Paul Butler Associates
Planning, Development & Heritage Consultants

Jamieson Contracting on behalf of MCC
Proposed New Bridge over River Mersey
on site of former Barlow Hall Bailey
Bridge, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 7PG

Planning, Design and Access Statement

23 January 2026

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Project: Proposed New Bridge over River Mersey on site of former Barlow Hall Bailey Bridge (nr Chorlton Water Park and Kenworthy Woods), Chorlton, Manchester, M21 7PG

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1. Introduction

1.1 This planning application seeks approval for a new bridge to be constructed over the River Mersey alongside enabling works to the existing river abutments which are to be extended upwards to accommodate the new bridge deck. On completion the works will provide a permanent bridge link and reinstate an access route to Chorlton Water Park for members of the public and for maintenance vehicles. The location of the new bridge over the River Mersey is proposed to be located on the site of a previous bridge, known as Barlow Hall Bailey Bridge, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 7PG.

1.2 The proposed new bridge will span north to south at Grid reference SJ821916. The application site lies to the south of Chorlton Water Park and to the north of Kenworthy Woods. Chorlton Water Park lies adjacent to the northern bank of the River Mersey where the new bridge is proposed to be located. The southern bank of the proposed river crossing lies to the north of Kenworthy Woods.

1.3 The proposed bridge will provide access over the river for pedestrians, horse riders, and cyclists and also provide occasional access for maintenance vehicles. The previous bridge across the river likewise served similar end user groups being multipurpose bridge.

2. Site Location and Setting

2.1 The site area is approximately 6.7km south-west of Manchester City Centre and is centred on SJ821916. The application site is identified on the site edged red submitted in support of the planning application. The application area includes the former abutments on the north and south banks of the River Mersey which supported the former Barlow Hall Bailey Bridge (now removed) which spanned river at this position until May 2025.

2.2 Several public footpaths are located within the immediate surrounding area with the surfacing noted as predominantly soft with localised areas of gravel hardstanding/tarmacked track. The application site topography generally slopes down towards the north. On both banks there is a steep slope from the top of the bank to the River Mersey flowing below. The riverbank is approximately 8.00m high from the base of the river channel to the top of the bank, at a slope angle of c. 40 degrees. The banks here and locally appear to be an artificially raised manmade flood defence rather than forming part of a natural river bank topography.

2.3 The site where the bridge will be erected is predominantly highway land and unsealed tracks and footpaths. Beyond these routes the areas surrounding the proposed bridging point include a variety of habitat with river, grassland, woodland, scrub and artificial land all noted. The proposed engineering works are largely confined to the former abutments which are proposed to be extended upwards to accommodate the new bridge deck. In order to facilitate the addition of concrete extensions to these abutments some vegetation will be cut back aside each abutment to allow for a clear working area.

2.4 These areas of the bank are cleared by the Environment Agency (EA) occasionally to keep them free of obstruction and appear well maintained. The additional clearance works proposed to facilitate the erection of the bridge appear to have no impact above and beyond general maintenance by EA, nonetheless the applicant has commissioned an ecology report in advance of works to check for the presence of protected species. The survey reports were not submitted as part of the application but are summarised in the

Planning Appraisal at Section 7. They confirm water voles and otters are not impacted by the works.

2.5 Land to the north of the application site comprises of Chorlton Water Park. To the south of the application site is Kenworthy Woods and beyond this the South Manchester Substation at Fairy Lane. To the east and west is the River Mersy with bankside footpaths and tracks following the meandering course of the river.

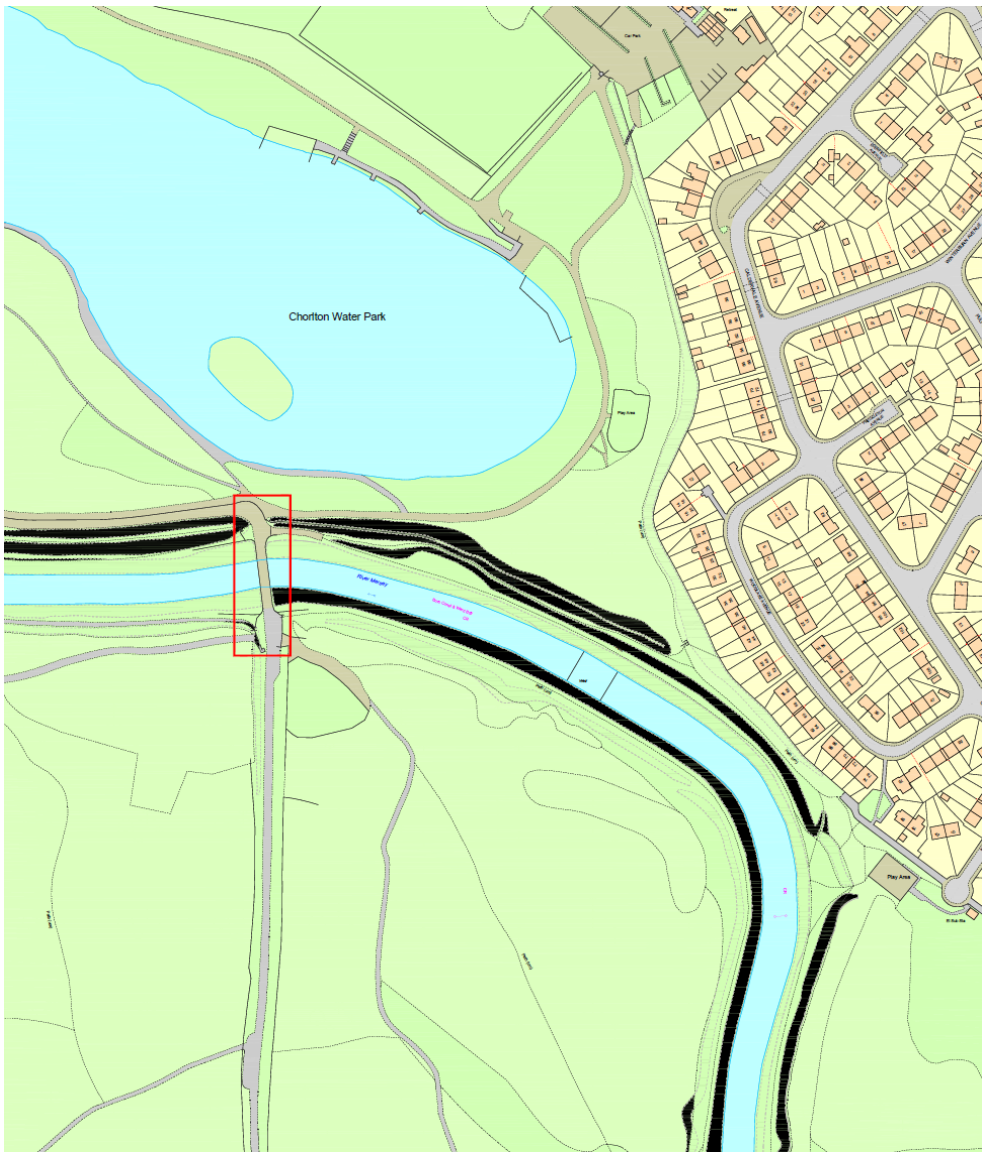


Figure 1: Site Location Plan, Former Barlow Hall Bridge, South Bank of River Mersey

3. Site History

3.1 The project involves the installation of a new bridge across the River Mersey in the same position as a previously removed bridge. Although the previous bridge was removed in 2025 for safety reasons, the submission of this application is noted to form part a strategic approach by MCC to re-establish a bridge link at the application site and in this sense the new bridge is regarded to be a 'replacement' bridge as the site history below confirms.

3.2 The previous bridge at the site, removed in 2025, was known as the Barlow Hall Bailey Bridge. It is understood that the Bridge was built during World War 2, being repurposed in the 1970s when it was installed across the River Mersey providing a bridging point at the application site. The earlier bridge provided access for pedestrians, horse riders and cycle access and also occasional access to Chorlton Water Park for maintenance vehicles.

3.3 The previous bridge is understood to have been built between 1971-1975 and was originally installed to provide a route for construction traffic to access the area being developed for the M62 Motorway.

3.4 After completion of the M60, the bridge was left in situ and repurposed as an access to reach Barlow Hall Refuse Tip and in the years which followed the bridge would be known as the 'Barlow Hall Refuse Bailey Bridge'. A temporary 5-year licence was granted for this use which expired on 25th March 1982. The bridge was later repurposed as an access to Chorlton Water Park with a 17-ton limit applied. In 2015 MCC records note the bridge was reassigned a reduced 5-ton classification.

3.5 Bailey bridges were crude steel bridges that were rapidly constructed in WW2 for military use. They were designed to be assembled without the need for heavy lifting equipment allowing for quick and efficient installation. Bailey type bridges were only intended to be in service for short periods of time with life spans for this type of bridge typically between 20-25 years for accommodating heavy vehicle movements which was their intended purpose.

3.6 A routine deflection and condition survey in November 2023 raised concerns with the weight limit of the bridge which in response was restricted to a maximum of 10 people at any time (Equivalent to a classification of 1-ton). After the reduced weight limit was imposed monthly deflection monitoring was undertaken by engineers Acrow. The final monitoring visit showed unacceptable deflection to the primary structural members caused by corrosion. Approval for the demolition of Bailey Bridge was granted by Manchester City Council planning department on 17 September 2024 with the Bridge removed in May 2025.



Figure 2: Image of Former Bailey Bridge from 2012, Image courtesy of MCC


Figure 3: Image of Former Bailey Bridge from 2024, Image courtesy of MCC

4. Design Principles including Engineering Feasibility

4.1 The applicant commissioned ACROW consulting engineers to review the feasibility and design of a replacement bridge that would accommodate the relevant user groups identified. The design work was informed by desk top research, a topographical survey of the area, ground investigations and an ecological review of the site from which was derived a preferred design solution.

4.2 The preferred solution is to reuse the concrete abutments formed to accommodate the previous Bailey Bridge. A Geotechnical Assessment by Pick Everard completed in October 2024 included a geotechnical assessment to establish whether the existing bridge foundations could support a new bridge with anticipated loads of approximately 50t (17t dead load and 33t live load). Their findings show the foundations of the existing abutments to be in excess of 2.00 mbgl. Since the loadings of the new bridge proposed to be installed will be less than the loads of the existing bridge the existing foundations were deemed to be sufficient to accommodate the new loadings proposed.

4.3 The ACROW feasibility document describes the preferred design response as follows '*The superstructure consists of single span steel modular truss. The proposed modular system is the Mabey Compact 200, a proprietary design fabricated and supplied by Acrow Global Limited. This comprises prefabricated panels, each 3.048m in length, which are pinned end to end to form the main trusses. Transversely spanning transoms are fitted between the trusses at low level in a through type arrangement. The structure has a single span of 10 bays (30.48m) between bearing centres along the length of the bridge decks. The structure has a carriageway of 4.20m wide between kerbs and parapets*' (Para 1.3, Acrow Design Brief 2553927564-Barloe Hall, August 2025).

4.4 The preferred option is a single span steel truss bridge structure. This is the most practicable solution to provide a suitable river crossing for all identified users including pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and vehicles. The carriageway decks surfaces are finished with factory applied anti-skid surfacing. The bridge design is shown on the drawing below.

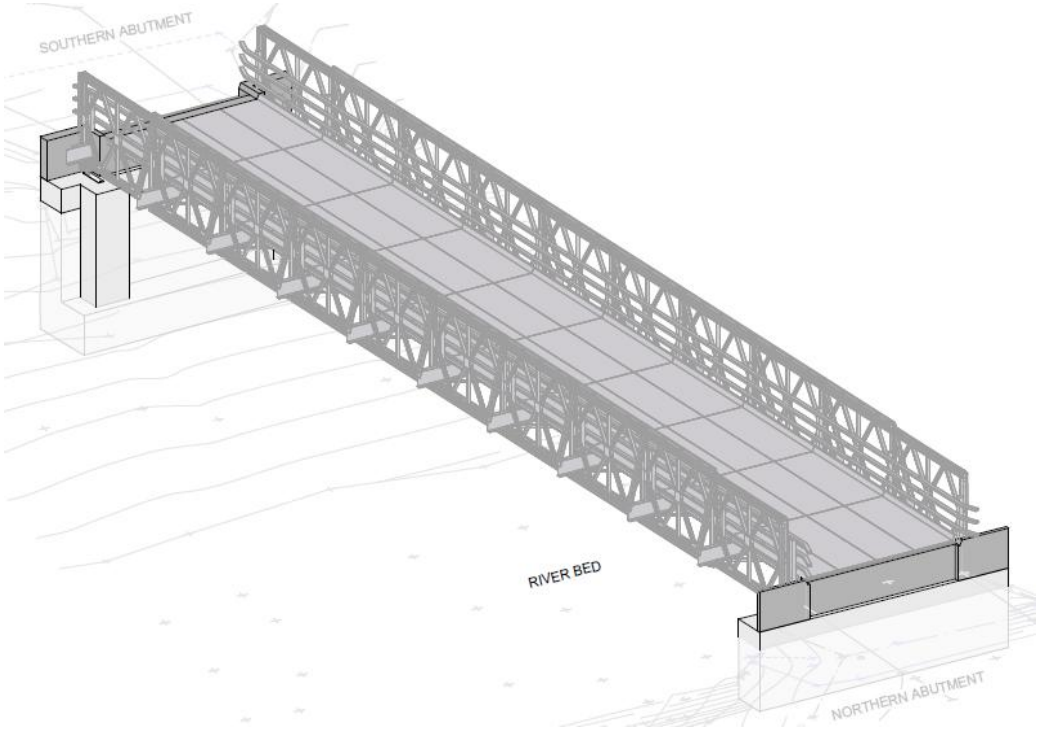


Figure 4: Extract from drawing 240960-PEV-XX-ZZ-DR-S-9000P01 showing an axonometric of the proposed bridge

4.5 The bridge is designed to carry all standard road going vehicles up to 44 tonnes (axle weights and layouts as defined in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, CS454 Assessment of Highway Bridges and Structures) and assumes a single vehicle crossing the bridge at any one time which is assured by the width of the bridge deck which prevents two way flow.

4.6 Vehicular access to the new bridge will be from the south via Willenhall Road. The proposed height of the bridge deck will provide the necessary clearance above river water level. Where the northern end of the bridge deck meets the access road on the northern bank the proposed regraded ramp to the bridge will have a maximum gradient of 1:20. Where the southern end of the bridge deck meets the southern access road the proposed regraded ramp to the bridge will have a maximum gradient of 1:20.

4.7 A traffic holding area at each end of the bridge will allow for passing traffic to safely wait until the bridge is clear. The proposed location of the bridge plugs into the existing highway/footway network and will cause minimum disruption to the immediate area. Access is straightforward and the alterations to land, landscape and access are minimal. The bridge will sit on the existing concrete abutments at each bank. The main construction bracing of the bridge and the parapet will be a galvanised finish to provide long-term protection from decay.

4.8 The application pack submitted includes the following information which should be read in conjunction of this Planning Design and Access Statement:

- Cover letter with fee codes – Barlow Hall Bailey Bridge;
- 25539-26803-AGL-COM-001-DR-CD-101-P01;
- 25539-27564-AGL-COM-001-DR-CD-201-P02240909;
- PIC001-005-002 Manchester Bailey Bridge PEA OT WV Rpt FINAL V01;
- 240960-PEV-XX-XX-DR-S-0900 P01 Main Bridge Plan;
- 240960-PEV-XX-ZZ-DR-S-9000 P01 Elevations;
- 240960-PEV-XX-ZZ-DR-S-9010 P01 Northern Abutment Details;
- 240960-PEV-XX-ZZ-DR-S-9015 P01 Southern Abutment Details; and
- Construction Management Plan prepared by Jamieson Contracting, November 2025.
- Ground Investigation Report prepared by Pick Everard, Report MC/CHO/240960/17-2/R001 prepared 24 October 2024.
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Thompson Environmental Consultants for Pick Everard, September 2024.
- Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Pick Everard, Report SHD/MDE/240960/17-2/R001 prepared 11 December 2025.

5. Access Considerations

5.1 This planning application seeks approval for a replacement bridge to be constructed over the River Mersey. The bridge will provide for pedestrian, bridleway, and cycle access and occasional access for vehicular maintenance traffic to access Chorlton Water Park.

5.2 The nearest alternative crossing point for pedestrians to the west lies at the far western side of Chorlton Water Park, just to the north of the South Manchester Sub Station at Fairy Lane. This bridge provides a pedestrian link across the River Mersey. It lies a significant distance from those parts of Chorlton which enjoyed convenient access across the Mersey until the former Barlow Hall Bridge was removed. Reinstatement of the removed bridge link at Barlow Hall will be particularly beneficial to walkers/dog walkers/cyclists/horse riders and local residents using the surrounding path and recreational network who presently have to detour c. 0.5 km to the bridge at the western side of the water park to cross the river.



Figure 5: Image showing Bridge to west of Chorlton Water Park (White arrows) and Location of Proposed Bridge at Barlow Hall (Red arrows)



Figure 6: Image showing proposed location of new bridge to Chorlton Water Park (Red arrows)

5.3 The plan above shows that important links were severed when the previous bridge was removed which underlines why the City Council has rigorously pursued a replacement bridge. The plan also demonstrates a clear need to rejoin severed accesses and installing a new bridge in this location will solve the problem.

5.4 The bridge has been designed to be accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. Level access will be provided on the bridge deck and will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and relevant accessibility standards.

5.5 For emergency access provision has been made for emergency vehicle access in line with statutory requirements.

6 Planning Policy Context

Introduction

6.1 This section of the statement sets out the local and national planning policy context of relevance to the determination of this planning application. An appraisal of how the proposal relates to the key planning considerations relevant to the site is set out in 7 of this statement.

The Development Plan

6.2 Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 states that applications for development must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. This establishes the Development Plan as the primary decision-making document when considering planning applications. In this instance the development plan is the Manchester Development Plan (comprising of the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan, Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester and Supplementary Planning Documents) and the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024). Due consideration in the determination of the application will also need to be afforded to national policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which represents a significant material consideration.

National Planning Policy (NPPF)

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was most recently updated in February 2025 and sets out the government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. It replaces the Framework published in December 2023, however a presumption in favour of sustainable development continues to be at the heart of the NPPF which ensures that development is pursued in a positive way.

6.4 Development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, permission should be granted unless:

- The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the proposed development; or

- Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

6.5 Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be pursued in mutually supportive ways through the planning system.

Delivery Sustainable Development

6.6 The NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. These sustainable objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the framework. The NPPF is split into 17 chapters, the chapters of relevance to this development are discussed below.

6.7 Promoting healthy and safe communities (Chapter 8) - the planning system should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe communities. Planning decisions should aim to achieve places which promote, amongst other things, safe and accessible developments, where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.

6.8 Promoting sustainable transport (Chapter 9) - to protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes, development should be located and designed to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and have access to high quality public transport facilities. Paragraph 116 advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

6.9 Achieving well-designed places (Chapter 12) - this chapter sets out at paragraph 135 that planning policies and decisions should aim to 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 sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.

c) Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit

d) Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks.

e) Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.

6.10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change (Chapter 14) - this chapter emphasises the importance of securing reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change; and, in terms of flooding, development should be made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

The Development Plan for Manchester

6.11 The Development Plan for Manchester comprises policies of the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2012), Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (adopted 1995), and Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (adopted 2024). These documents are discussed in further detail below.

Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2012)

6.12 The Core Strategy was adopted in July 2012 and sets out the long-term strategic policies for Manchester's future development. Policies relevant to the site and proposals are outlined below:

- Policy SP 1 'Spatial Principles' states that development should aid the creation of neighbourhoods of choice by creating well designed places that enhance or create character; and protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

- Policy T 1 'Sustainable Transport' states that the Council will support proposals that deliver a sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system to encourage a modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking, to support the needs of residents and businesses and to prepare for carbon free modes of transport.

- Policy T2 'Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need' seeks to ensure that new development is easily accessible by walking/cycling/public transport.

- Policy EN 14 'Flood Risk' states that development should be directed away from sites at the greatest risk of flooding and towards sites with little or no risk of flooding; and, that new development should minimise surface water run-off.

- Policy EN 17 'Water Quality' states that development should avoid any adverse impact on water quality, and minimise surface water run-off and ground water contamination.

- Policy DM 1 'Development Management' sets out various issues that development should have regard to, including: appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail; impact on the surrounding areas; effects on amenity; accessibility; community safety and crime prevention; and effects relating to biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage; and, green infrastructure including open space.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (adopted 1995)

6.13 The UDP was superseded by the Core Strategy. However, a number of UDP polices have been 'saved'. Extant polices contained within the UDP which are relevant to the proposed scheme include those relating to the Mersey Valley including:

- Mersey Valley Recreational Policy CB21 'In developing and improving recreation facilities in the Valley, and access to them, attention will be paid, wherever possible, to the needs of disabled people'.

- Mersey Valley Access Policy CB29 'A network of waymarked footpaths, horse riding routes and cycle routes will be developed and maintained throughout the Valley, segregated where appropriate. Particular emphasis will be given to the need to

provide a continuous footpath, along the length of the Valley. Wherever possible, this will be along the riverside'. The reason for this policy states that 'A network of the type now proposed wilt promote better use of the Valley paths, offering a wider choice of routes and catering for cyclists and horse riders as well as walkers. Measures will be taken to make these routes easier to follow'.

- Mersey Valley Access Policy CB30 'Where appropriate, existing access points into the Valley will be improved, making them more obvious and attractive and new access points will be created'. The reason for this policy states that 'To ensure easier access to the Valley from urban areas at the margins and increase its attractiveness as a major area for outdoor recreation'.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document 2024

6.14 The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document took effect and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the nine subscribing Greater Manchester authorities on March 21st 2024. The following policies are relevant to the determination of a planning application:

- Policy JP-Strat13 Strategic Green Infrastructure: This advises that the River Valleys will be protected and enhanced which will enable residents to access and maximise the benefits of green infrastructure on their health and wellbeing.

- Policy JP-S1 Walking and Cycling: In order to help deliver a higher proportion of journeys made by walking and cycling, decision makers will support a range of measures, including:

  1. Creating safe, attractive and integrated walking and cycling infrastructure, connecting every neighbourhood and community with reference to national and locally adopted design guidance;

2. Ensuring routes are direct, easily navigable and integrated with the street and public transport network;

3. Creating active neighbourhoods and street networks which are more permeable to walking and cycling than to the private car, creating an incentive to walk and cycle;

4. Creating, where needed, dedicated separate space for people walking and cycling, with pedestrians and cyclists given priority at junctions and crossings;

5. Increasing the capacity and quality of walking and cycling infrastructure in locations where significant growth in the number of short journeys is anticipated, and where quality of place improvements are proposed;

6. Utilising and enhancing green infrastructure, including canals, parks and recreation grounds, to create opportunities for walking and cycling.

- Policy JP-Strat4 Flood Risk and the Environment: This advises that development should be located and designed so as to minimise the impacts of current and future flood risk.

- Policy JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity: This policy sets out how a net enhancement in diversity will be achieved. It advises that development will be expected to avoid significant harm to biodiversity, particularly where it is irreplaceable. If necessary consideration should be given to the use of alternative sites with less harmful impacts.

7. Planning Policy Appraisal

Introduction

7.1 Having regard to the relevant planning policy guidance in the previous section, the key material considerations against which the proposed scheme should be considered, and which are discussed in this section, include:

- Principle of development;
- Impact on footpath network;
- Design considerations;
- Access and highway impacts;
- Potential Impact on Amenity;
- Ecology, trees and biodiversity net gain;
- Drainage and flood risk;
- Land contamination; and
- Sustainable development.

Principle of development

7.2 This planning application seeks approval for a new bridge to be constructed over the River Mersey and will provide a permanent bridge link for use by the public and will reinstate an access route to Chorlton Water Park for maintenance vehicles. The location of the new bridge is proposed to be located on the site of a previous bridge, known as Barlow Hall Bailey Bridge which was removed in 2025 due to deteriorating structural condition. The application site lies to the south of Chorlton Water Park and to the north of Kenworthy Woods and the new bridge will occupy the same position as the previous bridge which it is intended to replace.

7.3 The proposed bridge will provide for pedestrian, bridleway, and cycle access and for occasional access maintenance vehicles. The previous bridge removed in 2024 served

similar user groups. The proposed new bridge will replace the earlier construction which served the area from the 1970s to March 2025. The construction reuses the existing abutments and given that this location has accommodated a bridge for the last 50 years, the principle of the new bridge at SJ821916 is regarded to be acceptable. The following policy is therefore noted to be complied with:

- Policy SP 1 which advises that development should aid the creation of neighbourhoods of choice by creating well designed places that enhance the built and natural environment.

Impact on footpath, cycle and equestrian network

7.4 The plans included at Section 5 above show that important links were severed when the previous bridge was removed and this underlines why the City Council has rigorously pursued a replacement bridge. The new bridge fixes a broken node in the footpath, cycle and equestrian route network. There is clearly a need to reinstate a bridge in this location to solve an identified deficiency in the recreational route network. Furthermore the new bridge will complement the local Bee Network, an initiative of the GM Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund programme. The following policies are therefore noted to be complied with:

- Policy T1 'Sustainable Transport' which support proposals that deliver a sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system to encourage a modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking.

- Policy T2 'Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need' which seeks to ensure development is easily accessible by walking/cycling/public transport.

- Mersey Valley Access Policy CB29 and CB30 which aims to provide and maintain access and routes for footpaths, horse riding and cycling throughout the Valley.

- Policy JP-Strat13 Strategic Green Infrastructure which advises that the River Valleys will be protected and enhanced which will enable residents to access and maximise the benefits of green infrastructure on their health and wellbeing.

Design considerations

7.5 The proposal requires constructing a new bridge to an identified specification. The preferred solution is for a 30.48m single span (10 Bay) Bridge. The bridge width is 4.20m with a load classification of 44 tonnes. The deck construction will be in steel deck units with an anti-skid factory applied coating.

7.6 The proposed siting replicates that of the former bridge, now removed. This has the advantage of allowing existing routes aside the bridge to be repurposed with only minimal modifications being required to the existing approach routes to the bridge by minor regrading to facilitate the works. This mitigates the need to make changes to or divert existing routes or footpaths. The new bridge has therefore been designed to make efficient use of the site. By reusing the previous bridge location the new bridge will continue to display appropriate separation from neighbouring properties thereby retaining and maintaining privacy and amenity.

7.7 The bridge is located in a river valley setting and the new structure replaces what was a WW2 Bailey type bridge. These two influences have shaped the design and an overly elaborate bridge structure has been avoided in favour of a more modest bridge which fits into the surrounding area without drawing attention, much the same as the former Bailey Bridge did. The scale of the development is judged to be appropriate to the site and surrounding area and sits comfortably within the existing river valley and environs.

7.8 The materials and architectural style of the new bridge are reflective of the former Bailey bridge. Proposed materials include the steel trussed access bridge and concrete abutments. These materials are reflective of the materials used on the previous bridge and

will sit comfortably within the site. They are considered appropriate within the semi-rural river valley context and will reflect and enhance the character of the area.

Access and highway impacts

7.9 The bridge has been specified to be accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. Level access will be provided on the bridge deck and the approaches will be graded to meet 1:20 and will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and relevant accessibility standards.

7.10 The new bridge will not carry significant volumes of traffic and is intended primarily as a bridge for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Maintenance vehicles will use the bridge on an ad hoc basis. No traffic implications have been noted which need to be assessed as part of the determination since the bridge is not intended to accommodate regular traffic flows. The bridge is not intended to accommodate two way vehicle flows and retains the existing passing places to the northern and southern banks which will allow for safe operation at all times. For emergency access provision has been made for emergency vehicle access in line with statutory requirements. The following policies are therefore complied with:

- Mersey Valley Recreational Policy CB21 which seeks to improve access to recreation facilities in the Valley in particular, and access to them, in particular paying attention to the needs of disabled people.

- Policy JP-S1 Walking and Cycling which seeks to deliver a higher proportion of journeys made by walking and cycling.

Potential impact on amenity

7.11 The site for the erection of the bridge lies some distance away from existing buildings and development. The bridge is not proposed to be intensively used as a vehicle crossing point. Furthermore no artificial lighting is proposed to be installed to the bridge. The

closest residential properties to the application site lie 0.25 km to the east on Woodlake Avenue with Caldervale Avenue lying beyond this. These properties are separated from the application site by areas of woodland planting and no impacts are anticipated in terms of noise or disturbance to the amenity of these occupants. The following policies are considered to be complied with:

- Policy DM1 'Development Management which requires applicants to have regard to the potential impact of development including effects relating to amenity.

- Policy JP-Strat13 Strategic Green Infrastructure which advises that access to River Valleys will be protected and enhanced which will enable residents to access and maximise the benefits of green infrastructure on their health and wellbeing.

Ecology, trees and biodiversity net gain

7.12 As part of the design development Thomson Environmental Consultants (TEC) undertook a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site in September 2024, including an ecological desk study and a habitat survey, as well as an assessment of the riparian habitats for suitability to support otter and water vole.

7.13 With regard to the potential for otters, TEC made no definitive sightings of otter during site surveys at the River Mersey. TEC concluded that although no field signs were found either both the river and lake (Chorlton Water Park) did offer habitat suitable for foraging and commuting otter. TEC advised that since there will be no restrictions to river flow along the River Mersey during the works, otter will be able to move freely and without interruption along the watercourse. TEC also noted that since the bridge works will be conducted during daylight hours and lighting is not proposed for the replacement bridge, disturbance to foraging and commuting otter from lighting was not anticipated. A further survey of the island within the lake for otters was not deemed necessary due to the very low likelihood of a holt being present and the construction compound being located beyond the

recommended 30m exclusion for holts. No direct otter mitigation measures were considered to be necessary in advance of works commencing.

7.14 With regard to the water voles survey, areas were defined that encompassed a 400m stretch of the River Mersey, centred on the bridge site, and a 200m stretch of the banks of the Chorlton Water park. No potential or definitive field signs of water vole were identified during the surveys. TEC concluded that due to the low suitability of the waterbodies for water vole at the surveyed locations and lack of desk study records, a single field signs survey is deemed acceptable to establish likely absence, and water vole are not considered a direct constraint to the works.

7.15 A habitat survey, using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) methodology, was undertaken during a site visit carried out on 15th August 2024. The new bridge is to be rebuilt in the same location as the removed one and therefore extensive habitat clearance is not required to facilitate the installation works. Some localised cutting back of vegetation is likely to be required to ensure the visibility of the abutment working area in advance of the works. The EA compound to be used for construction will also be cleared as necessary to facilitate the storage of materials. This manmade compound undergoes regular use in any event. Construction impacts on biodiversity are therefore negligible. As the proposal relates to the upward extension of the existing concrete abutments and replacement of the bridge only, and does not include alterations to the existing surrounding habitats, a Biodiversity Net Gain exercise is deemed to be unnecessary. The following policies are therefore considered to be complied with:

- Policy DM1 'Development Management' which requires applicants to have regard to the potential impact of development including effects relating to biodiversity and ecology and landscape.

- Policy JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity which advises that development will be expected to avoid significant harm to biodiversity.

Drainage and flood risk

7.16 Prior to the development of the application a new soffit level for the bridge was identified and agreed with the Environment Agency. The new bridge will be constructed to utilise the existing abutments and be elevated by approximately 1 metre to meet the Environment Agency (EA) flood protection requirements. The surrounding access roads and paths will be contoured to meet the bridge deck level required by EA. Permeable surfaces are proposed. The installation of the bridge will slow run off as rainfall will not fall directly into the river, instead wetting the bridge before saturation and run off occurs, thereby the new bridge will slow surface runoff to an extent compared with the existing position. The proposed site layout is judged to tie in with the Environment Agency's flood level requirements. The following policies are therefore considered to be complied with:

- Policy EN14 'Flood Risk' which states that new development should minimise surface water run-off.

- Policy EN17 'Water Quality' which states that development should avoid any adverse impact on water quality.

- Policy JP-Strat4 Flood Risk and the Environment which advises that development should be designed so as to minimise the impact of future flood risk.

Land contamination

7.17 The end use proposed would not be particularly vulnerable to the presence of contamination, nonetheless a ground investigation report prepared by Pick Everard has informed the engineering design process for the bridge. The application land is confirmed not to be contaminated and the assessment confirm that the risk to controlled waters is low, and specific remedial measures were not unnecessary. The report did confirm the presence of some of asbestos within soils and advised that advise should be sought from a suitably qualified asbestos consultant. It is noted however that direct contact pathways will

be active throughout the construction phase if these would be disturbed. Accordingly, standard PPE and good hygiene practices should be adopted while working with potentially contaminated soils (i.e. nitrile or work gloves, welfare facilities and no food/drink within the work area). These measures can be incorporated into safe working construction documents governing works.

7.18 If during the works previously unidentified contamination is encountered, a suitably qualified Environmental Consultant shall be informed immediately, and the Contaminated Land Officer/Environmental Services at the local authority will also be informed of mitigation proposals for the area of concern. The following policy is considered to be complied with:

- Policy DM1 'Development Management' which requires applicants to have regard to the potential impact of development including effects relating to potential contamination.

Sustainable development

7.19 The development proposed is shown to fall within the definition of sustainable development because it improves the local route network which will encourage and facilitate increase pedestrian and cycle movements. The plans included at Section 5 above show that important links were severed when the previous bridge was removed and this underlines why the City Council has rigorously pursued a replacement bridge. The new bridge fixes a broken node in the footpath, cycle and equestrian route network. There is clearly a need to reinstate a bridge in this location to solve a deficiency in the network. Furthermore the new bridge will complement the local Bee Network, an initiative of the GM Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund programme. The following policies are therefore considered to be complied with:

- Policy T1 'Sustainable Transport' which support proposals that deliver a sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system to encourage a modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking.

- Policy T2 'Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need' which seeks to ensure development is easily accessible by walking/cycling/public transport.

- Mersey Valley Access Policy CB29 and CB30 which aims to provide and maintain access and routes for footpaths, horse riding and cycling throughout the Valley.

- Policy JP-Strat13 Strategic Green Infrastructure which advises that the River Valleys will be protected and enhanced which will enable residents to access and maximise the benefits of green infrastructure on their health and wellbeing.

8. Conclusions and Mitigation

8.1 This Planning Design and Access Statement has been prepared for Jamieson Contracting working on behalf of Manchester City Council. The statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the installation of new access bridge to Chorlton Water Park.

8.2 The development proposed by this application will re-establish a bridge link for use by pedestrians/cyclists/horse riders seeking to cross the River Mersey to the south west of Chorlton Water Park. This statement has provided an assessment of the various planning impacts associated with the proposals, supported by technical reporting where relevant. This assessment has successfully demonstrated that there are no technical reasons that would warrant refusal of planning permission.

8.3 The development proposed is shown to fall within the definition of sustainable development (NPPF Para 8) because it improves the local route network which will encourage and facilitate increase pedestrian and cycle movements. The plans included at Section 5 above show that important links were severed when the previous bridge was removed and this underlines why the City Council has rigorously pursued a replacement bridge. The new bridge fixes a broken node in the footpath, cycle and equestrian route network. There is clearly a need to reinstate a bridge in this location to solve a deficiency in the network. Furthermore the new bridge will complement the local Bee Network, an initiative of the GM Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund programme

8.4 In light of the need to balance the benefits of allowing the proposed development against any adverse impacts that may arise as a result, we conclude that the benefits outlined above would not be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by any perceived adverse impacts if planning permission was granted. The proposals are therefore considered to constitute sustainable development as defined by paragraph 8 of the NPPF and consequently the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply in the determination of this application.