

The information, recommendations and advice contained in this report are correct as at the date of preparation, which is more than two weeks in advance of the Committee meeting. Because of these time constraints some reports may have been prepared in advance of the final date given for consultee responses or neighbour comment. Any changes or necessary updates to the report will be made orally at the Committee meeting.

Case Officer	Katie Herrington
Application No.	23/00218/FULPP
Date Valid	23rd March 2023
Expiry date of consultations	13th April 2023
Proposal	Replacement of existing river bridge over the Blackwater River with a new vehicular river bridge to accommodate pedestrians and vehicles
Address	Blackwater River Bridge, The Hatches Farnborough
Ward	Empress
Applicant	Mr Michael Smith (National Rail)
Agent	Mr Michael Smith
Recommendation	Grant

Description

This is a planning application for the replacement for the existing bridge over the blackwater river. This is a cross boundary planning application, as the bridge lies across the boundary between Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Boroughs, whereby both Councils are required to determine the planning application. At the time of writing this report, Surrey Heath BC have not made a decision on the application.

The application site is located over the Blackwater River, reached via the Blackwater Valley path to the north, from The Hatches bridgeway next to Farnborough North railway station to the east, and via an existing service road (also forming the Blackwater Valley Path route) from the Coleford Bridge Road roundabouts at Mytchett to the south.

This application is the result of the wider proposals to close the vehicular level-crossing at Farnborough North railway station for safety reasons. At the time of writing this report an application for a pedestrian bridge crossing at the Station is expected shortly.

The proposed replacement river bridge the subject of this report is required as vehicular access to the Frimley Pit Fisheries currently relies on the Station level crossing. After the vehicular level-crossing is removed at the Station, vehicles will be routed along the access track section of the Blackwater Valley Path from Coleford Bridge Road instead. Whilst there is an existing

bridge over the Blackwater River on the access track, it is too weak to support the weight of vehicles and requires replacement.

The proposal seeks to remove the existing bridge and replace it with a precast concrete vehicular bridge. The existing bridge is approximately 11m in length, and 2.9m in width.

The proposed bridge would be 11.9m in length, with a 17m parapet and be 9.8m in width. The bridge would be made out of concrete sections with a tarmac road surface and concrete pedestrian walkway, with steel parapets.

Consultee Responses

Environment Agency	No comments received.
SLP Project	<p>The application reference 23/00218/FULPP falls partly within the order limits of the DCO as consented and is not an exempt application.</p> <p>Esso has no objections in principle to the proposed application 23/00218/FULPP. It is requested, however, that there is close liaison over the respective proposals so as to avoid or minimise any potential impacts.</p>
Surrey Heath Borough Council	No comments received.
Ecologist Officer	Should the Council be minded to grant permission for this proposal, the applicant should be required to implement the development only in accordance with an appropriately detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan CEMP.
HCC Highways Development Planning	As this is a replacement structure the only additional traffic of any significance is likely to be during the demolition and construction stages. I therefore confirm the Highway Authority has no objections to this proposal.
Planning Policy	No comments received.
Aboricultural Officer	No comments received.

Neighbours notified

In addition to posting a site notice, 21 individual letters of notification were sent to the following addresses;

Unit 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,8 of The Old Brewery; Station Yard; 16, 16A, 19, 21, 23, 27, 29, 33, 33A, 37 Farnborough Street; and 2, 3 Chapel Street.

Neighbour comments

None received.

Policy and determining issues

The site is located within the Designated Countryside. in flood zone 2 and 3, on a major river, within the SINC. The following policies of the adopted Rushmoor Local Plan (2014-2032) are considered relevant to this planning application: IN1 (Infrastructure and Community Facilities), IN2 (Transport), DE1 (Design in the Built Environment), NE3 (Trees and Landscaping), NE4 (Biodiversity), NE5 (Countryside); NE6 (Managing Fluvial Flood Risk). In addition, Environment Agency Standing Advice is also relevant.

The main determining issues of this proposal are considered to be:- Impact upon the character of the countryside; Flooding impacts of the proposal, Highways issues, and Biodiversity.

Commentary

1. Impact upon the Character of the Countryside.

Policy NE5 – Countryside – permits development within the Countryside where a) the location is considered sustainable for the proposed use; b) it preserves the character and appearance of the countryside; and c) it does not lead to a harmful physical or visual coalescence between Aldershot and Farnborough and neighbouring settlements.

The proposed replacement bridge would be wider and longer than the existing bridge, but given its location adjacent to a much larger bridge and that it is a replacement, it is not considered that it would result in any material harm to the character and appearance of the Countryside. The proposal is also considered to be sustainable as it replaces an existing bridge, provides access to nearby fishing lakes, and would not lead to a harmful physical or visual coalescence between neighbouring settlements. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with Policy NE5 of the Local Plan.

2. Flooding Impacts of the proposal

The application site is situated within flood 2 and 3 and above a watercourse designated by the Environment Agency (EA) as a 'major river'.

Policy NE6 – Managing Fluvial Flood Risk states that development proposals within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 will be appropriately flood resilient and resistant, including safe access and escape routes where required, and ensure that any residential risk can be safely managed.

The proposal itself, whilst larger than the existing bridge, is flood compatible development and is not considered to decrease flood storage potential in that location and as such is unlikely to cause flooding impacts elsewhere.

The proposed new bridge is designed for both pedestrians and vehicles to use the bridge. Given its location and existing pattern of use, it is not considered that it would materially increase flood risk to its users. The bridge is likely to be only used by vehicles when accessing the fishing lakes; and people walking or cycling along the Blackwater Valley Path route.

The proposal would require works to the riverbank as part of its construction. A separate permit or consent will be required from the EA for this purpose.

It is considered that the proposal would not conflict with Policy NE6 of the Local Plan.

3. Biodiversity

The proposed development site is located within the Blackwater River Frimley Bridge Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The location is therefore identified as being of County Importance for nature conservation.

The existing bridge is flanked by Hawthorne/common ivy scrub. The proposal would be wider and longer than the existing bridge and therefore would result in the loss of vegetation to accommodate it. No trees are proposed to be removed. The applicant has provided additional information with regards to the impact upon protected species, but not with regards to the impact upon the SINC.

The SINC survey report dated August 2012 identifies habitats in the location of the replacement bridge to be predominantly scrub, although this habitat appears to have matured over the intervening years. Habitat in this location is also identified by Natural England as being as Deciduous Woodland Habitat of Principal Importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity in England, in line with the provisions of Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Section 40 of the NERC Act places a duty on the Local Planning Authority to conserve biodiversity, whereby 'conserve' is clarified as meaning 'restoring or enhancing a habitat'. Any loss or deterioration of this Deciduous Woodland as proposed, would therefore be contrary to the objectives of the NERC Act.

Due to the limited extent of works footprint and the presence of scrub and semi-mature trees, adverse impacts on better quality woodland is likely to be limited and impact avoidance measures are feasible. However, in order to meet such requirements necessary measures need to be in place to avoid adverse impacts on the woodland habitat in this location.

It is considered appropriate in this instance to require such details by condition prior to the commencement of the development.

Subject to this condition, it is considered that the proposal would accord with the requirements of Policies NE3 and NE4 of the Local Plan.

4. Highway impacts

The proposal would replace an existing bridge so that vehicles can use it to gain access to the fishing lakes. Hampshire County Council's Highways team has been consulted on the proposal and raise no objections. The proposals are considered acceptable in highway terms having regard to Local Plan Policy IN2.

Conclusions : The proposal would not result in harm to the character of the Countryside, would not result in harm with regard to Flood Risk, or result in issues of highways safety and subject to condition would not result in harm to biodiversity. As a result, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies DE1, NE6, NE3, NE4, NE5 and IN2 of the adopted Rushmoor Local Plan (2014-2032).

Full Recommendation

It is recommended that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions and informatives:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason - As required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The permission hereby granted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings. Drawing numbers: 173080-ARC-1700-BWR01-DRG-ECV-001102 P01; 173080-ARC-1700-BWR01-DRG-ECV-000101 P01; 73080-ARC-1700-BWR01-DRG-ECV-001104 P01.

Reason - To ensure the development is implemented in accordance with the permission granted

3. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, an appropriately detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP should include, but not be limited to:
 - a) Map showing the location of all ecological features
 - b) Risk assessment of the potentially damaging construction activities
 - c) Practical measures to avoid and reduce impacts during construction
 - d) Location and timing of works to avoid harm to biodiversity features
 - e) Measures to ensure woodland habitats are restored or enhanced as a result of works, including measures to enhance bankside riparian habitats / removal of invasive species
 - f) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works
 - g) Responsible persons and lines of communication
 - h) Use of protected fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

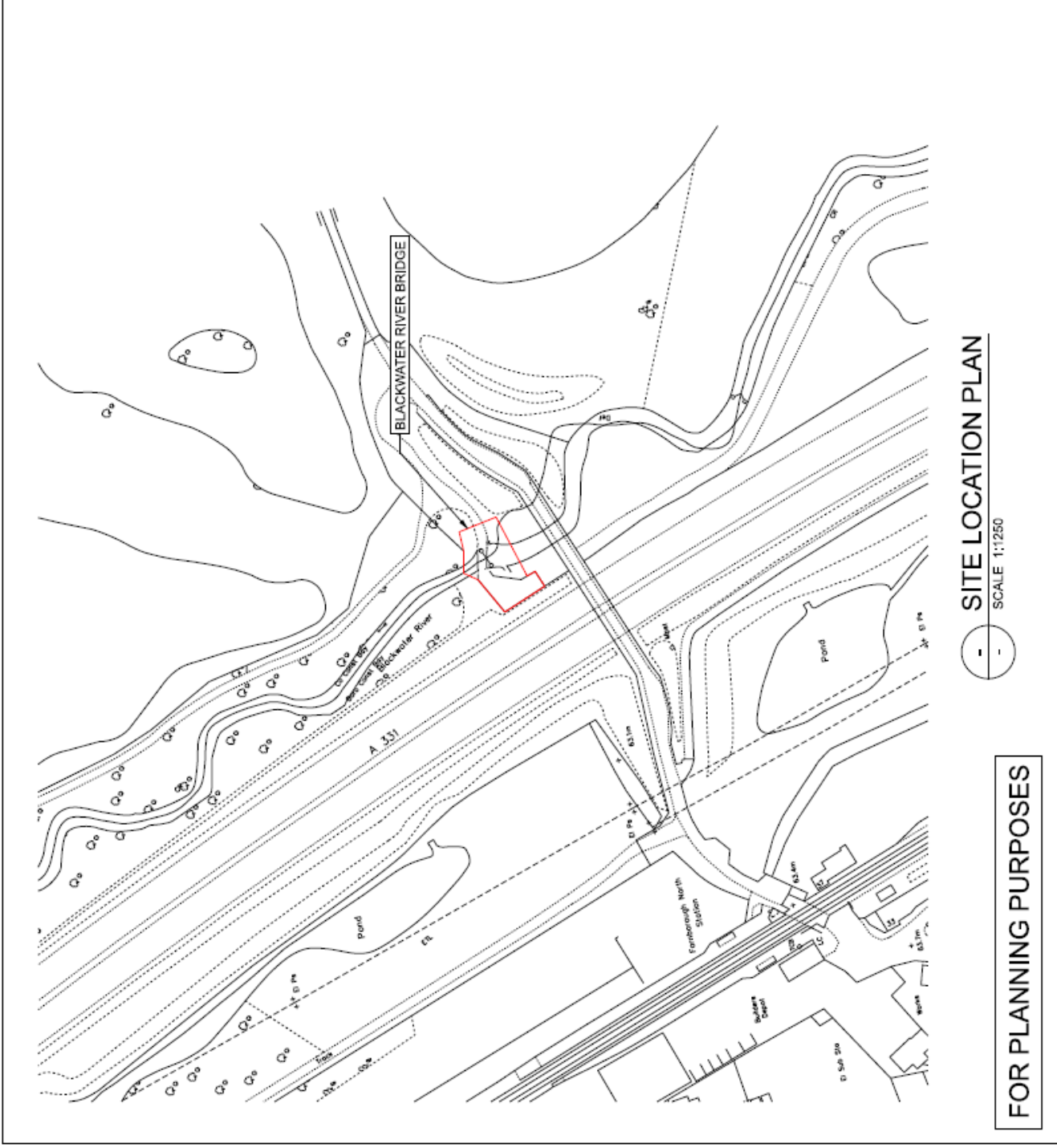
The works shall be carried out in accordance with such details so approved.

Reason: To ensure 'no adverse effect' on the Blackwater River SINC and no harm to protected species.

Informatives

- 1 INFORMATIVE – The Local Planning Authority's commitment to working with the applicants in a positive and proactive way is demonstrated by its offer of pre-application discussion to all, and assistance in the validation and determination of applications through the provision of clear guidance regarding necessary supporting information or amendments both before and after submission, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2 INFORMATIVE - REASONS FOR APPROVAL- The Council has granted permission because The proposal would not result in harm to the character of the Countryside, would not result in harm with regard to Flood Risk, or result in issues of highways safety

and subject to condition would not result in harm to biodiversity. As a result, the proposal is considered to accord with policies DE1, NE6, NE3, NE4, NE5 and IN2 of the Development Plan. It is therefore considered that subject to compliance with the attached conditions, and taking into account all other material planning considerations, including the provisions of the development plan, the proposal would be acceptable. This also includes a consideration of whether the decision to grant permission is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.



Legend/Notes

1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES AND ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES ABOVE A LOCAL DATUM UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
2. DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING. USE FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY.
3. THIS DRAWING IS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY. FOR DETAILS OF BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION WORKS SEE DETAILED DESIGN DRAWINGS.

Rev	Date	Description of Revision	Drawn	Check	Appr

Scale S3
Suitable for Review and Comment

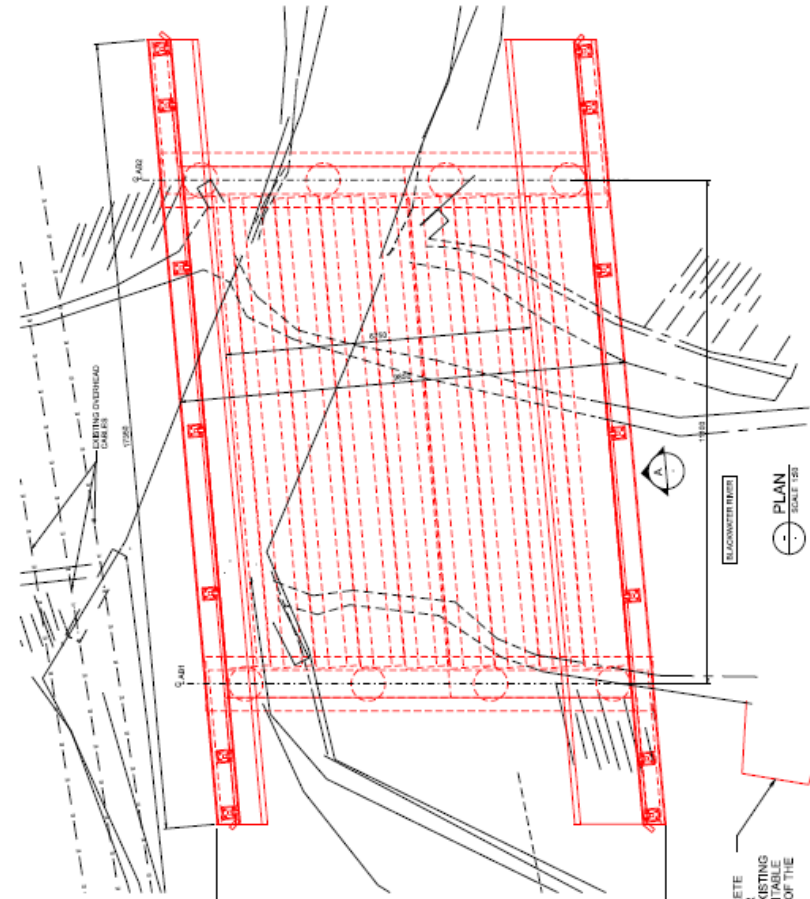


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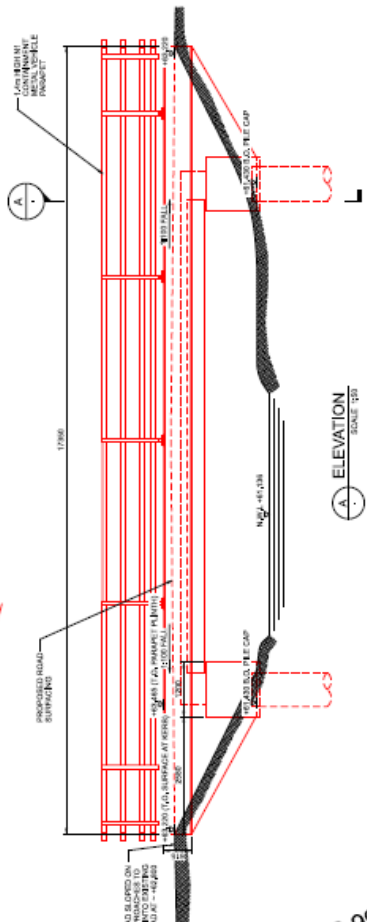
Wessex SMDf
 173080
 Farnborough & Hatches Level Crossing
 Blackwater River Bridge
 Site Location Plan

Task	By	Date	Status
Designed	G. Bramley	03/03/23	Digitally signed
Drawn	N. Moore	03/03/23	Digitally signed
Checked	A. Karakolis	03/03/23	Digitally signed
Approved	B. Briggs	03/03/23	Digitally signed
Scale	1:1250	N/A	N/A
Sheet	N/A	N/A	N/A
Drawing Number	173080-ARC-1700-BWR01-DRG-ECV-000101	Sheet of	P01

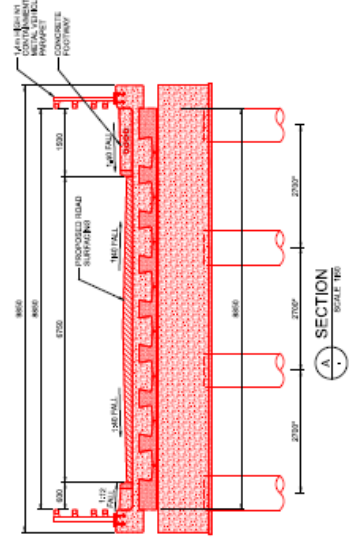
173080-ARC-170-BW-RD-LDRG-CV-001194.P01
 Drawing Number



NEW PRECAST CONCRETE HEADWALL OF SIMILAR DESIGN TO BE INSTALLED A SUITABLE DISTANCE UPSTREAM OF THE BRIDGE



A ELEVATION SCALE 1:50



A SECTION SCALE 1:10

1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METRES AND ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES ABOVE LOCAL DATUM UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
 2. ONLY DIMENSIONS SHOWN IN THIS DRAWING ARE TO BE USED.
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FOR PLANNING PURPOSES

NEW OR ADDITIONAL ASSETS



NO.	REVISION	DATE	BY	CHKD.

Suitable for Review and Comment S3



NO.	REVISION	DATE	BY	CHKD.

NO.	REVISION	DATE	BY	CHKD.

173080-ARC-170-BW-RD-LDRG-CV-001194.P01