



REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT

25 October 2012

Subject Heading:

P0981.12 – Gaynes Park Bridge

Report Author and contact details:

Replacement of existing footway/cycle
bridge over the Ingrebourne River
Helen Oakerbee (Planning Control
Manager) 01708 432800

Policy context:

Local Development Framework
London Plan
National Planning Policy

Financial summary:

None

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Clean, safe and green borough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

This planning application proposes the replacement of an existing footbridge at Gaynes Park, Upminster. Having considered the principle of development, the impact on the character of the area, and other considerations, officers are recommending approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out below.

1. Time limit - The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Accordance with plans - The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans, particulars and specifications.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

INFORMATIVES

1. Reason for Approval:

Having considered the principle of development, the impact on the character of the area, and other considerations, the proposal is considered to be acceptable having had regard to Policies DC18, DC45, DC58, and DC61 of the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Site Description

- 1.1 The application site comprises an existing pedestrian footbridge, crossing the River Ingrebourne, along with surrounding land located within Gaynes Park, Upminster. The site is located to the rear of Branfil Primary School, approximately 100m to the south east of Derby Avenue. The existing bridge

is a concrete structure with metal railings, approximately 1m in width. The site is located in the Green Belt and the Floodplain, and is designated as a Metropolitan level Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

2. Description of Proposal

- 2.1 This planning application proposes the removal of the existing pedestrian bridge and the installation of a new crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed crossing would be approximately 3m in width and 17.5m in length. The proposal would mainly be constructed of steel, including the girders, footway, and railings. The bridge would be set upon concrete piles set within the ground and the proposed development would involve re-profiling the river banks to allow for inspections to the bridge and to increase the river channel. The footpaths at both sides of the crossing would be realigned and small earthwork approach ramps would be provided (approximately 10cm in height.)

3. Relevant History

- 3.1 There are no previous planning decisions of particular relevance to this application.

4. Consultations/Representations

- 4.1 Notification letters were sent to 28 neighbouring properties; a site notice was placed in the vicinity of the site; and an advertisement was placed in the local press. One representation has been received raising queries, which officers have responded to.

5. Relevant Policies

- 5.1 The following policies of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD ("the LDF") are of relevance:

DC18 – Protection of Public Open Space, Recreation, Sports and Leisure Facilities

DC45 - Appropriate Development in the Green Belt

DC58 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

DC61 - Urban Design

- 5.2 National Planning Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework ("the NPPF")

6. Staff Comments

- 6.1 This application is put before Members as it proposes development on Council land. The main issues in this application are considered to be the principle of development, the impact upon the character of the area, and other considerations.

6.2 Principle of Development

6.2.1 The site is located in the Green Belt. In terms of the guidance contained in the NPPF, the preliminary assessment when considering proposals for development in the Green Belt is as follows:-

a) It must be determined whether or not the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF and the LDF set out the categories of development not deemed to be inappropriate.

b) If the development is considered not to be inappropriate, the application should be determined on its own merits.

c) If the development is inappropriate, the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt applies.

6.2.2 The proposal is for the replacement of an existing footbridge within a public park with a new, wider bridge providing a river crossing to pedestrians and cyclists. The application therefore proposes building operations.

6.2.3 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, except in given cases, which include:

“provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it...”

6.2.4 It is considered that the proposed bridge, which would provide a crossing to pedestrians and cyclists within a public park, would constitute an appropriate facility for outdoor recreation. Given the siting, scale, and design of the proposal, and that it would replace a similar, existing bridge, it is considered that the proposal would preserve the openness of the Green Belt, and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

6.2.5 It is considered that the proposal would constitute appropriate development in the Green Belt, and that it would be acceptable in principle.

6.3 Design Considerations

6.3.1 Policy DC61 states that planning permission will only be granted for development which maintains, enhances or improves the character and appearance of the local area.

6.3.2 The proposal would result in the replacement of an existing bridge with a new crossing. The proposed crossing would be wider than the existing one, but would have a similar span length and would be set lower than the existing bridge, which has a more defined arch. Given the nature of the proposal, including its siting, scale and design, it is considered that it would

not result in any significant adverse impacts on the visual amenities of the Green Belt, or the character of the area generally.

6.3.3 In terms of its visual impact, it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with Policy DC61 of the LDF.

6.5 Other Considerations

6.5.1 In terms of nature conservation considerations, the site is located within Metropolitan grade Site of Nature Conservation Importance. Policy DC58 of the LDF states that the biodiversity and geodiversity of SNCIs will be protected and enhanced. Natural England have raised no objections to the proposal. The Environment Agency have been consulted about the proposal but no comments have yet been received; Members will be updated at the Regulatory Services meeting. Subject to there being no objections from the Environment Agency, it is considered that the proposal would not be contrary to Policy DC58 of the LDF.

6.5.2 The site is located in the Floodplain and is therefore located on an area of land at higher risk of flooding. The guidance contained in the NPPF requires that proposals in areas at risk of flooding should be subject to the Sequential Test. The objective of the Sequential Test is to divert development to areas of land with the lowest possible risk of flooding. As the proposal is for a river crossing, it is considered that it cannot be relocated to an area at lower risk of flooding, and the proposal therefore passes the Sequential Test. The Environment Agency may make comments relating to flood risk and Members will be updated at the Regulatory Services meeting.

6.5.3 The site is designated as a public open space. Policy DC18 states that the Council will retain and enhance public open spaces. The proposal would not result in the loss of any public open space and is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC18 of the LDF.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Officers consider the proposal to be acceptable having had regard to Policies DC18, DC45, DC58, and DC61 of the LDF, and all other material considerations.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None.

Legal implications and risks:

None.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None.

Equalities implications and risks:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning application P0981.12