

Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from Councillors

Question No.	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1.	Cllr Ben Proctor	Why was the council not aware of the deteriorating condition of the pedestrian bridge between Barrs Court Road and Burcott Road in time to plan a replacement rather than implementing an emergency closure?	Councillor Price
Response: The council acknowledges that the condition of the pedestrian bridge between Barrs Court Road and Burcott Road should have been identified earlier, allowing for a planned repair or replacement rather than an emergency closure. The defects were identified following an inspection undertaken through the council's new Public Realm contract arrangements and, as soon as they were brought to our attention, we acted swiftly to close the bridge on public safety grounds. We recognise there are legitimate questions about why the issue was not identified sooner. Initial findings indicate that the previous inspection and maintenance arrangements did not provide the level of assurance or direct operational oversight now exerted under the new arrangements, and the council is reviewing that history carefully. Strengthening this oversight was one of the reasons for bringing the Public Realm service under more direct council control. We are continuing to progress repair and replacement options. Resolving the issue is complex and involves specialist contractors with experience of working over a live railway, agreement from Network Rail for track access, and further surveys. The footbridge also carries important utility services used by local homes and businesses, including pipes, cables and other connections for energy supply and telecommunications, which must be protected throughout any works. The council will provide a further update and a clear programme for the next stages of work once this information is available, and in the meantime we thank local residents, businesses and users of the bridge for their patience.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			