

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260716
Site Address:	Warren Road Bridge, Sonning, Reading, RG4 6SY
Expiry Date:	5 August 2026
Site Visit Date:	21 May 2026
Proposal: Prior approval submission for alterations to existing railway overbridge parapets to increase height, installation of anti-climb fencing, and associated highway works including kerbing, road markings and signage at Warren Road Bridge, Sonning.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Limited Development Location – Sonning
- Soft Sand
- AWE 12km Zone
- Flood Zone 1
- Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone (Green)
- Potentially contaminated land
- Landscape Character Assessment – Woodley-Earley Settled and Farmed Clay

PLANNING POLICY/LEGISLATION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Section 55	Provides that 'development' includes the carrying out of building operations on land, and 'building operations' includes structural alterations or additions to buildings.
Section 57	Planning permission is needed for all development of land.
Section 187a	Enforcement for breach of conditions

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

Section 7	Prior approval applications: time periods for decision
Article 3	In conjunction with Schedule 2, Part 18 Class A grants planning permission for development under local or private Acts or Order
Article 4	Provides that the planning authority may give direction to restrict the effect of Article 3

PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant to this application.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Highways – No objection
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection
WBC Ecology – No comments received



Photograph taken 21/05/26 showing brick parapet with metal railings.

Small repairs to the existing brickwork will be carried out where needed, but the bridge itself will not be widened, raised or rebuilt. Along the road edges, new kerbs will be installed to protect the fencing from vehicle damage. The scheme also includes minor changes to road markings and signs on the approaches to the bridge, to ensure the layout remains clear and safe for road users. It should be noted that works to the highway require separate consent from the Local Highway Authority.

PART A.1 APPRAISAL				
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)			Yes	No
1	s.55	Does it constitute development?	✓	
2	s.191	Would it be contrary to an enforcement notice?		✓
3	s.187a Art.3 (4)	Would it be contrary to any condition imposed by any planning permission granted or deemed to be granted?		✓
The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)			Yes	No
4	Art.3 (5)	Are the building operations involved in the construction of the original building lawful?	✓	
5	Art.4	Is there an 'Article 4 Direction' in effect for the site?		✓
6	Sch.2 Pt. A	Does it consist of development authorised by: a) a local or private Act of Parliament b) an order approved by both Houses of Parliament, or c) an order under section 14 or 16 of the Harbours Act 1964 (orders conferring powers for improvement, construction etc of harbours) which designates specifically the nature of the development authorised and the land upon which it may be carried out?	✓	

APPRAISAL

A.1 Development is not permitted by Class A if it consists of or includes—

(a) the erection, construction, alteration or extension of any building, bridge, aqueduct, pier or dam; or

(b) the formation, laying out or alteration of a means of access to any highway used by vehicular traffic, unless the prior approval of the appropriate authority to the detailed plans and specifications is first obtained.

The proposal would involve the extension of a bridge (in terms of its side barriers) and so (a) would apply. As such, prior approval is required.

Development under Class A is permitted subject to the following requirements under Part A.2:

A.2 The prior approval referred to in paragraph A.1 is not to be refused by the appropriate authority nor are conditions to be imposed unless they are satisfied that—

a) the development (other than the provision of or works carried out to a dam) ought to be and could reasonably be carried out elsewhere on the land; or

The proposed works seek to improve public safety and reduce unsafe actions on the bridge. Therefore, it would not be reasonable that the works be carried out elsewhere.

b) the design or external appearance of any building, bridge, aqueduct, pier or dam would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood and is reasonably capable of modification to avoid such injury.

Policy CP3(a) of the Core Strategy states that development should be of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.

The proposal, site is not located within a Conservation Area and the bridge is not listed. The proposal would increase the height of the barriers along the bridge span that would take the overall total height of the fencing to 1.8m. Whilst this would change the appearance of the bridge, the site location is relatively contained with limited views from other nearby bridges (those on the Sonning Cutting) and elsewhere. Visually, the fencing will not appear overly incongruous, and it will be finished in grey which is in keeping with the fencing already on the bridge. Due to its proximity from surrounding residential properties, it would not result in loss of amenity to neighbours.

As such, the proposal would be of a suitable visual appearance in accordance with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and consequently would not injure the

amenity of the neighbourhood, as per the requirement of the prior approval (A.2(b)).

Overall, the recommendation is that the proposal requires prior approval and prior approval should be granted.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Prior approval required and granted
Date:	27 July 2026
Earliest date for decision:	16 May 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	31.07.26