

APPLICATION NO.	P17/V1154/LB
SITE	Steventon Overbridge, High Street, Steventon, Abingdon, OX13 6RS
PARISH	STEVENTON
PROPOSAL	Demolition of listed railway overbridge, and provision of replacement bridge. As amended by plans received on 10 August 2017 (additional information received 16 March 2018: Options Review from PBA)
WARD MEMBER(S)	Matthew Barber
APPLICANT	Network Rail
OFFICER	Charlotte Brewerton

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 **To grant listed building consent for demolition of the Grade II listed overbridge at Steventon subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Commencement three years - listed building consent.**
- 2. Approved plans.**
- 3. Sample materials (walls - panel).**
- 4. Historic records.**

2.0 **BACKGROUND & CONTEXT**

2.1 This application has been called to planning committee by Councillor Matthew Barber.

2.2 The Steventon Overbridge is a grade II listed, brick built 3-arched bridge, with central wide Elliptical arch and flanking narrower round arches located on the edge of Steventon prior to the Milton Interchange. The bridge, which is owned by Oxfordshire County Council, carries the B4017 public road (High Street) over the Great Western Main Line and was listed in 1988.

2.3 In 2011 Network Rail concluded that Steventon Overbridge would need to be demolished to achieve electrification of the Great Western mainline in the upgrade from London to Cardiff.

2.4 Currently the bridge does not have sufficient electrical and physical clearance to allow the safe use of Overhead Line Electrification (OLE) equipment through the bridge. The low clearance through the bridge is exasperated by the need for OLE contact wire to have a minimum safety clearance of 5.8m through the adjacent Level Crossing's, at The Causeway and Stocks Lane, and to maintain a compliant gradient to the contact wire.

2.5 This application has been submitted for Listed Building Consent to demolish the Listed Overbridge. Network Rail have provided justification of the following options, which have been considered and found to be unviable to implement:

1. A full Track lower underneath the bridge

2. A partial track lower and closure of the Stocks Lane Level Crossing to vehicles
 3. A permanent speed restriction along this section of the line
 4. Closure of Stocks Lane and the Causeway Level Crossings and a new link road.
 5. Bridge lifting (Jacking) Or
 6. Total demolition of the listed bridge
- 2.6 Throughout the application process, Officers have liaised with Network Rail, Historic England and Oxfordshire County Council, who own the bridge, having regular meetings to discuss and consider the most appropriate course of action to ensure the electrification project, which is of national importance, is completed in a timely manner.
- 2.7 The latest delay in the determination of this application has been the need for the Council to gain an Independent Options Review of the Alan Baxter Report and CH2M Hill Report. The Council have requested Peter Brett Associates (PBA) to independently analyse these options to ensure a thorough assessment of the possible alternatives and enable an understanding of the technical issues surrounding the choice for demolition of a listed heritage asset.
- 2.8 The PBA Options Review, **attached** at Appendix 1, has concluded that ‘an exceptional engineering solution to achieve the 125mph running of the Intercity Express Programme (IEP) trains without demolition of the existing listed bridge, may be achievable through a combination of some or all of the following’:
- Closing of Stocks Lane level crossing to vehicles (but remaining open to pedestrians)
 - Exceeding the maximum recommended contact wire gradient on an exceptional basis and
 - Undertaking a partial track lower
- 2.9 In addition to the PBA report, Steventon Parish Council have also commissioned their own independent report, The Solka Report. This report concludes that additional details could be submitted which relate to vertical track alignment, depths of existing ballast and identification of any underground drainage systems which would enable an optimum track lower to allow OLE under the existing bridge. Therefore, demolition is not proven and there are possible technical solutions. A copy of this report is **attached** at Appendix 2.
- 3.0 **INTRODUCTION**
- 3.1 The railway passes through Steventon east to west dividing the village into northern and southern parts. The bridge carries the High Street over the railway providing access to the northern part of the village.

- 3.2 The primary routes to the southern half of the village are from the northern part of the village utilising two level crossings, one on Stocks Lane and another on The Causeway.
- 3.3 The southern part of the village includes residential areas and commercial properties including a small business park and a farm located near to the structure. These properties all rely on the level crossings for access. There is an unmade track which is a designated BOAT (Byway Open to All Traffic) but this is narrow with tight turns and not suitable for vehicular traffic (except 4x4's and farm vehicles).



Fig 3.1

- 3.4 Steventon Overbridge forms part of a group of listed station yard buildings including Brook House, Station House and The Sycamores in Steventon Station Yard which were designed by IK Brunel c.1839.
- 3.5 These structures have group value with other listed structures along the route of the GWR from London to Cardiff and Swansea beyond, which were designed by IK Brunel.
- 3.6 The site abuts the Steventon Conservation Area but is not located in it. The recently updated Flood Maps provided by The Environment Agency identify the site to be located within Flood Zone 3: Functional Floodplain.

4.0 **PROPOSAL**

4.1 The proposal seeks to demolish the listed bridge and to replace it with a higher contemporary structure as part of the Network Rail electrification of the GWR mainline. A copy of the site location and proposed plans is **attached** at Appendix 3.

4.2 This application was registered by the council on 27 April 2017. Included in the supporting documents was an options report which set out 5 alternative options to demolition (as noted above). In addition, a Heritage Statement justifying the demolition of the bridge was also included. A full copy of these documents can be viewed on the councils website at www.vwhdc.gov.uk.

4.3 Amended drawings have been submitted that show the inner facing of the overbridge, to be used by vehicular traffic, will be faced with red brick panels to retain some of the historic appearance on advice from our Conservation Officer. These plans altered the inner fascia of the bridge from concrete to a red brick slip panel with matching mortar to the existing bridge.

4.4 Additional information sought throughout this application process includes:

- Amended bridge design dated 10 August 2017 submitted by Network Rail
- Explanation from Network Rail regarding temporary measures to the track dated 22 September 2017 – This statement was submitted due to the delay in the application and the need to continue to be able to run electric trains along this part of the track whilst the application was pending. It explains that this temporary option could not be considered a permanent solution in order to retain the bridge.
- Peter Brett Associates Options Review dated 16 March 2018 – Independent review of the options commissioned on behalf of Vale of White Horse DC.
- Solka Report commissioned on behalf of Steventon Parish Council dated 23 March 2018.

4.5 Alongside this listed building application Network Rail have submitted a prior approval application. P17/V1161/P18 considers the works under Part 18, Class A, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 by Network Rail (NR) in their capacity as statutory undertaker. This application is a process whereby details are notified to the local planning authority prior to the development taking place.

5.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION COMMENTS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

The consultation comments received are summarised below. For a full copy of these responses can be viewed online at www.vwhdc.gov.uk.

Consultee	Original Proposal	Amended information
<p>Steventon Parish Council</p>	<p>Object (11 June 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great historic importance – a symbol of the coming of the GWRL through VOWH • Great effect on Steventon - LBC does not take into account • Not fully investigated – due process not investigated by NR • Options not analysed in depth – rushing application through • No consideration of objections from the village • Costs affect NR – costs by others irrelevant • Alternatives have not been costed in depth • No transport appraisal – no evidence of this within documents • Bridge jacking company not consulted • Heriate Statement not sufficient justification 	<p>Object (4 April 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient information to justify demolition
<p>Drayton Parish Council</p>	<p>Object (10 June 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Traffic often queues at the double roundabout in Abingdon, so Draytonians often drive South to the Milton interchange (via this bridge) to get onto the A34 to then drive north. Traffic from Steventon will also be forced to take alternative routes. •Three major housing sites are being built in Drayton and the closure of the bridge will force construction traffic to go via Milton or Abingdon. •Major traffic issues will arise if the A34 is shut. 	<p>Object (26th March 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvement (albeit a small one). • concerns regarding the disruption and the knock-on effects on Drayton remain. • Amendments do not address our previous concerns regarding the proposal to replace the bridge.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The condition on the Hanney Road is poor so it is not a viable alternative route. •Cycling from Abingdon to Harwell will be disrupted. •Bus route will be disrupted. •Any possibility to keep the road open must be considered. •Cost to the local economy. •The listed bridge will be replaced by a concrete structure. 	
Sutton Courtenay Parish Council –	<p>Object (30 June 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • harm to the historic environment and importance of the bridge and surrounding area, • not enough justification for loss of bridge. <p>Object (11 September 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware the proposal materials have changed • Main concern is traffic impact • Route is main access and local village roads are at capacity • Parish fully supports local view with regards to traffic impact • Full investigation into diversion routes required • S106 funding should be sought for local traffic schemes. 	<p>Object (6 April 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an engineering solution should be found to keep the existing structure. • Traffic impact
Historic England (South East) – (<p>No objection (11 August 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Adequate justification for demolition has been given by Network Rail in order to meet the requirements of paragraph 132 of the NPPF. • All the potential options are either impossible, would pose a risk to the running of the 	<p>No Objection (8 September 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cladding the inner face of the parapet of the proposed bridge with brick slips would markedly improve its appearance. • Our position regarding the

	<p>railway or would involve lengthy closures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With regret we conclude that the Network Rail have made a clear enough case for the bridge to be demolished in order for electrification to be delivered on time and compromising the service provided by the railway is to be avoided. <p>Holding Comment (23 March 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PBA report does not offer a practical alternative solution to demolition and this report does not change our stance. We do not object to the application. • The Solka Report raises serious questions about the necessity for demolition. • The Solka Report concentrates on the technical details of electrifying the line which need clarifying by Network Rail. 	<p>principle of demolition remains as set out in our previous letter.</p> <p>No Objection (18 April 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained clarification from NR on a number of issues • Any speed restriction would prove disruptive to the line reducing maximum capacity • Strong justification for demolition
<p>Conservation Officer (VOWH)</p>	<p>In-principle objection (21 July 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the bridge is listed and its' condition appears sound, there is, in isolation, no structural reason to justify the demolition of the bridge. • The proposal would affect the character and appearance of the Steventon Conservation Area and would neither preserve nor enhance it by means of the proposed total demolition. • The bridge is worthy and capable of retention and significant locally and nationally as a bridge which 	<p>No Objection (1 September 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly regrettable in proposing the total demolition of one of a number of bridges. • Should demolition be deemed on balance acceptable by the Planning Officer, details should be supplied by condition. <p>No Objection 19th April 2018</p>

	<p>was designed and constructed by a nationally important engineer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In my view the proposal constitutes substantial harm, as it results in total loss of the designated heritage asset under section 133 of the NPPF. • It is recognised that the Planning Officer must take into account the wider public benefits of the national electrification scheme and consider whether the public benefits of the scheme outweigh the harm of the demolition and replacement of the bridge. <p>Holding comment (3 April 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail is given the opportunity to respond to the SOLKA Report before a decision is made on the fate of the bridge. • Historic England is the government’s expert advisors on heritage matters. It is therefore important that the Council follows the advice of Historic England in obtaining these points of clarification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I regrettably concur with the recommendations of Historic England as the government’s advisors on national heritage.
OCC Highways	No statutory requirement to consult on an LBC application	Sent a statement with regards to traffic implications. <u>Attached</u> at Appendix 4
Wantage & Grove Campaign Group	<p>Object (6 June 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sufficiently detailed analysis • 10months no turning at traffic lights, traffic problems on A34 and hold ups at Milton Road and additional traffic at Hanney and Drayton 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options to lower track, lift bridge and track slew but NR don't want to do it NR Not following due process • Should have analysed all alternatives thoroughly not dismissed them • Evidence must be provided to demonstrate demolition only solution – dispute • EA says no flood risk therefore lower track. If flooding can use a pump to pump it away • Open a new station at Grove for new railway line from Oxford to Bristol – hope the new design can accommodate this and not need more road closures and replacement for this too. 	
<p>Neighbours Object (46)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst it is acknowledged that the current bridge cannot accommodate the electrification of the railway, the proposed solution is an ill-considered and generic solution that might be satisfactory for other locations along the line but is completely unsatisfactory for Steventon. • Due process not followed • Lack of communication from NR to public • No costings for all options shown – not justified • Lack of evidence to make informed or reasoned decision • No structural survey – surely required to assess justifiable? • Historic importance • Group value – remove one element devalue group • VOWH should stand up for LB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No alternative options have been seriously considered by NR. • combination of options would allow the passage of electrically powered trains without undue delays, and without • closing the Stocks Lane crossing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design not in keeping nor does it preserve historic significance • Other options are available • Significant historic value will be lost • Not a sympathetic design • Inappropriate materials, appearance and design • Road closure for 10 months unacceptable • Detrimental to setting of within a conservation area – unique vista • Ugly proposed replacement • Driven by cost and speed of construction • Historic context a secondary consideration • Not fully considered the alternatives • Commercial and political decision • More exploratory work required • Bi mode trains should be used in this location • Traffic implications • Disregard of existing landscapes. 	
Neighbours Support (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernisation and upgrade of the Railway line. 	
Neighbours No Strong View (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic asset but unfit for purpose • Modernisation but at expense of listed structure? 	

6.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

6.1 P17/V1161/P18 –

Prior Approval for demolition of Steventon Overbridge and replacement bridge as part of the Electrification of the GWRL.

6.2 [P14/V2644/PEM](#) - (12/03/2015)

Great Western electrification project, Steventon Overbridge.

6.3 [P13/V1380/ES](#) - Approved (27/09/2013)

Environmental Statement for the scheme of works to electrify the Great Western Main Line Railway.

7.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 The main issues in relation to the consideration of this application are:

- The demolition of the bridge which is a Grade II heritage asset

7.2 Saved Policies HE1, HE4 and HE5 of the Vale of White Horse 2011 seek to preserve and enhance heritage assets and protect their setting. In addition, Core Policy 39 of Vale of White Horse 2031 Part 1, has regard to the Historic Environment.

7.3 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF and paragraph 133 of the Framework, states that: Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term
- Through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

7.4 In addition, Officers have to assess this application in accordance with Paragraph 132 of the NPPF which requires ‘the Council to give “great weight” to the conservation of the bridge and section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council to have “special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting”.

7.5 The proposal seeks consent to demolish a grade II listed structure which would lead to the loss of historic fabric and in isolation Officers should recommend refusal of such an application.

7.6 However, the proposal seeks to improve the running efficiency of the GWR and in doing so would lead to wider public benefits both nationally and locally. In order to weigh up the balance Officers have considered the options below against Paragraph 132 of the NPPF.

7.7 The Council, having considered advice from all statutory consultees must consider the necessity test - whether the total demolition of the bridge is necessary to deliver the substantial public benefits that electrification of the Great Western Main Line would bring. As part of this assessment the alternative options which retain the bridge have been assessed.

7.8 **Review of the options**

Bridge Jacking

- 7.9 Bridge lifting, or jacking up, is a relatively new concept which seeks to raise the entire bridge to achieve the required height underneath to enable the Overhead Line Equipment (OLE) to be placed safely underneath. Whilst it has been achieved successfully in the UK this bridge is slightly different in that it is a 3-arched bridge and the track underneath is on a partial slew. The front face of the bridge has already been refaced in concrete and its arches have concrete bracings with infilling of the lateral pier arches to strengthen them.
- 7.10 Our Conservation Officer has advised that '*Jacking is likely to so alter, disfigure and compromise the appearance and proportions of the bridge in relation to its surroundings that even if it were feasible it would not achieve desirable or successful outcomes*'.
- 7.11 Officers consider that in Heritage terms both the Conservation Officers and Historic England advice would not look favourably at this option. Officers accept that this is not a viable option for the bridge.
- 7.12 Full Track Lower
Mill Stream culvert carries Ginge Brook beneath the railway. NR has discounted this option due to the likeliness of flooding that could occur if the track was lowered.
- 7.13 PBA have also concluded that this option would not be viable due to the likeliness of flooding. The Environment Agency have recently updated their hydraulic testing of Ginge Brook which has resulted in them making changes to their flood maps. The land surrounding the railway line has been upgraded from a Flood Zone 1 location, the lowest zone likely to flood, to a Flood Zone 3 location, this being a functional floodplain. Therefore Officers consider that any lowering of the track, whether partial or full, is likely to result in flooding of the railway line. This is therefore not a viable option.
- 7.14 Permanent Speed Restriction
NR have eliminated this option as a reduced track speed has disadvantages to train running times and the wear and tear upon the pantograph and contact wire gradient of electrified trains. This in turn would lead to increased maintenance costs.
- 7.15 PBA conclude that this option could be viable (for electric trains only) but would have an operational consequence with running a train at a reduced speed through Steventon (approximately 40mph rather than 125mph).
- 7.16 The Solka Report notes that it is unlikely that trains are passing through Steventon at speeds greater than 100mph due to the changes in tracks from 2 to 4.
- 7.17 Officers note that any speed restrictions would affect the arrival times of trains between London and Cardiff which is contrary to the electrification project of the mainline railway. In a response to the Solka Report HE state that '*contrary*

to the assumptions made in the Solka report, trains are indeed currently running at 125mph through Steventon.

- 7.18 HE advises that should the bridge be retained ‘A further issue, that of pantograph sway, has been raised. This would mean that trains are restricted to passing under Steventon bridge at 60mph if the tracks are slewed to obtain maximum clearance. While doubtless the issue of pantograph sway could be addressed by a partial track lower it looks unlikely that full line speed can be achieved here if both the crossings are to be kept open.’
- 7.19 Furthermore, ‘Network Rail have confirmed that at peak times up to 18 trains an hour are passing under the bridge and it is at these peak times that even a relatively small slowing of the line-speed would prove disruptive. The PBA report concludes that even a minor reduction in maximum speed to 105-110 mph (the maximum speed of current bi-modal trains) reduces the maximum capacity of the line here to 18 trains an hour, so presumably a reduction below that would indeed cause issues at peak times and make intensification of traffic very difficult.’
- 7.20 Officers do not wish to compromise the effectiveness of a national project. Given the likeliness of later arrival times and the increased costs that may be incurred from increased wear and tear to the wires Officers consider that this would not be wholly desirable to the national project resulting in very little gains nationally. Whilst PBA have advised us that this option could be a possibility in reality, when assessing a trains efficiency, maintenance costs versus a considerable improvement to the line and running efficiency Officers consider on balance this option is not viable in this instance.
- 7.21 Reduced Track Lower combined with closure of Stocks Lane Level Crossing to vehicles
PBA have advised that this option would require more work by NR to understand viability in more detail. It would result in closing Stocks Lane to vehicles but open to pedestrians with a maximum track lower of 444mm under the bridge which may present some engineering challenges.
- 7.22 The Solka Report advises that with additional testing and detailed information an optimal track lowering scheme could achieve retention of the bridge.
- 7.23 Officers note that in order to assess Solka Report conclusions additional testing and detailed information is required. This would delay the process, and the overall scheme, even further which already has time pressures from Central Government. The partial lower of the track has already identified that in this location the line could be at risk from flooding and therefore the conclusions put forward by Solka, whilst possible, in this location would not be a viable option.
- 7.24 Officers consider that closing one of the level crossings to vehicles would have significant impacts upon Steventon village and its residents. Retaining the bridge, compromising the project and resulting in highways upheaval elsewhere in the village does not result in significant gains in this instance but only provides to pass a logistics problem elsewhere along the trainline.

- 7.25 Officers consider that retrofitting a scheme around a bridge that is not the best example of a Brunelian structure, increasing project funding and delaying the National scheme further, whilst adding local traffic upheaval to residents of Steventon does not appear to be a pragmatic approach. Therefore, on balance Officers weigh in favour of loss of the bridge when considered against this option.
- 7.26 Closure of Stocks Lane and The Causeway Level Crossings and a New Link Road
PBA confirm that this option *'would close Stocks Lane Level Crossing and closes the Causeway Level Crossing to vehicles allowing access only by pedestrians. This would then allow train speed to reach 125mph. Closing both level crossings to vehicles would have a significant effect on the village of Steventon and would require significant highways works to reinstate suitable vehicular access to the south side of the village.'*
- 7.27 Closing the two Level Crossings to vehicular traffic would have a detrimental long term impact on traffic within Steventon and result in significantly more upheaval to the Village road network than closure of the bridge for 10months.
- 7.28 There is a BOAT adjacent to the railway line but this access route is very narrow and does not present an easy option to upgrade for use by heavy traffic flow.
- 7.29 In addition, OCC have advised that they would not permit closure of the level crossings and so officers weigh in favour of bridge demolition based upon the public impact and the benefits a replacement bridge would have versus this option.
- 7.30 Historic England objected to the original proposal. However having reviewed the options and the Heritage Statement they do not object to this application and are now satisfied that adequate justification for the demolition of the bridge has been provided.
- 7.31 Officers are mindful that closing the Stocks Lane level crossing would result in an objection from OCC, as Highways Authority, and could result in lengthy public enquiries to get the necessary permissions in order to secure this. In addition, closing of this level crossing would result in significant traffic implications to local residents with the need to find an alternative vehicular route around the village. This would not be beneficial to the public and could result in significant disruptions to the traffic network which could last longer than the planned closure of the road for 10 months.
- 7.32 A number of objections have been received in relation to the demolition and replacement of the bridge due to the road closure and long diversion route which would have to be put in place for approximately 10 months. Closure of the bridge would be extremely inconvenient to residents but in the longer term, once the upgrade of the railway line has been completed, it would return to a

fully functioning road through the village without resulting in traffic implications further around the village.

- 7.33 A number of other bridges along this mainline route have been retained throughout the undertaking of this electrification project. Steventon Overbridge given its design as a 3 arched bridge, its location within a floodplain, its partial track slew and its identification at not being '*the best example of a 'Brunealien' structure*' have provided difficulties in its retention.
- 7.34 There is no option to fit in alternative road links in this part of Steventon and as such a replacement, purpose built bridge is considered, regrettably, the most beneficial option in this instance.
- 7.35 The bridge abuts the Conservation Area. Officers consider that the loss of the bridge would not be materially detrimental to the wider visual significance of the Conservation Area. This is due to the limited views from public vantage points that the bridge commands. Its loss would not cause severe visual harm to The adjacent Conservation Area.

8.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Having regards to Paragraph 132 of the NPPF, to give great weight to the conservation of the bridge and section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, whilst there would be significant harm from the loss of a historic asset, demolition is outweighed by the public benefits both locally and nationally.
- 8.2 Demolition and the provision of a replacement structure allows important modernisation to the railway network. Whilst officers are aware that in the short term there would be significant traffic implications to Steventon and the wider area, once the upgrading works are completed there will be no longer term traffic implications to residents and the village of Steventon from its loss.
- 8.3 Given the location of the bridge within Flood Zone 1 and the probability of flooding of the railway line, Officers consider that any lowering of the track would cause severe implications to the running capacity of the track. This is not in the national interest nor would it result in public benefits that the electrification project is trying to achieve.
- 8.4 The closure of the levels crossings and a speed restriction on this part of the line has been discounted due to the extremely disruptive impact it would have upon running capacity of a busy line. Furthermore, a speed restriction along this part of the line would have implications to the maintenance of the OLE equipment.
- 8.5 There would be no possibility of an alternative route to allow vehicles from this part of Steventon to gain access to the wider surrounding area. The adjacent BOAT is too narrow with any upgrading works needing to be considerable to provide for a heavy flow of local traffic.

8.6 Officers therefore consider that having assessed all viable options, on balance and regrettably, the justification for the total demolition of the bridge is necessary to deliver the substantial public benefits that electrification of the Great Western Main Line would bring. This is in accordance with Policies HE1, HE4 and HE5 of the Vale of White Horse Saved Policies 2011 and Core Policies 37, 39 and 40 of the Adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031.

9.0 **POLICIES**

9.1 The following planning policies have been taken into account:

9.2 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 (SOLP 2011) policies;
HE1- Preservation and enhancement- implications for development
HE4- Development within the setting of a listed building
HE5 - Development involving alterations to a listed building

9.3 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1
CP37- Design and Local Distinctiveness
CP39- The Historic Environment
CP40- Sustainable Design and Construction

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