

Chair and Members

Planning and Environment Committee

City of London

Re: April 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 meeting regarding the Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area

I have reviewed the ESA Conservation Master Plan for the Medway Valley Heritage Forest and have a concern with a recommendation by City Staff to build 2 bridges across the river. The construction of bridges will have a detrimental ecological impact and will detract from the natural aspect of the area. When hiking the trails one wants to feel surrounded only by nature and not be reminded of man made structures by seeing a bridge. This could set a precedent for more bridges and other structures to be built in this ESA and other ESAs in the future.

To build a bridge in an ESA presents a challenge. Construction must be done without disturbing the natural features and that it has the aesthetics to blend in. It is unlikely that this could be achieved at a reasonable cost to the City. For a bridge to be built it would appear that some trails would have to be upgraded as well, which further takes away from the natural aspect and adds to the cost.

The Medway Valley is too unique to spoil for future generations as we continue to split, subdivide and overbuild in natural areas.

I recommend City Staff reject the idea of building bridges in the Medway Valley ESA.

Regards,

Rob Croft