

Planning, Access and Design Statement

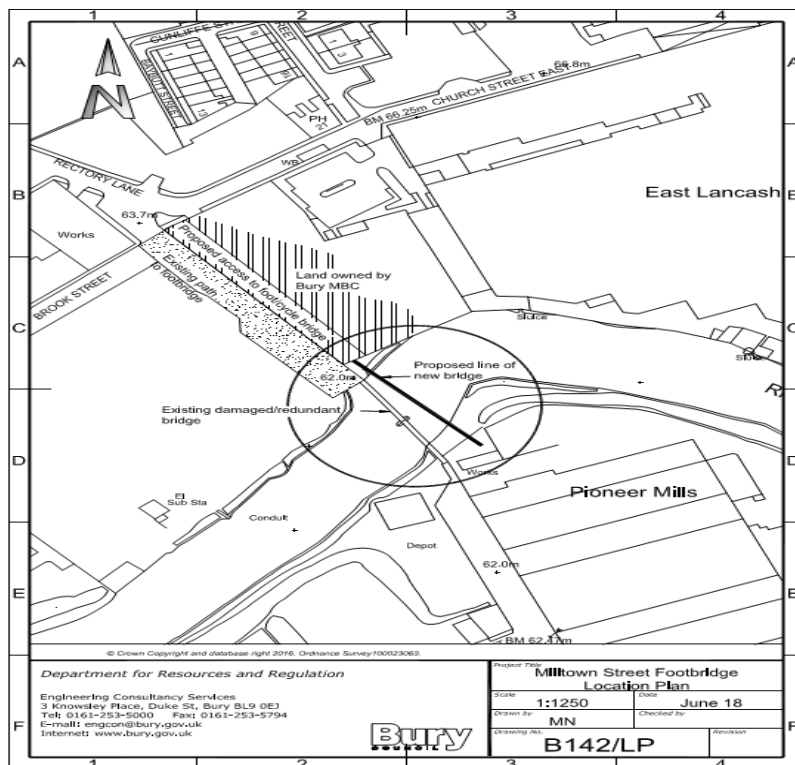
Proposed Milltown Street Foot/Cycle Bridge, Radcliffe

1. Background/Summary

This planning application seeks approval for a replacement bridge to be constructed over the River Irwell; for site and river abutment/pier works, plus temporary and permanent access to the bridge site. The proposed structure is located in Radcliffe, approximately 3 miles to the South West of Bury Centre at grid reference SD 379115 407250. The area is bounded by industrial land and overgrown former industrial land to the south and similar land but with some residential properties to the north. The Limit of Works (boundary of the site) is shown on drawing B142/02-P that supports this application. The bridge will provide for pedestrian (re-connecting a public right of way) and cycle access.

An original bridge in the vicinity of the proposed structure was badly damaged by high water levels in the River Irwell in December 2015. The structure has been out of service since this time with one span of the bridge being later removed in the interest of public safety. It is not considered practicable to repair the existing bridge. As such, the Council is looking to provide an alternative river crossing in the vicinity of the existing bridge and take the opportunity to provide a river crossing that will accommodate cycle and pedestrian traffic.

The proposed bridge is to be a two span structure over the River Irwell. It is envisaged that the spans will be approximately 42m and 13m giving a total span of approximately 55m. The internal width of the bridge is to be 3.5m (minimum) and all design works shall be carried out in accordance with applicable and current 'DfT Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' standards.



Location Plan



Central pier viewed from Rectory Lane.



Approach from Milltown Street



Former bridge access ramp, Milltown Street



Approach from Rectory Lane

The replacement bridge is to be located immediately north of the previous structure, along the same axis and with realigned access points to the existing highways. There is residential development to the north of the site but the surrounding land is predominantly industrial or cleared former industrial land.

This statement is accompanied by :-

- Plans, elevations, sections and a general layout of the bridge site showing the temporary site arrangements and final layout.
- A scaled plan showing the application site edged red, land ownerships edged blue and area of temporary works.
- A scaled location plan of the area in question.
- A habitat/ecological survey and report dated October 2021.
- Flood risk assessment
- Application form and certificate.

The applicant has commissioned a detailed engineering design for the new bridge to meet current standards and performance targets. It is necessary to provide replacement cycle access for the existing Greenway route, whilst ensuring the proposed bridge and the associated works meet planning policy and design standards.

It is also important to ensure that the new bridge does not interfere with river flows and meets the Environment Agency's flood risk requirements, the proposed structure has been designed accordingly.

2.Engineering Feasibility and Design

The applicant commissioned Wilde Consulting Structural and Civil Engineers to look at the feasibility and design of a replacement bridge that would accommodate the relevant user groups.

An initial feasibility study (May 2019) included a desk top survey; geotechnical and topographical surveys of the area; riverbed survey; ground investigation including trial pits and boreholes, access options, single and two span structure options with different structure types and dimensions. The study looked at 5 options. In conclusion, the preferred option is a two span steel truss structure with a new river pier.

The final assessment covered relative costs; feasibility/practicability; deck level and access. This option was further refined in a revised report (July 2019) which resulted in some cost savings. The resulting bridge design (option 4B) is shown on the drawing and example image below.

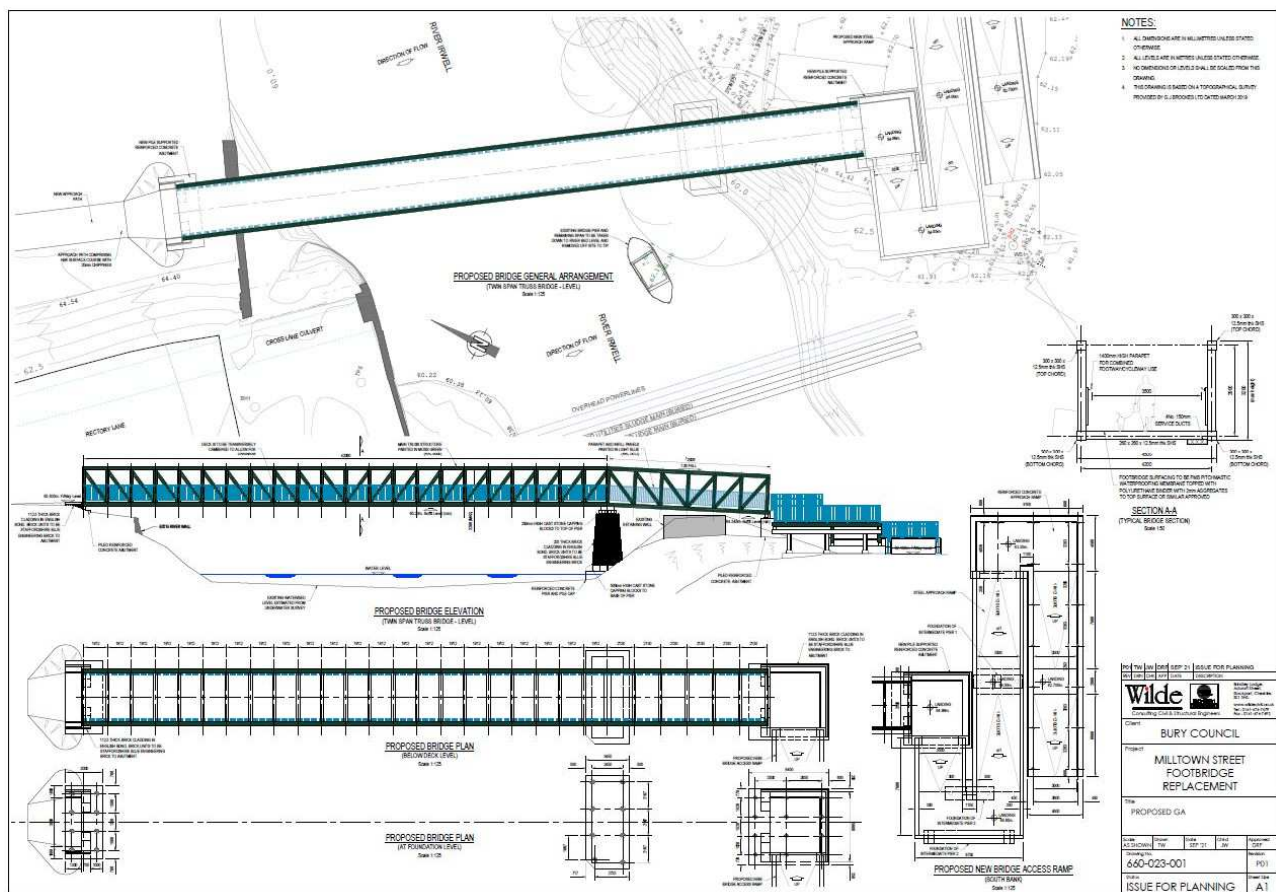


Image of the proposed bridge.

3. Proposed Bridge Design

The proposed bridge design will provide a two span shared footbridge/cycle bridge (3.5m clear internal width) by provision of a new abutment to the south east side of the river, new pier to the south bank at new design levels and a ramp giving access to the deck level.

Superstructure

The superstructure would comprise 2 No. simply supported spans of different lengths. The north span would be approximately 42.1m long and the south span 12.8m. Each span would comprise a steel truss supporting steel deck plates and stiffeners. It is envisaged the maximum truss height will not exceed 3.2m. Truss options include Warren, Vierendeel or Pratt arrangements. The deck would have an internal clearance width of 3.5m to accommodate a combined footway/cycleway. Deck plates would be coated with an anti-slip surfacing. A pedestrian parapet of minimum height 1.4m would be provided to the internal faces of the trusses.

Levels

The minimum soffit level of any point of the north span of the bridge shall be 64.87m. The bridge deck will be slightly cambered to assist with drainage. The south span would fall towards the south abutment at a gradient of 1-in-20 resulting in a footway level of 64.43m at the south abutment. To the north, the footway level at the new north abutment would tie in with the existing road level at Rectory Lane. To the south, a new permanent approach ramp is to be constructed to the east of the existing south abutment in order to facilitate the level change.

Substructures

There will be a new abutment to the north side of the river. The new abutment will be founded at a higher level to the east of the existing support location. A reinforced concrete bank seat is the preferred abutment choice at this location. The above ground concrete elements could be clad with masonry. A new abutment will also be constructed to the south side of the river.

It is envisaged that the pier would comprise of a piled foundation, reinforced concrete column and reinforced concrete pile cap with masonry cladding to the concrete column. The existing river pier is to be removed/taken down to riverbed level.

4. Ecological Report

An ecological survey and report by Penny Anderson Associates was produced in October 2021. This studied the ecology of the site and the impact of the proposed development when viewed against current legislation, planning policy and good practice. The report found no concerns over the impact of the proposed bridge on a range of habitats. It did however advise that any work for the clearance of habitats used by breeding birds should be undertaken outside the breeding season. Also, in the event that building 1, as identified in the report, is to be affected by the work then additional bat surveys may be required. Care must also be taken to avoid the spread of Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam to other sites. Handling/working near to giant hogweed is hazardous and can cause severe skin irritation/blisters. The report also saw the opportunity to undertake the following as part of the works -

- Bat and bird boxes on bridge structure;
- Native species landscaping as required to restore land after the works; and
- Control of invasive non-native plant species in locality of scheme

Input from a suitably qualified ecologist is recommended for habitat creation (bat/bird boxes) and native planting, and specialist weed control services are recommended for the management of Invasive Non-native species (INNS) of plants.

5. Discussion and Compliance with Planning Policies

The 2021 NPPF largely confirms that assessments of development proposals should be in line with the policies in LPAs development plans. It does, however, give some guidance, as outlined below.

For the remainder of part 5 the policies are followed by comments in relation to the submitted planning application and in line with the description/discussion in parts 2 and 3.

NPPF paragraph 130. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Comment: Where relevant, the design and function of the bridge and its access meet the above requirements.

The following NPPF policies are also relevant. In paragraph 8, Promoting healthy and safe communities, paragraphs 92 a and c refer to the need to encourage walking and cycling. Paragraph 98 refers to the need to 'protect and enhance public rights of way and access and add links to existing rights of way networks, including National Trails'. Paragraphs 104c and 106c, under promoting sustainable transport, encourages the identification and implementation of opportunities to promote walking and cycling.

Comment: The replacement of the bridge and re-establishing its important cycle and walking links is totally consistent with the requirements of the 2021 NPPF.

The relevant saved policies from the Council's approved UDP (1997) are as follows:-

- EN1/1 - Visual Amenity.
- EN1/7 – Through routes and Gateways
- EN5/1 - New Development and Flood Risk
- EN6/4 - Wildlife Links and Corridors
- EN7/3 - Water Pollution
- HT6/3 - Cycle Routes.
- OL5/2 - Development in River Valleys
- RT3/3 - Access to the Countryside
- RT3/4 - Recreational Routes

EN1/1 - Visual Amenity.

Development will not be permitted where proposals would have a detrimental effect on: public views of prominent or important buildings, especially those in areas of architectural or historic interest; the visual

amenity both within, or viewed from, areas of environmental interest such as the Green Belt, Special Landscape Areas **or the river valleys**.

Justification

Although proposals may be considered acceptable in principle, the wider consideration of the effect on visual amenity is necessary in sensitive areas to ensure that developments are not inappropriate by reason of their siting, materials or design. All new proposals should be carefully sited and designed so as not to have any serious detrimental effects on surrounding areas, buildings and views, or create built skyline ridges which will undermine the aims of this policy. This policy applies the advice contained in PPG 2 'Green Belts', which states that proposals should not injure the visual amenity, either within, or where conspicuous from, the Green Belt.

Comment: The design of the bridge and its abutments, walls, landscaping, planting and access routes will contribute to the appearance of the riverside.

EN1/7 – Through routes and Gateways

The Council is concerned to improve the quality of development along through routes and at gateways, and will require new proposals fronting major through routes and at the identified gateways to display a high standard of design and landscaping.

Justification

Many people form their main impression of the Borough when travelling along the main through routes and at certain points of arrival ("gateways") to the Borough's town centres. Along the through routes listed below and at the gateways shown on the Proposals Map, there will be an emphasis on encouraging environmental improvements, removing dereliction and preserving/enhancing features of quality and importance in the street scene. When considering proposals for development along through routes and at gateways, the Council will be especially concerned with encouraging a high standard of design and landscaping. The Borough's main through routes are listed below: Highways:- M60, M62, M66, A56, A58, A576, A665, A667, A676, A6044, A6053, B6196, B6198, B6213, B6214, B6221, B6222, B6473, Hollins Brow/Croft Lane/ Pilsworth Road, (between the A56 and M66). Railways:- Bury - Manchester Metrolink line and the East Lancashire Railway. Waterways:-**The Rivers Irwell** and Roch, and the Manchester, Bolton, and Bury Canal.

Comment: The proposed development will provide a high quality structure and improved riverside.

EN5/1 - New Development and Flood Risk

The Council will not permit new development, including the raising of land and the intensification of development, where such development would be at risk from flooding, would be likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, or would adversely affect river flood defences. When assessing proposals against this policy, the following criteria will apply: the impact on the floodplain; the increase in surface water run-off as a result of the proposal; the impact on fluvial flood defences; the incorporation of mitigating works.

Justification

Circular 30/92 "Development and Flood Risk" states that where flood defence considerations arise, they should always be taken into account by local planning authorities in preparing development plans and in determining planning applications. This policy follows this advice, the aim being to ensure that new development or the intensification of existing development is not at risk from flooding and does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Within the floodplain, new development may be liable to flooding and may also increase the risk of flooding elsewhere by reducing the storage capacity of the floodplain and impeding flood flows. New developments may also result in a substantial increase in surface water run-off because of impermeable surfaces such as roofs and paving. This may result in an increased risk of flooding downstream and a reduction in infiltration to groundwater. A breach in river flood defences could lead to flooding and as such the Council will need to assess the impact of developments on the stability and

continuity of any river flood defences. When assessing proposals against this policy, the Council will consult the Environment Agency before determining the application. Where the principle of development is accepted, the Council may require the developer to undertake works to mitigate the impact of any development.

Comment: The proposed bridge will be raised up at bank level on abutments and should cause no disruption to river flow. There should be no impact on flood defences, the floodplain or on run off from adjacent land resulting from the proposals. The design consultant will engage with the statutory bodies to agree all design details. The consultant will obtain the relevant formal approvals for the design/proposed works from the EA and consult with UU to establish its requirements. Any such conditions/requirements will then be included in the detailed design or passed on to the successful contractor as required.

EN6/4 - Wildlife Links and Corridors

The Council will seek to consolidate and, where appropriate, strengthen wildlife links and corridors, and will not permit development which would adversely affect identified areas. In particular, the Council will seek to ensure that new development within or adjacent to identified links or corridors contributes to their effectiveness through the design, landscaping and siting of development proposals and mitigation works, where appropriate.

Justification

A network of wildlife links and corridors has been defined on the basis of Phase 1 (1990/91) and Phase 2 (1991/92) Habitat Surveys of the Borough. Such areas are important as routes for species migration and dispersal, and often comprise diverse semi-natural habitats. The identified network of wildlife links and corridors connect designated SBI's and other identified areas of high and medium wildlife value. Figure 6 gives a diagrammatic indication of the broad areas concerned and the more detailed boundaries of these areas are identified on the Proposals Map. For the purpose of clarification wildlife corridors are defined as the major routes by which species migrate or disperse. Wildlife links are generally narrower than corridors but perform an equally important function and mainly consist of roadside verges, active or disused railway land and the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal. The wildlife value of land depends to a large extent on its management. Thus, the management of land in accordance with nature conservation principles is necessary to generally enhance the quality and quantity of wildlife habitats. The Bury Wildlife Strategy details the requirements and methods of management for sites of nature conservation value, as well as promoting the social, educational and environmental benefits accessible natural areas can bring to the local community. Existing wildlife corridors include:

the Irwell Valley

the valley of Holcombe Brook
the valley of Hawkshaw Brook
the Kirklees Valley
the Roch Valley
Hollins Brook etc. etc

Comment: The submitted ecology survey and report has put forward recommendations to protect and enhance habitats. In principle, the bridge will also provide an additional river crossing point enhancing links and corridors.

EN7/3 - Water Pollution

The Council will not permit development which would have an unacceptable adverse effect in terms of pollution upon the water quality of the Borough's water courses and other water features.

Justification

Improvements in water quality and control of water pollution are the responsibility of the Environment Agency (EA) and North West Water (NWW). The Council can restrict development likely to have a

detrimental effect on the Borough's watercourses and other water features, and it can support measures to raise water quality standards. Water pollution incidents can also be reported to the above agencies to encourage positive action. Working closely with the EA and NWW will help to demonstrate the Council's commitment to improving water quality in the Borough. Encouraging water quality improvement is also seen to be an integral part of the Council's wider objectives of improving and developing the Borough's river valleys for recreation and tourism activities.

Comment: The successful contractor will be responsible to the applicant to ensure that the development site and construction works are controlled to comply with policy EN7/3.

HT6/3 - Cycle Routes.

The Council will give consideration to the establishment of designated cycle routes. The following areas are presently identified as having potential for defined cycle routes: HT6/3/1 - The Kirklees Valley. A route linking Bury Town Centre and Greenmount primarily along a former railway line. HT6/3/2 - Former Bolton to Bury/Radcliffe Railway Line. Routes from Bradley Fold to Bury and from Bradley Fold to the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal in Radcliffe along a former railway line.

HT6/3/3 - The Roch Valley. A route from Springwater Park in the Irwell Valley along the valley of the River Roch to link with the Ashworth Valley in Rochdale. For a part of its length the proposed route lies within the Borough of Rochdale and is, therefore, not shown on the Proposals Map.

Justification

The provision of cycle routes in the locations identified would create a cycle route almost the whole length of the Borough and would facilitate links to existing defined cycle routes, particularly in the West Pennine Moors area. At some points the routes will be shared with walkers and horse riders. By providing defined cycle routes as part of a Transport Strategy for the Borough it is hoped that cycling can be encouraged both for recreational purposes and for journeys to work and school as an alternative to the use of private motor cars (See also Recreation and Tourism Policy RT3/4). These routes will be safeguarded and any development which would prejudice their establishment or use will not be permitted. In implementing this policy, the Council will ensure that, where appropriate, both new footpaths and improvements to existing footpaths take account of the need to minimise conflicts between different user groups. The Council will ensure that both reclamation schemes and new development proposals along the proposed recreation routes make satisfactory provision for public access. The improvement or provision of facilities for cyclists is also considered under Policies HT2/2 and HT6/1.

Comment: The new bridge will contribute improved cycle links in the borough. The proposed development will contribute significantly to the implementation of specific routes and connectivity in general.

OL5/2 - Development in River Valleys

Within the River Valleys, new buildings or the change of use of existing buildings or the change of use of land will not be permitted. The only exceptions considered acceptable will be those where the development would not lead to the division of the open parts of the valleys into sections and it falls within the terms below: where the area is designated as Green Belt the established Green Belt policies will apply; or where the area does not form part of the Green Belt, at least one of the following circumstances is met: that the development represents limited infilling to an established valley settlement or industrial area; that it is an extension to, or renewal of an existing industry, where the economic and employment factors are of overriding importance; that the development is required in association with an outdoor recreation or appropriate tourist facility; that the development is limited and will form part of, and be essential to, the maintenance of the provision and improvement of public services and utilities; any other development that would be appropriate in a Green Belt.

Justification

The Council is keen to retain the open character of the river valleys by controlling development. This is to protect, as much as possible, the open land which is left and to help to implement future conservation, recreational and environmental programmes and strategies. The policy, therefore, intends to protect all the open land in the river valleys regardless of its physical condition, by directing inappropriate development away from the valleys and by only permitting development which would not be damaging to them. This will prevent further urban encroachment although it will not guarantee that open land will be properly used or managed.

The majority of the river valley system in Bury is within the Green Belt and where this occurs, not only will Green Belt policies apply, but the need to ensure that development does not lead to the division of the open parts of the valleys into sections will also be a primary objective. Within the river valley areas outside the Green Belt, development must still not lead to the division of the open parts of the valleys into sections. However, proposals will be accepted in principle where they are considered to conform with the important exceptions as set out in Part b) of the policy. The first exception accepts that there will be a presumption in favour of limited infilling development within established valley settlements or industrial areas. In the case of industrial areas this means accepting in principle the development for industrial purposes of small parcels of land wholly within existing industrial areas, or of small salients or projections of open land which penetrate into them. There would also be no objection in principle to new industry locating within the existing industrial areas. There are also a number of settlements within the river valleys and whilst seeking to control their expansion, this policy recognises the need to accept limited infilling within a settlement's boundary.

The second exception for river valley areas outside the Green Belt deals only with industry which is already established within the valley. Provided that it would not lead to the division of open parts of the valleys into sections, an extension to or renewal of an industry will be acceptable in principle where economic and employment factors are considered to be of overriding importance. In seeking an exception under this policy, it will be up to the company concerned to demonstrate the economic and employment case to the Council.

The third exception relates to the recreation and tourism objectives of the Plan. In seeking to encourage appropriate recreation and tourism facilities, particular attention will be paid to siting, design, layout, materials and landscaping. The fourth exception relates to maintaining the provision and improvement of public services and utilities. The Council will continue to give sympathetic consideration to the particular operational requirements of statutory undertakers and other bodies providing essential public services. However, where a proposal is made to locate an entirely new development, or alterations to an existing facility, within the area subject to this policy, the Council will require the bodies concerned to show compelling reasons why sites outside this area were considered by them to be unacceptable. Development of this kind will only be permitted where such compelling reasons appear to the Council to exist. The final exception relates to all other development proposals and indicates that proposals which would be considered acceptable in Green Belt areas will also normally be acceptable in river valley areas.

Comment: There will be no or little impact on the open character of the Irwell valley resulting from the construction of the proposed bridge and its abutments and access. Any minor impact will be in the immediate vicinity of the bridge and will have little effect on wider views. The replacement bridge involves the provision and improvement of public services and utilities.

RT3/3 - Access to the Countryside

The Council will seek to improve and extend opportunities for all to gain access to the countryside, in particular at focal points identified for informal recreation, by: **maintaining, improving and, where appropriate, extending the existing network of Public Rights of Way, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways**; improving signposting and waymarking; improving facilities for the mobility impaired; providing car parks and bus facilities, where appropriate; creating new access points and areas of public access.

Justification

The Council recognises that it is important to improve and increase access to the countryside for all members of the community. The Rights of Way network, in particular, ensures that people have access to the countryside. Maintenance and signposting of paths, the provision of car parking in appropriate locations, and consideration of the requirements of the mobility impaired, will help to ensure that access to the countryside is available for all members of the community. In those areas listed earlier, in Recreation and Tourism Policy RT3/1, access for informal recreation is an important consideration. Whilst it is not possible to detail future proposals at this stage, it is at these focal points where recreation is concentrated, that the provision of car parking and facilities for the mobility impaired would be of greatest benefit.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all the Borough's residents and visitors are able to gain access to the countryside. Where access is poor, this policy enables new access points to be created. Encouraging increased access to the countryside must be compatible with the character and amenity of the area. The car parking requirements in factor (d) should accord with the Council's car parking standards referred to under Highways and Transportation Policy HT2/4 - Car Parking and New Development and set out in Appendix 4 of the Plan.

Comment: The proposed development will provide a river crossing suitable for a range of users with links throughout the borough.

RT3/4 - Recreational Routes

In promoting access to the countryside, the Council will seek to establish a network of designated recreational routes to provide access, where appropriate, for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. These routes will be safeguarded and any development which would prejudice their establishment or use will not be permitted.

The following routes are presently identified as having potential for recreational use: RT3/4/1 - The Kirklees Valley. A route linking Bury Town Centre and Greenmount primarily following a former railway line. RT3/4/2 - Former Bolton to Bury/Radcliffe Railway Line. Routes from Bradley Fold to Bury and from Bradley Fold to the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal in Radcliffe along a former railway line. RT3/4/3 - The Roch Valley. A route from Springwater Park in the Irwell Valley along the valley of the River Roch to link with the Ashworth Valley in Rochdale. For a part of its length the proposed route lies within the Borough of Rochdale and is, therefore, not shown on the **Proposals Map. RT3/4/4 - The Irwell Valley South of Bury Town Centre. This route follows the canal towpath and a former railway line linking Prestwich Forest Park with Radcliffe and Bury Town Centres.**

Justification

This policy reflects the Council's intention to improve opportunities for all users to gain access to the countryside (see Policy RT3/3). It is envisaged that the recreational routes defined have the potential to be developed to provide access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders (See also Highways and Transportation Policy HT6/3). Some sections of the routes identified on the Proposals Map are already established Rights of Way, though gaps and obstructions do exist. In implementing this policy the Council will ensure that, where appropriate, both new footpaths and improvements to existing footpaths, take account of the need to minimise the conflicts between different user groups. The Council will ensure that both reclamation schemes and new development proposals along the proposed recreation routes make satisfactory provision for public access.

Comment: The proposed development will support policy RT 3/4.

6. Conclusions

The bridge structure is of a strong modern design finished in subtle colours. It is not a tall structure. It is within a mainly industrial use setting where it will have a positive impact on the immediate locality though with little or no affect on wider views in the river valley or urban area. It will improve connectivity for pedestrian and cyclists. The construction of the bridge will involve a range of mitigation and other works in line with the recommendations of the ecological report. It is a much needed replacement facility. Its construction is totally in line with the 2019 NPPF and supports the saved policies of Council's approved UDP (1997).

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