

## Ash Road Bridge – Appendix 10 to Full Council Report

Appendix Title: **Equality and Diversity Implications**  
Subject: Equality and Diversity  
Author: ARB Project Team  
Date: 1 April 2021

- 1.1 The Council has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 (in particular, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of that Act) to have due regard to the following matters in the exercise of all its functions, namely the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a "relevant protected characteristic" (i.e. age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it; and
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 1.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was prepared for the road bridge (Stage 1) – a copy of this is provided as an Annexe to this Appendix. An EqIA is a systematic assessment of the potential or actual effects of plans, policies, or proposals on groups with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. This EqIA provides evidence that equality duties in relation to the PSED have been fulfilled in developing the proposed development. It provides a consideration of potential direct and indirect equality impacts (both negative and positive) associated with the new road bridge and link road.
- 1.3 The EqIA for the road bridge (Stage 1) identified that the scheme is likely to provide a range of benefits that can be shared by groups with protected characteristics. This includes direct benefits such as improved safety, accessibility and journey time savings for drivers and bus passengers as well as indirect benefits such as facilitating accelerated housing delivery in the area. Specific benefits highlighted include:
- A decrease in noise levels for residential properties north of the station along Guildford Road to the roundabout with Ash Hill Road resulting in health and well-being benefits for residents;
  - A new cycle path along the new road bridge and connecting link road providing a safer and more seamless route for people to cycle in the area including those with protected characteristics including young people and other protected characteristic groups;
  - Provision of direct employment opportunities which can be shared by groups with protected characteristics; and
  - Accelerated delivery of the Local Plan including new housing opportunities. This includes provision for affordable housing, extra care and accessible housing and dwellings of varying sizes and types benefitting a wide range of households including young people, those on low incomes, older people, disabled people and families with children.

- 1.4 The EqlA also highlighted specific impacts for further consideration as follows:
- (a) An increase in day and night time exposure to construction and traffic noise for residential properties along the route with potential differential impacts for children and older people. Adverse noise impacts are also predicted for the traveller site on Guildford Road near to the station;
  - (b) Long diversions or continued use of the level crossing for pedestrians would occur should the planning application for the footbridge not be submitted or approved. This may have implications for people with mobility issues including older people and people with disabilities and people with pushchairs and /or young children; and
  - (c) An increase in walking distances to bus stops from Ash Station for bus passengers including older people and people with disabilities and people with pushchairs and /or young children.
- 1.5 Stage 2 of the ARB Scheme specifically seeks to address (b) through the delivery of an equality compliant footbridge and subsequent closure of the Ash level crossing. A further EqlA will be prepared to support the application for the footbridge (Stage 2) to ensure that the design is accessible and equality compliant. The EqlA will be prepared in accordance with the Council's EqlA guidance and Network Rail's Diversity Impact Assessment guidance to ensure that due regard is paid to the Equality Act 2010 and PSED for the planning application.
- 1.6 In regards to points (a) and (c) at paragraph 1.4, the following provisional high-level recommendations were set out in the EqlA to strengthen, secure or enhance positive equality impacts and to mitigate for potential negative equality impacts associated with Stage 1 of the scheme:
- Develop a renewed strategy for ongoing wide-ranging stakeholder engagement prior to and during the construction stage to consider any specific needs (including the traveller community on Guildford Road). This could include the procurement of a Community Relations Manager;
  - Preparation of a local employment and procurement policy to ensure opportunities are available to all groups with protected characteristics;
  - Preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan which accounts for the various needs of those with protected characteristics (e.g. information (language), accessibility, dangers of construction sites (schools));
  - Provide information with regards to the relocation of bus stops and any potential changes to bus services during construction and operation; and
  - Monitoring of equality impacts should be included as part of the proposed development's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. This would include reviewing how the proposed benefits of the scheme will be realised by groups with protected characteristics once operational.

- 1.7 Further detail is provided in the full EqlA at the Annexe to this note. As part of the continuing design and delivery of the road bridge, the recommendations outlined in the EqlA will be reviewed and developed to realise the benefits outlined for those groups with protected characteristics and to help to further minimise any adverse impacts of the proposed development.

**ANNEXE 1 – EQUALITY AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

# Ash Road Bridge

Equality Impact Assessment

Guildford Borough Council

20 August 2019

### Quality information

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# 1. Introduction

## Purpose

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned by Guildford Borough Council Major Projects team ('the Applicant') to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to support the planning application for a new road bridge in Ash to pass over the railway line to the south of Ash railway station and Ash level crossing, together with associated junction improvements (hereafter referred to as 'the proposed development').
- 1.2 The proposed development relates to the following description:

*"The construction of a road bridge with associated footways and cycle path connecting Guildford Road / Ash Hill Road Roundabout to a new junction with Foreman Road over the North Downs Railway Line south of the existing Ash level crossing, in addition to associated junction improvements, landscaping mitigation, ecology management measures, flood mitigation measures, and drainage."*
- 1.3 A footbridge is also planned to be constructed at Ash level crossing however this will be subject to a separate application and is not subject to detailed consideration as part of this planning application. The level crossing will not be closed until the footbridge is consented and constructed. The footbridge application will be intrinsically linked to the proposed development as the stopping up of the highway cannot come into force until the road bridge is constructed.
- 1.4 As a public sector organisation, the Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 (in particular, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of that Act) to ensure that the proposed development does not lead to unlawful discrimination (direct and indirect), and that it advances equality of opportunity and fosters good relations between those with a protected characteristic<sup>1</sup> and all others. An EqIA is often used by public sector organisations to demonstrate how due regard has been paid to this duty.
- 1.5 An EqIA is a systematic assessment of the potential or actual effects of plans, policies, or proposals on groups with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of this EqIA is to consider how the proposed development would contribute to the realisation of equality effects on the community affected.
- 1.6 This EqIA will provide evidence that equality duties in relation to the PSED have been fulfilled in developing the proposed development. It provides a consideration of potential direct and indirect equality impacts (both negative and positive) associated with the new bridge and link road. It also provides potential mitigation and recommendations for ensuring due regard continues to be paid to the PSED during the detailed design and operational stages of the proposed development.

## Background

- 1.7 The new road bridge will pass over the railway line to the south of Ash railway station and Ash level crossing. Ash is located to the west of Guildford, approximately two miles east of Aldershot. Ash station is located on the North Downs line, between Reading and Gatwick. The station sits within the Wessex region and is served by South Western Rail and Great Western Rail, with the former managing the station.

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<sup>1</sup> Protected characteristics are defined under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership.

- 1.8 A level crossing is located immediately to the east of Ash Station on the A323 Guildford Road. When trains pass through the station the level crossing is closed, causing delays to all users of A323 Guildford Road. Further traffic in this area arising from development principally associated with the Guildford Local Plan A31 policy allocation and increases in level crossing closures arising from proposed enhancements in rail frequencies will exacerbate existing delays and associated issues. Network Rail consider that the level crossing will become prohibitively unsafe without its closure<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.9 The proposed development comprises construction of a 7.3 metre width single-carriageway road with accompanying footways, cycleway and highway improvements, including all utilities, lighting, drainage, signing and guarding. The proposed road route will connect Guildford Road / Ash Hill Road Roundabout to a new junction with Foreman Road via a new road bridge over the North Downs Railway Line south of the existing Ash Level Crossing and will include attendant highway works to Foreman Road to facilitate the diversion of the A323 Guildford Road along the new road.
- 1.10 A footbridge will be provided on or adjacent to the alignment of the present level crossing, with the level crossing subsequently 'stopped up'. The footbridge will be subject to a separate standalone planning application which will be linked to the stopping-up order. Therefore, this EqIA will only assess the impact of the new road bridge and link road. An EqIA or Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) of the footbridge will be undertaken as a separate assessment forming part of the future planning application.

## Report structure

- 1.11 Following on from this introduction section, the remainder of the report is structured as follows:
- **Chapter 2: Methodology** – setting out our approach to collecting evidence and assessment of impacts;
  - **Chapter 3: Policy and legislation review** – providing context through relevant national, regional and local policy and legislation associated with equalities and transport schemes;
  - **Chapter 4: Summary of the proposed development** – an overview of the proposed Ash Road Bridge Scheme;
  - **Chapter 5: Equalities baseline** – using secondary data sources such as Census 2011 data to form an understanding of the local community as well as feedback and issues raised through consultation;
  - **Chapter 6: Consultation** – overview of consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the public;
  - **Chapter 7: Assessment of potential equality effects** – an appraisal of impacts and equality effects of the proposed development using the evidence gathered; and
  - **Chapter 8: Recommendations and conclusions** – high level recommendations and conclusions for enhancing positive equality impacts and minimising potential negative impacts of the proposed development.

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<sup>2</sup> Network Rail (July 2017) Response to consultation on the Guildford Local Plan (Reg 19)

## 2. Methodology

### Introduction

- 2.1 This chapter sets out the approach to assessing the equality effects associated with the proposed development. The assessment considers how Ash Road Bridge could directly impact and contribute to equality effects for groups with protected characteristics within the study area.
- 2.2 It also considers the indirect equality effects realised through the proposed development, associated with facilitating new development land for housing.
- 2.3 The approach for undertaking this EqIA and compiling this report follows a three stage process:
- Desk-based review - including relevant national, regional and local policies and legislation, the proposed redevelopment plan and secondary datasets relating to groups with protected characteristics;
  - Appraisal of potential impacts - informed by a consideration of the policy context, consultation responses, equalities baseline data, and information from environmental and transport assessments of the scheme; and
  - Recommendations and conclusions.
- 2.4 The approach is based on our understanding of the Equality Act 2010, particularly section 149 regarding the PSED, and supporting technical guidance produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) as well as AECOM's in-house approach to conducting EqIAs.

### Desktop Review

- 2.5 In addition to a review of relevant national, regional and local policies and legislation, the desk-based review included a full review of the following:
- Relevant and recent information regarding the proposed development;
  - National and local datasets associated with groups with protected characteristics as well as data on key equality themes within the area; and
  - Consultation activities undertaken to date in relation to the proposed development.

### Appraisal of equality impacts

- 2.6 The assessment of equality effects takes into account the information gathered through the above activities in light of the impacts identified through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Transport Assessment (TA). It also considers mitigation measures outlined in these documents and the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- 2.7 Following the desktop review, including a review of the EIA, TA and CEMP, a judgment has then been made as to how the proposed development would contribute to the realisation of the equality effects for affected groups with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 as:
- **Age:** this refers to persons defined by either a particular age or a range of ages;
  - **Disability:** a disabled person is defined as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities;
  - **Gender reassignment:** this refers to people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process for the purpose of reassigning their gender identity;

- **Marriage and civil partnership:** marriage can be between a man and a woman or between two people of the same sex. Same-sex couples can also have a civil partnership. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples;
- **Pregnancy and maternity:** pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth;
- **Race:** the Equality Act 2010 defines race as encompassing colour, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins;
- **Religion or belief:** religion means any religion a person follows. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief, and includes those people who have no formal religion or belief;
- **Sex:** this refers to a man or to a woman or a group of people of the same sex;
- **Sexual orientation:** a person's sexual orientation relates to their emotional, physical and/or sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction.

2.8 The appraisal considers both disproportionate and differential impacts. A disproportionate equality effect arises when an impact has a proportionately greater effect on protected characteristic groups than on other members of the general population at a particular location. For the purpose of this EqlA, a disproportionate impact is defined by the following:

- Where an impact is predicted for the area in which a group with protected characteristics are known to make up a greater proportion of the affected resident population than their representation in the wider local authority district and/or county/region as identified in the baseline; or
- Where an impact is predicted on a community resource predominantly or heavily used by protected characteristic groups (e.g. primary schools attended by children; care homes catering for very elderly people).

2.9 A differential equality effect is one which affects members of a protected characteristic group differently from the rest of the general population because of specific needs, or a recognised sensitivity or vulnerability associated with their protected characteristic.

2.10 In some cases, protected characteristic groups could be subject to both disproportionate and differential equality effects. The EqlA considers impacts on groups of people rather than on individuals. In considering impacts a 'worst case scenario' is used for assessment purposes.

## 3. Policy and legislation context

### National legislation and policy

#### Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 is a major piece of UK legislation which provides the framework to protect the rights of individuals against unlawful discrimination and to advance equal opportunities for all. Section 149 of the Equality Act sets out the PSED to which Guildford Borough Council, as a public body, is subject in carrying out all its functions, including in the exercise of its CPO powers. Those subject to the PSED must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2 These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the PSED. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
  - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and
  - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- 3.3 The Act describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.
- 3.4 The duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation as described Section 2.5 of this report.
- 3.5 Public authorities need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. This means that the first arm of the duty applies to this characteristic, but that the other arms (advancing equality and fostering good relations) do not apply.

#### National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

- 3.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>3</sup> was adopted in July 2018 and updated with minor revisions in February 2019. It consolidates the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England into a single document and describes how it expects these to be applied. The NPPF supersedes the majority of National Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements and provides overarching guidance on the Government's development aims.

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<sup>3</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, (2019); National Planning Policy Framework available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> (last checked July 2019)

3.7 While the NPPF does not contain specific guidance on equalities, it does emphasise the importance of sustainable development and the need to support a healthy and just society. This is reflected in the key dimensions of sustainable development which relate to the economic, social and environmental roles of the planning system:

- The economic role contributes to building “*a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure*”;
- The social role supports strong, vibrant and healthy communities by “*providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being*”; and
- The environmental role contributes to protecting and enhancing the “*natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy*”.

3.8 The NPPF identifies key principles that local planning authorities should ensure that they consider, including:

- Local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all;
- The delivery of sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs;
- The requirement to plan for the needs of different groups within communities.

3.9 In Chapter 8, the NPPF outlines how planning policy should help promote healthy communities by taking a positive and collaborative approach to enable development to be brought forward. The NPPF emphasises that planning policies and decisions should aim to create places which offer: opportunities for social interaction and meetings between members of the community through the delivery of mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages; safe and accessible environments which include social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs; a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities; and access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation.

## Regional Policy

### Surrey Transport Plan (LTP3) (April 2018)

3.10 The Surrey Transport Plan is the third Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Surrey and sets out the vision to ‘help people to meet their transport and travel needs effectively, reliably, safely and sustainably within Surrey; in order to promote economic vibrancy, protect and enhance the environment and improve the quality of life’.

3.11 The objectives of the plan are:

- **Effective transport:** To facilitate end-to-end journeys for residents, business and visitors by maintaining the road network, delivering public transport services and, where appropriate, providing enhancements.
- **Reliable transport:** To improve the journey time reliability of travel in Surrey.
- **Safe transport:** To improve road safety and the security of the travelling public in Surrey.
- **Sustainable transport:** To provide an integrated transport system that protects the environment, keeps people healthy and provides for lower carbon transport choices.

## Confident in our future: Equality Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-2020

3.12 The Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2015 and sets out Surrey County Council's priorities and demonstrates their commitment to deliver fair and inclusive services to meet the needs of all Surrey communities. Priorities are to:

- Ensure Surrey's children, adults and families are supported and helped to lead more independent lives;
- Support all children and young people to participate and succeed in education, training and employment;
- Support preventative actions to reduce health inequalities and increase wellbeing for our communities; and
- Be a local employer of first choice for people from all our diverse communities, particularly for disabled and younger people.

3.13 Strategic goals of the strategy are:

- Wellbeing – aiming for everyone in Surrey has a great start to life and can live and age well;
- Economic prosperity – ensuring Surrey's economy remains strong and sustainable; and
- Resident experience – making sure residents in Surrey experience public services that are easy to use, responsive and value for money.

## Local Policy

### Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (adopted April 2019)

3.14 The Strategy and Sites document sets out the vision, aims and strategy for the borough between 2015 and 2034 and contains the overarching planning policies as well as allocating land for housing, employment, community facilities and other types of development.

3.15 The Local Plan includes a number of strategic objectives, including

- To deliver sufficient sustainable development that meets all identified needs.
- To improve opportunities for all residents in the borough to access suitable housing, employment, training, education, open space, leisure, community and health facilities.
- To ensure that all development is of high quality design and enables people to live safe, healthy and active lifestyles.
- To facilitate the timely provision of necessary infrastructure to support sustainable development.
- To deliver an integrated, accessible and safe transport system, balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, to facilitate sustainable development.

3.16 Policy S3: Delivery of development and regeneration within Guildford Town Centre states that: *'schemes must demonstrate high quality urban design and contribute wherever possible to achieving: an attractive and safe public realm and legible routes that are easy to understand and to move through and give priority to pedestrians and cyclists over motor vehicles'*.

3.17 Policy D1: Place shaping states that: 'essential elements of place making include creating economically and socially successful new places with a clear identity that promote healthy living: they should be easy to navigate, provide natural security through layout and design with

attractive, well enclosed, and overlooked streets, roads and spaces with clear thought given to the interrelationship of land use to external space. In order for streets to be safe, connected and efficient *‘all new development will be designed to ensure it connects appropriately to existing street patterns and creates safe and accessible spaces. Particular regard shall be given to maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cycle movement and the creation of a high-quality public realm.* Regarding access and inclusion: *‘all new development will be designed to meet the needs of all users, this includes the setting of the building in the wider environment, the location of the building on the plot, the gradient of the plot, transport infrastructure and public realm.’*

- 3.18 The delivery of a *‘new road bridge and footbridge scheme to enable level crossing closure on A323 Guildford Road adjacent to Ash railway station’* is a key infrastructure requirement (LRN19) on which the delivery of the Plan depends, as set out in the Infrastructure Schedule at Appendix 6 of the Local Plan.
- 3.19 The plan provides for the delivery of at least 10,678 new homes by 2034 including land around Ash and Tongham. Policy A31 contained within the Submission Local Plan refers to *‘Land to the south and east of Ash and Tongham’* which is allocated for *‘approximately 1,750 homes, including some self-build and custom house building plots (C3)’*, and comprises 16% of the Local Plan allocation.
- 3.20 The wording of the allocation specifically identifies: *“Land and provision of a new road bridge which will form part of the A323 Guildford Road, with an associated footbridge, to enable the closure of the level crossing on the A323 Guildford Road, adjacent to Ash railway station”*.
- 3.21 The allocation also states the requirement for *‘Proposed road layout or layouts to provide connections between both the individual development sites within this site allocation and between Ash Lodge Drive and Foreman Road, providing a through road connection between Ash Lodge Drive and Foreman Road, in order to maximise accessibility and to help alleviate congestion on the A323 corridor’*. This identifies that the design of the proposed development, where relevant will need to consider how links may be provided to adjacent development parcels.
- 3.22 The plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2017 for independent examination. Public hearings were held in June and July 2018. The Inspector required no changes to the wording of Policy A31 in regards to the road bridge and considered the plan sound once the suggested modifications to the remainder of the plan are implemented. A further set of hearings were held on 12 and 13 February 2019, with the Inspector having now produced a final report and recommendations and submitted these to the Council. In this report, the Inspector comments as follows on Policy A31 (formerly A29) and the road bridge:

*“The level crossing at Ash on the A323 is closed for about 20 minutes in every hour and 127 times a day (on November 2016 figures). Network Rail identifies the crossing as being within the top 20% of crossings in terms of safety risk and has raised safety concerns regarding the impact of the scale of development from sites which are represented in Policy A29 on the operation of the level crossing at Ash railway station. Network Rail, Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council all consider that an alternative means of access over the railway for both vehicular and non-motorised users should be provided to facilitate further development in this area.*

*The removal of the level crossing and the provision of a new bridge would considerably reduce delay and lessen rat-running by keeping traffic on the A323. Policy A29 contains a requirement to make land available and provide a new bridge for the A323 and associated footbridge. A preferred layout has been produced, designed and costed, and funding sources have been identified including Network Rail, Homes England and various development sites. On the basis of all the evidence, the provision of this bridge is necessary for the allocation to proceed and this aspect of the policy is sound.”*

- 3.23 The Guildford Borough Local Plan was adopted on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019.



## Guildford Borough Council's Equality and Diversity Policy Statement (2015)

3.24 The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy sets out their commitment to equality. The Council recognises that they serve a diverse community with diverse needs and will ensure that the community face no unjustifiable barriers in accessing services, the services that others provide on the Council's behalf and job opportunities.

3.25 Specific objectives include:

- Use of an Equality Impact Assessment toolkit to systematically and consistently assess all of activities to identify potential differential impacts on people from the protected groups;
- Where the Equality Impact Assessment identifies a clear differential impact on one or more of the above groups, consult with people from those groups on the best ways of avoiding the differential impact causing unfair discrimination;
- Monitor the impact of equality policy and objectives to ensure that they are having the desired affect; and
- Ensure, through procurement procedures, that those who the Council contract with to provide services on the Council's behalf apply the Council's equality and diversity approaches in the work that they do.

## 4. The proposed development

### Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter describes the infrastructure associated with the proposed development, including a brief outline of the construction methodology and an overview of operational details.
- 4.2 Congestion on the A323 Guildford Road at the Ash level crossing causes delays and safety concerns for road users and pedestrians. These issues cause constraints on the existing highway network and act as a barrier to future residential development in the area.
- 4.3 The proposed development consists of a new single-carriage way road which crosses the railway line via a road bridge, associated works and infrastructure. The erection of a permanent stepped footbridge with lift access is also planned on the alignment of the existing Ash level crossing; this would be subject to a future planning submission.
- 4.4 The proposed development offers the opportunity to improve transport networks and public safety, as well as facilitating access to future proposed residential development within the surrounding area. The proposed development (combined with the proposed footbridge) would therefore:
- Provide access between the A323 Guildford Road / Ash Hill Road roundabout to a new junction with Foreman Road, by-passing the Ash level crossing;
  - Allow non-motorised users to cross the railway and provide highway infrastructure allowing traffic to be diverted across the new road bridge which would ultimately facilitate the future closure of the Ash level crossing; and
  - Improve the reliability and safety of the junctions associated with the works.

### Ash Road Bridge

- 4.5 The proposed development comprises delivery of a link road between the A323 Guildford Road / Ash Hill Road roundabout and a new five arm roundabout on Foreman Road crossing over the North Downs railway line to the south east of the existing Ash station level crossing. From here the proposed development continues north along Foreman Road, which would be widened to 7.3m, before turning left to connect with the existing A323 Ash Church Road via a new bend, which would replace the existing A323 Ash Church Road / Foreman Road junction.
- 4.6 The proposed route (including all highway improvements) is approximately 1 kilometre (km) in length.
- 4.7 The link road carriageway would be 7.3 meters (m) in width, crossing the railway line via a road bridge. A shared cycleway/footway and verge has been incorporated on the west side of the carriageway and a footway and verge to the east. This gives a typical cross sectional width (excluding embankment and easements) of 12.55m.
- 4.8 The horizontal alignment of the road bridge has been designed to cross over the railway line perpendicular to the tracks, which reduces the complexity of the bridge. The minimum clearance between the railway tracks and the underside of the road bridge is 4.78m which would allow electrification of the railway line in the future if required. The bridge approaches are proposed as embankments. The earthworks that support the proposed highway have been designed to be 1:3 side slopes starting at the back of the verges and would be planted to soften the impact of the proposed development.
- 4.9 New surfaced footways would tie in with the existing footway network, Ash station car park and the proposed new shared cycleway/footway associated with the road bridge. Vehicle Restraint Systems (VRS) would be incorporated on both sides for the entire length of the road bridge, with

a pedestrian guardrail at the back of the verge. Double yellow lining would be provided along the extent of the road between Ash Church and the A323 Guildford Road / Ash Hill Road to manage the risk of informal parking.

## Footbridge

- 4.10 A footbridge is proposed on or adjacent to the alignment of the present level crossing, with the level crossing subsequently stopped up. The footbridge will be subject to a separate standalone planning application which will be linked by way of the stopping-up order. A separate or updated EqIA will be required for the footbridge application. It is expected that non-motorised users will be able to continue to use the existing level crossing until the footbridge has been installed.

## Construction overview

- 4.11 The proposed development would take place in five phases:
- Phase 0: Site access and set up (Q2 2020);
  - Phase 1: Preliminary highways works (Q2 2020 to Q3 2020);
  - Phase 2a: Construction of the north side of the link road (Q2 2020 to Q2 2021);
  - Phase 2b: Construction of the south side of the link road (Q2 2020 to Q2 2021);
  - Phase 2c: Construction of the road bridge (Q2 2021);
  - Phase 3: Further highways works (Q2 2021 to Q3 2021); and
  - Phase 4: Construction of the footbridge (indicatively Q3 2021 to Q1 2022).
- 4.12 Construction of the proposed development is programmed to start in Q2 2020, with completion of all elements planned for Q1 2022. The road bridge is expected to be complete in Q3 2021, at which point construction of the footbridge would likely commence subject to future planning submission and approval. In any event, it is anticipated that once the road bridge is open the level crossing will be closed to motorised vehicles but remain open to non-motorised users. Once the footbridge is complete and operational, the level crossing would be permanently closed to all users.
- 4.13 Construction working hours would include some night working although these would be confirmed through the planning process.

## 5. Baseline

- 5.1 The section outlines the equalities baseline relevant to the proposed development. This includes analysis of Census 2011 data and other datasets at the ward, borough and South East scale for comparison purposes. Ward areas analysed include Ash South and Tongham ward and Ash Wharf as both wards cover the area required for the proposed development. Wherever possible the most recently available data is presented at all geographical levels relevant to the study area.
- 5.2 A baseline profile of the population living and working within the study area is necessary for the identification of potential equality impacts in order that an assessment can be made as to the potential level of impact the proposed development may have on groups with protected characteristics. The main source of data used in the baseline profiling at this stage is Census 2011 data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

### Population

- 5.3 According to the most recent data available, Ash South and Tongham is home to 7,802 people and Ash Wharf is home to 6,391 people.
- 5.4 As shown in Table 5-1, the population of Ash Wharf increased at a lower rate between 2001 and 2017 in comparison to Guildford and the South East averages. The population of Ash South and Tongham decreased by 2.5% between 2011 and 2017.

**Table 5-1 Population growth 2001 - 2017<sup>4</sup>**

Date	Wards		Guildford	South East
	Ash South and Tongham	Ash Wharf		
2001	8,005	6,073	129,701	8,000,645
2011	7,674	6,120	137,183	8,634,750
2017	7,802	6,391	147,889	9,080,825
% Change	-2.5%	+5.2%	+14.0%	+7.9%

Source: ONS 2001 and 2011 Census and Mid-year population estimates, 2017

### Age

- 5.5 Table 5-2 outlines age breakdown across the different geographical areas encompassed within the baseline area. The proportion of residents aged 0 – 15 years old across the Ash South and Tongham ward (17.7%) and the Ash Wharf ward (17.4%) is slightly lower than for Guildford (17.9%) and the South East (19.02%). The proportion of the residents within the 16 – 64 age group in Ash South and Tongham (65.6%) and Ash Wharf (63.9%) is slightly lower than that of Guildford (66.5%) but slightly higher than the South East (63.8%). Finally, the proportion of residents over the age of 65 is highest in Ash Wharf (18.7%) among all the different geographical areas.

<sup>4</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: Population Density 2011 (Table QS102EW); Population Density 2001 (Table UV02)

**Table 5-2 Age breakdown by different geographical areas**

Date	Wards		Guildford	South East
	Ash South and Tongham	Ash Wharf		
0-15	17.7%	17.4%	17.9%	19.0%
16-64	65.6%	63.9%	66.5%	63.8%
65 and over	16.7%	18.7%	15.6%	17.2%

Source: ONS Mid-year population estimates, 2017

## Disability

5.6 The proportion of residents at ward level who reported that their day-to-day activities were 'limited a lot' in Ash Wharf (8.3%) ward was higher than the Guildford average of 6.1% and the South East average of 8.2%. The proportion of residents with day-to-day activities 'limited a little' is also higher at the ward levels than across Guildford, however the ward levels are broadly similar to the South East. Correspondingly, the proportion of residents who reported that their day-to-day activities were not limited is lower at the ward levels than that reported for Guildford and the South East.

**Table 5-3 Limiting long-term illness or disability by different geographical areas**

Date	Wards		Guildford	South East
	Ash South and Tongham	Ash Wharf		
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	7.6%	8.3%	6.1%	8.2%
Day-to-day activities limited a little	10.3%	10.7%	8.7%	10.4%
Day-to-day activities not limited	82.1%	81.0%	85.3%	81.4%

Source: ONS, DC3602EW - Long-term health problem or disability by NS-SeC by sex by age<sup>5</sup>

## Gender reassignment

5.7 There are no official statistics relating to gender reassignment and the UK Census currently only collects data relating to sex (gender assigned at birth). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has identified a need for information about gender identity for policy development and service planning with these requirements strengthened by the need for information on those with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Work is currently being undertaken to identify the ways of capturing this information within the 2021 Census.

## Marriage and civil partnership

5.8 51.3% of the population in Ash South and Tongham and 50.6% of the population in Ash Wharf who are over the age of 16 are married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership comparable to 51.3% in Guildford 46.8% nationally.

<sup>5</sup> ONS, (2011); DC3602EW - Long-term health problem or disability by NS-SeC by sex by age, available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=676&version=0&anal=1&initsej=> accessed April 2019

## Pregnancy and maternity

- 5.9 Pregnant women can be more susceptible to experience negative effects associated with development and the built environment. For example, pregnant women can be more susceptible to poor air quality<sup>6</sup>, which can have a negative impact on birth weight.
- 5.10 Pregnant women will also need good access to health care facilities, particularly towards the latter stages of pregnancy. Accessibility is therefore an important issue for this group.
- 5.11 With regards to income, housing and wellbeing, young mothers (and fathers) may be more likely to suffer from deprivation and struggle to find affordable housing.

## Race

- 5.12 Table 5-4 shows that the proportion of White British residents at the ward level (91.61% in Ash South and Tongham and 89.15% in Ash Wharf) is higher than both Guildford (83.47%) and the South East (85.23%) averages. The proportion of 'Other' white residents (2.68% in Ash South and Tongham and 2.99% in Ash Wharf) is also lower than in Guildford (6.21%) and the South East (4.41%).
- 5.13 Ash South and Tongham and Ash Wharf wards have a lower presence of other ethnic groups including Indian, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Black African and Arab residents in comparison to Guildford and the South East.
- 5.14 The area has a higher than average proportion of residents who identify as a gypsy or traveller and the White Rose traveller site is located within the vicinity of the proposed development.

**Table 5-4 Ethnic groups by different geographical areas**

Ethnic group	Wards		Guildford	South East	
	Ash South and Tongham	Ash Wharf			
White	British	91.61%	89.15%	83.47%	85.23%
	Irish	0.78%	0.59%	0.87%	0.85%
	Gypsy or Traveller	0.78%	1.88%	0.36%	0.17%
	Other	2.68%	2.99%	6.21%	4.41%
Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Groups	White/ Black Caribbean	0.18%	0.36%	0.31%	0.53%
	White and Black African	0.22%	0.46%	0.21%	0.26%
	White and Asian	0.46%	0.51%	0.79%	0.68%
	Other	0.23%	0.36%	0.51%	0.47%
Asian/ Asian British	Indian	0.55%	0.57%	1.21%	1.76%
	Pakistani	0.18%	0.42%	0.36%	1.15%
	Bangladeshi	0.04%	0.15%	0.23%	0.32%
	Chinese	0.51%	0.29%	1.37%	0.61%
	Other	0.55%	1.03%	1.65%	1.39%
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	African	0.63%	0.77%	0.85%	1.01%
	Caribbean	0.33%	0.2%	0.24%	0.40%
	Other Black	0.10%	0.10%	0.12%	0.17%

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nhs.uk/news/pregnancy-and-child/air-pollution-associated-with-low-birthweight/>

Other Ethnic Group	Arab	0%	0.02%	0.67%	0.22%
	Other	0.17%	0.16%	0.57%	0.37%

Source: ONS DC2101EW - Ethnic group by sex by age<sup>7</sup>

## Religion or belief

5.15 The percentage of the population who identify as Christian is slightly higher in Ash South and Tongham (66.58%) and Ash Wharf (62.78%) in comparison to Guildford (60.23%) and the South East (59.76%). The proportion of other religious groups is lower in Ash South and Tongham and Ash Wharf in comparison to Guildford and the South East.

**Table 5-5 Religion or belief by different geographical areas**

Religion	Wards			
	Ash South and Tongham	Ash Wharf	Guildford	South East
Christian	66.58%	62.78%	60.23%	59.76%
Buddhist	0.33%	0.56%	0.61%	0.51%
Hindu	0.44%	0.41%	0.95%	1.07%
Jewish	0.08%	0.07%	0.23%	0.21%
Muslim	0.48%	0.80%	1.98%	2.34%
Sikh	0.09%	0.10%	0.15%	0.64%
Other religion	0.30%	0.49%	0.34%	0.46%
No religion	24.15%	27.96%	27.78%	27.66%
Religion not stated	7.56%	6.85%	7.73%	7.36%

Source: ONS, KS209EW - Religion<sup>8</sup>

## Sex

5.16 Ash South and Tongham and Ash Wharf have a slightly higher proportion of female residents (51.5% and 50.2% respectively) compared to males (48.5% and 49.8%). A similar trend is observed nationally (Census 2011).

## Sexual orientation

5.17 In 2017, there were an estimated 1.1 million people aged 16 years and over identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) out of a UK population aged 16 years and over of 52.8 million. This reflects approximately 2.0% of the UK population identifying as (LGB) in 2017, a 0.5% increase from 2012 figures<sup>9</sup>.

5.18 London as a region has the largest proportion of adults identifying as Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual (LGB), at 2.6% (with other regions in the UK ranging from 1.0% in the East Midlands to 1.8% in

<sup>7</sup> ONS, (2011); DC2101EW - Ethnic group by sex by age, available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=651&version=0&anal=1&initset=> accessed July 2019

<sup>8</sup> ONS, (2011); KS209EW - Religion, available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=616&version=0&anal=1&initset=> accessed July 2019

<sup>9</sup> ONS: Sexual orientation, UK: 2017 Available at:

[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2017?utm\\_source=ovdelivery&utm\\_medium=email#main-points](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2017?utm_source=ovdelivery&utm_medium=email#main-points)

the South East). Estimates relating to numbers of people identifying with a specific sexual orientation are not available at borough level or below, due to the small sample size of this dataset.

## Nationality and migration

5.19 Within Ash South and Tongham 92.3% of residents were born in the UK, 0.6% were born in Ireland, 2.5% were born in other EU countries and 4.7% were born outside of the UK. Similarly, 90.9% of residents in Ash Wharf were born in the UK, 0.6% were born in Ireland, 3.1% were born in other EU countries and 5.4% were born outside of the UK (Census 2011).

## Socio-economic status

5.20 Socio-economic status considers an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on several factors including levels of deprivation, employment, education, health / health inequality, and housing. These factors are pertinent to those with protected characteristics and provide an indication of the levels of vulnerable groups residing within an area. Therefore, additional baseline information relevant to the forthcoming appraisal of equality effects and has been provided in this section and includes data on: transport and connectivity; access to services and facilities; public realm and open space; safety, security and well-being; and community cohesion.

### Deprivation

5.21 According to the Economy, Employment and Deprivation chapter of the Surrey Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Surrey is generally regarded as a wealthy county with low levels of deprivation. However, pockets of deprivation do exist.

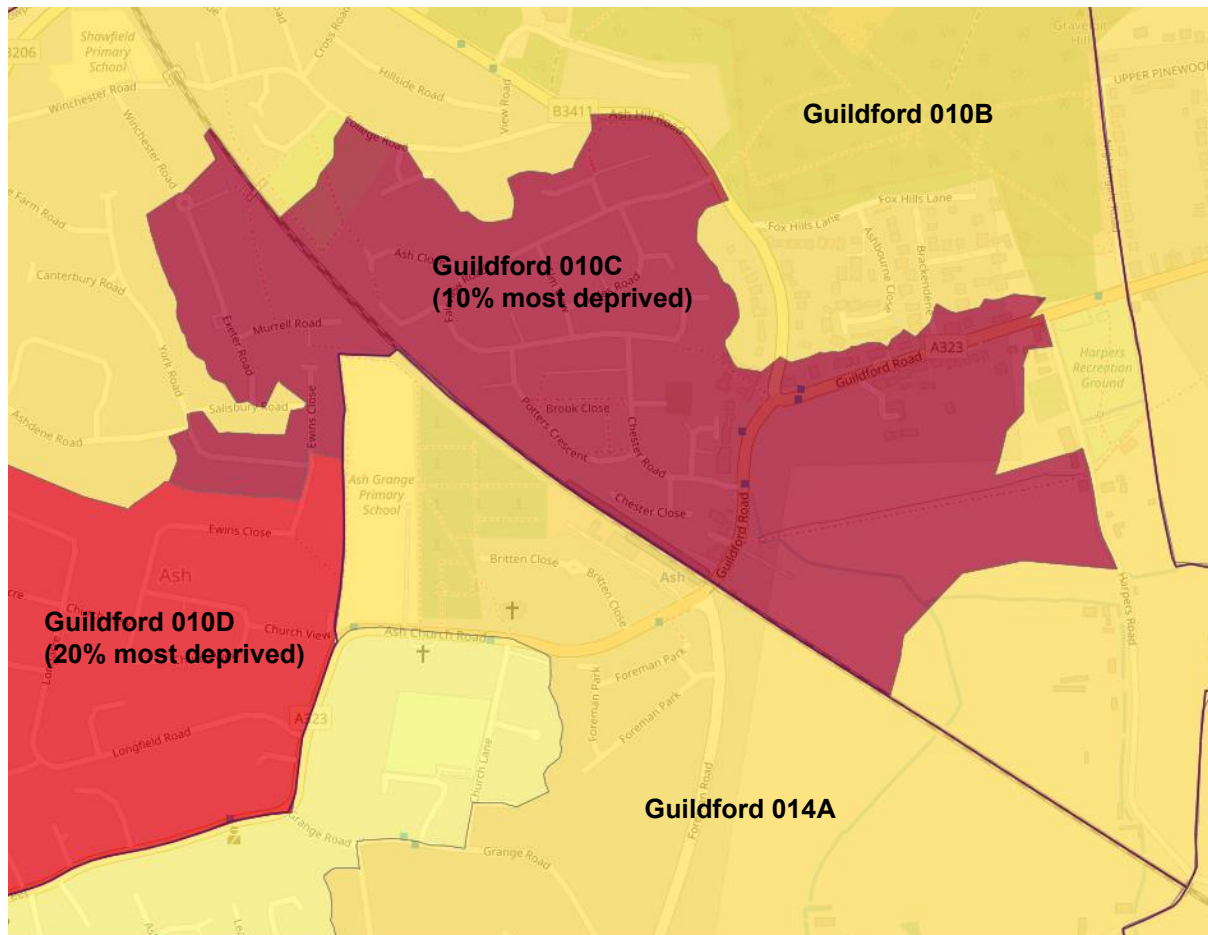
5.22 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

- Income: The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- Employment: The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities
- Education, Skills and Training: The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- Health Deprivation and Disability: The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- Crime: The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- Barriers to Housing and Services: The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
  - a. 'Geographical Barriers': relating to the physical proximity of local services
  - b. 'Wider Barriers': relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- Living Environment: The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.
  - a. 'Indoors Living Environment' measures the quality of housing.
  - b. 'Outdoors Living Environment' measures air quality and road traffic accidents.



- 5.23 Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:
- Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index: The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
  - Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index: The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.
- 5.24 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardised geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2015, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalised into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales.
- 5.25 On a scale of average Index of Multiple Deprivation, where 1 is most deprived, at County level Surrey ranks 150 out of 152. More than 70% of Surrey's 709 LSOAs are in the least deprived deciles 8, 9 and 10.
- 5.26 The proposed development lies across three LSOAs: Guildford 014A, Guildford 010B and Guildford 010C. Guildford014A and Guildford010B are in decile 9 (within the 20% least deprived LSOAs in England) Guildford 010C is in decile 4 (within the 40% most deprived LSOAs in England).
- 5.27 However, Figure 5-1 shows that the LSOA (Guildford 010C) to the north of the proposed development is in the 10% most deprived areas nationally in terms of Education, Skills and Training.

**Figure 5-1 Ash South and Tongham and Ash Wharf Index of Deprivation map – education, skills and training domain**



Source: <http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html>

**Employment**

- 5.28 According to 2011 census data, 76.6% (4,295) of Ash South and Tongham residents are economically active, 3.1% are unemployed and 13.6% are retired. This is similar to Ash Wharf where 74% (3,374) of residents are economically active, 2.9% are unemployed and 14.8% are retired. Levels of unemployment in the wards are similar to Guildford (2.7%) and the South East (3.4%).
- 5.29 Table 5-6 presents a detailed breakdown of employment sectors by geographical area. This highlights that there is a higher proportion of employee jobs in administrative and secretarial, skilled trades, caring, leisure and service occupations and a lower proportion in highly skilled jobs within Ash South and Tongham and Ash Wharf compared to Guildford and the South East.

**Table 5-6 Employee jobs by broad sector group across different geographical areas**

Occupation	Wards		Guildford	South East
	Ash South and Tongham	Ash Wharf		

Managers, directors, senior officials	12.14%	11.67%	13.64%	12.25%
Professional occupations	16.63%	17.41%	24.52%	18.73%
Associate professional & technical occupations	15.22%	13.50%	16.03%	13.83%
Administrative & secretarial occupations	12.86%	13.47%	10.28%	11.46%
Skilled trades occupations	12.86%	13.47%	10.28%	11.46%
Caring, leisure & other service occupations	13.60%	13.06%	9.46%	11.11%
Sales & customer service occupations	8.75%	9.22%	7.79%	9.32%
Process plant / machine operatives	5.35%	5.96%	3.55%	5.70%
Elementary occupations	8.17%	8.38	7.76%	9.70%

Source: ONS, KS608UK - Occupation

## Education

- 5.30 Education attainment (Table 5-7) at ward level for Ash South and Tongham and Ash Wharf shows a higher percentage of residents with no qualifications (20.87% and 22.57% respectively) relative to Guildford (14.20%) and the South East (19.08%).
- 5.31 Correspondingly, the proportion of residents with level 4 qualifications and above in Ash South and Tongham (26.71%) and Ash Wharf (26.07%) is lower than Guildford (5.06%) and the South East (5.18%).

**Table 5-7 Educational attainment by different geographical areas**

Religion	Wards			
	Ash South and Tongham	Ash Wharf	Guildford	South East
No qualifications	20.87%	22.57%	14.20%	19.08%
Level 1 qualifications	15.09%	14.64%	10.68%	13.53%
Level 2 qualifications	15.44%	15.47%	13.55%	15.88%
Apprenticeship	4.58%	4.23%	2.78%	3.62%
Level 3 qualifications	12.73%	12.28%	14.22%	12.77%
Level 4 qualifications and above	26.71%	26.07%	39.52%	29.94%
Other qualifications	4.59%	4.75%	5.06%	5.18%

Source: ONS, LC5102EW - Highest level of qualification by age

## Health inequalities

- 5.32 Health data profiles for Surrey describe the health and care needs of the population in at the Clinical Commissioning Group Level (CCG) level. The study area is included within the Guildford and Waverley CCG.
- 5.33 There is a tendency for people belonging to protected characteristic groups, particularly young people, older people, disabled people, and BAME people, to experience poorer health.<sup>10</sup> Surrey in general is not as ethnically diverse as the rest of England. Guildford and Waverley have a smaller proportion of individuals from non-white ethnic backgrounds compared to the rest of England.<sup>11</sup>
- 5.34 In Guildford and Waverley, there are access issues to a GP or hospital for households which don't have a car. Only 17% of households without a car have access to a GP within a reasonable time by public transport or walking, and 4% for hospital access.
- 5.35 Life expectancy for men and women in Guildford and Waverley is better than the rest of Surrey and England and is among the highest in the country (82 years in men and 85 years in women).
- 5.36 There are significant numbers of people who have risky health behaviors in Guildford and Waverley:
- Adults who drink alcohol at levels which can damage health;
  - Adults who smoke;
  - Adults with excessive weight; and
  - Adults who are physically inactive.
- 5.37 Those with risky health behaviors tend to live in the more deprived areas of Guildford and Waverley and for each factor there will be a proportion of children and young people who are already have these risky health behaviors.
- 5.38 In terms of long-term health conditions in Guildford and Waverley there are several that stand out in terms of large numbers:

<sup>10</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, (2010); *How Fair is Britain?* Report. Available at: [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/how\\_fair\\_is\\_britain\\_-\\_complete\\_report.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/how_fair_is_britain_-_complete_report.pdf) [accessed January 2018]

<sup>11</sup> Surrey County Council (2017) *Guildford and Waverley Place-Based Profile* available at: <https://www.surreyi.gov.uk/health-profiles/guildford-and-waverley/> [accessed July 2019]

- People with hypertension – estimate 27,000;
- People with depression – estimate 13,000;
- People with asthma – estimate 15,500
- People with coronary heart disease and stroke – estimate 8,600; and
- People with diabetes – estimate 7,500.<sup>12</sup>

## Housing

- 5.39 According to the Guildford Borough Housing Strategy (2015-2020), the main housing tenure is owner occupation representing 69% of homes. In comparison, owner occupation is 63% in England.<sup>13</sup>
- 5.40 There are 6,850 affordable homes in the borough. Despite an increase in population and the number of people waiting for social housing, the number of affordable homes is at similar level to 2002. This is because the supply of new build rented homes has barely kept up with the loss of social rented homes under the Right to Buy. There is an on-going need to increase the provision of affordable housing available to residents.
- 5.41 There are approximately 3,297 properties located in Ash South and Tongham and approximately 2,578 in Ash Wharf.<sup>14</sup> The majority of households in Ash South and Tongham and Ash Wharf are owned (77% and 72.6% respectively). This proportion is higher than observed across Guildford (68.8%) and the South East (67.6%). Census (2011) data indicates that 14.6% of households in Ash South and Tongham and 17.2% of households in Ash Wharf are socially rented, higher than the Guildford (17.8%) and the South East (13.7%) average.

## Access to services and facilities

- 5.42 Ash Rail Station is located on A323 Guildford Road and serves the Ascot to Guildford Line and the North Downs Line. The station operates services to Ascot, Guildford, Reading, Redhill, Shalford and Gatwick Airport. The station has a car park with 23 parking spaces and sheltered cycle parking spaces.
- 5.43 North of the railway line, community facilities include Ash Youth and Community Centre, Ash Victoria Hall, and public houses. Ash Vale Health Centre also lies to the north of the railway line, approximately 1.6km from the proposed development. To the south of the railway line there are various community facilities including St. Peter's Centre village hall, St Peter's Church, Holy Angels Church, Ash Museum, Ash Grange Preschool, Nursery and Primary School, and Ash Grange Children's Centre.
- 5.44 There are various open spaces and recreational facilities located in the villages of Ash and Ash Vale and in surrounding rural areas. In Ash there are a number of formal and informal open spaces and recreational facilities including Collins Garden's open space, Ash United Football Club, Willow Park, Old School Close open space, Ash Manor Sports Centre and Harper's Road play park. Open spaces located in closest proximity to the proposed development include the play park adjacent to Harper's Road and Guildford Road.

## Safety and security

- 5.45 The feeling of safety and security within a person's local area is key to ensuring their personal wellbeing. Everyone is vulnerable to feelings of being unsafe, however these may be particularly acute for people belonging to certain protected characteristic groups, including young people,

<sup>12</sup> Surrey County Council (2015); *Guildford and Waverley Health Profile*. Available at: <https://www.surreyi.gov.uk/dataset/guildford-and-waverley-ccg-health-profile-2015> [accessed July 2019]

<sup>13</sup> Guildford Borough (2015) *Housing Strategy 2015-2020*. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/tamsin.stevens/Downloads/\\_gbcprdfs1\\_gbc-prd\\_media\\_pdf\\_k\\_f\\_Housing\\_Strategy\\_document\\_2015.pdf](file:///C:/Users/tamsin.stevens/Downloads/_gbcprdfs1_gbc-prd_media_pdf_k_f_Housing_Strategy_document_2015.pdf) [accessed July 2019]

<sup>14</sup> Valuation Office Agency (2017)

older people, disabled people, women, and people belonging to a particular ethnicity, or sexual orientation.<sup>15</sup>

- 5.46 The top three reported crimes within Ash South and Tongham in May 2019 in the area of the proposed development are criminal damage and arson (2), anti-social behaviour (2) and violence and sexual offences (1).<sup>16</sup>

## Community cohesion

- 5.47 To ensure healthy communities which are functional, safe, and enjoyable places to live and work, it is important to promote community cohesion and good relations between different groups. Encouraging civic engagement and ensuring dialogue with all people in the community; particularly those belonging to protected characteristic groups, is an important step in working towards community cohesion. For people belonging to protected characteristic groups, their feelings of a lack of cohesion (or exclusion) may be more acute than those of other people.

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<sup>15</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, (2010); *How Fair is Britain?* report. Available at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/how-fair-britain>, accessed September 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Police UK (2019), *Crime map for Eashing, Hurtmore, Shackleford, Puttenham, Seale & Sands, Ash South & Tongham* available at: <https://www.police.uk/surrey/GDEH/crime/> accessed July 2019.

## 6. Consultation

### Introduction

- 6.1 Effective consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the local community is important for community cohesion and the development of an inclusive and supported scheme. This chapter presents an overview of consultation undertaken to date by the Council in relation to the proposed development. Full details of engagement undertaken, and feedback received can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the proposed development.

### Summary of engagement and consultation to date

- 6.2 The concept of the road bridge was included in two rounds of public consultation on the council's Local Plan, in 2016 and 2017. Since January 2018, following a review of the comments received during the Local Plan consultation, officers at Guildford Borough Council have held quarterly public forums that have provided the public with updates on the scheme. Public questions raised at the Ash Forum meetings have been taken on board by officers and incorporated into the scope of works for the planning application preparation. For example, after the Ash Forum meeting in April 2018 raised questions that mainly related to highways and parking issues, officers held a specific session with local councillors, Surrey County Council and representatives from local residents' groups on highways questions associated with the scheme. The responses were published on the Council's website <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/ashroadbridge>.
- 6.3 Mitigation comprising a formalised on-street parking scheme and a traffic calming strategy (including monitoring and mitigation) have subsequently been included as part of the planning application to address concerns raised.
- 6.4 Two public information events were organised in January 2019 to show local stakeholders and the wider public the plans for the proposed Ash Road Bridge scheme as part of the pre-application consultation. The public information events were structured as drop-in events to allow the Applicant and AECOM to engage with residents and local stakeholders, discussing the proposals and answering any questions. The events also provided an opportunity for attendees to give their views on the information presented by completing a feedback form. Freepost envelopes were available so that feedback forms could be returned at a later date, and an email address was provided for attendees to submit further questions or feedback.
- 6.5 Priority stakeholders were directly invited to take part in the consultation including political stakeholders, business groups, media organisations and the following community groups:
- Ash Green Resident's Association;
  - Ash Residents' Association;
  - Ash Aldershot Community Public Group;
  - New Ash Green Youth and Community Centre; and
  - Ash & Ash Vale Community Public Group.
- 6.6 Officers have also been in discussion with local developers and landowners regarding the scheme. This includes four landowners / developers whose land is directly impacted by the proposed development, and who have agreed to work with the Council.
- 6.7 Guildford Borough Council intends to continue to provide updates on the proposed development as it progresses through the Ash Forum when required. These forums have been advertised locally and are well attended, attracting up to 140 attendees. Past forum presentations have been made available on the Council's website following these events.

## Feedback relating to equalities

- 6.8 Stakeholders and members of the public were invited to provide their views and feedback on the proposed development. The responses have been recorded within the SCI and reviewed for the purpose of this EqIA.
- 6.9 The following example comments have been identified as relating to equality issues and mainly relate to the level crossing and proposed footbridge:
- “Will the lift at the crossing be large enough to accommodate all the pushchairs for the local school?”
  - “As long as there is a lift both sides to allow disabled and prams and elderly going on holiday with suitcases.”
  - “A key local issue is the pedestrian crossing it is essential that disabled and pushchair access is maintained, particularly for the local schools. A system of lifts at an unmanned station is probably not suitable.”
  - “I would like to see the footbridge built as soon as possible and not wait until the level crossing closes.”
- 6.10 Other feedback relating to equalities included parking in relation to the station and speeding in local areas. These issues have been addressed through refinements to the scheme design as mentioned above.
- 6.11 In addition, comments were also received relating to the location of bus stops and these will be considered further during the detailed design stage.



# 7. Appraisal of equality impacts

## Introduction

- 7.1 This appraisal considers the potential impacts on affected people sharing protected characteristics arising from the proposed development. This includes potential impacts identified through the policy and baseline review as well as impacts and mitigation measures as identified within the following documents:
- Environmental Statement – Environmental Impact Assessments including Noise and Vibration, Air Quality, People and Communities, Landscape and Visual chapters; and
  - Transport Assessment – information with regards to drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
  - The Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) – mitigation measures associated with construction impacts
- 7.2 It also considers feedback and issues raised through consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the public with regards to the proposed development as documented in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 7.3 The appraisal examines both the disproportionate and differential effects of the identified impacts on groups with protected characteristics and the proposed mitigation measures that may eliminate or mitigate any adverse equality impacts. In addition, recommendations are made as to further reduce adverse equality effects as well as to enhance beneficial impacts and equality of opportunity.

## Potential equality effects of the proposed development

### Noise Levels

#### *Increase in noise levels for residential properties along the route of the proposed development during construction and operation*

- 7.4 The scheme will result in increased noise levels for residential properties within the local area due to construction noise at the construction phase, as well as traffic noise during the operation phase.
- 7.5 The noise assessment as reported in the Environmental Statement shows that the required night-time construction has potential, without additional mitigation, to result in significant adverse effects at residential properties in the vicinity of Guildford Road and Ash Hill Road roundabout.
- 7.6 Residents on Foreman Road, Foreman Park, Ash Church Rd and Guildford Rd, and occupants of the White Rose travellers site on the east side of Guildford Rd, in proximity to the realigned Foreman Road and the new proposed new footbridge over the railway would also be subjected to increased noise levels. This is due to the works to construct the new road bridge over the railway, which would involve piling and may also require night-time works.
- 7.7 The noise assessment for the proposed development during operation also shows expected significant adverse noise effect at properties in the new Foreman Road development facing Foreman Road. These increases result from the traffic on Guildford Road, which currently uses the level crossing, being diverted on to the new road bridge and turning right at the proposed roundabout on Foreman Road to re-join the A323 south of the station. Similarly, moderate increases in traffic noise are expected at the residential properties in Foreman Park for the same reason.

- 7.8 A significant adverse noise is also expected at the traveller site to the east of Guildford Road, which lies within 100m of the proposed development.
- 7.9 Research shows that children are more vulnerable to the effects of traffic noise than the population overall and exposure at home may result in more adverse impacts than exposure at school<sup>17</sup>. Children spend more time at home than at school and night-time exposure can be associated with sleep disturbance, with regard to both quality and quantity. In children sleep disturbance and sleep problems may affect behaviour. Noise also affects children and adults with autism differently.<sup>18</sup>
- 7.10 Furthermore, older people may also be more vulnerable to traffic noise exposure due to spending more time at home than the population overall.
- 7.11 Those living in mobile homes or caravans as part of the traveller's site to the east of Guildford Road may also be more vulnerable to an increase in noise levels from construction and traffic due to the nature of their accommodation and the potential for children to be educated at home.
- 7.12 The potential adverse noise effects of the scheme may therefore have a differential impact on younger and older residents and members of the traveller community living near the proposed development.
- 7.13 Further consideration of the potential construction effects and identification of appropriate measures to minimise effects as far as practicable will be reviewed as detailed information relating to construction plant, timings and programme become available. The CEMP will provide a mechanism to reassess the proposed working methods to consider all appropriate mitigation measures, including the potential use of noise insulation and temporary re-housing during construction, with the aim of avoiding significant adverse effects during construction. This includes households where those most vulnerable to adverse noise effects may reside.
- 7.14 Furthermore, during the construction phase, appropriate communication channels with local residents would be set up to highlight potential periods of disruption (e.g. web-based, newsletters, newspapers and radio announcements). This could include the appointment of a Community Relations Manager responsible for leading engagement with affected communities and to be a point of contact, for any resident's queries or complaints. All noise complaints would be investigated and appropriate action taken as required, with a response provided outlining the results of the investigation and any action taken.

### ***Decrease in noise levels for residential properties along the route of the proposed development during operation***

- 7.15 The noise assessment shows expected major decreases in traffic noise for properties to the west of Guildford Road between the station and the roundabout with Ash Hill Road. This section of Guildford Road would experience a large drop in traffic with the proposed development in place as through traffic uses the new Ash Road bridge instead.
- 7.16 This will provide benefits for residents living in these properties, particularly children and older people who are more sensitive to the impacts of noise.

## **Access**

### ***Alternative rail crossing for pedestrians***

- 7.17 Ash level crossing experiences a high level of vehicle and pedestrian traffic and a high frequency of train services and long barrier downtimes. Deliberate misuse at the crossing is high with a mixture of both vehicular and pedestrian abuse. As a result of this, it ranks in the top 20% of

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<sup>17</sup> Hjortebjerg D et al (2015) Exposure to Road Traffic Noise and Behavioral Problems in 7-Year-Old Children: A Cohort Study in Environ Health Perspect. Feb 2016

<sup>18</sup> Autism: handle with care!: understanding and managing behavior of children and adults with autism, G Gillingham (1995)

crossings on the Wessex Route in terms of risk and is categorised as high/medium risk for those crossing. With proposed increases to train frequency on the North Downs Line, the risk score for the crossing is likely to increase by 16%; this will be further exacerbated by increased in vehicular and pedestrian traffic from planned development and could provide additional risk for more vulnerable pedestrians and vehicle users.

- 7.18 The level of protection currently in place at the level crossing is the highest available, with limited opportunity for any further upgrades to the crossing to improve safety or efficiency. The closure of Ash level crossing would reduce traffic congestion on the A323 Guildford Road and completely eliminate the risk associated with the crossing.
- 7.19 The scheme provides an alternative crossing point via the road bridge for pedestrians and has a maximum 5% gradient. The road bridge will provide an alternative link for residents at Foreman Road/Grange Road to connect with Guildford Road (East) and Ash Station. However, increased walking distances make the road bridge an unlikely alternative for pedestrians who currently walk between the areas to the north and south of Ash Station, especially those with mobility issues including older people and people with disabilities as well as pregnant women and parents with pushchairs. Therefore, the construction of the footbridge would realise benefits for pedestrians in terms of improved accessibility whilst also helping to eliminate the risk afforded by using the level crossing. However, feedback from the consultation demonstrates that effective community engagement with regards to the design and operation of the footbridge is required to ensure the needs to different groups are met.

### **Improvements to bus reliability**

- 7.20 The delivery of the proposed development is likely to lead to an increase in journey length for buses travelling along the A323. This is offset however by the improvements in journey time reliability which is crucial for passenger transport services, which coupled with additional patronage generated by new residential development will help to support the viability of existing or upgraded routes.
- 7.21 The TA for the proposed development shows that currently buses could be delayed on average by between three and four minutes whilst they wait for the level crossing to open. Through the delivery of the proposed development journey time savings could be in the order of 2 minutes 39 seconds eastbound and 1 minute 41 seconds westbound.
- 7.22 The proposed development will also improve access for residents of Foreman Park and Ellsworth Park as well new housing developments in the area. The National Travel Survey (DfT, 2016) shows that 28% of bus passengers in England are over the age of 60, 30% of bus passengers in England are under the age of 20. Furthermore, the largest percentage of bus passengers overall are women, aged 17-20. These groups are likely to benefit most from increased reliability and viability of bus services in the area and consequently public transport accessibility to employment, education, health and recreational facilities in the local area. New bus stops will be designed to be accessible with raised platform for access which will benefit those with mobility issues.

### **Relocation of bus stops**

- 7.23 The relocation of bus stops to cater for the diversion of the A323 and the delivery of improved facilities will lead to an increase in walking distance for some passengers. For example, the TA indicates an increased walking distance of at least 80m for northbound services and 100m from south bound services from Ash Station. This will have a potentially adverse impact on people with mobility issues including people with disabilities (of which the area has higher levels than for the Borough or County), older people, pregnant women and parents or carers with pushchairs.
- 7.24 However, facilities at the bus stops will be improved and journey times will overall be reduced with increased reliability. It is recommended that the upgrade of facilities should include seating facilities where appropriate to mitigate against the extra walking distance required as well as clear signage to help guide people to the new or alternative bus stop locations.

## ***Improved facilities for cycling***

- 7.25 During the operational phase, the proposed development will provide a shared footway/cycle route over the new bridge.
- 7.26 As a result, the proposed development will encourage walking and cycling through the provision of additional cycle routes and the implementation of safety measures. This will provide an increased opportunity for active travel and associated benefits for physical health that can be shared by groups with protected characteristics.

## **Employment**

### ***Employment opportunities during the construction of the scheme***

- 7.27 Construction of the proposed development will provide direct employment opportunities for around 40 employees on-site. There is a commitment through the SCAPE Framework to procure from and work with local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) where feasible. The area has a higher unemployment rate than at the borough level and as such a local procurement strategy would help to ensure that opportunities are available for local people including for younger people and other groups with protected characteristics who find barriers to finding employment.
- 7.28 An Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) would be developed and delivered. This would contain targets for work experience for young people, adult employment opportunities, trainees, apprentices, internships and graduates which would be determined based on project value and align with the aspirations of the Council. This would be beneficial for local people as the area is in the top 10% most deprived for education, skills and training.
- 7.29 Further detail regarding the ESP and local procurement arrangements are contained in the Ash Road Bridge Feasibility Report

### ***Supporting opportunities for employment and housing through the enabling of land for development sites***

- 7.30 The proposed development would improve accessibility to local employment and training opportunities providing improved direct access to employment areas to the south and to the north of the railway line. The proposed development also supports the wider economy by enabling the delivery of strategic development sites for housing and making Ash and Guildford an attractive place for businesses to invest in through better connections. This benefit could be shared by groups with protected characteristics including young people.

## **Consultation and Monitoring**

### ***Effective consultation and community engagement***

- 7.31 Effective consultation and engagement with affected stakeholders and the local community is important for community cohesion, as well as ensuring that important community and social links within the area are not lost and that that all groups with protected characteristics can benefit from the proposed development. A clear and on-going engagement strategy will be developed for this purpose. A Community Relations Manager may be appointed as part of the CEMP and would be responsible for ensuring that members of the community are engaged in a way that meets their needs and requirements.

### ***Diversity monitoring to understand effects on equality protected groups***

- 7.32 Monitoring of equality and impacts will be included as part of the proposed development's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to track and update impacts throughout the design, development and construction of the proposed development. The monitoring plan will also seek to review how the proposed benefits of the proposed development will be realised by groups with protected characteristics once operational.

## **Summary of potential impacts**

- 7.33 Table 7-1 provides a summary of direct and indirect effects of the proposed development. This describes each potential impact alongside the potentially affected groups with protected characteristics. Details of embedded mitigation are provided where confirmed and individual further recommendations are given for consideration where appropriate.
- 7.34 It is envisaged that as more development details and mitigation measures are developed for the CEMP then this table will be updated and the assessment of effects and recommendations reviewed to reflect this update.

Table 7-1 Summary of equality effects

Potential impact	Affected protected characteristics groups	Embedded mitigation (if any)	Further recommendations
Increase in noise levels for some residential properties along the route of the proposed development resulting in adverse effects during construction	Children, older people, people with autism and traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEMP will provide a mechanism to reassess the proposed working methods to consider all appropriate mitigation measures, including the potential use of noise insulation and temporary re-housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure proposed mitigation measures are incorporated into the scheme during construction.</li> <li>CRM to engage closely with traveller community to understand needs</li> <li>Feasibility of appointing a Community Relations Manager (CRM) deal with noise complaints and issues should be examined</li> </ul>
Increase in noise levels for some residential properties along the route of the proposed development resulting in adverse effects during operation	Children, older people, people with autism and traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No feasible mitigation measures for the adverse effects around the north end of the new Foreman Road development or the traveller site have been identified. Some of these properties may qualify for insulation under the Noise Insulation Regulations, although the indication from current noise modelling suggests that absolute traffic noise levels may be too low to meet the qualifying criteria.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure consideration of noise impacts on mobile homes within the traveller site are considered as part of the Noise Insulation Regulations investigation during detailed design phase.</li> </ul>
Decrease in noise levels for some households along the route of the proposed development resulting in beneficial effects during operation	Children, older people and people with autism		

Potential impact	Affected protected characteristics groups	Embedded mitigation (if any)	Further recommendations
Provision of an alternative and safer rail crossing for pedestrians	All groups with protected characteristics who are pedestrians and access facilities to the north and south of the station. In particular more vulnerable groups or groups with mobility issues including children young people, older people, people with disabilities, pregnant women and people with pushchairs and/or young children		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The construction of the footbridge is required to facilitate a long term and safe alternative option to the level crossing for pedestrians. The footbridge should adhere to inclusive design standards to ensure it is accessible for all.</li> </ul>
Improvements to bus reliability	All groups but particularly older people, younger people and women, all of whom are more likely to be bus passengers.		
Relocation of bus stops resulting in longer walking distances from Ash Station	Older people, people with disabilities, pregnant women and people with pushchairs and/or young children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bus stop facilities are being upgraded at the new stop locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide seating facilities at stops to ensure comfort for passengers with limited mobility</li> <li>Provide clear information to the local community with regards to the location of the new bus stops</li> </ul>
Increased opportunity for cycling	All groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared cycle/footpath along extent of the proposed development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to ensure that appropriate provision for cyclists is included within proposed development</li> <li>Consultation with cycling groups to ensure appropriate crossings and routes</li> </ul>

Potential impact	Affected protected characteristics groups	Embedded mitigation (if any)	Further recommendations
Employment opportunities during the construction of the scheme	Young people and other groups with protected characteristics that potentially experience barriers to employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to procuring local businesses including SMEs where appropriate</li> <li>• Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) will be developed and delivered for the scheme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement selection process should include Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) criteria and evidence of being a Disability Confident employer.</li> </ul>
Facilitation of development land for housing and business developments (Indirect impact)	All groups		
Effective consultation and community engagement with affected groups to contribute to sharing benefits of the proposed development	All groups including those with protected characteristics who are traditionally 'hard to reach' in terms of engagement. This can include young people and BAME groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRM is to be appointed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop strategy for engaging with groups affected by the scheme to enhance benefits</li> </ul>
Diversity monitoring to understand effects on equality protected groups	All groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity monitoring should be taken for all engagement activities with businesses, employees, residents and visitors.</li> </ul>



## 8. Recommendations and conclusions

### Recommendations

The following provisional high level recommendations are set out to strengthen, secure or enhance positive equality impacts and to mitigate for potential negative equality impacts associated with the proposed development:

- Following a planning decision, the Applicant should develop a renewed strategy for ongoing wide-ranging stakeholder engagement prior to and during the construction stage. Engagement should seek to be inclusive and accessible and consider any specific needs associated with groups with protected characteristics in the area so that they are able to fully participate. Clear diversity monitoring of engagement events and activities should be undertaken to ensure equal representation.
- Further specific engagement should be undertaken with the traveller community on Guildford Road to understand how to mitigate noise impacts they will experience during the construction and operation of the scheme. Full details of developed mitigation should be included within the CEMP.
- Jobseekers in the area should be able to share in direct and indirect newly created employment opportunities and be supported to ensure that they are aware of job opportunities in the area. A local employment and procurement policy would help to ensure that recruitment involving contractors during the construction stage and businesses at the operation stage is inclusive and that opportunities are available to all groups with protected characteristics. This should include a requirement for contractors to adhere to national or local schemes to promote employment amongst under-represented equality groups, e.g. Disability Confident accreditation and Fairness, Inclusion and Respect criteria.
- The CEMP for the proposed development should take into account the various needs of those with protected characteristics including language requirements for information purposes, accessibility issues in the vicinity of construction sites and communications with local schools regarding the dangers of construction sites.
- Information with regards to the relocation of bus stops and any potential changes to bus services during construction and operation should be communicated through different channels including at existing bus stops and consider the needs of different protected characteristics.
- The proposed development should provide improved safety, access and journey time savings which can also be experienced by groups with protected characteristics. However, without the construction of the footbridge, pedestrians would not fully experience these benefits as they would be required to use the existing level crossing which has been identified in the TA as having increasing risk to pedestrian safety. Alternatively, the new road bridge would require pedestrians to undertake a long diversion. It is therefore recommended that the planning application for the footbridge be submitted as soon as possible in order to realise benefits for pedestrians including those with mobility issues including older people, people with disabilities, pregnant women and those with young children and/or pushchairs. The footbridge planning application would also require an EqIA to ensure that the design was accessible and suitable for the full needs and requirements of its users.
- Monitoring of equality impacts should be included as part of the proposed development's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. This should use Table 7-1 of this report as a basis on which to track and update impacts throughout the continued design, development and construction of the proposed development.

- The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan should also seek to review how the proposed benefits of the scheme will be realised by groups with protected characteristics once operational. It is recommended that a member of the project team is given responsibility for tracking and updating the equalities and human rights actions within the monitoring plan.

## Conclusions

- 8.1 The Ash Road Bridge scheme is likely to provide a range of benefits that can be shared by groups with protected characteristics. This includes direct benefits such as improved safety, accessibility and journey time savings for drivers and bus passengers as well as indirect benefits such as facilitating further housing development in the area.
- 8.2 A decrease in noise levels for residential properties north of the station along Guildford Road to the roundabout with Ash Hill Road is predicted. This will result in health and well-being benefits for residents, particularly children and older people who are more vulnerable to noise impacts.
- 8.3 The proposed development will include a new cycle path along the new road bridge and connecting link road providing a safer and more seamless route for people to cycle in the area including those with protected characteristics including young people and other protected characteristic groups.
- 8.4 Construction of the proposed development will provide direct employment opportunities which can be shared by groups with protected characteristics. A local procurement commitment and Employment and Skills Plan will help to provide opportunities for local people.
- 8.5 Approval of the planning application for the proposed development could also allow the accelerated delivery of the Local Plan including new housing opportunities. This includes provision for affordable housing, extra care and accessible housing and dwellings of varying sizes and types benefitting a wide range of households including young people, those on low incomes, older people, disabled people and families with children.
- 8.6 The EqIA has also identified a number of impacts of the proposed development where groups with protected characteristics may experience adverse disproportionate or differential effects. These include:
- An increase in day and night time exposure to construction and traffic noise for residential properties along the route of the scheme with potential differential impacts for **children and older people**. Adverse noise impacts are also predicted for the **traveller site** on Guildford Road near to the station. There is currently no mitigation proposed for operation noise effects for this site;
  - Long diversions or continued use of the level crossing for pedestrians would occur should the planning application for the footbridge not be submitted or approved. This may have implications for people with mobility issues including **older people** and **people with disabilities and people with pushchairs and /or young children**;
  - An increase in walking distances to bus stops from Ash Station for bus passengers including **older people** and **people with disabilities and people with pushchairs and /or young children**;
- 8.7 Furthermore, increased provision of additional housing is identified as a residual benefit of the proposed development with housing developments being enabled due to the connection to the highway network. However, affordability barriers may prevent certain groups, including low income households, young people and older people households, from sharing in this benefit. Ensuring that the affordable housing is provided to similar timescales to the overall development will help to ensure that benefits are shared equally.

- 8.8 Effective consultation and engagement with affected stakeholders and the local community is important for community cohesion and to ensure that all groups with protected characteristics can benefit from the propose scheme. A clear and on-going engagement strategy should be developed for this purpose. A Community Relations Manager could also be appointed to lead engagement with affected communities and to be a point of contact, for any resident's queries or complaints.
- 8.9 In conclusion, it is considered that developing a set of clear mitigation measures and following the recommendations outlined above should provide benefits for those groups with protected characteristics and help to minimise any adverse impacts of the proposed development. Monitoring of equality effects should also be undertaken on a regular basis to capture the realisation of benefits and the implementation of mitigation measures to demonstrate the Council's due regard to the PSED in the continued design and delivery of the proposed development.

# Appendix A Guildford Borough Council EqIA form

Name of person completing the assessment	Laura Walker (AECOM)	Date of assessment	26 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Name of the proposed activity being assessed	Ash Road Bridge	Is this a new or existing activity?	New
Who will implement the activity and who will be responsible for it?	GBC Major Projects		

## 1. Determining the relevance to equality

What are the aims, objectives and purpose of the activity?	<p>Congestion on the A323 Guildford Road at the Ash level crossing causes delays and safety concerns for road users and pedestrians. These issues cause constraints on the existing highway network and act as a barrier to future residential development in the area. The proposed development consists of a new single-carriage way road which crosses the railway line via a road bridge, associated works and infrastructure. The development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access between the A323 Guildford Road / Ash Hill Road roundabout to a new junction with Foreman Road, by-passing the Ash level crossing;</li> <li>• Allow non-motorised users to cross the railway and provide highway infrastructure allowing traffic to be diverted across the new road bridge which would ultimately facilitate the future closure of the Ash level crossing; and</li> <li>• Improve the reliability and safety of the junctions associated with the works.</li> </ul>
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Is this a major activity that significantly affects how services or functions are delivered?	Yes	Who will benefit from this activity and how?	Local residents and rail passengers (including vehicle and non-motorised users), through improved crossing of the rail line.
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Does it relate to a function that has been identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	The proposed development will affect non-motorised users including older people, parents with pushchairs and young children who use the level crossing. The proposed development is also within close proximity to a traveller site.	Who are the stakeholders? Does the activity affect employees, service users or the wider community?	Local residents and rail passengers
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**Based on the above information, is the activity relevant to equality?**

<p><b>Yes – continue to section 2</b></p> <p><b>No – please record your reasons why the activity is not relevant to equality</b></p>	Yes
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2. Is the proposed activity accessible for all the protected groups listed below? (Consider in what ways the activity might create difficulties or barriers to parts of the workforce, community or protected groups. How might one or more groups be excluded because of the activity?)			
Protected groups	Yes	No	Evidence
Disability	✓		The proposed development will be accessible for drivers and non-drivers <b>with disabilities</b> , particularly those with disabilities affecting mobility. The new bridge will provide a long diversion (at a gradient of 5%) for non-motorised users to travel between the areas south and north of Ash station. However, the level crossing will remain open until a new footbridge is constructed in its place maintaining access.
Race	✓		A traveller site is situated adjacent to the proposed development and people living on this site will be able to benefit from the improved access and safety.
Gender	✓		Women are more likely to be bus passengers as well as using the level crossing as pedestrians including taking and collecting children to and from school. They will benefit from safety improvements with alternative crossing points and bus stop and bus service enhancements.
Sexual orientation	✓		There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any difficulty or barriers with regards to the proposed development due to sexual orientation.
Age	✓		Older people are potentially more vulnerable to mobility issues. The new bridge will provide a long diversion for non-motorised users to travel between the areas south and north of Ash station. However, the level crossing will remain open until a new footbridge is constructed in its place maintaining access. Younger people may benefit from more job opportunities associated with the construction of the proposed development.
Religion or belief	✓		There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any difficulty or barriers with regards to the proposed development due to religion or belief.
Transgender or transsexual	✓		There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any difficulty or barriers with regards to the proposed development due to transgender status.
Marriage and civil partnership	✓		There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any difficulty or barriers with regards to the proposed development due to marriage or civil partnership.
Pregnancy or maternity	✓		Pregnant women and those with babies and young children are more vulnerable to safety issues associated with the level crossing. The new bridge will provide a long diversion for non-motorised users to travel between the areas south and north of Ash station. However, the level crossing will remain open until a new footbridge is constructed in its place maintaining access.

3. Is it likely the proposed activity will have a negative impact on one or more protected groups?			
Protected groups	Yes	No	Evidence
Disability	✓		Long diversions or continued use of the level crossing for pedestrians would occur should the planning application for the footbridge not be submitted or approved. This may have implications for people with mobility issues including <b>people with disabilities</b> . The proposed development will result in an increase in walking distances to bus stops from Ash Station for bus passengers including <b>people with disabilities</b> .
Race	✓		Adverse noise impacts during construction and operation of the scheme are likely to have a greater impact on the traveller community living on the site adjacent to the proposed development due households residing in mobile homes.
Gender		✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	
Age	✓		Adverse noise impacts during construction and operation of the scheme are likely to have a greater impact on children and older people who are more vulnerable to increases in noise levels. Long diversions or continued use of the level crossing for pedestrians would occur should the planning application for the footbridge not be submitted or approved. This may have implications for people with mobility issues including <b>older people and people with pushchairs and /or young children</b> . The proposed development will result in an increase in walking distances to bus stops from Ash Station for bus passengers including older people and <b>people with pushchairs and /or young children</b> .
Religion or belief		✓	
Transgender or transsexual		✓	
Marriage and civil partnership		✓	
Pregnancy or maternity	✓		Long diversions or continued use of the level crossing for pedestrians would occur should the planning application for the footbridge not be submitted or approved. This may have implications for people with mobility issues including <b>people with pushchairs and /or young children</b> ; The proposed development will result in an increase in walking distances to bus stops from Ash Station for bus passengers <b>with pushchairs and /or young children and pregnant women</b> .



4. What action can be taken to address any negative impact? What measures could be included to promote a positive impact? (*Consider whether it is possible to amend or change the activity due to the likely adverse impact whilst still delivering the objective. Is it possible to consider a different activity which still achieves the aims but avoids an adverse impact? Is an action plan required to reduce any actual or potential adverse impact?*)

Embedded mitigation that addresses negative impacts and promotes a positive impact includes:

- A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will provide a mechanism to reassess the proposed working methods to consider all appropriate mitigation noise measures, including the potential use of noise insulation and temporary re-housing;
- Some properties experiencing increase in noise levels during operation may qualify for insulation under the Noise Insulation Regulations, although the indication from current noise modelling suggests that absolute traffic noise levels may be too low to meet the qualifying criteria. This will be examined during the detailed design phase.
- Bus stop facilities are being upgraded at the new stop locations
- Shared cycle/footpath along extent of the proposed development enabling increased opportunity for cycling
- A commitment to procuring local businesses including SMEs where appropriate
- Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) will be developed and delivered for the scheme

Further measures that can be included to address residual negative impacts and promote a positive impact include:

- Community Relations Manager (CRM) is to be appointed to deal with noise complaints and issues
- A strategy for ongoing wide-ranging stakeholder engagement prior to and during the construction stage. Engagement should seek to be inclusive and accessible and consider any specific needs associated with groups with protected characteristics in the area so that they are able to fully participate. Clear diversity monitoring of engagement events and activities should be undertaken to ensure equal representation.
- Further specific engagement should be undertaken with the traveller community on Guildford Road to understand how to mitigate noise impacts they will experience during the construction and operation of the scheme. Full details of developed mitigation should be included within the CEMP.
- Jobseekers in the area should be able to share in direct and indirect newly created employment opportunities and be supported to ensure that they are aware of job opportunities in the area. A local employment and procurement policy would help to ensure that recruitment involving contractors during the construction stage and businesses at the operation stage is inclusive and that opportunities are available to all groups with protected characteristics. This should include a requirement for contractors to adhere to national or local schemes to promote employment amongst under-represented equality groups, e.g. Disability Confident accreditation and Fairness, Inclusion and Respect criteria.

- The CEMP for the proposed development should take into account the various needs of those with protected characteristics including language requirements for information purposes, accessibility issues in the vicinity of construction sites and communications with local schools regarding the dangers of construction sites.
- Information with regards to the relocation of bus stops and any potential changes to bus services during construction and operation should be communicated through different channels including at existing bus stops and consider the needs of different protected characteristics.
- The proposed development should provide improved safety, access and journey time savings which can be also be experienced by groups with protected characteristics. However, without the construction of the footbridge, pedestrians would not fully experience these benefits as they would be required to use the existing level crossing which has been identified in the TA as having increasing risk to pedestrian safety. Alternatively, the new road bridge would require pedestrians to undertake a long diversion. It is therefore recommended that the planning application for the footbridge be submitted as soon as possible to realise benefits for pedestrians including those with mobility issues including older people, people with disabilities, pregnant women and those with young children and/or pushchairs. The footbridge planning application would also require an EqIA to ensure that the design was accessible and suitable for the full needs and requirements of its users.
- Monitoring of equality impacts should be included as part of the proposed development's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. This should use Table 7-1 of this report as a basis on which to track and update impacts throughout the continued design, development and construction of the proposed development.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan should also seek to review how the proposed benefits of the scheme will be realised by groups with protected characteristics once operational. It is recommended that a member of the project team is given responsibility for tracking and updating the equalities and human rights actions within the monitoring plan.

5. What are the main sources of evidence that have been used to identify the likely impacts on the different protected groups? *(Use relevant quantitative and qualitative information that is available from sources such as previous EIA's, engagement with staff and service users, equality monitoring, complaints, comments, customer equality profiles, feedback, issues raised at previous consultations and known inequalities).*

The main sources of evidence used for the EqIA include:

- A review of local, regional and national policy and legislation associated with equalities, planning and transport schemes
- Data from Census 2011, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 and other socio-demographic datasets with regards to groups with protected characteristics living in the area.
- Feedback from public consultation on the proposed development

The evidence is documented in the Ash Road Bridge EqIA Report July 2019 (AECOM)

6. Has any consultation been carried out (e.g. with employees, service users or the wider community)? Please provide details

The concept of the road bridge was included in two rounds of public consultation on the council's Local Plan, in 2016 and 2017. Since January 2018, following a review of the comments received during the Local Plan consultation, Council officers have held quarterly public forums that have provided the public with updates on the scheme. Public questions raised at the Ash Forum meetings have been taken on board by officers and incorporated into the scope of works for the planning application preparation. For example, after the Ash Forum meeting in April 2018 raised questions that mainly related to highways and parking issues, officers held a specific session with local councillors, Surrey County Council and representatives from local residents' groups on highways questions associated with the scheme. Full details of engagement undertaken, and feedback received can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

7. Is further consultation required as a result of any negative impact identified? If so, what groups do you intend to engage with and how?

Further engagement should be undertaken with the local traveller community and other affected properties with regards to noise impacts. A Community Relations Manager will be appointed for this task. In addition, local residents and users of the rail station should be engaged with regard to the new bus location and facilities as well as information regarding construction works and phases.

8. Conclusion of Equality Impact Assessment - please summarise your findings

The Ash Road Bridge scheme is likely to provide a range of benefits that can be shared by groups with protected characteristics. This includes direct benefits such as improved safety, accessibility and journey time savings for drivers and bus passengers as well as indirect benefits such as facilitating further housing development in the area.

A decrease in noise levels for residential properties north of the station along Guildford Road to the roundabout with Ash Hill Road is predicted. This will result in health and well-being benefits for residents, particularly children and older people who are more vulnerable to noise impacts.

The proposed development will include a new cycle path along the new road bridge and connecting link road providing a safer and more seamless route for people to cycle in the area including those with protected characteristics including young people and other protected characteristic groups.

Construction of the proposed development will provide direct employment opportunities which can be shared by groups with protected characteristics. A local procurement commitment and Employment and Skills Plan will help to provide opportunities for local people.

Approval of the planning application for the proposed development would also allow the accelerated delivery of the Local Plan including new housing opportunities. This includes provision for affordable housing, extra care and accessible housing and dwellings of varying sizes and types benefitting a wide range of households including young people, those on low incomes, older people, disabled people and families with children.

The EqIA has also identified a number of impacts of the proposed development where groups with protected characteristics may experience adverse disproportionate or differential effects. These include:

- An increase in day and night time exposure to construction and traffic noise for residential properties along the route of the scheme with potential differential impacts for children and older people. Adverse noise impacts are also predicted for the traveller site on Guildford Road near to the station. There is currently no mitigation proposed for operation noise effects for this site;
- Long diversions or continued use of the level crossing for pedestrians would occur should the planning application for the footbridge not be submitted or approved. This may have implications for people with mobility issues including older people and people with disabilities and people with pushchairs and /or young children;
- An increase in walking distances to bus stops from Ash Station for bus passengers including older people and people with disabilities and people with pushchairs and /or young children;

Furthermore, increased provision of additional housing is identified as a residual benefit of the proposed development with housing developments being enabled due to the connection to the highway network. However, affordability barriers may prevent certain groups, including low income households, young people and older people households, from sharing in this benefit. Ensuring that the affordable housing is provided to similar timescales to the overall development will help to ensure that benefits are shared equally.

Effective consultation and engagement with affected stakeholders and the local community is important for community cohesion and to ensure that all groups with protected characteristics can benefit from the propose scheme. A clear and on-going engagement strategy should be developed for this purpose. A Community Relations Manager will also be appointed to lead engagement with affected communities and to be a point of contact, for any resident's queries or complaints.

In conclusion, it is considered that developing a set of clear mitigation measures and following the recommendations outlined above should provide benefits for those groups with protected characteristics and help to minimise any adverse impacts of the proposed development. Monitoring of equality effects should also be undertaken on a regular basis to capture the realisation of benefits and the implementation of mitigation measures to demonstrate the Council's due regard to the PSED in the continued design and delivery of the proposed development.

