Application No: 17/1980N

Location: RAILWAY BRIDGE, SYDNEY ROAD, CREWE

Proposal: Demolition of the existing Sydney Road Bridge and provision of a new wider road bridge that will allow for two way traffic movement and removal of the traffic lights, and the creation of new pedestrian footpaths. The scheme also includes the creation of a temporary site compound, temporary site access, provision of a temporary pedestrian and cycle bridge during the construction period and other ancillary works.

Applicant: Chris Hindle, Head of Strategic Infrastructure

Expiry Date: 12-Jul-2017

SUMMARY

The existing Sydney Road Bridge is identified within the Cheshire East Infrastructure Delivery Plan (CEIDP). The CEIDP identifies that the developments around Crewe will exacerbate the delays currently caused at the Sydney Road Pinch Point. The CEIDP identifies that the construction of a new bridge to allow two way carriageway is classed as Priority 1 (the highest priority).

The replacement of the existing bridge will provide important highway benefits to Crewe and economic benefits outlined above. It should also be noted that the existing bridge is an aging structure which is classed as 'fair to poor condition'. The bridge currently requires regular maintenance work.

During the construction period of the development there would be some disruption to local residents in terms of noise, traffic diversions, closure of the PROW and through air quality but this would be for a limited time only. Following the completion of the development there would be benefits in terms of improved traffic movement, improved pedestrian and cycle links and a slight reduction in predicted levels of NO_2.

In terms of noise following the completion of the development the NSEA predicts a moderate adverse increase in noise levels at the closest sensitive receptors to Sydney Road. At receptors further away the increase in noise levels is not considered to be significant

The landscape assessment identifies that the landscape impacts will be adverse and most apparent for residential receptors and those using nearby footpath to the western side of the railway (FP26 Crewe) and the cycle track to the eastern side of the railway (formerly FP36 Crewe).

The development would have a neutral impact in terms of trees, ecology, flood risk/drainage and electric infrastructure.

In this case it is considered that the benefits of this scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any harm and on this basis the proposal represents sustainable development.

RECCOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for a new Sydney Road Bridge. The development would be a single span structure and would measure 22.8m in length and 14.6m in width. The bridge would accommodate a 7.3m carriageway to allow two lane traffic with a 3m wide footway/cycleway set back 0.5m from the southern lane and a 2m footway located to the northern side of the bridge.

The bridge would have parapets of 0.9m in width and 1.85m in height with a red engineering brick cladding to the internal face of the bridge. To accommodate the new structure the existing central bridge pier would be demolished. The new bridge will maintain the existing main span headroom of 4.9m between the bridge and the railway tracks.

The section of Sydney Road to the east of the bridge would require widening works in order for the new bridge to tie into the existing road network. These works would include the creation of a footway/cycleway up to a new pedestrian crossing. The road widening works would permanently require a small amount of land from the back gardens of a number of residential properties on Rochester Crescent and the front garden of the cattery on Sydney Road. A new L-shaped precast retaining wing wall would be installed at the rear of the private properties located along Rochester Crescent.

To the west of the bridge, a new footway/cycleway would be installed adjacent to the southern lane of Sydney Road on a new earth embankment next to the Scottish Power electricity substation. This would tie in with the existing cycle track (formerly Crewe FP36) to the east of the bridge that follows adjacent to the route of the railway line north to connect into Sydney Road. A new guard rail will be installed on the southern side of the bridge.

It is envisaged that the works will be carried out in three phases.

Phase 1 - Would be associated with the piling works for the new substructure and the excavation of a new duct/route for the 132kV Scottish Power cable diversion.

Phase 2 - Would include the completion of the piling works and the diversion of the 132 kV cable.

Phase 3 - The main stage of the works. This would include the assembly of the service access bridge, diversion of services in the bridge structure, demolition of the bridge structure, alteration of the Overhead Line Equipment (OLE), assembly of the 1000T crane, delivery of bridge components, construction of the new bridge, services re-instatement into new ducts, and constructing new sections of the road over the bridge and where the road ties in with existing. This phase would last for approximately 6 months.

The development includes a site compound to the south of the existing Scottish Power sub-station.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Sydney Road is a 'B' road which forms part of the strategic access route from South Crewe to North-West Crewe (including Leighton Hospital and Bentley). The Sydney Road Bridge is one of four locations within Crewe where it is possible to cross the Crewe to Manchester Railway Line. Sydney Road Bridge is currently a single carriageway structure (4.3m wide with a 1.8m wide footway to the northern side) which is only capable of accommodating traffic in one direction at a time with access being controlled by traffic lights.

The application site is located within a predominantly residential area with dwellings fronting Sydney Road and Rochester Crescent being in close proximity to the application site. There is a children's nursery and a cattery to the eastern side of the railway line and a Scottish Power electric substation to the west.

RELEVANT HISTORY

15/3119S - EIA Screening opinion proposed road bridge over Manchester - Crewe Road Coast Main Line – EIA Not Required

POLICIES

National Planning Policy
The National Planning Policy Framework

Local Plan policy
BE.1 – Amenity
BE.2 – Design Standards
BE.3 – Access and Parking
BE.4 – Drainage, Utilities and Resources
BE.5 – Infrastructure
BE.6 – Development on Potentially Contaminated Land
NE.5 – Nature Conservation and Habitats
NE.9 – Protected Species
NE.17 – Pollution Control
NE.20 – Flood Prevention
TRAN.1 – Public Transport
TRAN.3 – Pedestrians
TRAN.5 – Provision for Cyclists
RT.9 – Footpaths and Bridleways

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version
PG2 – Settlement Hierarchy
PG6 – Spatial Distribution of Development
SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles
SE 1 - Design
SE 2 - Efficient Use of Land

SE3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE 4 - The Landscape
SE 5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
SE 13 - Flood Risk and Water Management
SE 6 – Green Infrastructure
IN1 – Infrastructure
CO1 – Sustainable Travel and Transport
CO2 – Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure

Other Considerations
The EC Habitats Directive 1992
Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010
Circular 6/2005 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System
National Planning Practice Guidance
Cheshire East Infrastructure Delivery Plan

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

CEC Head of Strategic Infrastructure: No objection subject to the imposition of planning conditions and an informative.

Network Rail: As this proposal is being progressed by Network Rail as a third party scheme with the relevant agreements, there are no comments to make.

United Utilities: A public sewer crosses this site and UU may not permit building over it. UU will require an access strip width of six metres, three metres either side of the centre line of the sewer which is in accordance with the minimum distances specified in the current issue of "Sewers for Adoption" for maintenance or replacement.

Scottish Power: No objection subject to the imposition of two planning conditions.

CEC Public Rights of Way: The proposed development would have a direct yet insignificant effect on the Public Right of Way (FP26).

The PROW Officer has made a number of suggestions to improve pedestrian/cycle provision as part of the scheme.

The following conditions have been suggested;
- A PROW scheme of management shall be submitted and approved which shall include proposals for the temporary closure of the PROW along with the alternative route provision
- The line of the PROW shall be marked out prior to the commencement of development
- Pre-commencement and pre-completion surveys of the PROW shall be submitted to the LPA and approved in writing.

CEC Environmental Health: It is for the planning service to make a decision on planning balance, taking account of many factors including noise and air quality. Conditions are suggested.

CEC Flood Risk Manager: No objection subject to the imposition of a planning condition.

Natural England: No comments to make on this application.

Cheshire Brine Subsidence Board: The Board has considered the above application and is of the opinion that the site is located within an area that has previously been affected by brine subsidence, and the possibility of minor future movements cannot be completely discounted. Therefore, the Board in accordance with their duties under Section 38(2) of the Cheshire Brine Pumping (Compensation for Subsidence) Act 1952 requires that precautions are taken to mitigate the effects of any future brine movement.

VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Crewe Town Council: No comments received.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

One letter has been received from Cllr Brookfield which makes the following general observations;

- Whilst appreciating the essential nature of the proposed works and adaptation to Sydney Road Bridge I have concerns about the diversions that will be put in place and also the public transport changes that are required. Both these will impact residents in Crewe East greatly. The area would have already seen major disruption with Crewe Green roundabout, Manchester Bridge and the numerous housing developments which will see major roadworks and adaptation taking place (Remer St/Cross Keys, Broughton Road and Maw Lane).
- In all cases the Traffic Management and communication have to date been inadequate and requiring more thorough communication with residents.
- I have concerns that some of the roads intended to take the increased traffic are basically 'not up to the job' and have significant further concerns that the Ward's residential side streets will see increased deterioration to their already damaged surfaces. Will there be a programme of resurfacing and repairs for these roads following the numerous roadworks in the immediate vicinity?
- In this regard I would politely respect the Planning Committee consider conditions being affixed to this application for such works to be addressed?
- Air quality and congestion along the intended diversion routes are already poor and/or serious - what will the Local Authority / Planners do to mitigate these issues for local residents?
- In respect of public transport - no regard has been given to school bus / college transport and would ask for assurances that schools etc will be liaised with. I would also make an observation that if the bus companies establish services are becoming unviable that support is provided for the services to continue post bridge works and it is not used to see bus services further reduced in the area.

Two letters of objection has been received which raises the following points;

- The proposed diversion route ignores the fact that Hungerford Road has a 7.5 ton limitation.
- As a large number of trucks use Remer Street and Sydney Road they will be diverted via Hungerford Road which is not acceptable.
- Hungerford Road is in a residential area and has a Primary Academy and an increase in vehicles will increase the volume of traffic which raises issues in terms of road safety, health and air quality.
- The works to Crewe Green roundabout should be functional by the start of the bridge construction and a better diversion route would be down Macon Way and onto Crewe or Weston Road which are better suited for large volumes of traffic. A large amount of traffic using Sydney Road at peak time is destined for or coming from Electra Way and the suggested diversion would be a better approach.
- Hungerford Road suffers from parking on both sides which restricts the width of road.

- Queues of standing traffic are common along Hungerford Road at peak times and Sundays due to the Grand Junction Retail Park.
- Hungerford Road is used as a route for emergency services.
- The diversion via Earle Street is designated as an Air Quality Management Area with some of the worst air quality in Crewe.
- HGV's accessing Earle Street from Vernon Way have great difficulty making this manoeuvre due to the tight turning circle
- The proposal to divert traffic via Vernon Way/Middlewich Street is unsafe as HGVs and some medium fixed vehicles cannot negotiate this route due to the height restriction under the Cumberland Railway Bridge. Middlewich Street is reduced to a single width carriageway due to on-street parking
- A more suitable diversion would be via Crewe Green Roundabout to the A534 Crewe/Nantwich Road and then onto Edleston Road/Oak Street/Vernon Way subject to the weight restriction being lifted on Edleston Road Bridge. At the junction of Vernon Way with Badger Avenue traffic should be diverted left along Badger Avenue and right into Broad Street to the Cross Keys Roundabout.
- Cheshire East have failed to carry out a risk assessment for this diversion route which is unacceptable.
- The submitted Transport Assessment gives little credence to public transport and contains omissions and inaccurate information.
- There should be discussion/liaison with schools, colleges and bus operators to ensure that pupil/student school/college timetables are unaffected.
- The bus stop needs to be repositioned, upgraded and retained to serve future development within the design of the Sydney Road Bridge.
- The highway design provided as part of this planning application is inadequate in respect of the new pedestrian crossing
- The highways design conflicts with the design for the approved development for Muller Properties (13/2055N). Without the widening of the bridge the highway design for the estate would be adequate as traffic entering the estate would be assisted by the traffic signals at the bridge. When the bridge is widened and the traffic signals are removed traffic entering the estate will require the highway near the junction to be widened to provide a middle recess right turn to prevent queueing traffic entering the estate from blocking back along Sydney Road

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principal of Development

The existing Sydney Road Bridge is identified within the Cheshire East Infrastructure Delivery Plan (CEIDP). The CEIDP identifies that the developments around Crewe will exacerbate the delays currently caused at the Sydney Road Pinch Point. The CEIDP identifies that the construction of a new bridge to allow two way carriageway is classed as Priority 1 (the highest priority).

The Core Planning Principles of the NPPF identify that planning should;

'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs'

The NPPF then goes onto state that Local Planning Authorities should;

'identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement'

And that Local authorities should work with transport providers to;

'develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development'

In terms of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan Policy TRAN.1 (Public Transport) seeks to safeguard the rail infrastructure within the Borough and states that *'development affecting rail corridors throughout the Borough will not be permitted'.* TRAN.3 requires new development to make appropriate provision for pedestrians through a number of measures including *'improving an existing footpaths'* and *'creating pedestrian routes through housing and employment areas'*.

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy identifies that the Sydney Road Bridge is an important infrastructure requirement and the allocations CS5 (Sydney Road, Crewe), CS38 (Leighton, Crewe) and CS39 (Broughton Road) all seek to secure S106 contributions towards the Sydney Road Bridge or the Sydney Road Corridor.

Policy CO1 (Sustainable Travel and Transport) identifies that development should give priority to walking, cycling and public transport within its design and create safe and secure footways/cycleways and paths linking public transport and other services.

Policy CO2 states that the Council will support transport infrastructure including schemes outlined within the current Infrastructure Delivery Plan/Local Transport Plan and support the improvement of rail infrastructure.

As a result it is considered that the principal of the bridge replacement in this location is acceptable.

SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Amenity

The proposed bridge would not raise any impacts upon adjoining residential properties in terms of loss of light, privacy or overbearing impact. The main amenity concerns relate to noise, air quality and contaminated land. These issues are considered below.

Noise and vibration

The proposed development has the potential to residents being exposed to noise and vibration at various times. There are also concerns caused by the re-routing of traffic onto other roads causing a temporary increase in road traffic noise levels for residents along those routes.

When assessing any planning application the impacts of the scheme have to be assessed against the overall long term benefits of the scheme.

The bridge crosses the West Coast Main Line (WCML) and due to this there will be a necessity for a great deal of the work to be undertaken during the night time and at weekends. Works over and on the WCML can only be undertaken during planned possessions (closures) of the line.

The construction is to be split over three phases as identified within the 'Proposal' section above.

There are also predicted impacts from ground borne vibration due to compaction rolling and bored piling.

Finally following completion of the scheme it is likely there will be an increase in the number of vehicles and the speed of vehicles using the road.

In addition throughout the scheme a site compound will be operational, and this is located in close proximity to sensitive receptors. Again due to the nature of the scheme it is assumed this will be operational 24/7 throughout the scheme.

The Non-Statutory Environmental Assessment (NSEA) submitted with the application uses baseline noise monitoring and noise prediction modelling to determine the impact of various operations on the nearest noise sensitive receptors.

During the construction phases, the NSEA predicts significant impacts with respect to noise and vibration at a number of noise sensitive properties. It is considered therefore that for the duration of the scheme significant controls and mitigation will be required to minimise the disruption to residents.

During the operational phase the NSEA predicts a moderate adverse increase in noise levels at the closest sensitive receptors to Sydney Road. At receptors further away the increase in noise levels is not considered to be significant.

The impact of the scheme is assessed against the Noise Policy Statement for England criteria which describes the impacts of noise as LOAEL (Lowest Observable Adverse Effect Level) through to SOAEL (Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level).

With the scheme in place 255 noise sensitive receptors are expected to experience SOAEL during the daytime (07:00-23:00) and 143 during the night-time (23:00-07:00).

The NSEA proposes a series of mitigation measures to minimise the impacts of the construction phase however it is recognised that there is little in the way of mitigation available for noise sensitive receptors likely to experience adverse impacts of noise in the long term operational phase.

The NSEA concludes that on noise grounds the proposed scheme has an adverse effect.

Ultimately it is for the decision maker to make a decision on planning balance, taking account of many factors including noise.

Whilst it is accepted (if approved) that construction and demolition will inevitably take place overnight and at weekends it is considered that wherever possible the noisiest activities should take place during standard construction hours.

The following conditions would be needed to prevent any amenity impacts as part of this development;
- Submission and approval of a Construction Environment Management Plan including that where possible that noise generative activities take place during standard construction hours
- A scheme to facilitate a residents liaison group
- At all times signage shall be displayed with contact numbers for reporting issues and problems associated with the construction works.

Air Quality

Policy SE12 of the emerging Local Plan states that the Council will seek to ensure all development is located and designed so as not to result in a harmful or cumulative impact upon air quality. This is in accordance with paragraph 124 of the NPPF and the Government's Air Quality Strategy.

When assessing the impact of a development on Local Air Quality, this office has regard to (amongst other things) the Council's Air Quality Strategy, the Air Quality Action Plan, Local Monitoring Data and the EPUK Guidance "Land Use Planning & Development Control: Planning for Air Quality May 2015).

As part of this application the applicant has submitted a detailed assessment of the likely impact on air quality in the area both with and without the development. The following scenarios were considered:

- Baseline 2013;
- Do minimum 2019;
- Do something 2019 including the widening of Sydney Road Bridge

The report concludes that there will be no significant adverse affect on the NO_2 and PM_{10} levels as a result of the proposed development. In most cases there is a slight reduction in predicted levels of NO_2.

However, this Environmental Health Officer has concerns over the air quality in other areas during the development phase road closure which is scheduled to last for 22 weeks. The diversion route passes through the Earle Street Air Quality Management Area where there could be an impact on the NO_2 levels, although this will be limited by the fact that the diversion will only be in place for 22 weeks. There are also concerns that traffic could use an alternative route to the official diversion by travelling down Queen Street/Lime Tree Avenue which could have an impact on the air quality in this area.

The following conditions would be required to mitigate the air quality implications of this development;
- The provision of diversion route signage
- Dust Control Measures

Contaminated Land

The proposal includes the creation of a temporary site compound and temporary site access, potentially necessitating the import of material. The Contaminated Land Officer has raised no objection to this application subject to the imposition of an informative.

Highway Implications

The existing bridge is located on the north east side of Crewe and carries Sydney Road over the four electrified lines of the Crewe to Manchester Rail line. Sydney Road is a part of the distributor road network within Crewe and forms a key strategic corridor linking the east and south-east parts of the town with areas to the north and north-west. The location is one of only four places within Crewe where it is possible to cross the West Coast Main Line (WCML). At present there is only a single carriageway across the bridge and flow is controlled by traffic signals; this causes congestion particularly at peak times. The new structure will increase the capacity of the road by allowing for two way flow across the bridge and as such remove a pinch point from Crewe road network. This will result in some

redistribution of traffic associated with removing the capacity constraint at the bridge, with the modelling suggesting approximately 120 and 175 additional vehicles using Sydney Road in the AM and PM peaks respectively (for forecast year 2034).

The existing bridge also suffers from poor pedestrian/cycle facilities with only one footway on the northern side of the bridge. This requires those approaching the bridge from the south to cross Sydney Road in order to safely cross the bridge. This issue is further compounded by no pedestrian crossing facilities (dropped kerb, tactile paving etc) being in place.

The new bridge will be designed with footways on both sides improving access for pedestrians and reducing the need for pedestrians to cross the road to use the existing footway, thus reducing potential traffic / pedestrian conflicts. Also, by situating a footpath on both sides of the carriageway the replacement structure will provide a continuous link within the pedestrian network. The design of the replacement bridge will ensure a safe route for pedestrians; it will also provide a safer route for cyclists by providing a combined cycle/footpath across the railway line.

During phase 3 of construction it is necessary to close Sydney Road Bridge to all vehicular traffic for a period of approximately 22 weeks. Options for potential diversionary routes are limited as Sydney Bridge is one of only four crossing points over the rail line within Crewe. As such, a diversion route has been proposed which involves utilising the A532 & B5076 which is deemed acceptable in principle as this route benefits from a higher or equivalent road classification than Sydney Road. However to enable this route to be fully utilised the existing 7.5 tonne weight restriction along Hungerford Road will need to be temporarily suspended by way of a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order. If this order wasn't forthcoming then an alternative diversion route utilising Crewe Road/Macon Way would need to be pursued.

The existing bus route 8 will need to be diverted during the works as this route currently traverses Sydney Road Bridge. The applicant has undertaken to discuss a suitable diversionary route with the relevant bus company.

The scheme will need to take account the consented residential development at land to the rear of 138 Sydney Road which may result in amendments to these access arrangements however the access arrangements detailed in application 14/5842N appear to cater for the changing traffic dynamic that would result from the bridge improvement scheme by the provision of a right turn lane into the residential development.

There will inevitably be some disruption on the local highway network during the construction period of the new bridge. However once complete the development will provide benefits to the flow of traffic along Sydney Road with the removal of the existing bottleneck. The development will also provide benefits in terms of improved pedestrian and cycle links across the railway. The highway benefits of this development weigh in favour of this proposed development.

Landscape

The scale of the proposed development and urban character of the surrounding area means that a variety of vegetation will need to be removed, including a number of trees. As part of the application an assessment of the proposed scheme on landscape character, townscape character and views has been submitted. The submitted assessment indicates that the townscape character is of low sensitivity, since it is already influenced by road and railway infrastructure. The assessment identifies that the

impacts will be adverse and most apparent for residential receptors and those using nearby footpath to the western side of the railway (FP26 Crewe) and the cycle track to the eastern side of the railway (formerly FP36 Crewe).

The assessment identifies that the construction work and removal of vegetation will result in very large adverse effects and that users of FP26 Crewe will experience a major view, and that users of cycle track will experience a moderate change in view, with moderate adverse effects for residents at no 205-243 Lime Tree Avenue and also for residents of Sydney Road. It is identifies that these effects will reduce with replacement planting.

The Councils Landscape Architect would broadly agree with the assessment. The proposed mitigation will help reduce the impacts over time and although a Landscape Mitigation Plan has been submitted, this is only illustrative and only shows proposed tree planting without identifying particular species. Since some of this planting is located in private gardens it may not be the case that it will ever be planted, dependant on the views of owners. The Councils Landscape Architect has suggested that every effort be made to implement this planting, but also that additional tree planting could be undertaken along the western side of the bridge, particularly to the north of the existing sub station, where there appears to be no replacement vegetation proposed for the vegetation that will be removed as part of this scheme.

The scheme of landscaping will be secured through the imposition of a planning condition.

Trees

The Application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) which provides an assessment of the potential impact of the development on existing trees, anticipated tree losses and protection measures required for those trees identified for retention. The scope of the assessment includes land 15 metres either side of the proposed road bridge or within 15 metres of the proposed works, provision of a 5 metre clearance/working width within the construction footprint, a 1 metre working width to the pedestrian footpath and fixed footprint for a 600t working crane and site compound.

The trees within the area of land required for development are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order and the site does not lie within a designated Conservation Area.

The submitted AIA has identified 50 individual trees, 21 groups and 7 hedgerows within or immediately adjacent to the application site. One individual tree has been identified as High (A) category; 8 individual trees and 6 groups have been identified as moderate (B) category. Three individual trees and 2 groups are specified as being in a poor condition (U category) with the remaining 38 individual and 13 groups categorised as low quality (C category) trees.

The AIA provides an assessment of likely impact on trees and identifies 17 individual trees and 8 groups for removal of which the majority are low quality (C category) trees. Three moderate (B) category individual trees and 4 moderate (B) category groups are proposed for removal.

The assessment identifies that the arboricultural impact of the scheme is considered to be of low to medium significance to the surrounding area with just over half of surveyed tree features to be removed or partially removed.

In terms of the loss of trees, the greater proportion have been assessed as low quality (C) category individual specimens or groups. Whilst it is accepted that these losses will have a low to medium impact from an arboricultural perspective, collectively from a landscape perspective the impact is considered to be greater.

It is noted that there are proposed tree losses within private gardens principally within No.88 and 110 Sydney Road, and a section of hedge within and adjacent to No 78 Sydney Road. These have been mostly assessed as low quality specimens but nevertheless provide some benefit of screening to residents.

An Illustrative Landscape Mitigation Plan has been submitted with the scheme showing proposed tree planting and further planting should be considered to offset the impact of the scheme.

Reference is made in the supporting Extended Phase 1 Habitat/Bat Roost & Activity Survey Report to an Oak tree located to the west of the electricity sub station which has been recorded as having cavities which could be used for roosting bats (category 1). The tree, is identified in the submitted Arboricultural Assessment as T9, a low quality (Category C) tree. The tree is not affected by the proposal and is shown for retention on the Tree Removals and Constraints Plan.

The Assessment broadly identifies that a number of trees may be encroached by the development (associated infrastructure, retaining walls or earthworks) and that there may be subsequent alterations to the scheme, such as the submission of construction details relating to proposed retaining walls which may require additional tree removals.

In the light of the above, a precautionary approach is required to address current and possible future arboricultural implications of the proposal and as suggested by the Assessment an Arboricultural Method Statement/Tree Protection Plan and on site monitoring of the project will be required.

Ecology

Statutory Designated Sites

Natural England have been consulted on the application to advise on the potential impacts of the proposed development upon statutory designated sites. In this case Natural England have stated that they offer no comments on this application and as a result it is not considered that the development would impact upon any statutory designated sites.

Bats and trees

A tree has been identified within the works compound area as having High potential to support roosting bats. It has now been confirmed that this tree will be retained as part of the proposed development.

A lighting condition may be required to avoid any impacts on foraging and commuting bats as a result of any construction phase lighting.

Woodland

A small area of broad leaved woodland would be lost as a result of the proposed works compound. This woodland area however consists of only a handful of small trees.

The area of the works yard is currently proposed to be restored to amenity grassland. To compensate for the loss of the existing trees the Councils Ecologist recommends that the submitted landscape plan be amended to show woodland planting provided in this area instead.

Hedgerows

The proposals will result in the loss of a section of species rich native hedgerow. Habitats of this type are a material consideration for planning purposes. The submitted landscaping plan suggests either the translocation or replanting of a new hedgerow to compensate for this loss.

In the event that planning permission is granted the Councils Ecologist recommends that a condition be attached with requires the submission of detailed proposals for the creation of compensatory hedgerows.

Reptiles

Habitats adjacent to the railway embankment have been identified as having potential to support common reptile species. The Council Ecologist advises that considering the scale of the proposed works the impacts of the proposals on reptiles is likely to be low (if they are in fact present). The submitted habitat report recommends that the potential impacts on reptiles be mitigated through the implementation of a suite of 'Reasonable Avoidance Measures'. This approach is acceptable.

In the event that planning permission is granted a condition could be imposed which requires the submission of a reptile mitigation method statement.

Japanese Knotweed

The applicant should be aware that Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica)* is present on the proposed development site. Under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981 it is an offence to cause Japanese Knotweed to grow in the wild. Japanese Knotweed may be spread simply by means of disturbance of its rhizome system, which extends for several meters around the visible parts of the plant and new growth can arise from even the smallest fragment of rhizome left in the soil as well as from cutting taken from the plant.

Disturbance of soil on the site may result in increased growth of Japanese Knotweed on the site. If the applicant intends to move any soil or waste off site, under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 any part of the plant or any material contaminated with Japanese Knotweed must be disposed of at a landfill site licensed to accept it and the operator should be made aware of the nature of the waste.

Other Protected Species and Great Crested Newts

Based upon the results of the submitted surveys the Council Ecologist advises that these species do not present a constraint on the proposed development.

Nesting Birds

If planning consent is granted the following condition is required to safeguard nesting birds.

Flood Risk/Drainage

The site is located within Flood Zone 1. In this case the Councils Flood Risk Team have raised no objection to the development subject to the imposition of a planning condition in relation to drainage strategy/design.

The comments raised by United Utilities in relation to their infrastructure are noted. An informative will be attached to any approval to make the developer aware of any implications as part of the construction phase of the development.

Impact upon the Public Right of Way (PROW)

The proposed development would have a direct yet insignificant effect on the Public Right of Way (FP26) and the cycle track (formerly FP36). The Councils PROW Officer has raised no objection to the scheme subject to the imposition of planning conditions.

The PROW Officer has made a number of suggestions to improve pedestrian/cycle provision as part of the scheme.

In terms of the suggested pedestrian/cycling improvements to the scheme the applicant has confirmed that the works are not possible as they would rely on third party land.

However the applicant has confirmed that they are keen to take the opportunity to improve the local highway network if possible – provided that the delivery of the planning permission is not dependent on it. As a result the applicant has suggested that a condition could be imposed with the following wording;

'Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a scheme to improve cycleway and footpath provisions in the vicinity of the development shall be submitted to the local planning authority for written approval.'

The proposed development will result in benefits to both pedestrians and cyclists with the proposed bridge accommodating improved pedestrian/cycle connections.

Brine Subsidence

The Brine Board has stated that the site is located within an area that has previously been affected by brine subsidence, and the possibility of minor future movements cannot be completely discounted.

A standard informative will be attached to any approval to advise the applicant of these comments in order that they are taken on board during the construction phase of the development.

Electric Infrastructure

The site lies adjacent to a Scottish Power substation and there are power cables which run through the existing bridge structure. In this case Scottish Power have been consulted on this application and originally objected in terms of the impact that the development would have upon their infrastructure in

terms of the encroachment of the development upon their access and the position of the site compound.

Following negotiations Scottish Power have now confirmed that they have no objection to the development and that the imposition of two planning conditions will address their concerns. The first condition is for an amended plan to be submitted to realign the footpath to avoid Scottish Power land and apparatus, the second condition relates to further details of the proposed site compound and details of its time of use. On this basis there is no objection in terms of the electrical infrastructure as part of this development.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The overview to the CELPS states that the policy principles underpinning the vision for the Borough includes;

'Support new development with the right new infrastructure; our plan proposes at least eight miles of new roads and substantial upgrades to our overall transport network.'

The Overview to the CELPS then goes onto state that;

'This Plan is strongly underpinned by a need to improve transport connections across the Borough. New projects are planned in all towns as part of the Plan, to address congestion issues.'

The existing single carriageway structure acts a bottleneck within the highway network. Sydney Road acts as a main distributor route for traffic to the north of Crewe Town Centre and provides access from the South of Crewe to North West Crewe (which includes Leighton Hospital, Bentley Motors and future housing sites identified within the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

Providing additional infrastructure capacity in the local highway network is required in order to help Crewe play a vital role in the economic growth of Cheshire East and the wider sub-region, and the Department for Transport identifies that the proposed development would have the benefit of: '*removing a significant pinch point and unlocking capacity to support a number of allocated housing sites.'*

As well as being a bottleneck in the local highway network and constraining future growth aspirations for the area, Sydney Road Bridge is also an ageing structure that is in need of regular maintenance work. The existing bridge is owned by Network Rail and has sub-standard parapets, and also suffers from cracks that are caused by differential movement between the bridge supports. A recent structural survey showed the bridge to be in a '*fair to poor condition*'.

As a result it is considered that there would be significant economic benefits arising from this proposed development.

CONCLUSIONS

The existing Sydney Road Bridge is identified within the Cheshire East Infrastructure Delivery Plan (CEIDP). The CEIDP identifies that the developments around Crewe will exacerbate the delays currently caused at the Sydney Road Pinch Point. The CEIDP identifies that the construction of a new bridge to allow two way carriageway is classed as Priority 1 (the highest priority).

The replacement of the existing bridge will provide important highway benefits to Crewe and economic benefits outlined above. It should also be noted that the existing bridge is an aging structure which is classed as 'fair to poor condition'. The bridge currently requires regular maintenance work.

During the construction period of the development there would be some disruption to local residents in terms of noise, traffic diversions, closure of the PROW and through air quality but this would be for a limited time only. Following the completion of the development there would be benefits in terms of improved traffic movement, improved pedestrian and cycle links and a slight reduction in predicted levels of NO_2.

In terms of noise following the completion of the development the NSEA predicts a moderate adverse increase in noise levels at the closest sensitive receptors to Sydney Road. At receptors further away the increase in noise levels is not considered to be significant

The landscape assessment identifies that the landscape impacts will be adverse and most apparent for residential receptors and those using nearby footpath to the western side of the railway (FP26 Crewe) and the cycle track to the eastern side of the railway (formerly FP36 Crewe).

The development would have a neutral impact in terms of trees, ecology, flood risk/drainage and electric infrastructure.

In this case it is considered that the benefits of this scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any harm and on this basis the proposal represents sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve subject to the following conditions;

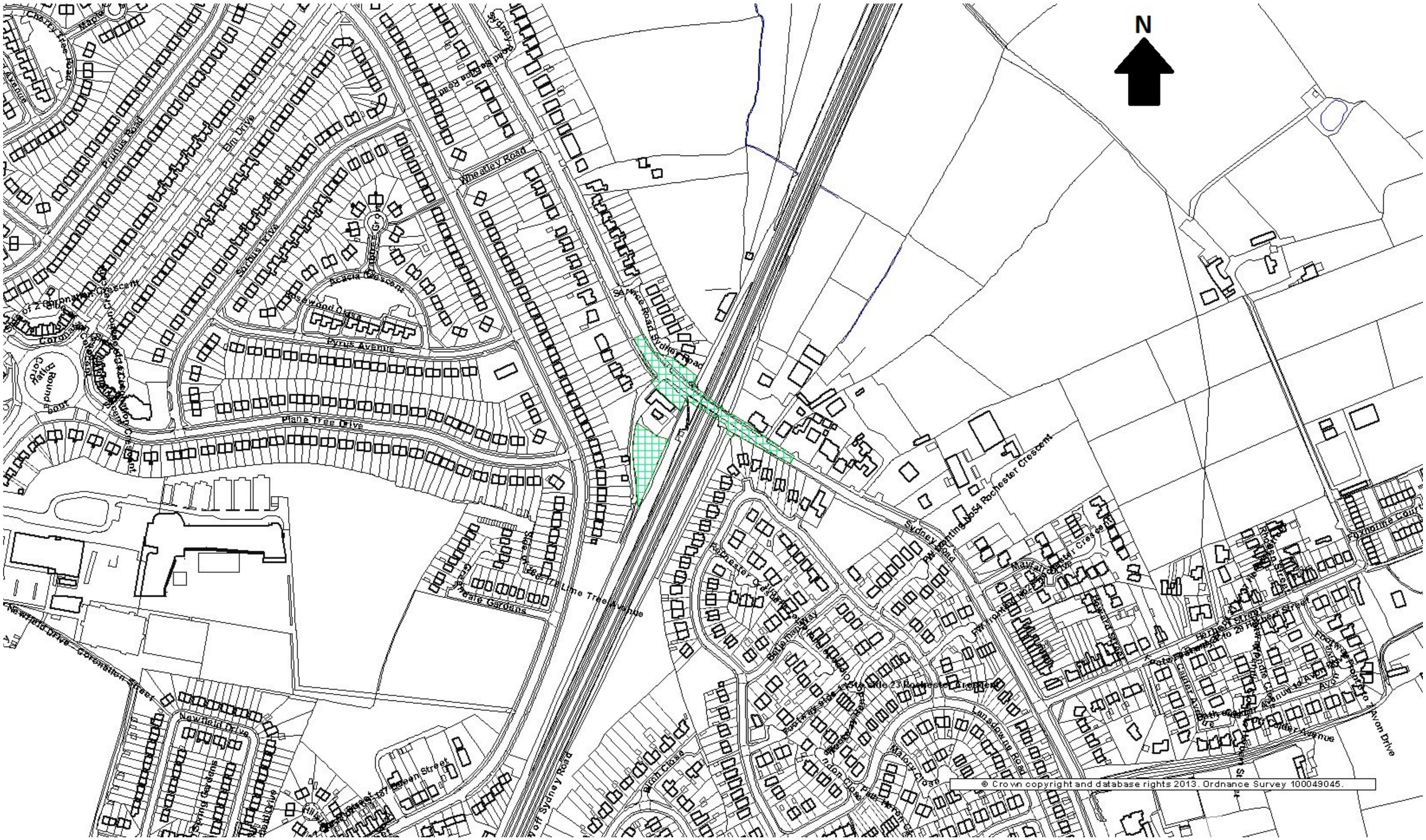
1. **Standard time 3 years**
2. **Development to proceed in accordance with the approved plans**
3. **Prior submission of an amended plan to realign the footpath and to avoid Scottish Power infrastructure**
4. **Details of the siting of the compound and its timing to be submitted and agreed**
5. **Prior to the commencement of development a Tree Protection Scheme is to be submitted and approved**
6. **Prior to the commencement of development an Arboricultual Method Statement is to be submitted and approved**
7. **Submission of a scheme of landscaping including replacement tree and hedgerow planting to be submitted**
8. **Implementation of the scheme of landscaping including the replacement tree and hedgerow planting**
9. **Reptile Mitigation Method Statement to be submitted and approved**
10. **Nesting birds – timing of works**
11. **Prior to the commencement of development a Construction Environment Management Plan is to be submitted and approved**
12. **Where possible noise generative activities shall take place during standard construction hours**

13. **At all times of construction there shall be a prominently displayed contact telephone numbers for the reporting of issues and problems**
14. **Dust Control Measures to be submitted and approved**
15. **Drainage Strategy and design to be submitted and approved**
16. **Prior to commencement a scheme to improve cycleway and footpath provision within the vicinity of the site shall be submitted and approved**
17. **A PROW scheme of management shall be submitted and approved which shall include proposals for the temporary closure of the PROW along with the alternative route provision**
18. **The line of the PROW shall be marked out prior to the commencement of development**
19. **Pre-commencement and pre-completion surveys of the PROW shall be submitted to the LPA and approved in writing.**

Informatives;

1. **Japanese knotweed informative**
2. **Liaison committee to be set up with local residents and Members**
3. **Diversion Route signage to be provided**
4. **Standard Construction Hours informative**
5. **Contaminated Land informative**
6. **Informative to advise of United Utilities Infrastructure**
7. **A temporary Traffic Regulation Order will be required to enable any diversion along Hungerford Road**
8. **Brine Board informative to advise that precautions are required to mitigate the effects of any future brine movement**

In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Planning and Place Shaping Manager has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Southern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.


N
Wheatley Road
Prunus Road
Elm Drive
Acacia Crescent
Pyrus Avenue
Plane Tree Drive
Lime Tree Avenue
Newfield Drive
Coronation Street
Sydney Road
Rochester Crescent
Lansdowne Road
Calder Avenue
Avon Drive
© Crown copyright and database rights 2013. Ordnance Survey 100049045.