DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: …Tom Rea……

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
18/00913/FP	Replacement of dilapidated bridge	Bridge At Purwell Mill Purwell Lane Hitchin Hertfordshire

Submitted Plan Nos
HMWT-PM-002 HMWT-PM-004 HMWT-PM-009 4070-1-.8.17

1.0 Policies

LP2	Green Belt
LP14	Nature Conservation
SECT11	Conserving and enhancing natural environ
SECT9	Promoting Green Belt Land
SECT10	Meeting climate change, flooding,coastal

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 None relevant

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Hertfordshire Highways:** 'Does not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission subject to conditions'

3.2 **Herts Ecology:** No response

3.3 **HCC Rights of Way:** No response

3.4 **Environment Agency:** No response

3.5 **Site Notice/Adjoining occupiers:** Letters received from the occupiers of Purwell Cottage and Mill Cottage raising the following concerns:

1.0 Temporary bridge will be required for pedestrian access
2.0 No provision for waste collection
3.0 Construction period will prevent emergency services access to properties
4.0 Wildlife Trust should maintain the road and reinstate it following works
5.0 Flood defence pipes need to be maintained. FRA required
6.0 No information on when works will start or duration
7.0 Temporary car access bridge would be preferred
8.0 Temporary secure car compound could be provided next to bridge works.
9.0 Closing the footpath is not an acceptable solution

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site and Surroundings

Purwell bridge is a masonry built vehicle and footbridge across the River Purwell located south of Purwell Lane and just north of Purwell Mill. Footpath 91 runs across the bridge from Purwell Lane into the Poets estate. The bridge has been repaired with concrete and render. The bridge has a culvert to accommodate the river Purwell and there are 2 large concrete culvert pipes immediately to the bridge to accommodate high flow periods. The access road serves approximately 8 properties located south of the bridge along the public footpath. The bridge is in the Green Belt. The bridge is just outside of Flood Zones 2 & 3 of the Environment Agency's Flood Map.

4.2 Proposal

The proposal is to replace the bridge incorporating a culvert pipe, retaining the high flow pipes, and involving a new bridge deck and new surfacing. New parapet walls are proposed and other brickwork repaired. The adjacent post and rail fences will be repaired.

A temporary footbridge to permit continued access is proposed.

The applicants agents advise that the repair works will take approximately six weeks to complete.

4.3 Key Issues

The key issues are the principle of the development, design, public safety and access and ecology

Principle of the development

The submitted structural report advises that the existing bridge is in a dilapidated and dangerous condition and therefore needs to be replaced. It forms a key section of the part of the public footpath and provides vehicular access to adjacent houses. Subject to appropriate arrangements to secure adequate access for existing properties and maintenance of the right of way I consider that there can be no objection in principle to the proposed works.

Design

The design of the bridge would be appropriate for this semi-rural location and would not have any significant visual impact on the visual amenities of the locality. The flood defence measures would be retained.

Public safety and access and issues raised by neighbours
The applicant has consulted with the ambulance and fire services and both authorities have not raised objections. Access solutions are set out as below:

Fire Authority
Advise that they will put a marker on the properties to highlight reduced access and increase pump provision.
Ambulance
Advise that the temporary footpath would be the best option for ambulance access

In terms of the concerns raised by residents the applicant has provided the following response:

1) **Information on when the works will take place**: Should planning permission be granted, it is envisaged that works commence during early summer to ensure any wildlife will not be affected. Works will begin as soon as practically possible following planning permission and will last approximately between 4-6 weeks.
2) **Parking during the works:** Unrestricted roadside parking is available in the vicinity. This will be a short term small inconvenience which we would hope residents and users will bear with while essential works are made for the safety of all users.
3) **Pedestrian access/bridge**: The Head of Countryside Rights of Way has been consulted on this issue and he has recommended that "given the situation locally and the plethora of alternative routes we think that a temp closure order is the best option."
   All possible measures will be made to ensure that this will be for the minimal time possible so as to cause minimal disruption and inconvenience.
4) **Flood relief**: There would be no diminution of the current flood relief measures in place now, either during or after the works. This is addressed in our ***Design and Access Statement*** and ***Outline Method Statement.***
5) **Waste/bins:** Arrangements can be made for contractors to collect the bins from an agreed position and put them ready for collection and return them.
6) **Emergency cover:** The emergency services have been consulted and are satisfied that they can provide continuous cover – please refer to document with ref: ***HMWT-PM-015 - firemen response*** and ***HMWT-PM-016 - ambulance response.*** The HMWT will ensure that the contacts at the emergency services are kept well informed as agreed.
7) **Road leading to the bridge** - this area is not included in the application and so is not relevant to the application.

I consider that the above responses adequately deal with the issues raised by residents.

Ecology

Herts Ecology have advised that a bat survey is not required. The impact on wildlife can be minimised by the clearance of vegetation prior to the commencement of works to dissuade species from using the area for breeding or shelter prior to the commencement of works. HE have advised the applicants that there are no reasons to consider that there are any significant archaeological constraints associated with the works. Given this response from Herts Ecology I do not consider that there are any ecological issues that would prevent the works.

4.4 **Conclusion**

The proposed works are essential to ensure the longer term future of the bridge and are required on health and safety grounds. The public benefits of the new bridge far outweigh in my view the limited inconvenience to footpath users and local residents in terms of access. Safety aspects have been taken into account by the relevant authorities and the provision of a temporary footbridge ensure continued access.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

   Reason: To comply with the provisions 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. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

   Reason:To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

Signed  Simon Ellis Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 21 May 2018	