



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Our Ref: SO13718

7 January 2021

Dear Grant,

**Re: Hammersmith Bridge funding**

The closure of Hammersmith Bridge has had a prolonged and devastating impact on the lives of my constituents. I am therefore writing to request a meeting to discuss short and long-term solutions at the earliest opportunity.

My constituents are long past the point of inconvenience. Since the bridge was closed to cyclists and pedestrians in August, access to healthcare, education and work has been severely disrupted for thousands of people.

Previous comments made by yourself and the Department for Transport (DfT) Permanent Secretary suggested an availability of funding for permanent repairs, but I am afraid to say that these words have, so far, failed to materialise into action.

Decision-making remains extremely slow and the Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce is simply not delivering on its intended objectives. Despite the lack of progress, there exist a number of promising options that could provide relief to my constituents in as little as six months, such as Foster + Partners plans, in collaboration with Sir John Ritblat, for a “double-decker” structure.

However, the major obstacle is funding. The reality is that the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (LBHF) simply do not have the funds to underwrite such a costly and lengthy process, particularly given the huge financial strains of COVID-19. I know that discussions between yourself and LBHF about their contribution to the funding are ongoing, but my expectation is that the lion’s share of the funding will have to come from the DfT.

If the DfT was to make a clear funding commitment to the permanent repairs, I believe a financial agreement could be reached between your department and LBHF for immediate work to begin on the kind of short-term plan outlined above. This would soon make an enormous difference to the lives of thousands of people and help us avoid the stalemate we are otherwise guaranteed.

At a time of immense financial hardship and health anxiety, it is imperative that we protect our major infrastructure so that, as we begin to emerge from the pandemic later this year, people are able to access work, healthcare and education and regain control of their livelihoods.

If the problem isn't solved urgently North Barnes will suffer for years to come – businesses will close, schools will become inoperable and the unresolved traffic issues will become intolerable. There will be major issues with the long-term viability of the whole community.

I am confident that an effective solution can soon be reached, and I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the matter at your earliest convenience. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Olney".

**Sarah Olney**  
Member of Parliament for Richmond Park and Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Transport