	<p align="center">Cabinet 12 December 2022</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Director of Regeneration, Growth and Employment</p>
<p>SCIL request for new Grand Union Canal Pedestrian / Cycle Bridge in Alperton</p>	

Wards Affected:	Alperton
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Equality Impact Analysis
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funding to deliver a proposed new pedestrian/cycle footbridge over the Grand Union Canal in Alperton to support regeneration and growth in the area.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That Cabinet approve £6.855m Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) to design, plan, construct and maintain the proposed Grand Union Canal (GUC) bridge, subject to St George and Canal & River Trust agreement on its preferred location.

2.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Communities and Regeneration to enter into agreements with St George, Canal and River Trust (CRT) and any other relevant third parties to negotiate terms in respect of any land transfer for the land required to site the bridge.

2.3 That Cabinet approve the making of a scheme under section 106(3) of the Highways Act 1980 and thereafter the submission of the scheme to the Secretary of State for Transport for confirmation.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Alperton is a strategic Growth Area and GLA Housing Zone, which is accommodating a significant amount of new development and a rapidly growing population. 1,400 new homes have been delivered in the past 10 years, and at least 6,500 new homes are expected by 2040.

3.2 Alperton is projected to be the second fastest growing ward in the borough, with a population increase from 16,400 people in 2019 to 34,700 people in 2040. The opportunity for Alperton Housing Zone is for the area to be transformed into a sustainable neighbourhood with new and improved homes, including affordable homes, new workspace, better community facilities, a cleaner, safer and improved public realm and environment, with better access to local and active forms of travel.

3.3 Investment in transport infrastructure is required to support regeneration and the delivery of the Council's priorities in Alperton. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2019 considered the delivery of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge on the Grand Union development (formerly the Northfields Industrial Estate) as a critical piece of infrastructure required to support the expected growth in the area.

3.4 Based on the level of expected growth in Alperton, Brent CIL receipts for Alperton are expected to increase to approximately £100m. Capital Programme Board have approved a business case proposing a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Grand Union Canal (GUC) to be delivered through contributions from SCIL.

4.0 New Grand Union Canal Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge

4.1 An Alperton Transport Assessment in 2018 identified delivery of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the GUC from the Grand Union development site as critical to provide a sustainable transport link to the existing canal towpath and onwards to Park Royal and Old Oak Common.

4.2 Under the s106 agreement for the Grand Union development, the Council safeguarded a parcel of land to deliver the new pedestrian and cycle bridge. Regeneration appointed AECOM in December 2020 to assess bridge design and deliverability.

5.0 Options Appraisal - AECOM Feasibility Study & Options

5.1 AECOM investigated ten options for the proposed new bridge, taking into account discussions with stakeholders and the Council's objectives. The area of the safeguarded land was found to not be big enough, and more significantly, was located above a strategic water main, with a 5m exclusion zone for development.

5.2 Option 10 is identified as the preferred option and best arrangement for the proposed bridge. It provides a shared use bridge in the southwest corner of the site. It is a simple, compact and symmetrical design, and provides a crossing and link to the canal towpath with access and egress at the same location either side of the canal.

5.3 Option 10 (Figure 1) can be built independently from St George’s development, with interface issues limited to the ground level footpath. The bridge is far enough away from new residential blocks, with no impact on access and privacy, however sits within a local Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

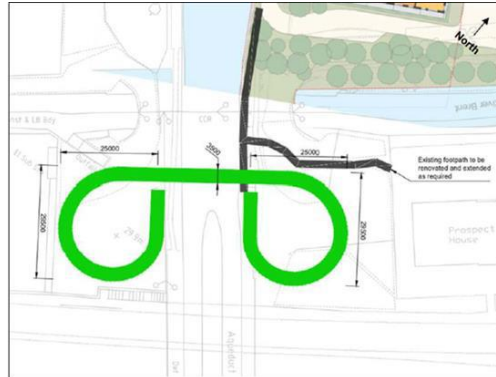


Figure 1: Option 10 – Double spiral ramps

5.4 In December 2021 AECOM began an assessment of the ecological habitat and constraints of the SINC location, bridge construction impacts, potential mitigations, and a topographical survey for options 9 and 10. The ecological and topographical report also found invasive species within the footprint of both options, and in adjacent areas along the canal.

5.5 Option 10 has less adverse impacts and the loss of habitat within the SINC could be compensated through habitat creation and / or enhancement within or directly connected to the SINC. An Invasive Non-Native Species Management Plan detailing the mitigation, removal and disposal of invasive species is underway.

5.6 £6.855m of SCIL funding is required to deliver the bridge on current estimates. The costs below exclude any land and air rights acquisition costs. An additional report and funding request may be made to Cabinet at a later date when an agreement on a preferred location is reached with the stakeholders.

Items	Price
Construction cost	£5,400,000
Design and planning fees	£375,000
Future maintenance (10%)	£540,000
Contingency (10%)	£540,000
Total	£6,855,000

6.0 Fall back Option

6.1 Option 2 (Figure 2) is the fall back option for a pedestrian only bridge, subject to the outcome of the further ecological study and CRT buy in to land the bridge within the SINC. Option 2 is located in a feasible location besides building F on the St George site. The ramps are 2m wide with a 1 in 20 gradient; but cyclists would need to dismount when using the bridge.

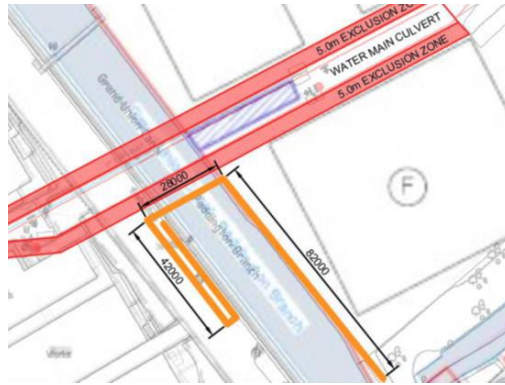


Figure 2: Option 2- single fold ramp

7.0 St George and Canal & River Trust

- 7.1 St George and CRT are landowners and partners whose agreement is required to install any bridge over the GUC. Under the s106 agreement, St George are required to provide land for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the GUC, but not the cost of delivering the bridge.
- 7.2 Officers have worked with St George, who in principle support the new bridge being located on their land within the SINC, preferring it to other options which could impact on their resident's privacy and emergency and service vehicles access.
- 7.3 The western section of the SINC land is owned by CRT and the eastern half by St George. CRT are responsible for managing the GUC. CRT have raised concerns with the proposed southwest corner location and ecological impacts of any new bridge within the SINC. At our last meeting with the stakeholders June 2022, CRT set out additional feasibility and survey works necessary to provide sufficient comfort and detail for them to seek Board approval to support a new bridge in the SINC location.
- 7.4 AECOM has been instructed to conduct additional works including ecological mitigation survey, tree survey and outline design drawing and visualisation of the preferred option over the next 4 months to address the requests of CRT. Subject to St George agreement and CRT board approval of the preferred location, design and planning for the new bridge is estimated to take approximately 12-18 months.
- 7.5 St George are also investigating bringing back into use an existing footbridge, however it is locked and suitable for pedestrian use only. A renovated bridge would not enable shared use, require a large ramp to meet accessibility standards, may infringe privacy of users of the new health centre, and would require St George to re-design landscaping. Installation of a lift was investigated in place of a ramp but AECOM concluded that it would increase the capital cost of a bridge by 50%, increase maintenance and security costs, and lead to reliance on a mechanical lift which would inevitably not be operational at all times. This option and the use of lifts is therefore not favoured.
- 7.6 After reviewing all the options, Option 10 is the preferred location, subject to AECOM's further study, St George and CRT agreement, and subject to SCIL funding agreement and delivery strategy.

Preferred location – Option 10

Pros

Location preferred by LBB Transport and St George a key stakeholder in delivering the scheme.

Option 10 is the only option that contains a simple, compact and symmetrical design. This provides an aesthetically pleasing structure as well as a practical crossing that provides access and egress at the same location either side of the GUC

The structure is located away from the residential blocks such that privacy issues are no longer a concern.

Option 10 meets modern specifications and can be use by groups protected under Equality Act 2010 such as users with mobility or sensory impairments.

The land required is owned by CRT and St George who are both keen to improve connectivity in the area.

Other options require private land with at least some development potential. As such, land assembly under this option is viewed as more straightforward and lower cost.

Minimal intrusion into the SINC compared to Option 9

The cost and time savings of this option could be significant during both design and construction.

Cons

Location of the west ramp is within the London Borough of Ealing, and planning applications for a bridge in this location would have to be assessed by both Brent LPA and Ealing LPA.

Location of the west ramp is close to the River Brent outfall structure. AECOM is conducting further examination to understand the extent of the outfall structure.

Bridge location and structure is one of the more expensive options.

CRT have raised concerns regarding bridge impacts on the SINC

This option requires removal of vegetation which will result in a temporary increase in noise to the St George development from the A406 North Circular Road.

8.0 London Borough of Ealing

8.1 Part of the land required to site the proposed bridge on the west side of the Grand Union Canal is located within the London Borough of Ealing. Whilst the land is owned by the Canal and River Trust, Brent Council would therefore be required to submit applications for assessment by both the London Borough of Brent and London Borough of Ealing Local Planning Authorities for planning consent to construct the proposed bridge.

9.0 Transport Comments

- 9.1 Cycling and walking are low cost, healthy and environmentally friendly means of travel and form an important component of Brent's Long Term Transport Strategy. A key priority is the implementation of new/improved dedicated cycling and walking links to key destinations, including all major town and district centres, to improve inter-borough connectivity and promote sustainable mode shift.
- 9.2 Amongst the main challenges in the Alperton area is a need to improve cycle and pedestrian access over physical barriers such as major roads, railways and waterways as a means of reducing severance and connecting the various communities. The proposed new pedestrian / cycle bridge over the Grand Union Canal (GUC) will go a long way to achieving this. In addition, by linking directly to the GUC towpath, the bridge will provide significantly enhanced access to key employment sites in Park Royal, HS2 and major new developments in and around Old Oak Common. The scheme will also help bring about a number of environmental and health benefits by reducing the need for people to travel by car whilst enhancing accessibility to low- and zero-carbon modes of transport; and encourage more people to incorporate physical activity into their daily journeys, in turn improving productivity and dramatically reducing ill health.

10.0 Benefits to Council

10.1 Project 1 - New Grand Union Canal Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge

Description of Benefit	Financial/ non-financial benefit?	Estimated benefit amount?	When will the benefit be realised?	One-off or recurring?
Attracting inward investment to the wider Alperton regeneration by improving the environment, quality of public realm, connectivity and overall attractiveness	Financial and non financial	Over £2bn inward investment to deliver mixed use regeneration including 6,500 new homes, new commercial floorspace and other supporting infrastructure	Short, medium – long term	Recurring
Support new homes and jobs	Financial and non financial	6,500 new homes, including new affordable homes c22,000 sqm commercial space supporting c900 new jobs	Short, medium and long term	Recurring
Generate Community Infrastructure Levy receipts	Financial	At 35% affordable housing, Brent might expect c£100m CIL receipts from regeneration and development within the AHZ	Short, medium and long term	One-off
Support Council tax receipts	Financial	c£6m annual Council Tax revenue	Short, medium and long term	Recurring
Support Business rate receipts	Financial	c£1m annual Business Rates receipt	Short, medium and long term	Recurring
Increase accessibility and footfall to the retail offer on Ealing Rd, to the commercial offering at Grand Union, and the employment areas south of the canal in Alperton and Park Royal.	Financial	c16,000 new population expected to live in AHZ by 2040, increasing footfall and retail spend at both Ealing Rd and the commercial offer at Grand Union	Medium – long term	Recurring
Reduce environmental transport impacts, and increase in number of residents walking and cycling	Non-financial	The bridge and other interventions in the area could bring total sustainable modes of transport to 80% and reduce carbon emissions. ¹	Medium term	Recurring
Connecting the towpath to Park Royal, Old Oak Common and Central London	Non-financial	The new bridge link across the GUC will connect St George development with the canal towpath on the south, North	Short, medium – long term	Recurring

¹ Alperton Housing Zone, Transport Assessment (2018), pg.381

		Circular Road and onwards towards employment opportunities at Park Royal, Old Oak Common and Central London, plus the proposed major transport interchange at the Oak Old Common which will serve Crossrail services to Heathrow and Central London and HS2 rail routes to the Midlands and the North.		
Provide links between existing and new communities, the canal and local amenities	Non-financial	Helping to support cohesive communities, access to open space and local amenities	Medium term	Recurring
Journey time savings	Non-financial	The proposed footbridge and a new east -west connection would reduce journey times by over 5.5 minutes to Stonebridge Park station for residents at Atlip Road, and reduce journey time to Alperton Station by 2.5 minutes from the Grand Union site. ²	Medium term	Recurring
Improved safety and security	Non-financial	The bridge is likely to lead to higher pedestrian activity which would in turn provide natural surveillance and the visual appeal of the area would promote perceptions of safety during the day and at night.	Short – medium term	Recurring

² Alperton Housing Zone, Transport Assessment (2018), pg.574

11 Risks

11.1 New Grand Union Canal Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge

Risk/issue description	Planned mitigation or resolution	Owner
Unable to land a bridge within the SINC due to ecological constraints Impact: High	Further investigations on how to mitigate constraints associated with landing the bridge within the SINC. Fall-back option 2 of pedestrian only bridge.	Yaz Aboubakar
Unable to reach agreement with St George and CRT Impact: High	Under s106, St George consented to provide land to deliver the new pedestrian / cycle link across the GUC. Continue to engage relevant stakeholders Escalate to leadership group as appropriate	Yaz Aboubakar
Project not approved for funding Impact: High	If funding isn't approved then the bridge would not be delivered resulting in poor permeability for residents.	Yaz Aboubakar

12. Financial Implications

12.1 As outlined in paragraph 5.6, the total estimated cost including 10% contingency for the improvement works in the parks and the sports ground is £6,855,000. This report seeks approval for a budget allocation to this value of £6,855,000 along with an allocation of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) to fund this spend.

13. Legal Implications

13.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. Section 216 of the Planning Act 2008 it to be applied, to supporting development by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure. The Act provides that “infrastructure” includes—

- (a) roads and other transport facilities,
- (b) flood defences,
- (c) schools and other educational facilities,
- (d) medical facilities,
- (e) sporting and recreational facilities and
- (f) open spaces

13.2 It is understood that the Grand Union Canal is a SINC area. This site is mentioned as a SINC area within paragraph 3.26 of Brent Council’s Local Plan Accordingly, where

development takes place within a SINC area the Planning Authority will treat the fact that the area to be developed comes within a SINC as a planning consideration and the Planning Authority will seek to enhance and protect the area.

- 13.3 An investigation of the title in respect of the land upon which the bridge is to be constructed should be undertaken prior to constructions. It is noted that the land is owned by CRT and St George and separate agreements/licence/deeds will need to be entered into to allow for the construction of the Bridge.
- 13.4 The deed will usually also set out who owns the bridge, maintenance responsibilities, as well as user rights, and payments to CRT. The Council the owner of the bridge, St George and the CRT, will need to consent to the proposed use by cycles, this will all be a matter for commercial negotiation.
- 13.5 If the watercourse over which the bridge is proposed navigable, then the Council has powers pursuant to section 106 and 107 of the Highways Act 1980 (HiA 1980) to construct a bridge subject to consent from the Secretary of State for Transport who will need to see the proposal. The process pursuant to s106 and 107 requires a period of consultation and a period of advertising the proposal for the erection of the bridge. Further specialist external advice will be required in relation to this.
- 13.6 In terms of the Canal and River Trust the Council would be required to adhere to the Code of Practice for works affecting Canal and River Trust. There is specific information in the code on all works that might affect the Trust.

14. Equality Implications

- 14.1 Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty when exercising their functions to have 'due regard' to the need:
 - a) To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity; and
 - c) Foster good relations between those who share a "protected characteristic" and those who do not.
- 14.2 This is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The 'protected characteristics' are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 14.3 The purpose of the duty is to enquire into whether a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision. Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 14.4 The proposals in this report have been subject to Equality Analysis (Appendix 1). Officers believe that there are no identified adverse implications relating to equality

issues. The bridge would support improved permeability and connectivity across the Alperton Housing Zone, encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes.

- 14.5 The proposed new bridge would be expected to have a positive impact on age, disability and pregnancy or maternity characteristics and a neutral impact on all other protected characteristics. The new bridge options would be expected to meet modern standards and be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant, but that would be very challenging for refurbishment of the existing bridge.

15. Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 15.1 As noted at above, discussion are ongoing with key stakeholders St George and Canals & River Trust, whose agreement is required to install any bridge over the Grand Union Canal. Subject to such agreement, consultation with residents would be held when the scheme reaches planning stage. The Lead Member has been briefed on the project.

16. Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

Regeneration are currently managing this project under the Alperton Housing Zone and within existing resources.

Report sign off:

Alice Lester

Director of Regeneration, Growth and Employment