

## **County Council confirms Tenbury Teme Bridge essential works to take less time than first anticipated**

Worcestershire County Council has confirmed the essential works set to begin in the new year to strengthen and refurbish Tenbury's Teme Bridge will take around ten weeks to complete – three months less than first anticipated.

The closure of the bridge starts on the 9<sup>th</sup> January and is programmed to end on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

To ensure the town centre link is closed for the minimum time the County Council put in place incentives to contractors through the procurement process that awarded high points to those that could deliver the project in the shortest time.

It's been confirmed that Volker Fitzpatrick was successful in bidding for the contract and its plans should see the bridge closed to vehicles for no longer than ten weeks. It will remain open throughout to pedestrians, those with mobility scooters and cyclists and motorcyclists – riders will be asked to dismount to cross.

A number of measures have been put in place to minimise disruption and help Tenbury traders to remain 'open for business' while the works, which will include strengthening to avoid future need for vehicle weight restrictions, take place.

The County Council and Malvern Hills District Council have also announced that a £50,000 grant, which includes a contribution to lower car parking charges during the bridge closure set to begin on January 9, will be made available to local businesses to spend as they see fit.

In addition, a special shuttle bus service has been arranged to run Monday to Saturday throughout the duration of works linking the 758 service between the bridge and the Bromyard Road Business Park.

For the duration of the scheme temporary, free and unlimited car parking for 55 cars will be provided on the Burford side of the river. Similarly arrangements have been made to utilise the old market land for both free and unlimited parking and a turning facility for delivery vehicles.

All proposed diversion routes will receive enhanced signing to address any safety concerns the community may have such as horse riding on the highway and children walking to school. The diversion and information signs extend into the neighbouring counties.

All winter maintenance work, including gritting, will routinely take into account the main diversion routes. Other routes, which will have a temporary environmental weight restriction of 7.5 tonnes imposed, will be additionally treated when freezing rain, snow, or hoar frost is forecast. Neighbouring counties are aware of the work and will be clearing their roads as we would.

**County Councillor Dr Ken Pollock, Local Member for the Tenbury Division, said:** "We fully understand why local residents and traders have concerns when it comes to the impact this bridge closure, necessary to accommodate these essential works, will have. This is why a number of measures are being put in place to help our town centre. We will continue to work with the community to get the message out that Tenbury is open for business."

A second Public Briefing event, which attracted around 70 people, was held last week (November 17) at Tenbury High school where those attending had the opportunity to ask questions and find out more about the plans.

The distribution of information leaflets, which includes a map of diversion routes, to household and businesses in the area has also begun.

**Cllr John Smith OBE, County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, said:** "Keeping disruption to an absolute minimum and keeping the town open for business while Teme Bridge is strengthened and refurbished has been one of our key objectives, which is why we added extra incentives into the process for contractors looking to secure the contract. This approach looks to have had the desired effect with bridge closure set for ten weeks – three months less than originally anticipated."

For further details on the scheme, which will include regular updates and useful information, please visit the dedicated section on the Teme Bridge works at [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/currenttransportschemes](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/currenttransportschemes).