to ensure that this more cost effective and environmentally responsible option is taken forward.

I would welcome early engagement with Newport Council Officers , the applicant and residents to ensure the detailed design can move forward quickly and welcome the Planning committee to undertake a site visit to see first hand the longstanding access, safety and living issues I have suffered which this application will quickly resolve.

If outline permission is granted I would strongly welcome the next stage of detailed design work without delay with full consideration of mine and the residents needs.

In light of this application, I am prepared, for the time being to put my legal action against the council "on hold" until such time as a decision for this is made.

In the meantime I would welcome your response

Kind regards

