

25 August 2020

Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
Secretary of State for Defence
MOD Ministerial Correspondence Unit
5th Floor, Zone A
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB
United Kingdom

Colonel Andy J Rogers ADC CEng MIET
RHQ REME
The Prince Philip Barracks
Lyneham
Chippenham
SN15 4XX

Colonel Matt Quare
Corps Colonel, Royal Engineers
Regimental Headquarters
Ravelin Building
Brompton Barracks
Chatham
Kent
ME4 4UG

Dear Minister, Colonel Rogers and Colonel Quare,

You may be aware that the Hammersmith Bridge in London was recently closed to all users due a series of structural weaknesses found by Hammersmith and Fulham's engineers.

The emergency closure to all users meant that access was instantly severed for residents. This comes at a particularly unfortunate time as schools are days away from re-opening. Many residents from both sides of the river school their children on the opposite side of the Thames.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham are the responsible authority for the structure, which they are pressing the Government for funds to ensure a timely repair and urgent provision of a temporary bridge for cyclists and pedestrians.

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and the office of the Richmond Park fully support these efforts to secure necessary resources from our national Government.

However, even with these resources secured, a resumption of access for our residents remains some way off.

It is with this immediate need that we write. A number of our residents have raised the exceptional expertise of our Army engineers in dealing with similar scenarios overseas.

While we realise that this written approach is unconventional. We are asking if you would allow for the REME and Royal Engineer's expertise to be used to evaluate the possibility of (and if necessary deploy) an urgent bridge crossing.

Once again, we appreciate this is a highly unusual approach, but the situation we face in our part of South West London is bleak. As a Council and MP, we cannot in good conscience leave any stone unturned in trying to find a remedy to the immediate impacts of the bridge's closure.

We look forward to your response and thank you in advance for giving consideration to this matter, when you will have a great many calls upon your time.

Kind Regards



Cllr Alexander Ehmann
Deputy Leader and Chair of the
Transport and Air Quality Committee
Richmond Council



Sarah Olney MP
Member of Parliament
for Richmond Park