Rural Estates
Warwickshire County Council

Kenilworth Greenway - Connect2Kenilworth Sustrans sustainable transport scheme
A429 Bridge, Coventry Road, Kenilworth
Supporting Planning Statement

December 2009

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Please also refer to the drawings and the Design and Access Statement enclosed with this application.

1.2 The Connect2Kenilworth project links Kenilworth to Berkswell Greenway and the University of Warwick. An integral part of the scheme involves the construction of a new bridge over the A429, Coventry Road in Crackley, Kenilworth. The bridge will connect the existing Greenway to the Kenilworth Common area and into the town centre and will be sited where the former railway bridge stood, please refer to aerial map below.
1.3 The main delivery partners are Warwickshire County Council, Warwick District Council and the University of Warwick who own most of the land that the Connect2Kenilworth route passes through. The route is an integral part of the University of Warwick's Green Travel Plan.

1.4 To the north is Reine Gardens, a new residential development on the site of the former Crackley garage, to the north west Princes Drive Industrial Estate and to the south and east older, more established residential properties. Crackley Cottages are separated from the Greenway by Redthorne Grove, a private access road serving five residential properties. The nearest residential properties to the proposed bridge are 30, 32, 57 and 59 Crackley Hill, Coventry Road, 1 to 8 Crackley Cottages, Coventry Road and 1-21 Laneham Place. The closest property is probably 32 Coventry Road which is approximately 20m away from the proposed bridge.

1.5 The Reine Gardens development comprises a small number of three storey residential properties, 1-21 Laneham Place whose rear gardens/patios immediately back onto the Greenway. Properties within the first block 1-3 Reine Mews do not have windows within the gable end. Views of the bridge will be possible from the bay windows and top floor of the front elevation of the Mews properties.

1.6 The existing bends in the Coventry Road limit potential views of the bridge from the road and adjacent footway to the edge of Crackley, i.e., properties 14 and 15 Arborfields and Crackley School in the other direction.

1.7 The existing vegetation along the dismantled railway line will help to frame views of the new bridge. This winter 250 saplings comprising native tree species will be planted along the embankment, to the back of the properties in Woodland Road, to help to partially screen views of the shared footpath/cycleway from these properties. Planting to the back of the first property in Woodland Road will be carried out once the bridge has been installed.

1.8 There is an existing vehicular access for maintenance works to the Greenway immediately adjacent to Redthorne Grove. This access will be retained for the contractors use and for future maintenance works to the cycleway/footpath.
2.0 Description of Proposed Development

The Steering Group for Connect2Kenilworth have worked with Warwickshire County Council Design Services to produce 6 designs for the new bridge. Three options were subject to extensive public consultation. Design A or the "Plain bridge" received 53% of the vote from the extensive public consultation exercise. The span of the proposed bridge is approximately 40m with a 3m wide shared footpath and cycleway.

2.1 The bridge design will conform to the following:

- A 3.0m wide shared cycleway/footpath.
- An approximate overall span of 40m between supports.
- A minimum headroom of 5.7m, to comply with highway design standards.
- The bridge superstructure will be a steel construction to achieve rapid installation with minimum disruption.
- The surfacing will be slip resistant and co-ordinate with the adjoining fine yellow granite chip macadam shared footpath/cycleway.
- The design of the footbridge superstructure and substructure will be to The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.
- Parapets will be 1.4m high.
- The bridge superstructure will be reinforced concrete abutments, clad in brickwork to match surrounding buildings.
- The preferred colour for the bridge design is olive-green, as chosen by the majority of respondents from the public consultation.

2.2 Please also refer to the Design and Access Statement enclosed with the application.

3. Planning Policy Framework

3.1 The bridge and its abutments are outside the area defined as Green Belt. There are no other designations on this land. The Greenway is owned by Warwickshire County Council, having been transferred from British Rail in the 1970's.

3.2 DP1 Layout and Design

*Development will only be permitted which positively contributes to the character and quality of its environment through good layout and design. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they:-*
a) harmonise with, or enhance, the existing settlement in terms of physical form, patterns of movement and land use;

The bridge is a key feature of the Sustrans Connect2Kenilworth Scheme. It will physically link Berkswell Greenway and the University of Warwick to both Kenilworth Common and Kenilworth town centre via a continuous section of safe shared cycleway and footpath between these locations.

e) enhance and incorporate important existing features into the development;

The bridge construction will re-unite the two stretches of dismantled railway embankment, the Greenway which form the core section of the Connect2 Scheme route.

f) respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;

The proposed bridge is designed to be sympathetic to its surroundings. The bridge crossing is comparable with the width of the adjoining Sustrans shared cycleway/pedestrian route.

g) adopt appropriate materials and details;

The bridge will be a lightweight structure that will include a wildlife upstand constructed from steel plate, designed to help protect wildlife that will use the bridge as part of the wildlife corridor/greenway.

h) integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;

The development is an integral part of the Sustrans’ Connect2 project, which aims to revitalise walking and cycling in 79 communities across the UK by creating new routes for local journeys. Crossings and bridges are being created over busy roads, railway lines and rivers, linking into networks of local paths to enable people to get to where they want to go by foot or by bike. The Kenilworth scheme is part of a competition process that is part of Connect2.

j) incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;

The bridge will directly link to the shared cycleway and footpath. Service water will drain away to a soakaway as part of the proposed sustainable drainage system.
k) ensure all components, e.g. buildings, landscaping, access routes, parking and open spaces are well related to each other and provide a safe and attractive environment;

The bridge connects the current footpaths providing a safe and alternative route for both pedestrians and cyclists.

The development complies with these material considerations.

3.3 DP2 Amenity
Development will not be permitted which has an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby uses and residents and/or does not provide acceptable standards of amenity for future users/occupiers of the development.

The bridge will have a positive impact on the amenity of nearby uses and residents because it will provide an additional safe crossing point over the A429 road.

The bridge will provide acceptable standards of amenity for future pedestrians and cyclists.

The development complies with this material consideration.

4. Sustainability

4.1 The bridge design we are progressing with secured the majority of the vote at public consultation.

4.2 The bridge will be constructed from a high percentage of recycled steel.

5. Key Issues and Justification of the Proposed Development

5.1 Need for the development
The provision of a bridge over the A429 Coventry Road is central to the ethos of Connect2 which is about improving sustainable transport links and removing barriers to use. The provision of a bridge is an explicit and high profile part of the Sustrans bid and the agreed scheme.

5.2 Suitability of the site
Historically there was a railway bridge on this site up until the late 1960’s. Since the railway was dismantled the area is widely used for informal recreation.
5.3 An ecological appraisal for Kenilworth Common cycleway was conducted by Warwickshire County Council’s Ecology Unit in August 2008. To date all site preparation works for the bridge crossing have been carried out in consultation with Warwickshire County Council’s team of ecologists. A Watching Brief has been set up which allows the ecologists to be on site while works are taking place and advise accordingly. This Watching brief will be extended to cover the areas of construction for the proposed bridge. The County Ecologists have advised that a watching brief supervision condition is likely to be sufficient rather than a pre-determinative survey, given the small scale of the impacts.

5.4 A small amount of vegetation clearance will be necessary to install the abutments. This is likely to comprise the removal of three trees and the pruning back of one tree. There will be some replanting following the installation that will help to frame the bridge.

6.0 Conclusion
In conclusion the proposed bridge crossing does not present any particular agricultural, landscape or ecological concerns. Indeed there is a benefit in reconnecting the wildlife corridor.

There is a need for the development to provide a safe cycle/pedestrian route from Berkswell Greenway and the University of Warwick to Kenilworth Common and the town centre. The proposed bridge complies with planning policy relating to new developments.