

Connecting Leeds

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Dear resident and business,

**Otley Bridge footbridge replacement**

Last July, after public reports of defects in the footbridge section of Otley Bridge, Leeds City Council urgently investigated whether further repairs were necessary. After specialist contractors inspected the underside of the current footbridge it found further hidden defects, resulting in the decision to replace it.

Specialist contractor Balfour Beatty were appointed to look at solutions for the bridge replacement and traffic management of the project. Initial work looked at options which saw pedestrians being diverted into the carriageway of Otley Bridge and a single lane with temporary traffic lights for vehicular traffic. It was felt that any traffic restrictions could have a significant impact on anybody visiting or travelling around Otley town centre and, to avoid this level of disruption and congestion, a different option was developed.

The chosen option is to install a temporary footbridge which would allow cars to flow both ways over the existing main bridge, causing as little disruption to vehicles as possible. The temporary footbridge will give residents easy access to both sides of the river, while construction of a new, permanent footbridge takes place on the main bridge. The temporary footbridge will be found a short distance to the east of the main bridge and links to Tittybottle Park.

If the council do not address the footbridge problems, the deterioration will continue. This would eventually require a full closure of the footbridge to pedestrians on safety grounds and a lengthy pedestrian diversion or disruptive traffic lights to facilitate pedestrians on the carriageway.

The works site will be created in early September for welfare and storage, followed by traffic management to allow for the works to be undertaken in the safest and most efficient way. This Initial activity is subject to constraints due to its proximity to a residential street and the ecology impact on vegetation situated nearby. Although every effort is made to avoid such actions, there will be a need to clear some trees and vegetation on the southern side of the river. This is necessary to create a temporary working area and launch site for initial piling works in September, to construct the footbridge and to position a crane that will lift the bridge sections into place next year. Because of this, diversions will be in place during various phases of the project. These will be communicated to residents via signage and our dedicated website (see next page), once they have been finalised.

In the park on the northern side, minor works will also need to be carried out to create a temporary abutment for the footbridge and to divert utility services. After the completion of the scheme, the council will carry out robust mitigation for every tree which can’t be replaced like for like.

This approach was chosen after considering a range of options which needed to factor for disruption, cost and timing of the works limited by planning, ecology, and guidance from the Environment Agency who we continue to work with on all our projects. In addition, by starting the construction of the temporary bridge now, we can then look to start the process of replacing the existing footbridge in spring next year.

Unfortunately, there will be some short-term disruption and noise, as we prepare the site for construction, in particular to allow crane access to the site. We apologise in advance for this disruption and ask residents for their patience. The urgency required for the works identified will inevitably see some short-term inconvenience to construct the temporary bridge, however, it will ensure this vital crossing for Otley and traffic flow in both directions remain unaffected during this time.

We will work closely with our contractor to make good progress over the months ahead, working towards an expected completion of the temporary bridge in spring 2025, access to the new Otley footbridge by late summer 2025 and removal of the temporary bridge by autumn 2025.

**How to stay in touch?**

We will keep you regularly updated as the works progress and have set up a website about the project with frequently asked questions, along with plans and timescales.

Residents and businesses will also be able to speak to us directly at the Otley Community Hub at Nelson Street, starting in September on the following day/times: Tuesday 10 – 11am and Friday 1pm – 3pm. You are also welcome to sign up for the latest news by visiting the website and registering your email: <https://otleybridge.commonplace.is>



If you have questions about the scheme, you can email us at: [connectingleeds@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:connectingleeds@leeds.gov.uk)

You can also check progress on our social media by following @ConnectingLeeds on X and Facebook.

We would like to take this opportunity again to apologise for any inconvenience and assure you that every effort will be made to keep disruption to a minimum.

Kind regards

**The Connecting Leeds Team**

**Leeds City Council**

**Diversion map for Mill Lane closure – starting Monday 9 September**

**A map of a connecting lanes

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