

## Transport & Parking Group

### Lucy's Mill Bridge Background Paper

The following is an extract from the Stratford Voice response to the Local Transport Plan (LTP3) consultation

#### 7.5.34 Lucy's Mill Footbridge

1. We do not believe that all possibilities for improving Lucy's Mill Footbridge have been investigated. The feasibility studies in 2006 and 2008 pre-dated our detailed study of the use of the bridge (see 3. below). Furthermore they were undertaken against a background of the World Class Stratford proposal for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Avon, which was seen by some as an alternative to improving Lucy's Mill Bridge.
2. Since the proposed new pedestrian and cycle bridge is no longer being pursued, the essential role of Lucy's Mill Bridge in providing a circular river walk, much enjoyed by residents and visitors alike, is undiminished. This route, which is part of the River Walk promoted in Stratford's 'Official Historic Walking Guide', should be improved and enhanced in line with the Walking strategy in Section 7.5.30.
3. In April 2009 Stratford Voice carried out a survey on Lucy's Mill Bridge, the results of which were submitted to the County Council on 1 May 2009. In summary:
  - a. We submitted a petition containing 927 names in support of improvement or replacement of the bridge. This petition was collected at the bridge over a period of two days.
  - b. Our survey found that 1,128 people crossed Lucy's Mill Bridge between 8.00am and 7.30pm on Saturday 18th April, with a further 525 crossing between 8.00am and 4.30pm on the following Wednesday (22nd April).
  - c. In addition to monitoring the number of people using the bridge we found that, in the two days of the study:
    - i. 258 bicycles were carried up and down the bridge's steps
    - ii. 49 baby pushchairs and prams were lifted over
    - iii. 8 adult wheelchairs somehow succeeded in crossing
    - iv. 31 people using walking sticks or other aids negotiated the steps to cross
  - d. Photographs taken on the two days are provided – all those featured gave consent to being photographed
  - e. It must be remembered that the only way to cross the bridge is to climb its steep concrete steps. Carrying any large item is a hazardous undertaking and clearly the great majority of wheelchair users have to stay away as the bridge presents an impossible obstacle to them. One person crossing the bridge told us that on the Sunday between the two survey days she witnessed a lady falling on the bridge and receiving injuries that resulted in her having to be taken to hospital. One wonders how often this happens.
  - f. During the two days of the study a total of 1,653 people crossed the bridge. This number included some people who crossed more than once, others were children, while some (particularly runners) were unwilling to pause to talk with our tellers – who at times were overwhelmed by the number of people crossing. In spite of this a total of 927 adults did stop to sign the petition. Of these, around 40% were residents of Stratford, 10% came from other parts of the district and the

remaining half were visitors from elsewhere in the UK or overseas. All the signatories were people who turned up at the bridge and were therefore able to understand the issues involved. Stratford Voice did not publicise the survey in advance, either to its members or to the general public, so there was no element of artificiality in the figures.

- g. The degree of support achieved is entirely consistent with a Town Poll undertaken in Stratford during the previous year in which 84.7% of those who voted supported the improvement or replacement of Lucy's Mill Bridge.
4. It is clear that the bridge is well used by cyclists (those strong enough to carry their bikes over it). Its location is close to established cycle routes, including the Greenway and the National Cycling Network routes. We have engaged in discussions with Sustrans, and their engineer has visited the site. While we have received positive feedback from them, it requires some engagement from the County Council to move this matter forward. It should be noted that Sustrans has raised £50 million to build 79 bridges in recent years, in support of the National Cycling Network.

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Stratford Voice