

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 22 OCTOBER 2020

Item No:

UPRN

APPLICATION NO.

DATE VALID

20/P2438

06th August 2020

Address/Site

Road Bridge Bishopsford Road - London Road Morden SM4

Ward

Ravensbury

Proposal:

ERECTION OF REPLACEMENT BRIDGE TO RECONNECT BISHOPS FORD ROAD TO LONDON ROAD IN MITCHAM, WHERE THE A217 CROSSES OVER THE RIVER WANDLE). THE PROPOSAL INCLUDES A CHANGE IN THE ROAD ALIGNMENT TO THE NORTH OF THE BRIDGE AND CHANGES THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO THE EASTERN BOUNDARY OF RAVENSBURY PARK

Contact Officer: Awot Tesfai

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions

CHECKLIST INFORMATION.

- S106 Legal Agreement: Not required
- Mayor of London Referral: Not required
- Secretary of State Referral: Not required
- Is a screening opinion required: No
- Is an Environmental Statement required: No
- Has an Environmental Impact Assessment been submitted – No
- Design Review Panel consulted – Yes
- Number of neighbours consulted – 224
- Press notice – Yes
- Site notice – Yes
- External consultations: Transport for London, Environment Agency, Metropolitan Police (Secured by Design), Metropolitan Police (Traffic Safety) Historic England (Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service), Historic England Development Management)), Thames Water Utilities, Natural England, UK Power Networks, British

Telecom, SGN UK Gas Distribution, National Trust, Canal and River Trust.

- Number of jobs created – N/A
- Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL): 2
- Flood Zones 2 and 3
- MOL – Wandle Valley

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This application for replacement of the Bishopsford Road Bridge has been submitted following partial collapse of the bridge during strengthening works undertaken in June 2019. This planning application is brought before Planning Applications Committee for consideration due to the scope and number of representations.

- 1.1 The current application seeks planning permission for replacement of Bishopsford Bridge. The proposals also involve widening the footways to provide improved accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians with designated lanes. It is considered that the proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to the architectural and historic interest of the bridge or the setting of neighbouring surrounding area, and to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 1.2 The Flood Risk assessment submitted with the application is also considered acceptable as the 'hydraulic model' carried out demonstrated that there will be further reductions to flood risk for the site and surrounding. The Environment Agency and the Councils Flood Risk officer have reviewed the report and confirm its acceptance, which has also been considered in the main body of this report.
- 1.3 Having also paid special regard to the desirability of preserving the bridge and some of its features of special architectural and historic interest, and paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is considered that the proposal complies with local and national planning policies in all other respects. No other planning considerations are identified that would warrant refusal of the planning application.
- 1.4 The applicant has fulfilled the requirements to provide plans and various other documents in support of the proposed planning application, which has complied with the statutory validation process. Members should note that conditions are also being imposed with the grant of any planning approval requiring the applicant to provide further details to be submitted and to be agreed in writing by the LPA.

1.5 **Background**

- 1.6 The historical records relating to Bishopsford Bridge show that this location has been a fording point since the middle ages. The three arch Bishopsford Bridge was built circa 1789 century and there are survey records of the current bridge that dates back to 1882.
- 1.7 The upstream footbridge was built over the former ford circa 1947, attached to the highways bridge and wholly changing the view of the bridge from upstream. The deck of the upstream footbridge was completely replaced in 2010 along with piling work to the north and south abutments. In 2010 a wooden footbridge was built downstream about 6 metres from Bishopsford Bridge in Watermeads Park.

2. **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 The site comprises the Bishopsford Road Bridge which runs over the River Wandle located within the London Borough of Merton. It carries the single carriageway and footways of the A217 London Road. The approximate Ordnance Survey Grid Reference for the centre of the site is 527174E, 167834N with the nearest post code at SM4 6AW.
- 2.2 To the west of the site lies part of Ravensbury Park and adjoins a wooden footbridge that crosses the River Wandle, situated close to the west (downstream) elevation of the of the road bridge. This was built on the upstream side, over the old ford. Further west of the site lies the neighbouring residential area of Octavia Close. To the East of the Site lies the National Trust Land and the Watermeads Nature Reserve. To the south-east of the site lies the Tooting and Mitcham Community Sports Club.
- 2.3 The application site is located within the Wandle Valley Conservation Area. Sub areas 5 and 6 are the most relevant to Bishopsford Bridge. The characteristics of the conservation area at this point include the forms of enclosure: the river itself, boundary walls, fences, metal railings and gates that typify the conservation area. These are visible on the lead up to the bridge from the Mitcham / Cricket Green side and into Ravensbury Park. Metal railings are also visible on the bridge parapet and will be salvaged during demolition.
- 8.5.1 The site has the following environmental planning designations in the Sites and Policies Plan (2014) and Core Planning Strategy (2011);
- Green Corridor – Ravensbury Park (CS13, DM02)
 - MOL – Wandle Valley (CS13, DM01)
 - WVRP Brangwyn Crescent 400m buffer (CS5, CS13, CS para 21.13, DM01)
 - Green Chains (CS13, DM01)
- 2.4 The site is maintained by Merton London Borough Council. The characteristics and design of the existing bridge comprise of three arch masonry bridge and the material is brick. The total length of the bridge is 22 m (72 ft.), width 10 m (33 ft.), height 1.7 m (6 ft.), with 2 piers in the water and 2 vehicle lanes including shared pedestrian and cycle lanes on the bridge. The clear square span of the arches are 2.709m (north), 3.324m (centre), and 2.724m (south).

- 2.5 The bridge is situated in the area covering the "Watermeads" housing development, National Trust land and the Grove Mill complex. The site was once in the setting of several watermills, which dates back to Domesday. The National Trust land is an important riverine wet land area and is now a nature reserve.

3. CURRENT PROPOSAL

- 3.1.1 The proposed bridge will be constructed at the same location as the existing bridge and will not change the current profile or the alignment of the River Wandle. The proposed bridge comprises of clear span structure with a soffit level of 19.2mAOD and span of 10m. The proposed bridge will provide a greater aperture for flow conveyance beneath the bridge, replacing the existing bridge structure that comprises three brick arches of varying soffit level (19.09mAOD, 19.22mAOD and 19.47mAOD). The existing arch piers have been removed as part of the demolition works and the river bed reinstated with a minimum 200mm depth of washed gravels.
- 3.1.2 The width of the River Wandle upstream of the Bishopsford Road Bridge measures approximately 25m. The distance between the existing bridge abutments measures 10.497m, although the aperture between each of the three arches measures approximately 8.24m. As per above, the new structure will comprise a clear span between the abutments of 10m and the removal of the piers promotes further re-naturalisation of the river bed and an overall increase in gravel bed for fish and spawning habitat. The proposed wing-wall design for the new structure also allows some further bank enhancement compared to the existing structure.
- 3.1.3 The wall bordering Ravensbury Park is proposed to be substituted for a 1.5m high park railing, this will be similar with the form and colour (black), currently in place on the boundary with the National Trust land, which is situated on the other side of the road. Officers consider this to reflect well with the surrounding National Trust railings, which would allow improved views within the Metropolitan Open Land.
- 3.1.4 Proposals would also involve widening the bridge to incorporate improved pedestrian and cycle access, in doing so, the scheme will create significant improvements to provide inclusive access for all in accordance with Policy CS13 and CS14 of the Core Planning Strategy (2011).
- 3.1.5 The proposals noted above are further discussed in detail within the main consideration section of this report.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 There are numerous entries under the planning history for the immediate area surrounding the bridge and most of these applications relate to tree works with applications dating back to circa 1990.
- 4.2 The most relevant applications has been listed below;

4.3 **10/P1491** - FORMATION OF VEHICULAR CROSSOVER ONTO WATERMEADS NATURE RESERVE TO FACILITATE ACCESS FOR FLOOD MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE VEHICLES – Granted on 14/12/2010

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1.1 Site notice posted, neighbouring properties notified. The planning application was publicised by means of site and press notices, together with individual letters to **224** nearby addresses sent on 10th August 2020. The Council received **16** objection letters from neighbouring residents and local amenity groups. **1** letter of support was received from a local amenity leisure facility and **1** letter of support was received from a neighbouring resident

5.1.2 Furthermore, a total of 45 site notices were put up in the surrounding area, comprising of, General Site Notices, Conservation Area Site Notices and Departure Site Notices.

5.1.3 N.B. The majority of representations have focused on concerns relating to removal of the wall along the boundary of Ravensbury Park and removal of trees to facilitate the provision of new cycle and pedestrian access and the provisions of shared cycle and pedestrian access. The objections received are summarised below;

- The bridge, as designed, is not wide enough to fulfil its active travel purpose or the needs of a 'climate emergency' world extra space needed for a proper southbound cycle lane and a safe pedestrian pavement. recommend that negotiations with the National Trust are re-opened immediately
- Does not meet current recommended standards for cycling provision on main roads and on shared use pavements
- The proposed scheme does not promote active travel
- Objections note the climate change emergency and that we need more active and sustainable ways of travelling
- Potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists at this location
- No adequate facilities for cyclists
- Do not support the demolition of the wall and the historic brick wall protecting Ravensbury Park and the Wandle Trail. Support the environmental and other benefits of a single span structure.
- Preference would be for the road never to open to traffic again
- Loss of trees and wall will increase; visual, noise and vehicle pollution.
- Loses 40 sq.m of Metropolitan Open Land for Highways.
- Misnaming the bridge
- Lacks evidence that the loss of 12 valued trees will be compensated by new planting
- Fails to take advantage of the opportunity to promote the historic significance of the crossing through use of decorative railings. Fails to confirm use of the Wandle Valley Regional Park visual identity in all signage and interpretation. Incorrect information in the arboriculture report not stating the correct site description, TPO or Conservation Area designations
- important that this screen should be retained, which visually protects the park from views of traffic, its noise and pollution
- Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) study not submitted

- All woodland and parkland is made up of trees of varying appearance and natural development and contribute to the overall ecology of the area
- impact on the ecology of that corner of the park
- Trees, the wall and undergrowth provide a habitats for a wide range of species and biodiversity
- Removing the wall will expose Watermeads residents in houses and flats to increased traffic noise, and pollution. The green area is considered by residents to be part of the estate, and probably is. Current wall generates a sense of seclusion and therefore safety
- There is already a well maintained, and well used, public footpath that runs adjacent to the current bridge and crosses the river via its own dedicated bridge. This is used by cyclists as well as pedestrians and has low risks in terms of safety
- Whilst I appreciate that you do need to put some safety measures in for cyclists, it would be nice to see some for pedestrians too

Support

- Support the new bridge, we feel it is very well designed and looking forward to seeing in use
- Support the reinstatement of the bridge on Bishopsford Road (MitchamBridge). I recognise that the current plans are considerably better than previous plans

5.1.4 **Internal consultees:**

5.1.5 LBM Flood Risk Officer

5.1.6 No objections to the proposed application subject to conditions relating Construction Method Statement which includes but is not limited to, flood flow conveyance during construction works, river sediment. Management, measures to manage higher flood flows in heavy rainfall for in and out of hours including any emergency contact.

5.1.7 LBM Green infrastructure (Ecology/Biodiversity)

5.1.8 The methodologies and findings set out in the three reports; Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Nocturnal bat survey and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Provided the recommendations, mitigation and enhancements are included as part of the proposed development works / conditioned appropriately, the reports conclude there should be no adverse effects on the habitats or species within and around the site

5.1.9 LBM Greenspaces

5.1.10 Object to the removal of the wall along boundary of Ravensbury Park, object to the removal of trees behind the wall and object to the applicants applying British Standards BS5837:2012 for the assessment on the impact of development on trees. The officer contends that a CAVAT assessment should have been applied instead.

5.1.11 LBM Tree Officer

5.1.12 No objections raised, However, I do consider it important to ensure the removed trees are replaced, something that is recognised by in the arboriculture report.

5.1.13 LBM Urban Design

5.1.14 Broadly agree with the proposed scheme and has referred officers to the design review panel comments.

5.1.15 LBM Conservation and Design

5.1.16 Satisfied with the design of the bridge. It is of simple cantilever design of a single span and looks well enough within the landscape. It is good to open up views of the park by replacing the wall with railings. The railings will still mark the historic boundary of the open land along this old route down into Mitcham.

5.1.17 LBM Highways

5.1.18 H10 is a condition put on the approval, for Construction shall not commence until a working method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning department

5.1.19 H13 is a condition again put on by planning for a construction logistics plan to be submitted and approved in writing by the planning department

5.1.20 INF9 is information when Highways must be contacted to ensure all relevant licenses are in place prior to starting works

5.1.21 INF12 is information when any works that could affect the public highway shall be coordinated under the requirements of the new roads and street works act and the traffic management act and licensed accordingly and liaised with the borough of Merton's network coordinator.

5.1.22 All above apply to this site

5.1.23 No objections to the proposed application subject to above conditions and informatives.

5.1.24 LBM Transport

5.1.25 No objections raised

5.1.26 LBM Environmental Health

5.1.27 No objections raised

5.1.28 **Design Review Panel**

5.1.29 The design has moved from a three arched bridge to a single span. The three arches have been articulated in the parapet via the 3 pillars on the western side, while no such articulation existed on the eastern side. The new railing appear to be an improvement on the western side over the existing structure, however the design makes no attempt to further articulate the landing of the bridge and its abutments. It simply merges with the simple greenery and fairly crude abutments. In the context of a conservation area, it appears to be a missed opportunity to articulate – and celebrate – the landing of the structure either side and it's integration with the landscape and start of parapets, in particular after the loss of the arches and pillars on the eastern side.

VERDICT - AMBER

5.1.30 **External consultees:**

5.1.31 Environment Agency

5.1.32 No objections raised, Flood risk model acceptable, subject to Compliance condition to be added for the provision of an Otter ledge.

5.1.33 Met Police Crime Prevention Officer

5.1.34 No concerns raised - Supports the removal of the wall separating Ravensbury Park and London Road A217 and replacing with railings, this would allow for greater visibility along the pedestrian footpath so to reduce the chance of crime, fear of crime and avoidance of the area.

5.1.35 Transport for London

5.1.36 No objections received in support of the proposed scheme.

5.1.37 Historic England (Greater London Archeological Advisory Service)

5.1.38 No objections to the proposed application subject to conditions and informatives.

5.1.39 Historic England (Development Management)

5.1.40 No comments and no objections raised

5.1.41 Natural England

5.1.42 No comments and no objections raised

5.1.43 Met Policy (Traffic)

5.1.44 No objections raised, in support of the proposed application.

5.1.45 London Buses

5.1.46 No comments received

5.1.47 National Trust

5.1.48 No comments received

5.1.49 SGN UK Gas Distribution

5.1.50 No comments received

5.1.51 UK Power Networks

5.1.52 No comments received

5.1.53 Thames Water

5.1.54 No comments received

5.1.55 BT Open Reach

5.1.56 No comments received

7.0 POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

7.1.1 Specific policy areas considered directly relevant are as follows:

- Promoting healthy and Safe communities;
- Promoting sustainable transport;
- Achieving Well-Designed Places;
- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

7.1.1 Planning policy. **London Plan (2015/16).**

7.1.2 The London Plan (2016) is the overall strategic plan for London, and it sets out a fully integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital for the next 20-25 years.

7.1.3 The London Plan was published on 14th March 2016. The policies relevant to this application are:

- Policy 2.3: Growth areas and co-ordination corridors
- Policy 2.6 Green Infrastructure: the multi-functional network of green and open spaces
- Policy 5.2: Flood risk management
- Policy 6.1: Transport
- Policy 7.5: Public Realm
- Policy 7.8: Heritage Assets and Archaeology
- Policy 7.9: Heritage Led Regeneration
- Policy 7.17: Metropolitan Open Land
- Policy 7.19: Biodiversity and access to nature

7.2 **The draft New London Plan (2019/20)**

- Policy HC1: Heritage Conservation and growth
- Policy G6: Biodiversity
- Policy SI12: Flood Risk Management

7.3 **London Borough of Merton LDF Core Planning Strategy (2011)**

7.3.1 The relevant policies in the Merton LDF Core Planning Strategy (2011) are:

- Policy CS.5: Wandle Valley
- Policy CS.13: Open space, nature conservation, leisure and culture
- Policy CS.14: Design
- Policy CS.16: Flood risk management
- Policy CS.18 – 20: Active travel

7.4 **London Borough of Merton Site and Policies Plan (2014)**

7.4.1 The relevant policies in the Merton Site and Policies Plan (2014) are:

- Policy DM O1 Open space
- Policy DM O2 Nature conservation, trees, hedges and landscape features
- Policy DM F1 Support for flood management
- Policy DM EP4 Pollutants
- Policy DM D1 Urban design and the public realm
- Policy DM D2 Design considerations in all developments
- Policy DM D4 Managing heritage assets
- Policy DM T1 Support for sustainable transport and active travel
- Policy DM T4Transport infrastructure
- Policy DM T2Transport impacts of development
- Policy DM T5Access to the Road Network

7.5 **OTHER DOCUMENTS AND GUIDANCE**

- Mayors Sustainable Design & Construction SPG (April 2014)
- London Borough of Merton 'Archaeology SPD' (Part 1 & 2) (2004)
- Merton's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2019
- The Wandle Valley Conservation Area Character appraisal
- Wandle / Mitcham Archaeological priority area

8.0 **MAIN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1.1 **Key Issues**

8.1.2 The key issues of consideration for this planning application are;

- Principal of development
- Flood Risk
- Design/appearance and heritage
- Heritage
- Trees
- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Transport and Highway

8.1.3 **PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

8.1.4 Bishopsford Bridge provides an important vehicle, pedestrian and cycle crossing point on the A217 from Sutton in the South to Mitcham in the North. Its replacement is therefore essential to maintain such movements. Its location, within the context of the surrounding conservation area with both open spaces and historic building in close proximity and with the additional constraints of flood risk and biodiversity provide the main constraints in terms of the development of its design and the need to ensure the replacement of the former bridge not only perform the vital functional role, addressing flood risk issues, but preserves or enhances the character of the conservation area, promotes high quality inclusive design and safeguards natural habitats and trees.

8.1.5 ***Development on MOL***

8.1.6 Members should note that planning policy for Metropolitan Open Land seeks to protect not just the land itself but the sense of openness. Policy DM.O1 Open Space in Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014 states at part (d) Development in proximity to and likely to be conspicuous from MOL or designated open space will only be acceptable if the visual amenities of the MOL or designated open space will not be harmed by reason of siting, materials or design.

8.1.7 This site is also part of the Wandle Valley Regional Park and has similar boundaries to the historic conservation area. The new bridge itself will not be visible from far in the surrounding Metropolitan Open Land or designated open space due to the existing woodland and vegetation in the National Trust Land and the existing wooden footbridge on the western side. In winter months parts of the bridge will be just about visible from the Wandle Trail on the western side but in summer months when vegetation is growing and in leaf it is only visible by leaving the Wandle Trail and walking to the western riverbank in the National Trust Land. Nevertheless, in the places where the new bridge will be visible from the MOL, designated open spaces and Wandle Trail help to demonstrate that the design of the new bridge will be a visual improvement compared to what was visible of the previous structure, particularly from the eastern side.

8.1.8 As such, after carefully consideration of the proposals, officers consider that this development would not have an adverse impact on the MOL and would in fact provide a positive contribution to enhance the visual amenities of the MOL and designated open space, therefore complying with the Sites and Policies Plan (2014) Policy DM.O1

8.6 FLOOD RISK

8.6.1 Core Planning Strategy (2011) Policy CS.16 relates to Flood risk management and Sites and Policies Plan (2014) Policy DM F1 relates to Support for flood risk management. The aim of these policies is to ensure

8.6.2 Policy CS.16 seeks to ensure individual development proposals will have no adverse impact and that essential community infrastructure will be at less risk of damage.

8.6.3 Policy DM F1 Support for flood risk management - Aim to mitigate the impact of flooding in Merton, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) and associated national guidance, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Flood Risk Regulations 2009, The Water Framework Directive, the council's duty as Lead Local Flood Authority and Merton's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

8.6.4 WSP provided a Flood Risk Assessment (doc no: 70066777). Hydraulic modelling of the baseline scenario (with updated bridge representation) was completed for a range of events from the 1 in 5 to the 1 in 1000 annual probability events. The impacts of climate change were assessed for the 1 in 100 annual probability event for the Higher Central allowance with a 35% increase in peak flows, and the Upper End allowance with a 70% increase in peak flows.

8.6.5 The Bishopsford Road Bridge is surrounded by Flood Zones 2 and 3. Significant flood risk to out of bank areas upstream and downstream of the bridge is indicated. This is predominantly contained within the Watermeads Nature Reserve, Imperial Sports Ground and Ravensbury Park, although also affects residential buildings close to the river as well as residential areas downstream of Ravensbury Park. Some residential properties upstream of the bridge are indicated to be at risk during events as small as the 1 in 5 annual probability event. Many more properties are indicated to be at risk during the 1 in 1000 annual probability event.

8.6.6 The NPPF defines flood risk as a product of the probability (frequency) of flooding and the severity (potential damages, danger and disruption) of the flooding. The findings from assessment by WSP indicates that the frequency of flooding within the surrounding area is not predicted to increase. The assessment has indicated a potential increase in flood depth however this is not predicted to increase potential damage, danger or disruption. Furthermore, the selected 10m span offers significant betterment elsewhere by reducing upstream flood levels, removing properties from areas previously identified to be at risk, and reducing the flood frequency of other areas compared to the baseline scenario. The proposed design is therefore considered to satisfy the requirements of the Exception Test.

8.6.7 **LBM Flood Risk officer**

8.6.8 After reviewing the application, officers have no reservations on flood risk grounds and are satisfied with the flood risk assessment submitted by WSP. The hydraulic model carried out demonstrated that there will be further reductions to flood risk to some properties for the 100year plus 35% climate change event, for the 10.m span bridge. These are clearly show on the Baseline Flood Extent and Proposed Flood Extents maps. With this in mind officers recommend approval subject to condition relating to detailed Construction Method Statement which includes but is not limited to, flood flow conveyance during construction works, river sediment management, and measures to manage higher flood flows in heavy rainfall for in and out of hours including any emergency contact.

8.6.9 **Environment Agency Response**

8.6.10 The Environment Agency (E.A) have reviewed the information submitted and have no objection to the proposed development. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by WSP (Project no. 70066777, Date: April 2020) states that if feasible, it is recommended that an otter ledge is incorporated in the new bridge design. However the updated environmental assessment by CGO Ecology Ltd (Version 4, 18th July 2020) concludes no mitigation or enhancement is required for otters. The E.A have agreed with the initial recommendation of the WSP report and understand following further discussion with the applicant that prevision of a ledge will be possible. The E.A have therefore requested a compliance condition for the provision of an Otter Ledge to be provided on the left hand bank.

8.7 **DESIGN/APPEARANCE AND HERITAGE**

8.7.1 Sites and Policies Plan (2014) Policy DM D2 'Design considerations in all developments' seeks to ensure high quality design and protection of amenity within the borough. Core Planning Strategy (2011) Policy CS14 'Design' recognises the importance of design and states that all development needs to be designed in order to respect reinforce and enhance the local character of the area in which it is located and to contribute to Merton's sense of place and identity. These policies are also supported by Core Planning Strategy policies CS13 'Open Space', 'Nature conservation', 'Leisure and Culture'.

8.7.2 The proposed new bridge design sees the integration of the east side footbridge, which was separate from the main river crossing as an extension to the side. The partially collapsed bridge was unsafe, the appearance of the bridge had been compromised as a result of designs, which was in very poor condition. The design of the new bridge makes significant reference to the design of the old and makes use of various aspects of the original design to create a new pedestrian and cyclist-friendly bridge, in this sense this allows for improved appreciation of the River Wandle and Nature Reserve. Members should note that this proposal sufficiently accords with the NPPF paragraphs 185 and 192 and Draft London Plan Policy HC1, which emphasises the importance on drawing upon the positive contributions heritage assets can make to sustainable communities and places. The NPPF states that proposals should seek identify opportunities for enhancement area.

- 8.7.3 It is regarded that the design of the new bridge, with railings to either side would provide a more visually enhancing appearance, improving the character and appearance of the wider street scene and the conservation area as a whole. The proposal also recognises the importance of enhancing and improving visual connection with the wider surrounding, which would allow improved appearance from the Watermeads and from the Grove Mill listed buildings.
- 8.7.4 Officers have considered the impact arising from the removal of the wall and assessed this on balance taking on board the positive contribution that this would provide. Officers have reviewed objections received for the removal of the wall. It is considered that the proposed replacement of the wall with railings would provide an improved appearance of the bridge that will create a more open and inclusive feel, and consider this to be more acceptable form of design and appearance that would also enhance the appreciation of surrounding heritage assets as discussed in detail below. This approach would be policy compliant as it would provide a more visually accessible and enhanced design in accordance with policy DM D2 and CS14. The other benefits that the scheme would bring by widening the bridge is the incorporation of improved pedestrian and cycle access, in doing so, the scheme will create significant improvements to provide inclusive access for all in accordance with Policy CS13 and CS14 of the Core Planning Strategy (2011).
- 8.7.5 The proposal in its design and appearance would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene or the Wandle Valley Conservation Area.
- 8.7.6 **Heritage**
- 8.7.7 Bishopsford Road Bridge lies within the Wandle Valley Conservation Area. Sub areas 5 and 6 are the most relevant to Bishopsford Bridge. The characteristics of the conservation area at this point include the forms of enclosure: the river itself, boundary walls, fences, metal railings and gates that typify the conservation area.
- 8.7.8 The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as being made up of four main constituents: architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. The assessments of heritage significance and impact are normally made with primary reference to the four main elements of significance identified in the NPPF.
- 8.7.9 Paragraphs 193 and 194 of the NPPF state that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering applications that affect its significance, irrespective of how substantial or otherwise that harm might be.
- 8.7.10 In terms of Local Policy context, the following policy considerations include, but are not limited to: Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014: Policy DM D4 Managing Heritage Assets; Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011-2026: Policies CS5 (Wandle Valley) and CS14 (Design) are of particular relevance and make reference to protecting and enhancing the River Wandle, archaeological sites, conservation areas and the desire to raise awareness of the area's heritage. These policies acknowledge Merton's 'rich architectural heritage and diverse built environment'.

- 8.7.11 In regards to London Plan 2016: Policy 7.8 Heritage Assets and Archaeology is relevant to this proposed application and the forthcoming London Plan 2019 intent to publish version: Policy HC1 heritage conservation and growth would be relevant.
- 8.7.12 The main buildings of significance to this part of the conservation area are; the statutory listed buildings around and including the former Mitcham Station, Wandle House, the Grove Mill and former mill workers cottages to the south of Grove Mill and the 'Watermeads' Nature reserve. There are some remnants of the former Surrey Brewery which are also of historic significance.
- 8.7.13 The historical records relating to Bishopsford Bridge show that this location has been a fording point since the middle ages. The three arch Bishopsford Bridge was built in the 18th century and survey records exist from 1882. The upstream footbridge was built over the former ford circa 1947, attached to the highways bridge and wholly changing the view of the bridge from upstream. The deck of the upstream footbridge was completely replaced in 2010 along with piling work to the north and south abutments. In 2010 a wooden footbridge was built downstream about 6 metres from Bishopsford Bridge in Watermeads Park. There is a metal Parish Boundary Marker in the Western parapet bearing the date 1882, it is important to note that this important historic fabric will be reinstated on the new bridge at a mid-river point. Whilst, the existing bridge does retain some 19th century fabric most of this has been damaged and is of no particular architectural interest. Alterations have further compromised the overall architectural integrity of the structure. The location, rather than the bridge itself, is of most local historic interest and is a locally important position insofar as it marked historic parish boundaries on an significant route north-south.
- 8.7.14 NPPF Section 16 and the Draft London Plan (2017 Policy HC1) recognise the positive contribution of heritage assets of all kinds and make the conservation of archaeological interest a material planning consideration. NPPF paragraph 189 says applicants should provide an archaeological assessment if their development could affect a heritage asset of archaeological interest. If you grant planning consent, paragraph 199 of the NPPF says that applicants should record the significance of any heritage assets that the development harms. Applicants should also improve knowledge of assets and make this public.

Applicants Heritage assessment (in accordance with paragraph 199 of the NPPF)

- 8.7.15 The applicants have provided a heritage assessment that was submitted with the planning application. The assessment evaluates and records the significance of any heritage assets that may be harmed by the proposed replacement Bridge and replacement of wall with railings.
- 8.7.16 The report methodically evaluates the significance of heritage assets, of particular relevance is Sub-Area 6: Lower Mitcham – Watermeads and Station, within which the Site is located. The Appraisal notes that there was settlement and industry in the area before the Roman period. Sub-Area 6 is divided into 2 parts. The first being the area around Mitcham Station, including development of the railway and the Surrey Iron railway, and the second being the area around Grove Mill, and the location of the Site, which was historically the focus for a great deal of water-based industrial

activity. A feature of the conservation area is Watermeads, managed by the National Trust and appreciable from the Site.

8.7.17 In summary, the applicant's appraisal identifies a couple of designated heritage assets close to the Site. The observations made on site have confirmed these heritage assets could largely be scoped out of the assessment and would not be subject to any harm or notable impacts due to the proposed bridge reconstruction/replacement. Wandle House (historically known as Wandle Grove) is considered first, insofar as glimpses of it from the bridge and towards the bridge from the listed building are possible, when the foliage on the trees along the river are absent or much reduced during the Autumn/Winter months. Mill Cottages are further to the east and front onto the riverside. At present any downstream views along the river (i.e. westwards) take in unattractive view of the extension footbridge over the ford. In terms of assessment of impact on the setting of these nearby heritage assets the report identifies the following, please see below a short summary of findings;

8.7.18 *Wandle House, Grade II*

8.7.19 Wandle House is set back from the River Wandle to the north but there is some limited indivisibility with it. The Site will not be apparent in any key views of the Wandle House, which is best appreciated from within its immediate environs. The bridge will not be in competition with or distract from the listed building. The bridge has relatively low sides and allows for open views along the River Wandle, which will be maintained. The material and design will be traditional and appropriate with brick columns and iron railings. In terms of the inter-visibility of the bridge with listed building, this will be subject to seasonal change. Although visibility is limited there will be glimpses in winter months when the trees along the riverside have thinned out. That is apparent as existing, so there will be no change to the existing conditions through the bridge replacement.

8.7.20 The appraisal concludes that no harm to the significance of Wandle House will come about due to the introduction of the proposed new bridge, which has an overall positive effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area (within which Wandle House is located).

8.7.21 *Mill Cottages, Grade II*

8.7.22 The bridge will not be seen in any key views towards Mill Cottages. The appraisal concludes that the proposed new bridge will not result in any harm to the significance of Mill Cottages. The observations suggest that there would in fact be an enhancement within their wider setting, as views of the bridge from Mill Cottages will also be improved, allowing for greater appreciation of the river. This is considered an improvement within the setting of these cottages.

8.7.23 Assessment on replacement of wall with railings along boundary of Ravensbury Park

8.7.24 The appraisal assesses this replacement of wall with railings along boundary of Ravensbury Park. In order to add the cycle lane along the bridge, which was added to the proposal following public consultation, the bridge has been slightly realigned and also widened on the west side by 1m. As a result of the modified road alignment

to allow for improved provision of access for cyclists and pedestrians, the high brick wall running along the Ravensbury Park east side boundary, away from the bridge, is to be removed. The wall will be replaced with full height railings 1m closer to the trees. The existing wall is approximately 6ft in height and prevents views into the park, whilst also enclosing one side of the road leading to the bridge. It comprises brickwork of varying date, some 19th century but much of it has been rebuilt. This arrangement encourages pedestrians to edge near to the road and is not ideal.

8.7.25 The appraisal identifies that the replacement of the Ravensbury Park boundary wall would bring about a number of positive changes. Currently the existing high wall encloses the pavement and pushes pedestrians close to the roadside. Removing the wall and replacing it with full height railings, slightly set back further towards the trees, will create a more open and inviting feel, giving pedestrians more space and allowing for better appreciation of the open green landscape and providing much needed natural surveillance. In terms of design the new replacement railings along the boundary of Ravensbury Park will tie in visually to the design of the new bridge. The condition of the brick wall is regarded to be in very poor state and dangerous for passing pedestrians, particularly in moments of high wind with potential tree fall. The heritage assessment notes that the bricks themselves are of no particular interest and of varying date, but the marker as historic boundary of the open land along this old route within the context of the bridge and the conservation area, has been considered and acknowledged.

8.7.26 **Historic England (Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service)**

8.7.27 The site is located in a tier 2 archaeological priority area which covers an area of historic mills associated with the River Wandle. Mills were located to the east of the bridge, but none are known from the immediate vicinity.

8.7.28 Very little historic fabric of the bridge survives, and it is in a bad state of repair and not felt worthy of archaeological recording. It is noted that the historic boundary marker will be saved and re-sited on the new bridge, which is very positive from a heritage perspective and will provide continuation of the site as a the historic crossing point of the Wandle.

8.7.29 In terms of below-ground archaeology, an archaeological watching brief should be conducted on the areas where ground works are required for new piles or other works associated with the replacement of the bridge. This would ensure that no remains of unknown mills or evidence for the historic ford were destroyed without first being recorded.

8.7.30 I have looked at this proposal and at the Greater London Historic Environment Record. I advise that the development could cause harm to archaeological remains. However the significance of the asset and scale of harm to it is such that the effect can be managed using a planning condition.

8.7.31 Historic England have therefore recommended a condition on any consent prior to commencement of development to ensure that a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for site investigation is submitted and agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

8.7.32 *Historic England (Listed Buildings)*

8.7.33 No objections raised to this proposed application, H.E officers have stated that they do not wish to offer any comments. H.E suggest that Merton Council officers seek the views of their specialist conservation advisers.

8.7.34 *LBM Conservation Officer*

8.7.35 The conservation and design officer reviewed and assessed the proposed application for the replacement of the bridge and replacement of the boundary wall with railings. The officer states that the bridge is of simple cantilever design of a single span and looks well enough within the landscape. In terms of the wall, the officer states that it is good to open up views of the park by replacing the wall with railings. The railings will still mark the historic boundary of the open land along this old route down into Mitcham.

8.7.36 *Greater London Historic Environment Record Database*

8.7.37 Greater London Historic Environment Record Database was undertaken on July 2020 for recorded assets and find-spots of Bishopsford Bridge located at grid reference TQ 27171 67843 and including searches within 500m of its setting at grid reference TQ 27173 67841 for the purpose understanding the historical developments of this site and its local setting. The search confirmed that there were no finds of historic importance.

8.7.38 *Planning Officers review*

8.7.39 Planning Officers have looked at the applicant's heritage assessment and reviewed response from Greater London Historic Environment Record Database and comments from Historic England. Officers assessed the impact of the proposal on heritage assets, in line with national and local planning policies.

8.7.40 Site and Policies Plan, Policy DM D4 titled 'Managing heritage assets' seeks to conserve and where appropriate enhance Merton's heritage assets and distinctive character.

8.7.41 Policy CS13 titled 'Open Space, Nature Conservation, Leisure and Culture' further reinforces the need to improve and enhance visual connection with the natural landscape and waterways. The policy encourages new linkages in landscape and visual terms into the river corridor when development opportunities arise. The council recognise the waterways as a natural asset and will ensure these opportunities are enhanced and improved.

8.7.42 In response to objections received relating to provision of signage, officers are satisfied that as part of the proposed works there will be adequate signage as illustrated in the proposed highway layout. Members should also note that Merton Council in its capacity as Highways Authority will enhance the signage relating to the local area, including the Wandle Trail. Merton's Design Review Panel raised that clear signage for cycling must be provided and this will be worked up and installed prior to the bridge reopening. It is also worth pointing out to members that the council

is proposing to hold a local competition to name the bridge, which may lead to appropriate signage.

8.7.43 The proposal would not result in the loss of a structure that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area or heritage site and would not lead to substantial harm on the significance of, or the total loss of heritage assets. In fact the proposal would conserve and enhance Merton's heritage assets and distinctive character. The proposal would also enhance and conserve the setting and significance of the asset of surrounding area and line with the policies noted above.

8.7.44 ***Secured by design***

8.7.45 London Plan policy 7.3 aims to ensure that measures to design out crime are integral to development proposals and are considered early in the design process, taking into account the principles contained in Government guidance on 'Safer Places' and other guidance such as Secured by Design' published by the Police. Development should reduce the opportunities for criminal and anti-social behaviour and contribute to a sense of security without being overbearing or intimidating. Places and buildings should incorporate well-designed security features as appropriate to their location.

8.7.46 The NPPF and London Plan 2016 policies 7.1, 7.3, 7.4 seek to ensure that policies and decisions should aim to create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion and create safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes and high quality public space, which encourages the active and continual use of public areas.

8.7.47 Officers have reviewed objections received in regards to the loss of the wall along Ravensbury Park and also note some comments that state there being low risk levels for safety along the footpath that runs adjacent to the current bridge. Having given due consideration to the details and plans submitted and taken into consideration relevant planning policy including expert advice from the Met police Crime Prevention Design Officer (CPDO), I am satisfied that the design appears to have included Secured by Design and Designing out Crime measures as intrinsic considerations. The following observations have been made by the Met Police in regards to the proposal and taking into consideration the comments above;

8.7.48 "The open rail design is of benefit security wise as it will facilitate natural surveillance to the natural reserve, Ravensbury Park and towards the western pedestrian footbridge. The removal of the wall separating Ravensbury Park and London road A217 and replacing with railings again would allow for greater visibility along the pedestrian footpath to reduce the chance of crime, fear of crime and avoidance of the area. Issues highlighted by the local Safer Neighbourhood Teams at other nearby bridges over the River Wandle are illegal fishing, jumping from the bridge into the river and throwing large items into the river".

8.7.49 Officers are satisfied with the information that has been submitted in support of this application and on the bases that the proposal will improve and enhance security and safety measures for the general public. Secured by design principle notes that it is the fear of crime that has a severe effect on public quality of life, the proposal would substantially reduce the fear of crime and improves natural surveillance and discourage unwanted and anti-social behaviour.

8.7.50 Members should also note officer's observation whilst on site, officers witnessed the unauthorised use of moped vehicles being used along the footpath, this presented significant health and safety risks to pedestrians and cyclists and is seen as serious criminal act. By creating and improving the visual natural surveillance this would discourage these types of anti-social behaviours. Furthermore, the anti-social behaviour acts involving throwing large items into the river, as noted above by the Met Police officer could raise potential flood risk issues and needs to be discouraged as a serious concern.

8.8 TREES

8.8.1 Policy DM.O2 of the Sites and Policies Plan (2014) requires all types of development to protect trees, hedges and other landscape features of amenity value to secure suitable replacement in instances where their loss is justified. Furthermore proposals for new and replacement trees, hedges and landscape features should consist of appropriate species. Core Planning Strategy (2011) Policy CS 13 Open Space, Nature Conservation, Leisure and Culture seeks to protect and enhance the borough's public and private open space network including Metropolitan Open Land parks and other open spaces the policy also recognises the importance of Improving access to open space and nature conservation by public transport, cycle mobility vehicles and on foot.

8.8.2 *Methodology*

8.8.3 CGO Ecology Ltd conducted an arboriculture assessment for the proposed replacement of the Bishopsford Road Bridge. The results from the survey undertaken confirm the following; A BS5837:2012 Tree Survey was conducted on 11th May, 18th May and 6th July 2020, recording the prescribed metrics for all trees that may be affected by the proposals. Trees within the impact zone were recorded, measured, described, and their condition, health, life-expectancy, and other observations were assessed. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Conservation Areas were researched. Root Protection Areas (RPAs) were calculated following BS5837 methodology, and a Tree Schedule was drafted, presenting metrics and observations. An Arboriculture Impact Assessment (AIA) was conducted, and a Tree Constraints Plan (TCP), Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and Draft Arboriculture Method Statement (AMS) were produced.

8.8.4 *Results*

8.8.5 The site comprises broadleaved woodland, a river, road, and formerly a brick-built bridge. 47 individual trees and two groups of trees were surveyed: 16 sycamore, 10 English elm, seven elder, four hawthorn, four Norway maple, three horse-chestnut, two ash, two false-acacia, two ginkgo, two London plane, one beech, one lime. 18 trees are category B (moderate quality); 18 trees and one group are category C (low quality); 11 trees and one group are category U (unsuitable for retention). The survey revealed that all trees were classified as being of mainly landscape value. Several trees stand out due to their large size (T44-46); many others are young, small or poorly-structured specimens. In particular, the area northwest of the bridge is a dense clutter of low-quality trees and saplings. Of the 36 trees and one group worthy of retention, 12 trees need to be removed to facilitate the development, and nearly all the others will require some management. Several retained trees have

RPA's significantly overlapping the proposed works. A total of 23 trees plus one small group (cluster of young trees) are to be removed

8.8.6 **Recommendations**

8.8.7 The survey goes on to make the following recommendations for the tree protection, mitigation and management, based on the submitted plans (members should refer to the plan accompanying this PAC report); Trees T22, T25-27, T32, T34, T37-40, T42 and G1 are unsuitable for retention and should be removed. Trees T1-2, T4, T11, T23, 24, T28-30, T33, T35 and T43 will need to be removed to facilitate the development. Trees T5-8, T10, T13, T14, T16, T17, T21, T31, T41 and T44-48 will require crown-reduction on some or all sides, to facilitate plant movements and other development activities.

8.8.8 **Compensatory planting**

8.8.9 In order to compensate the loss of 23 trees and one small cluster of young trees, 26 new trees will be planted within the landscaped area to the west of London Road, northwest of the bridge. These will be location-appropriate, standard trees, which will be imposed as condition requiring a schedule list to be provided and agreed firstly. The report arboriculture report states that the species makeup should follow the trees removed to a degree, but should be native species only, and especially avoiding invasives such as false-acacia. Fruit and berry-rich trees such as apple (*Malus pumila*), pear (*Pyrus communis*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) and rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) should be selected. No new tree or shrub planting should take place within the RPA's of retained trees. **These recommendations comply with Policy DM.O2 which points out a strong preference for native species to be planted.**

8.8.10 No bat roost potential has been observed in trees requiring removal or crown reduction. T15 (unaffected) has low bat roost potential. No nests have been observed in trees to be removed, and only one nest/drey has been identified in a tree to be crown-reduced (T41). The nest/drey will not be affected by the proposed crown-reduction. Hedgehog is likely to forage and seek shelter on site, and fox could potentially inhabit the disused badger set to the northwest of the bridge.

8.8.11 In terms of the Root protection Areas of retained trees, these are treated as high importance in accordance with BS5837:2012, and their protection is a key consideration in the planning and development process. To protect any roots encountered, measures will include careful removal of existing surfaces, air-spade excavation, root pruning where necessary, and cellular confinement systems (CCS) for any level changes and resurfacing. Any root clipping will also follow BS5837 and BS3998:2010 'Tree Work' (BSI, 2010) recommendations.

8.8.12 Greenspaces state that the applicant's assessment of trees under BS 5837 – Trees on Development Sites is not appropriate for the site. The BS is useful in determining where on a development site, the footprint of a building is least damaging to trees and thus categorises trees by their perceived individual quality. Greenspaces consider that a more appropriate assessment of the trees is CAVAT (Community Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees). Greenspaces also state that this is the approach used by many Local Authorities

- 8.8.13 In response to the above, members should note that there are two approaches to undertaking assessments for impact of development on trees and vegetation. Merton Council can only apply consideration to adopted planning policy for the Borough and cannot consider how assessments are conducted in other Local Authorities. Members are kindly requested to refer to Paragraph 5.28, Policy DM.O2 of the Site and Policies Plan (2011) which refers to the British Standards approach in order to protect trees, hedges and other landscape features. ***“The council considers it important that development proposals are accompanied by appropriate reports and surveys to deal with the impact of the proposals on the existing vegetation. When applicable, developers will need to demonstrate that they have paid regard to current British Standards such as, BS 5837:2012 ‘Trees in relation to construction’.***
- 8.8.14 Policy DM.O2 does not require a CAVAT assessment to be carried out, this policy requires applicants to follow British Standards guidelines, BS 5837:2012 ‘Trees in relation to construction’, which the applicants have sufficiently undertaken.
- 8.8.15 **LBM Arboriculture Officer** has reviewed this application and the assessment that has been undertaken for the trees and impact of development. No objections were raised, the officer notes the importance of replacing the removed trees, and confirms that this has been recognised in the arboriculture report.
- 8.8.16 **Planning Officers** are therefore satisfied with the submitted documents, comprising of; Arboriculture Impact Assessment (AIA), Tree Constraints Plan (TCP), Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and Draft Arboriculture Method Statement (AMS). Officers can conclude that the recommendations made in the assessment above are acceptable. Members should also note that a planning condition will be imposed with any such consent to ensure that planning officers and Greenspaces are satisfied with the schedule list of planting type that is to be carried out, in terms of species, planting time, speed of growth and level of foliage for adequate screening particularly for the new replacement railings along Ravensbury Park.

8.5 ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

- 8.8.17 This part of the assessment looks at the Impact of the proposed replacement bridge on the ecology and biodiversity of the immediate area and the Wandle Valley Conservation Area, Sub areas 5 and 6, which includes the Watermeads. The site has the following environmental planning designations in the Sites and Policies Plan (2014) and Core Planning Strategy (2011);
- Green Corridor – Ravensbury Park (CS13, DM02)
 - MOL – Wandle Valley (CS13, DM01)
 - WVRP Brangwyn Crescent 400m buffer (CS5, CS13, CS para 21.13, DM01)
 - Green Chains (CS13, DM01)
- 8.8.18 The site is also directly adjacent to the following environmental designations;
- Watermeads Open Space (CS13, DM01)
 - River Wandle Riverside Walk Open Space (CS13, DM01)
 - Imperial Club Sports Ground Open Space (CS13, DM01)
 - The Upper River Wandle SINC (CS13, DM02)

- WVRP Watermeads (CS5, CS13, CS para 21.13, DM01)

8.8.19 The applicant has submitted a number of ecological reports, including: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report by WSP (dated April 2020), Nocturnal bat survey report by CGO (dated May 2020) and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report by CGO (dated July 2020). Officers have reviewed these documents and assessed these against the relevant planning policies noted above. The methodologies and findings set out in the three reports above are appropriate.

8.8.20 The ecologist recommendations and mitigation cover the following matters: - Pollution prevention. - Protected species and other species and habitats including bats, birds, amphibians, reptiles, otters, invasive species and aquatic ecology. - Minimise any effects on the SINC. - Tree removal and replanting. - Ecological enhancements.

8.8.21 The following Ecological Enhancements would be carried out as part of the proposal;

- Five bat boxes (e.g. Schwegler 2F) to be installed in suitable trees nearby.
- Five bird boxes (e.g. Schwegler 1B) to be installed on suitable trees nearby.
- One Hedgehog home to be installed in a suitable undisturbed area.
- Opt for the proposed single-span bridge design, as this will bring intrinsic improvements to channel flow and bed characteristics, increasing the extent of gravel bed available for spawning fish.
- Removal of the invasive plants (floating pennywort, Himalayan balsam) from the Watermeads reserve would be a significant benefit to this stretch of the River Wandle.
- Decanalisation and tree removal in the Watermeads stretch of the River Wandle would provide an opportunity for reintroduction or natural recolonization of water voles.
- Creation of deadwood features such as log-piles in the woodland areas around the site.

8.8.22 LBM officers have reviewed the submitted documents and are satisfied with the proposal provided the recommendations, mitigation and enhancements are included as part of the proposed development works / conditioned appropriately. The reports conclude there should be no adverse effects on the habitats or species within and around the site, or the nature conservation values of the SINC. Net biodiversity gain should be realised through the replanting of appropriate trees to replace those lost on site and the ecological enhancements listed below. Furthermore, any other application for removal of trees within the application site will be required to submit further bat survey, a condition be attached to ensure applicants are fully aware of this.

8.9 TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

8.9.1 Sites and Policies Plan (2014) Policy DM T2 Transport impacts of development states that Planning permission will be granted for development proposals provided they do not adversely impact on the road or public transport networks, safety or congestion particularly on strategically important routes. The policy seeks to encourage sustainable transport and active travel that have a positive impact on improving travel journeys, patterns and promotes greater use of travel by modes other than the car. This policy approach can lead to an improvement in health and

well-being from increased levels of physical active travel and help reduce pollution as a result.

- 8.9.2 Merton's Core Planning Strategy Policies CS18 to 20 seeks to ensure that transport implications are assessed and managed to ensure that transport infrastructure is provided where most needed and integrated across the borough and its borders. Policy CS13 also recognises the importance of improving access to open space and nature conservation by public transport, cycle, mobility vehicles and on foot;
- 8.9.3 The new bridge shall improve transport connections and better serve all transport types and pedestrians access across the River Wandle on the A217 and the Wandle Trail. The proposal would accord with Policy DM T2 and CS18 as this will provide improved modes of transport for and promote sustainable modes of transport. The proposal would provide cycle routes with a dedicated 1.5m cycle lane on the western side (running from south to north) and a shared 3m space for pedestrians and cyclists on the eastern side (running north to south). The new bridge will restore a crossing point for pedestrians, including those wishing to visit the National Trust Lands or Tooting and Mitcham Hub to the south.
- 8.9.4 The proposal would also provide adequate signage for the shared cycle and pedestrian access. There will be improved access, permeability and general visual improvement to ensure people can feel safe when commuting over the bridge either on foot or cycle particularly in the winter months when light falls early.
- 8.9.5 Objections have been noted stating that the proposed would result in increased traffic noise, and pollution. The green area is considered by residents to be part of the estate, and probably is. Current wall generates a sense of seclusion and therefore safety. In response to this, Officers state that the proposal would replace the historic boundary marker along Ravensbury Park with railings, the proposal would also comprise further tree planting along this boundary behind the railings, with suitable tree planting to create screening and security, whilst also maintaining adequate levels of natural surveillance. Members should note that a condition has also been imposed with any such consent to ensure the applicants provide a schedule list of planting type, size, and species. Officers will be working closely with LBM Greenspaces to ensure the appropriate submitted schedule planting list is acceptable in order to create good foliage and mitigation for noise and air pollution. It should also be noted that LBM Environmental Health Officers had been consulted and raised no objections on the grounds of noise, disturbance and air pollution.
- 8.9.6 Core Planning Strategy Policy CS13 titled 'Open Space, Nature Conservation, Leisure and Culture' also further reinforces this by stating that proposals should seek to Improve public access to and enhance our waterways, including the River Wandle and its banks, for leisure and recreational use while protecting its biodiversity value. This policy expects new development within the area of the Wandle Valley Regional Park, where appropriate, to incorporate physical, visual and landscape connections that will encourage pedestrian and cycle accessibility and enhance the attractiveness of the park.
- 8.9.7 ***LBM Transport and Highways***
- 8.9.8 Have raised no objections for the proposed layout in terms of carriage width, layout for cycle and pedestrian access and overall sustainable transport. Officers have

reviewed the submitted documents/plans and have accepted the proposal in its design would accord with the relevant policies noted above as the proposal would enhance and improve sustainable modes of transport. Two planning conditions have been recommended by officers and will be imposed with any such consent. These conditions relate to construction working method statement and a construction logistics plan to be submitted.

8.9.9 **Transport for London**

8.9.10 In terms of the proposed design/layout, TfL have no objections concerning the proposed replacement bridge.

8.9.11 Officers have also reviewed the Healthy Streets for London document, an initiative that was launched in February 2017 to support the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

8.9.12 **Healthy Streets for London** sets out how the Mayor and TfL will help Londoners to use their cars less and walk, cycle and use public transport more. It outlines some practical steps to achieve this, including:

- improving local environments by providing more space for walking and cycling, and better public spaces where people can interact
- prioritising better and more affordable public transport and safer and more appealing routes for walking and cycling
- planning new developments so people can walk or cycle to local shops, schools and workplaces, and have good public transport links for longer journeys

8.9.13 This approach recognises the importance of promoting both cycling and walking in equal measures. Officers note the objections received by local amenity groups for the provision of a shared surface and instead request another segregated cycle lane on the eastern side of the bridge.

8.9.14 Members should consider the guidance note from **DfT Local Transport Note 01/20** which states that "*A fully shared surface is preferable to creating sub-standard widths for both pedestrians and cyclists where the available width is 3.0m or less.* Although the DfT guidance 01/20 discourages shared use routes, it also makes clear that in certain circumstances it is possible to use them and makes it clear that a shared use route is better provision than not providing anything for cyclists.

8.9.15 Members should also note that the shared surface comprise of 3m wide and would provide equal space for pedestrians and cyclists on the eastern side (running north to south) and therefore follows the guidance note in the DfT Local Transport Note 01/20. The proposal would provide sustainable forms of transport that is acceptable in provision and safety, and has considered the overall objectives and importance of tackling climate change. **Members should note that the separate cycle provision and shared cycle/pedestrian access was added later into the proposal as a result of public consultation and the objectives of which are to encourage and promote active travel and reduce the dependency on cars.**

- 8.9.16 Whilst it would have been a welcomed aspiration to provide segregated cycle lanes on the eastern side as well as the western side, it is worth pointing out to members that these design changes would mean that equal access for pedestrians and cyclists would be severely compromised and therefore failing short to comply with Healthy Streets for London guidance. The other issues arising from segregated cycle lanes created on both sides of the road would result in significant alteration to road configurations, requiring further road alignment that would cause detrimental impact on the surrounding road network and the River Wandle and could potentially create risk flood risk concerns.
- 8.9.17 Officers also note objections received by residents to ensure equal safe access is provided for pedestrians as well as cyclist. Therefore in on order to achieve this, the proposal will provide a shared layout with appropriate width in line with guidance. Furthermore, adequate levels of signage for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided to ensure safety.
- 8.9.18 In response to objections received for the potential further widening of the bridge on the National Trust Land, this would result in significant impact on the natural landscape of the Watermeads to the detriment of the surrounding ecology and biodiversity. This would therefore be contrary Core Planning Strategy Policies (2011); CS13, and Sites and Policies Plan (2014) Policies; DM.O1 and DM.O2.
- 8.9.19 After carefully reviewing the Planning, design and access statement and the proposed Highway Layout submitted with the planning application and taking into consideration the objections received, officers feel satisfied with the proposed plans and agree with the technical expert's advice, received from LBM Transport and Highways and Transport for London. The proposed application is therefore in accordance with relevant adopted policies and is recommended for approval.

9.0 **SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**

- 9.1.1 The proposal is for replacement of bridge to reconnect Bishopsford Road to London Road.
- 9.1.2 The application does not constitute Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development. Accordingly, there are no requirements in terms on EIA submission.
- 9.1.3 WSP Consultants had prepared Project Water Framework Directive (WFD) Screening & Scoping Assessment (Project No.: 70066777) on July 2020. Officers have reviewed the assessment that has been undertaken in accordance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (2000/06/EC) to identify if the proposed works may affect the status of identified water features or their supporting attributes and indicators, in order to determine if a full WFD Assessment is required.
- 9.1.4 The assessment identified that there were no impacts to biological, hydro-morphological and chemical quality elements during operation of the proposed scheme. Furthermore, the assessment identified no impact to the priority mitigation

measures as set out in the River Wandle Catchment Plan. The report concluded that a full WFD Assessment was not deemed to be required.

10.0 Conclusion

10.1.1 Overall, it is concluded that the proposed development would be in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Sites and Policies Plan, Core Planning Strategy, the NPPF and the London Plan, and would be suitable to the site and the surrounding area. Officers consider that there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

10.1.2 The proposal would provide an enhanced and improved replacement bridge and create a positive contribution to the general visual aesthetics of the heritage assets, whilst maintaining and preserving the natural ecology and biodiversity of the area. The proposal would also comply with Environment Agency requirements as the proposal would result in further reductions to flood risk. The proposed scheme would also maintain the vitality of the site and its contribution to the local area. Therefore this proposed application would be in line with national and local planning policy. Accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions: -

CONDITIONS

COMPLIANCE: (Time limit for implementation)

1. The development hereby authorised must be begun not later than the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission, failing which the permission shall be of no effect.

REASON: This condition is imposed by virtue of the provisions of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and to prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

COMPLIANCE: Development in accordance with approved drawings and documents.

Approved Plans

2. The approved plans comprise the following drawing numbers:

- 70066777-200-PLA-200 Rev P07
- 70066777-200-PLA-201 Rev P04

- 70066777-200-PLA-202 Rev P05
- 70066777-200-PLA-203 Rev P05
- 70066777-200-PLA-204 Rev P02

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (OTTERS LEDGE)

3. The proposed development will only be acceptable if a mammal ledge is included on the left hand bank at the same height as the proposed wing walls. The ledge shall be set at least 600mm below the soffit of the bridge and be at least 300mm in width.

Reason: This is to mitigate the potential impact on otters, by providing a route for otters (a protected species) and other mammals to navigate the bridge and avoid crossing the road which could lead to road death.

FLOOD RISK

4. Prior to the commencement of the development, the applicant shall submit a detailed Construction Method Statement which includes but is not limited to, flood flow conveyance during construction works, river sediment management, measures to manage higher flood flows in heavy rainfall for in and out of hours including any emergency contact.

Reason: to ensure that flood risk is not increased during construction works.

ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

5. The Proposed Ecological recommendations and mitigation measures should include the features described in the following submitted documents: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report by WSP (dated April 2020), Nocturnal bat survey report by CGO (dated May 2020) and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report by CGO (dated July 2020). These shall be maintained in accordance with the approved plans and documents for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on ecology and biodiversity within the area in accordance with policy CS13 of Core Planning Strategy (2011) and Policy DM.O2 of the Sites and Policies Plan (2014).

LANDSCAPING AND PLANTING SCHEME

6. Prior to the bridge becoming operational full details of the proposed approach to the landscaping, including planting plans, a schedule list of plants, including plant sizes/type, proposed numbers, location of the proposed plants and a timetable of implementation for planting. The details shall also include hard landscape materials and boundary treatments. These shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the

Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed plans prior to the bridge becoming operational and thereafter retained and maintained.

REASON: To ensure adequate provision of open space within the development, in accordance with Policy 7.5 of the London Plan (2016), Policies DM O1, DM D1 & DM D2 of the SPP Local Plan (2014), Policies CS2, CS5, CS13 & CS14 of the Core Planning Strategy (2011).

HISTORIC ENGLAND (GLASS) WSI INVESTIGATION

7. No demolition or development shall take place until a written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no demolition or development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives, and
 - A. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works.
 - B. Where appropriate, details of a programme for delivering related positive public benefits.
 - C. The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI.

Reason: In the interests of archaeological protection in accordance with Policies DM.D2 and DM.D4 of the Sites and Policies Plan (2014), Policies CS2 and CS14 of the Core Planning Strategy (2011).

HIGHWAYS

8. H10 Construction Vehicles, Washdown Facilities etc
9. H13 Construction Logistics Plan

Informatives

Environment Agency

1. Please be aware the replacement bridge will also require permission from us under the terms of the Environmental Permitting Regulations. For further information please visit to: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits#bespoke-permits>

Historic England

2. The written scheme of investigation will need to be prepared and implemented by a suitably qualified professionally accredited archaeological practice in accordance with Historic England's Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Greater London.

This condition is exempt from deemed discharge under schedule 6 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Highways

3. The Highway section of the Council must be contacted prior to any works commencing on site to agree relevant licences, and access arrangements – no vehicles are allowed to cross the public highway without agreement from the highways section.

The applicant should contact David Furby of Council's Highway Team on: 0208 545 3829 prior to any work starting to arrange for this works to be done.