

Equality Analysis



Please refer to the guidance for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments is available on the intranet
Text in blue is intended to provide guidance – you can delete this from your final version.

What are the proposals being assessed?	Project submitted for planning permission - Bishopsford Bridge
Which Department/ Division has the responsibility for this?	Environment and Regeneration

Stage 1: Overview

Name and job title of lead officer	Tara Butler
1. What are the aims, objectives and desired outcomes of your proposal? (Also explain proposals e.g. reduction/removal of service, deletion of posts, changing criteria etc)	<p>The outcome of the proposal is to reopen Bishopsford Bridge, seeking planning permission for the new design. Separately the council is undertaking a procurement process to appoint a new contractor to build the new bridge, subject to planning.</p> <p>The proposed design has been submitted for planning permission. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soffit height, bridge span and bridge width to optimise flood risk reduction, particularly for the upstream homes. Since pre-app consultation the bridge width has been extended to the west to accommodate a new cycle lane northbound. Further width extension ruled out on flood risk, ecological, highways and land ownership grounds. - At street level, bridge design contains (west to east) railing parapet allowing visibility into the park and wider area, 60cm cycle kerb (see cycle design principles), a dedicated northbound cycle lane segregated by 50mm kerb (2 metre width reducing to 1.5 metre width crossing the bridge) carriageway lanes wide to accommodate abnormal / wide loads and allow bridge to be kept open as a single lane for repairs, kerb and 3-metre-wide shared surface, railing parapet. - On the southern side of the bridge a cycle and pedestrian pelican crossing allows users of the Wandle Trail to cross safely (this is not new; it already exists). - Design has changed since pre-app consultation to add the northbound cycle lane and widen the eastern shared surface. Crossing the bridge pedestrians can use either the existing wooden footbridge (west side – no change from existing) or the 3metre wide shared surface (east side - new) in both directions. Cyclists can use the same; if travelling northbound they can use the dedicated northbound cycle lane (new). Cyclists can also use the carriageway (. - Railings will be used for the parapet and to replace the large wall bordering Ravensbury Park, allowing greater visibility into the surrounding area, fewer hidden places and a greater sense of safety for users of the Wandle Trail. Safety and greater visibility of green space raised in pre-app consultation.

2. How does this contribute to the council's corporate priorities?	<p>On 24th February 2020 Cabinet resolved to reopen Bishopsford Bridge and to consider the urgency and importance of this project. https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=3402</p> <p>The design is based on a wide range of factors including the Water Resources Act, flood risk modelling, considerations and Environment Agency feedback, structural, highways and transport regulations and guidance, consideration of statutory planning policies (themselves already subject to EquIA), consideration of pre-application feedback.</p>
3. Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc.	<p>Anyone who uses Bishopsford Bridge by any form of transport (including walking and cycling) but particularly for those people who use it regularly, including local residents, commuters, delivery drivers, customers and workers in nearby organisations (e.g. Tooting and Mitcham Hub; the nearby petrol station), local schoolchildren arriving from the north (e.g. Mitcham town centre / Mitcham tramstop) and travelling to nearby schools.</p> <p>Those living locally that might be affected by flood risk – including local residents and the National Trust.</p> <p>Those whose business or organisation is affected by the bridge closure or the design of the new bridge.</p>
4. Is the responsibility shared with another department, authority or organisation? If so, who are the partners and who has overall responsibility?	<p>Merton Council has overall responsibility.</p> <p>If the planning application does not comply with flood risk matters, the Environment Agency will object.</p>

Stage 2: Collecting evidence/ data

5. What evidence have you considered as part of this assessment?

Provide details of the information you have reviewed to determine the impact your proposal would have on the protected characteristics (equality groups).

The key question is would any people with protected characteristics be discriminated against by the design of the new bridge, particularly in their ability to cross it safely. It should be noted that issues of mobility for everyone are embedded in highways and transport design regulations and guidance (e.g. pavements being wide enough for wheelchairs, people with buggies etc)

Types of evidence:

- Proximity of neighbouring homes and the characteristics of occupiers
- Proximity of nearby businesses and organisations and the characteristics of users / occupiers
- Design of the new bridge and compliance with design standards and planning policies.

Tooting and Mitcham Hub is used by sports players, including school aged children. The Hub also runs education and youth projects, hosts food banks and is involved in projects to reduce knife crime and encourage confidence, support and life skills for young people from deprived backgrounds (e.g. the St Matthews Project). Tooting and Mitcham Hub have told councillors that a significant proportion of the boys are from Black Caribbean or Black African heritage (over 55%, rising to nearly 70% in upper age groups)

Nearby residents include those living along London Road, those living on Bishopsford Road, those living in Grove Mill and Crown Mill (including three houses with London Road addresses) and those living the Watermeads (accessed via Rawnesly Avenue and Riverside Drive) and along Wandle Road. The Census 2011 provides information on local characteristics (see Merton data hub *updated link November 2020*) <https://data.merton.gov.uk/overview/?geographyId=e5b158fd6ed249cb882247c58385e892&featureId=E05000468>

There are several schools in the area including Harris Morden (secondary), St Theresa's, Malmesbury, (both primaries), and slightly further away, Cricket Green and Melrose (for children with specific needs). Large groups of schoolchildren use this route to get to school, particularly to Harris Morden secondary school, and it has been observed that the route is busy prior to school opening and after school leaving time.

Users of the Wandle Trail and the open spaces adjoining it including Ravensbury Park and the National Trust lands.

[Assessment](#)

- The design of the new bridge retains the wooden footbridge. This is currently accessible by people on foot and by bicycle and will continue to be so in the new design. Currently metal barriers seek to prevent motorbikes and scooters accessing the wooden footbridge while the road is closed but these can make it difficult for wheelchair users and people with large buggies to navigate this space. Once the bridge is reopened to all traffic these metal barriers will be removed. This will make the wooden footbridge more accessible to people with mobility issues by virtue of their age or disability.
- The design of the new bridge incorporates a 3metre shared surface on the eastern side. This is the same side as the Tooting and Mitcham Hub site entrance, as the homes at Grove Mill / Crown Mill and the same side as the Mitcham Tramstop. This is an improvement from the previous bridge where the pavement was 1.7 metres wide. The shared surface can be used by pedestrians and cyclists. At 3metres wide, the shared surface complies with cycling design guidance. Providing a 3 metre wide shared surface will allow people walking in large groups (e.g. schoolchildren going to secondary school, young people accessing Tooting and Mitcham Hub), people walking with large buggies, wheelchair users and people with mobility issues to walk side by side. If the shared surface is being wholly used at any one time by pedestrians (e.g. in large groups or people with buggies or wheelchairs) cyclists also have the choice of using the carriageway to cycle across the 14 metre bridge. The alternative design of having a 2 metre pavement and a dedicated southbound cycle lane (min 1.5 metres) cannot reasonably be taken forward as increasing the width of the bridge further eastwards would have flood risk, ecological, highways and land ownership issues including for residents at London Road.
- The width of the bridge carriageway will allow for repair options during the lifetime of the bridge to provide single lane traffic (as opposed to having to completely close the bridge) This will benefit all users.
- The provision of the northbound cycle lane will support cyclists including those with disabilities. The northbound cycle lane is segregated from the carriageway by a 50mm kerb and from the railings and parapet by a 60cm kerb in accordance with cycle design guides
- The provision of parapets and railings replacing the wall at Ravensbury Park will allow better visibility, legibility and permeability throughout the area, allowing people to see into and out of the existing paths of the Wandle Trail and not creating a hidden area that can discourage users and provide the scope for opportunistic crime. Tree planting is proposed to replace the trees removed due to their condition or to facilitate the development. Over time planting can be allowed to grow (increase screening of the path / park / rear of homes) or cut back (decrease screening of the path / park / rear of homes) depending on the experience of the park / Wandle Trail users and nearby residents over time with respect to increased visibility, crime / fear of crime and environmental issues. The railings are similar to those that already exist at the National Trust land. Lots of schoolchildren and young people use this path currently as it accesses between Harris Morden and Mitcham (tramstop, busses and town centre) and some may continue to do so once the bridge is reopened. With less scope for hidden crime and greater visibility it should have a positive impact in reducing opportunistic crime and fear of crime, both crimes against the person and burglaries of homes accessed from Ravensbury Park to the back of the Watermeads estate. This will benefit pedestrian and cyclists (i.e. users of the Wandle Trail) and Watermeads residents including those with protected characteristics.
- Reopening the bridge carriageway will allow quicker and more straightforward access for the London Fire Brigade stationed at London Road Mitcham (c500m from the site) to access Bishopsford Road and beyond in the event of an emergency. This will be a universal benefit
- The flood modelling carried out to inform the design of the bridge (particularly the single span, length over the water and soffit height) has modelled that homes on the upstream side are now at less risk of flooding than with the previous bridge. This represents a clear benefit for the homeowners and residents occupying these homes

Stage 3: Assessing impact and analysis

6. From the evidence you have considered, what areas of concern have you identified regarding the potential negative and positive impact on one or more protected characteristics (equality groups)?

Protected characteristic (equality group)	Tick which applies		Tick which applies		Reason Briefly explain what positive or negative impact has been identified
	Positive impact		Potential negative impact		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Age	X			X	The design of the new bridge will have a positive impact by providing better pedestrian and cycle facilities built to modern standards, particularly for those that don't drive and need to access services in the surrounding area (e.g. schoolchildren). The 3 metre shared surface on the same side as Tooting and Mitcham Hub is much improved compared to the previous 1.7 metre pavement in the same location. There is potential for the shared surface to be busy at specific times of some days (pre school and after school and at specific times with people accessing Tooting and Mitcham Hub) but it is considered that the potential for conflicts can be resolved by users as the bridge crossing is relatively short (14metres) and as cyclists have the choice of slowing down or using the carriageway. All users have the choice of using the wooden footbridge at the Wandle Trail. This has a positive effect on people of all ages.
Disability	x			x	Once the temporary metal guard railings are removed from parts of the Wandle Trail (near the wooden footbridge) the design of the new bridge will have a positive impact on people with disabilities that are wheelchair users or people that are mobility impaired. The new bridge provides wider crossing for pedestrians and cyclists than the old bridge did.
Gender Reassignment		x		x	No specific impact
Marriage and Civil Partnership		x		x	No specific impact
Pregnancy and Maternity	x			x	There may be minor positive impacts with the design of the new bridge as the wider space for pedestrian crossing in the new design should help all pedestrian users, including those with buggies and young children. The removal of the temporary metal rails at the wooden footbridge once the new bridge is open will help access for people with buggies.
Race		x		x	No specific impact
Religion/ belief		x		x	No specific impact
Sex (Gender)		x		x	No specific impact
Sexual orientation		x		x	No specific impact

Socio-economic status	x			x	<p>Positive impact on homeowners and residential occupiers upstream (regardless of any other socio-economic characteristic) as the flood modelling carried out for the new bridge shows a reduced risk of flooding than with the previous three-arch 19th century bridge.</p> <p>Positive impact on users of the park / Wandle Trail (including schoolchildren from local schools, young people visiting Tooting and Mitcham Hub and other users) and local homeowners / occupiers at Watermeads from fear of crime / opportunistic crime reduction due to Wandle Trail / path off wooden footbridge being less hidden (this is regardless of any other socio economic characteristics)</p>
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7. If you have identified a negative impact, how do you plan to mitigate it?

No negative impacts identified (once temporary scooter-preventing metal guard rails removed on wooden footbridge)

Stage 4: Conclusion of the Equality Analysis

8. Which of the following statements best describe the outcome of the EA (Tick one box only)

Please refer to the guidance for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments is available on the intranet for further information about these outcomes and what they mean for your proposal

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Outcome 1 – The EA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality are being addressed. **No changes are required.**

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Outcome 2 – The EA has identified adjustments to remove negative impact or to better promote equality. **Actions you propose to take to do this should be included in the Action Plan.**

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Outcome 3 – The EA has identified some potential for negative impact or some missed opportunities to promote equality and it may not be possible to mitigate this fully. **If you propose to continue with proposals you must include the justification for this in Section 10 below, and include actions you propose to take to remove negative impact or to better promote equality in the Action Plan. You must ensure that your proposed action is in line with the PSED to have 'due regard' and you are advised to seek Legal Advice.**

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Outcome 4 – The EA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. **Stop and rethink your proposals.**

Stage 5: Improvement Action Plan

9. Equality Analysis Improvement Action Plan template – Making adjustments for negative impact

This action plan should be completed after the analysis and should outline action(s) to be taken to mitigate the potential negative impact identified (expanding on information provided in Section 7 above).

Negative impact/ gap in information identified in the Equality Analysis	Action required to mitigate	How will you know this is achieved? e.g. performance measure/ target)	By when	Existing or additional resources?	Lead Officer	Action added to divisional/ team plan?

Note that the full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented; therefore it is important the effective monitoring is in place to assess the impact.

Stage 6: Reporting outcomes

10. Summary of the equality analysis

This section can also be used in your decision making reports (CMT/Cabinet/etc) but you must also attach the assessment to the report, or provide a hyperlink

This Equality Analysis has resulted in an Outcome 1	Assessment
<p>Please include here a summary of the key findings of your assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 5 sets out assessment. Section 6 summarizes impacts. Proposed design will be assessed at planning application. Local bridge users include local residents, schoolchildren of Harris Morden and other nearby schools and Tooting and Mitcham Hub users (inc schoolchildren and young people). However most bridge design issues apply to everybody – not specific to protected characteristics (e.g. benefits to all cyclists (inc those with disabilities) due to extra cycle provision in bridge design; benefits to all pedestrians and cyclists (inc older / younger / with disabilities / pregnant etc) due to increased space for them in bridge design) New bridge design modelled to reduce flood risk upstream. Direct benefit to residential occupiers and property owners upstream. EA will confirm / object at planning app. 	

Stage 7: Sign off by Director/ Head of Service			
Assessment completed by	Add name/ job title	Signature:	Date:
Improvement action plan signed off by Director/ Head of Service	Add name/ job title	Signature:	Date: