



Northamptonshire County Council

Rt. Hon. Andrea Leadsom MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: IM/la955383
Your ref: AL/TG/1809
Date: 5 October 2018

Dear Andrea,

Thank you so much for your correspondence dated September 5th.

We closed the A422 route on August 7th. Since our last communication we have been waiting for consent to be given by the Environment Agency (EA). They have a process in place that can take up to three months and we are doing all we can to expedite this. Thank you so much for your offer to write to the EA. We are working very closely with them and confident that this consent will be granted soon.

With this in mind I have not issued any direct updates or an email bulletin but I will in the next forty eight hours. There is definitely a local concern, due to extensive media coverage, that Northamptonshire County Council simply do not have the money and we will not start any repairs for a long time. The message is that we do have funds and our priority is to get the road repaired and opened.

Regarding the cost I am unable to provide figures at this time but will as soon as I can. We understand this is costing road users and businesses money and we really do just want to get this route open as it was. To allow us to repair this route we have had to move funds that were allocated elsewhere to address this issue. These are significant financial constraints in Northamptonshire and we always use the funds available to us in the best way we are able to.

This does mean that other locations requiring work will be moved down the programme and become a much lower priority.

I would like to take this opportunity to also address a few issues I have heard about. I am alarmed to hear that people are saying we will not be on site for 12-18 months. We have

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always been clear that repair works would start in the New Year, 2019. However, after meetings with all parties involved we are confident we will be on site this year. Once on site the works, which are weather dependant, will take three weeks to complete. We are unable to start work without the Environment Agency consent but, as soon as we get this, we will be able to provide a start date.

I have also heard that we will be repairing but then reopening with traffic lights or weight limits. This is not the case.

I do understand your disappointment with not opening temporarily. As I stated, we had been investigating the possibility of opening the road at the end of the year, under temporary traffic lights, to allow traffic to use the route again. This would have entailed the propping of the bridge but it has been agreed that this would not be cost effective. This would really have been a waste of time and money and actually extended the programme of repairs. It is always better to go in to repair a road once and then open fully, to all roads users without restrictions, and get the local communities back to normal.

The design we are now working to is to install a weight bearing membrane. This is the most cost effective way of working and will mean the structure will be solid for years to come.

Northamptonshire Highways is extremely conscious of the impact to the public and have not taken the decision to close this route lightly and do give diversions a lot of consideration. The County Council has a duty, not only to safeguard members of the public, but to manage our structures so that they do not pose an unacceptable risk to public safety.

I am sorry I cannot be of more help right now but as soon as more details are known we will communicate to everyone on the mailing list and update online, on Twitter @nnhighways and release information to the media.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Morris', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Ian Morris
Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways & Environment