

Riverside Resource Recovery Facility

Realignment of Ditch 9

Design and Access Statement

November 2021 | Revision 1



1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Design and Access Statement

1.1.1 As required by Part 3, s.9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (the GDPO 2015) this design and access statement has been prepared to accompany a full planning application for the installation, operation and maintenance of private wire connection and associated electrical infrastructure on land at Riverside Resource Recovery Facility.

1.2 Structure of the Design and Access Statement

1.2.1 To address the matters established in the GDPO 2015 and the Planning Portal advice, this design and access statement is set out in the following order:

- Section 2: Project description, site description, policy context, and consultation
- Section 3: Design: the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development
- Section 4: Access: how issues relating to access have been addressed

2. Project Description, Site Description, Policy Context

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This section has been prepared to give an overview of the proposed development on land at Riverside Resource Recovery Facility, its location and relevant policy, so that the reader has the relevant context contained in one document.
- 2.1.2 More detail about each of the matters can be found at the following locations:
- a. Site description, in the Planning Statement (section 2)
 - b. Project description, in the Planning Statement (section 3)
 - c. Relevant policy, in the Planning Statement (section 4)

2.2 Site Description

- 2.2.1 The application site is located on the southern boundary of the 2017 Consent, as shown on Figure 2, Application Area. Comprising Ditch 9 as it runs east-west along the southern boundary of RRRF and adjoining land, the application area measures 576 m².
- 2.2.2 Ditch 9 measures some 50 metres in length and approximately 1 metre in width (although this varies along the course of the ditch). It is enclosed at the western end with typically steep and densely vegetated banksides (dominated by False Oat-grass, with frequent Common Vetch, Field Bindweed, Broad-leaved Dock, Creeping Soft-grass and occasional Dog-rose, Teasel and Marsh Thistle). Within the banks, Ditch 9 is well vegetated with Common Reed.
- 2.2.3 There is scrub between Ditches 6 and 9 that has some value to nesting birds. Otherwise, amenity grassland surrounds Ditch 9, with the existing access road and hardstanding to the north and east, and Ditch 6 and the Crossness Nature Reserve to the south.
- 2.2.4 Figures 1 and 2, Site Location and Application Area present the application site.

2.3 Project Description

- 2.3.1 The proposed development is the realignment of a section (of no more than 50m in length) of Ditch 9/Ford Ditch on land to the south of Riverside Resource Recovery Facility, Norman Road, Belvedere. The site layout is shown on drawing number S3259-8310-0024DW Realignment of Ditch Nine R1.0.
- 2.3.2 The built form is limited to the creation of a new ditch to run on the same east-west alignment, a few metres to the south of the existing ditch line. It will reconnect with the north-south alignment of Ditch 9 at the top of Norman Road. The material dug out in the creation of the new Ditch 9 alignment will be used to fill in the existing ditch. Any excavated material that is identified as unsuitable for backfill, e.g. containing peat or organics, will be removed from site and disposed of in accordance with good industry practice.
- 2.3.3 Key materials, principally reed rhizomes, from within the existing Ditch 9 will have been previously extracted to enable their use in the new ditch. These materials will be carefully, and appropriately, stored on site to optimise their success in the new ditch.

- 2.3.4 Approximately 35m of new ditch is to be created replacing the c.35m of exiting Ditch 9 to be backfilled. The overall length of Ditch 9 will remain the same, at c.100m, following the realignment.
- 2.3.5 The realigned Ditch 9 will be profiled to reflect the dimensions of the existing ditch, so providing equivalent habitat area and water storage volume. Topographical survey (Reference 21110-100, May 2021) indicates typical ditch depths of 1m to 1.4m, with side slopes of c.33 degrees, or 1.5:1. The existing ditch profile has been used as the basis for the new ditch profile, with slope stability and habitat optimisation priorities incorporated as advised by MHE Consulting.
- 2.3.6 Drawing number S3259-8310-0027DW Profile of Realigned Ditch Nine R1.0 presents the details for the new ditch.
- 2.3.7 These works shall have been preceded by a water vole displacement exercise carried out under Class Licence CL31 held by MHE Consulting. All activities will be overseen by an Ecological Clerk of Works (likely to be MHE Consulting) and follow the programme set out in Table 1.
- 2.3.8 It is intended that the water voles will be displaced into immediately adjacent habitats, notably Ditch 6, located at the northern boundary of the Crossness Nature Reserve (see Figure 2, Application Area). A minimum 2m buffer zone will be maintained from the top of the northern bank of Ditch 6 to the top of new Ditch 9 at all times to ensure burrow habitat associated with Ditch 6 remains undamaged.

2.4 Policy Context

- 2.4.1 The key policy context relevant to the proposed development is:
- Bexley Core Strategy, adopted February 2012 (the Core Strategy);
 - Saved Policies, as at 2012, of the Bexley Unitary Development Plan, adopted 2004 (the Bexley UDP); and
 - The London Plan, adopted December 2020 (the London Plan).
- 2.4.2 In addition the National Planning Policy Framework (published July 2021, NPPF) the Draft Local Plan¹ is considered to be a material consideration and consequently also addressed.
- 2.4.3 The principle of the development is the realignment of a ditch located within the Riverside campus. The proposed development is demonstrated to be the solution that offers the minimal impact on the ditch and its associated water vole population. The realignment of Ditch 9 is located within the footprint of an operational facility and will enable the site to operate more efficiently in the future.
- 2.4.4 Bexley UPD policy E1 sets out a number of conditions to be met, which are also reflected in policy ENV39. In response, this application has demonstrated that they are all delivered by the proposed realignment of Ditch 9:
- there are no material adverse effects on the health, safety or amenities of the occupants of local residential areas and neighbouring properties;

¹ Bexley Draft Local Plan, published for Regulation 19 consultation from May to July 2021.

- it is compatible with the character of the surrounding area (simply relocating it) and is satisfactory in terms of design, scale and layout in relation to adjoining uses and buildings;
- it satisfies the requirements of Policy T6 with regard to effects on the local highway network and makes no change to the availability of parking, public transport or site access;
- it is appropriately landscaped and restores the only important element of biodiversity interest bringing the opportunity for conservation enhancement with improved ditch management and monitoring across the Riverside campus;
- it will have no effect in terms of noise, or emission to land, air or water;
- it will have no effect in terms of crime and will maintain an attractive environment; and
- it will have no effect in terms of accidents, disasters or pollution and presents no change to flood risk.

2.4.5 In terms of infrastructure, a recognised key condition for growth in the Economic Development Strategy is *'ensuring London has the digital connectivity, water, energy, waste and green infrastructure it needs to grow and support the transition to an inclusive, low carbon circular economy.'* (page 101, bullet point 3)

2.4.6 In light of the overview above, it is demonstrated that the proposed development complies with all relevant development plan policy.

2.5 Consultation

2.5.1 The application is minor development, located within the operational site of RRRF. It is simply seeking the planning permission necessary to realign a short section of Ditch 9 with conservation enhancement proposed.

2.5.2 Public consultation has not occurred, but will form a part of the statutory planning process.

3. Design

3.1 Design principles and concepts that have been applied

Design Principles and Concepts

- 3.1.1 The Ecology Mitigation Hierarchy has driven the design principles and concepts relevant to this proposed development.
- 3.1.2 A complex patchwork of utilities and sub-terranean support structures placed underground at Riverside. The review of the utilities location (described in detail at section 3.3 of the Planning Statement) has been undertaken to enable future known projects to go ahead (principally the DH network) but also to future proof the site. The relocation of the utilities needs to be useful in the long term to avoid such works being necessary to undertake again.
- 3.1.3 To this end, a number of different locations for the utilities have been considered and the review sought, in accordance with the ecology mitigation hierarchy, to avoid any impact to Ditch 9. However, it has become clear that the options for relocating the utilities are limited to running in an east-west alignment along the southern edge of the Riverside site, within the area occupied by Ditch 9, with Ditch 6 to the south (withing the Crossness Nature Reserve).
- 3.1.4 A Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken that demonstrates:
- the development is safe;
 - the development does not increase flood risk; and,
 - the development does not detrimentally affect third parties.

4. Access

4.1 Traffic Access

- 4.1.1 All vehicles will access the site via the existing site entrance on Norman Road.
- 4.1.2 There will be no new FTE jobs generated as a result of this proposal, with existing roles taking on the maintenance of the switchyard; no additional parking is required.
- 4.1.3 In accordance with development plan policy, access to the site can be achieved satisfactorily. It is proposed to use the existing highway network and no highway upgrade work is required.

4.2 Public Access

- 4.2.1 The site is not currently accessible to the public and is not proposed to be so.
- 4.2.2 The Thames Path runs alongside the northern boundary of RRRF, outside of its boundary. Another footpath runs around the north eastern side of RRRF, linking up with the Thames Path.
- 4.2.3 The proposed development will have no impact on either recreational resource.

4.3 How specific issues that might affect access have been addressed

- 4.3.1 No specific issues that might affect access have been identified.