

## AGENDA

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**Meeting:** Strategic Planning Committee  
**Place:** Council Chamber - Council Offices, Monkton Park,  
Chippenham, SN15 1ER  
**Date:** Wednesday 13 February 2013  
**Time:** 10.30 am

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Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Stuart Figini, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718376 or email [stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225) 713114/713115.

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<b>Briefing Arrangements:</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>
<b>PARTY SPOKESMEN</b>	13/2/13	9:30am	Council Chamber

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### Membership:

Cllr Peter Colmer		Cllr Francis Morland
Cllr Mark Connolly		Cllr Stephen Petty
Cllr Andrew Davis	(Chairman)	Cllr Leo Randall
Cllr Peter Fuller		Cllr Anthony Trotman
Cllr Charles Howard		Cllr Ian West
Cllr Julian Johnson	(Vice-Chair)	Cllr Fred Westmoreland
Cllr John Knight		

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### Substitutes:

Cllr Rosemary Brown	Cllr Mollie Groom
Cllr Liz Bryant	Cllr Russell Hawker
Cllr Ernie Clark	Cllr Alan MacRae
Cllr Nick Fogg	Cllr Mark Packard

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## **PART I**

### **Items to be considered when the meeting is open to the public**

1 **Apologies for Absence**

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (*Pages 1 - 14*)

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

5 **Public Participation and Councillors' Questions**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

#### Statements

Members of the public who wish to speak either in favour or against an application or any other item on this agenda are asked to register in person no later than 10.20am on the day of the meeting.

The Chairman will allow up to 3 speakers in favour and up to 3 speakers against an application and up to 3 speakers on any other item on this agenda. Each speaker will be given up to 3 minutes and invited to speak immediately prior to the item being considered. The rules on public participation in respect of planning applications are detailed in the Council's Planning Code of Good Practice.

#### Questions

To receive any questions from members of the public or members of the Council received in accordance with the constitution which excludes, in particular, questions on non-determined planning applications. Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda (acting on behalf of the Director of Resources) no later than 5pm on Wednesday 6 February 2013. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website.

- 6 **Application ref: W/12/01818/WCM - Construction of a new sludge digestion facility at Wessex Water Sewage Treatment Station, Trowle, Trowbridge**  
*(Pages 15 - 26)*

A report by the case officer is attached.

## **PART II**

**Item during whose consideration it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed**

**None**

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2012 AT CITY HALL, MALTHOUSE LANE, SALISBURY, WILTSHIRE, SP2 7TU.**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Peter Colmer, Cllr Andrew Davis (Chairman), Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Charles Howard, Cllr Julian Johnson (Vice-Chair), Cllr Alan MacRae, Cllr Francis Morland, Cllr Stephen Petty, Cllr Leo Randall, Cllr Anthony Trotman, Cllr Ian West and Cllr Fred Westmoreland

#### **Also Present:**

Cllr Mary Douglas and Cllr Bill Moss

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#### **40 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mark Connolly and John Knight.

Councillor Peter Colmer was replacing Councillor Chris Humphries as a permanent member of the Committee.

Councillor Alan MacRae was replacing Councillor Mark Connolly for this meeting only.

#### **41 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012 were presented, and it was,

#### **Resolved:**

**To approve the minutes as a true and correct record.**

#### **42 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **43 Chairmans Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements

44 **Public Participation and Councillors' Questions**

The Committee noted the rules on public participation and the manner in which the meeting would be held.

Members of the public addressed the Committee as set out in Minute No.s 45 and 46, as detailed below.

There were no questions received from members of the public or members of the Council.

45 **S/2011/1566 - ECO Homes Development - Castle Works, Salisbury**

**The following spoke objecting to the application**

1. John Cole
2. Bob Johns

**The following spoke in support of the application:**

3. Mark Vaughn
4. James Cleary - Agent

**The following spoke on behalf of Salisbury City Council objecting to the application**

- **Councillor Cheryl Hill**

The Committee received a presentation by the Senior Planning Officer, Southern Area Planning which set out the main issues in respect of the application. He introduced the report by explaining that the outline application was to demolish existing buildings and development of the site with an eco-village of 60 dwellings, open space amenity areas, new footpaths, parking spaces and internal site road. It was noted that the development would occupy a larger proportion of the site and would include buildings up to three stories in height. The officers report recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to a Section 106 agreement being secured and conditions.

Members of the Committee then had the opportunity to ask technical questions after which the Committee received presentations from those objecting and those supporting the application as detailed above, expressing their views about the planning application.

The Committee then heard from Councillor Mary Douglas as the local member who objected to the application and raised a number of concerns including affordable housing, the application being outline only not a full application, compatibility of the site for residential use with large local events being run

close by, amenity space issues, highway issues, character and appearance, design and layout, screening of the site. The Committee also heard from Councillor Bill Moss, a member of the Salisbury Rugby Club who spoke about the parking problems the Club experienced.

A site visit was held prior to the meeting and following Members attended:

Andrew Davis (Chairman)  
Charles Howard  
Julian Johnson  
Francis Morland  
Leo Randall  
Anthony Trotman  
Fred Westmoreland  
Ian West

In the absence of detailed plans, including landscaping proposals to demonstrate how the planting screen would be maintained, members felt that there were insufficient reassurances to guarantee that the proposed development would not be significantly more prominent than the current arrangement, and therefore considered that the proposal would be likely to harm the character and appearance of the area and the setting of heritage assets.

**Resolved:**

**To REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons**

- 1. contrary to Local Plan Policies C7, CN11, CN20, D1, G1 AND G2(iv) of the South Wiltshire Core Strategy**

### **INFORMATIVE**

**The Local Planning Authority consider that this is a site which, due to its sensitive environs, warrants a full planning application for any development along the lines proposed.**

### **Note**

The Committee intimated that they would prefer to see a full planning application submitted for the site rather than an outline application.

**The following spoke in support of the application:**

- **Greg Mitchell - Agent**

The Committee received a presentation by the Northern Area Development Control Team leader which set out the main issues in respect of the application. He introduced the report and explained that the outline application was for up to 84 dwellings and economic development including a nursing home, hotel and B1 offices. Demolition of existing buildings and structures, car parking, open space with associated infrastructure and access. The officers report recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to a Section 106 agreement being secured and conditions.

Members of the Committee then had the opportunity to ask technical questions after which the Committee received presentations from those objecting and those supporting the application as detailed above, expressing their views regarding the planning application.

Members of the public then had the opportunity to address the Committee with their views, as detailed above.

Members also heard the views of Councillor MacRae, as local Member who supported the application. The Committee in supporting the application express concerns about Section 106 agreements and the length of time it took for some applicants to sign the agreement. There were also concerns about the ability of traffic to enter and exit the site and for pedestrians to cross the busy A-road.

**Resolved:**

**To APPROVE planning permission**

Subject to the agreement being reached over the required amount of land to the given over to extra care accommodation; and

Subject to all parties entering into an agreement under s106 of The Act (as amended) in relation to the following matters:

- The delivery of affordable housing
- The delivery of extra care accommodation
- The delivery of on-site play and public open space
- The delivery of a contribution towards local education provision
- The delivery of a contribution towards local leisure provision
- The phasing of development



- The provision of bus stops and diversion of bus services to serve site

Then:

Planning Permission be GRANTED for the following reason:

**The proposed development is considered to be an acceptable redevelopment of a redundant Ministry of Defence establishment in the countryside for mixed use purposes. Subject to the imposition of relevant and necessary planning conditions and associated agreement under s106 of The Act (as amended), the development would not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of local residents, would provide a safe vehicular access, pose an acceptable impact upon the surrounding highway network and would deliver necessary community infrastructure so to ensure a sustainable form of development in the context of the local settlements. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies C3, NE15 and CF3 of the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2012 as well as the principles behind Policy NE20 of the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and Core Policy 37 of the emerging Wiltshire Core Strategy.**

Subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. No development shall commence on site until details of the following matters (in respect of which approval is expressly reserved) have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority:
  - (a) The scale of the development;
  - (b) The layout of the development;
  - (c) The external appearance of the development;
  - (d) The landscaping of the site;

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: The application was made for outline planning permission and is granted to comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Article 3(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the submitted plans and documents listed below. No variation from the approved plans should be made without the prior approval of the local planning authority. Amendments may require the submission of a further application.

Site location plan

Design and Access Statement - Pegasus Urban Design – March 2012

Planning Statement – March 2012

Statement of Community Involvement – March 2012

Flood Risk Assessment – RSK – March 2012

Utilities and Drainage Report – RSK – March 2012

Archaeological Assessment – Heritage Collective – March 2012

Transport Assessment and Travel Plan inc. Site Access plan 3032/sk/001/B – WSB – March 2012

Mining Stability Assessment – Parsons Brinkerhoff – March 2012

Explosive Ordnance Risk Assessment – Environment Science Group – March 2010

Ecological Appraisal – RSK - March 2012

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Pegasus Landscape – March 2012

Noise Assessment – RSK - March 2012

Ground Conditions Report – SKM – September 2012

Sustainability and Low Carbon Energy Strategy – Sweett – March 2012

Air Quality Statement – RSK – March 2012

Indicative Open Space Plan – YOR.1891\_35-2 I (date stamped 17<sup>th</sup> August 2012)

Indicative Cross Section of Interface with Concrete Structures – YOR.1891\_38 I (date stamped 17<sup>th</sup> August 2012)

Indicative Masterplan – YOR1891\_02-TG I (date stamped 09/10/12)

All date stamped 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 unless otherwise indicated.

REASON: To ensure that the development is implemented as approved.

4. Development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the principles set out within the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and those landscaping details approved at Reserved Matters stage. The

resulting implemented landscaping shall be maintained thereafter for a period of not less than five years from the implementation of each phase. This maintenance shall include the replacement of any tree or shrub which is removed, destroyed or dies by a tree or shrub of the same size and species as that which it replaces, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of amenity.

5. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted and before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development, details of fencing to be erected for the protection of retained trees/hedges/shrubs shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Fencing for the protection of retained trees/hedges/shrubs shall be erected in accordance with the approved details before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of protecting the existing trees/hedges/shrubs on the site.

6. No development shall take place until a detailed scheme for the positioning of all service trenches, pipe runs and/or drains has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such detailed scheme shall be configured such that no trenches, pipe runs and/or drains are sited within the root protection zone of retained trees set out in the approved landscape strategy and plans.

REASON: To maintain a vigorous and healthy root system to ensure the retention of trees in a safe and healthy condition.

7. No development shall take place until details of the construction of all walls, fences and other means of enclosure have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in accordance with a timescale to be approved by the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of amenity.

8. Absolutely no external lighting (including any lighting installed for security purposes or used during construction) shall be installed anywhere on the site until full details (which shall include positioning, levels of luminance and hours of illumination), have been submitted to and approved in writing by the

local planning authority. The lighting shall thereafter be installed and operated in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the local planning authority in the form of a separate planning permission in that regard.

REASON: In the interests of amenity and nature conservation.

9. No development shall take place until a construction method statement, which shall include measures to minimise disruption to the highway network and impacts upon the amenities of neighbouring residents, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved statement.

REASON: In the interests of securing a construction phase of development that minimises disruption to the highway network and impacts upon the amenities of neighbouring residents

10. Development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the conclusions and recommendations contained within the Noise Assessment. In particular, all new plant and services installed on any new building on the site shall achieve -5 dB below the measured background level when assessed (worst-case) in accordance with BS4142. During daytime (0700-2300hrs), all new building services plant shall be so sited and designed in order to achieve a Rating Level of -5dB below the lowest measured background noise level, determined to be LA9046dB at the nearest noise sensitive receptor. During night time(2300-0700hrs), all new building services plant shall be so sited and designed in order to achieve a Rating Level of -5dB below the lowest measured background noise level, determined to be LA9028dB at the nearest noise sensitive receptor. Measurements and assessment shall be carried out in accordance with BS4142: 1997.

REASON: In the interests of securing a development that respects the amenity of the nearest neighbouring residential occupiers.

11. Development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the conclusions and recommendations contained within the Noise Assessment. In particular, the new residential properties shall be constructed so as to achieve the "Good" indoor criteria for internal noise levels both day time and night time (BS 5228 1999). The applicant has identified that properties located in areas within NEC C will require both acoustic glazing and ventilation systems to avoid the need to open the windows. The applicant will have to provide additional information detailing the exact specification for the glazing and ventilation schemes at the design stage to achieve this.

REASON: So as to ensure the new residential properties to be constructed in close proximity to the A4 corridor are of a suitable standard so as to provide for a reasonable level of residential amenity and living conditions.

12. No development shall commence until a foul and surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground is permitted other than with the express written consent of the local planning authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to controlled waters. The scheme shall include details of how the scheme shall be maintained and managed after completion. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

REASON: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, to improve and protect water quality, improve habitat and amenity, and ensure future maintenance of the surface water drainage system.

13. No development approved by this planning permission (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority), shall take place until a scheme that includes the following components to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:
- (a) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified: all previous uses potential contaminants associated with those uses a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.
  - (b) A site investigation scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.
  - (c) The results of the site investigation and detailed risk assessment referred to in (b) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.
  - (d) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (c) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action. Any changes to these components require the express written consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

REASON: To prevent pollution of controlled waters.

14. Piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods shall not be permitted other than with the prior and express written consent of the Local Planning Authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to groundwater. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To prevent pollution of controlled waters.

15. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a remediation strategy to the local planning authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with and obtained written approval from the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

REASON: To prevent pollution of controlled waters.

- 16. No demolition, site clearance or development shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) prepared by an arboricultural consultant providing comprehensive details of construction works in relation to trees shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. All works shall subsequently be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details. In particular, the method statement must provide the following:**

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- A specification for protective fencing to trees during both demolition and construction phases which complies with BS5837:2012 and a plan indicating the alignment of the protective fencing;
- A specification for scaffolding and ground protection within tree protection zones in accordance with BS5837:2012
- A schedule of tree works conforming to BS3998.
- Details of general arboricultural matters such as the area for storage of materials, concrete mixing and use of fires;
- Plans and particulars showing the siting of the service and piping infrastructure;
- A full specification for the construction of any arboriculturally sensitive structures and sections through them, including the installation of boundary treatment works, the method of construction of the access driveway including details of the no-dig specification and extent of the areas of the driveway to be constructed using a no-dig specification;
- Details of all earthworks shall be submitted and include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including levels and contours to be

formed, and the nature of the material, showing the relationship of proposed moulding to existing vegetation and surrounding landform;

- Details of the works requiring arboricultural supervision to be carried out by the developer's arboricultural consultant, including details of the frequency of supervisory visits and procedure for notifying the Local Planning Authority of the findings of the supervisory visits; and
- Details of all other activities, which have implications for trees on or adjacent to the site.

REASON: In order that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied that the trees to be retained on and adjacent to the site will not be damaged during the construction works and to ensure that as far as possible the work is carried out in accordance with current best practice and section 197 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

17. No development shall commence on site until a scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the details of which shall include:

- (a) indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land;
- (b) details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development;
- (c) all species, planting sizes and planting densities, spread of all trees and hedgerows within or overhanging the site, in relation to the proposed buildings, roads, and other works;
- (d) finished levels and contours;
- (e) means of enclosure;
- (f) car park layouts;
- (g) other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;
- (h) hard surfacing materials;
- (i) minor artefacts and structures (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse and other storage units, signs, lighting etc);
- (j) proposed and existing functional services above and below ground (e.g. drainage, power, communications, cables, pipelines etc indicating lines, manholes, supports etc);
- (k) retained historic landscape features and proposed restoration, where relevant.
- (j) details for the intended treatment of all boundaries of the site

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development and the protection of existing important landscape features.

18. No development shall take place until a detailed scheme for the treatment of the retained concrete air shaft structures on the site shall have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include proposed measures for future security of the structures and their surrounds and measures to aid their visual integration into the developed site, once complete. The scheme shall also include a timetable for the completion of such works required by this planning condition.

Development shall be completed in accordance with the details and scheme so agreed as part of this planning condition.

REASON: So as to ensure the suitable treatment, safety and aesthetic integration of the retained concrete air shaft structures.

19. No development shall take place on the site, other than site clearance and demolition, until full details of all site access arrangements (including all accesses to the frontage of the site from the A4) have been completed in accordance with details, which shall have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority beforehand.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety

20. No development shall take place on the site until full details of the estate roads, footways, footpaths, verges, junctions, street lighting, sewers, drains, retaining walls, service routes, surface water outfall, vehicle overhang margins, embankments, visibility splays, accesses, carriageway gradients, drive gradients, car parking and street furniture, including the timetable for provision of such works, have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be first occupied until the estate roads, footways, footpaths, verges, junctions, street lighting, sewers, drains, retaining walls, service routes, surface water outfall, vehicle overhang margins, embankments, visibility splays, accesses, carriageway gradients, drive gradients, car parking and street furniture have all been constructed and laid out in accordance with the approved details, unless an alternative timetable is agreed in the approved details.

REASON: To ensure that the roads are laid out and constructed in a satisfactory manner.

21. Development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the conclusions and recommendations set out within the submitted Ecological Assessment Report (RSK, 2012).

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure development does not pose an unacceptable impact upon ecological interests.

**Informative:**

Attention is drawn to the Legal Agreement relating to this development or land which has been made pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 33 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 or other enabling powers and the Deed of Variation dated 21/06/2011.

**Note**



1. That officers discuss the issues raised at the meeting in relation to pedestrians crossing the A-road outside the site and methods of reducing traffic speeds approaching the site so that vehicles could enter and exit the site safely
2. That time limits for completing the Section 106 agreement be included in agreement

(Duration of meeting: 12.51 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Stuart Figini, of Democratic & Members' Services, direct line 01225 718376, e-mail [stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

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## WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

### REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>13 February 2013</b>		
<b>Application Number</b>	<b>W/12/01818/WCM</b>		
<b>Site Address</b>	<b>Wessex Water Sewage Treatment Station, Trowle, Trowbridge</b>		
<b>Proposal</b>	<b>The construction of a new sludge digestion facility</b>		
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Wessex Water</b>		
<b>Town/Parish Council</b>	<b>Trowbridge</b>		
<b>Grid Ref</b>	<b>384833 158710</b>		
<b>Type of application</b>	<b>County Matter</b>		
<b>Case Officer</b>	<b>Mark Henderson</b>	<b>01225 718598</b>	<b>mark.henderson@wiltshire.gov.uk</b>

#### Reason for the application being considered by Committee

Councillor Helen Osborn has requested that this application be determined by the Committee for the following reasons:

- Scale of development
- Visual impact on surrounding area
- Design – bulk, height, general appearance
- Environmental/highway impact

#### 1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above application and to recommend that planning permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions.

#### 2. Report Summary

The main issues in the consideration of this application are as follows:

- Principle of the development
- Landscape/Visual impact
- Green Belt
- Lighting
- Odour
- Traffic movements

### **3. Site Description**

The application site is located within the western part of the operational land at Trowbridge Sewage Treatment Works, near Trowle, north of Trowbridge. The site is accessed via a 400m private road leading from the A363 Bradford Road and which is also used to provide access to the adjoining agricultural land.

The site itself is screened by trees and hedgerows along the western and northern boundaries of the site. To the immediate north east of the application site are sewage treatment ponds and the main sewage treatment works are to the south and east. Beyond the northern and western boundaries of the Sewage Treatment Works the land is in agricultural use.

The nearest residential properties are approximately 325 metres to the south of the site at Langford Road. There are also properties along the Bradford Road at approximately 425 metres distance from the site.

The application site covers an area of 661 square metres, on land that has historically been used for sludge treatment. The land was, until very recently, the site of sludge digestion plant (built under permission ref 82/00840/FUL), which has recently been demolished.

The application site is situated at approximately 45 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), 5 metres lower than the crest of a natural rise in the topography at Trowle between the River Biss at Trowbridge and the River Avon at Bradford on Avon (both at approximately 25 metres AOD).

### **4. Relevant Planning History**

82/00840/FUL – Sludge digestion plant and sludge consolidation tanks.

W/08/09007/WCM – Construction of one motor kiosk to improve efficiency of current sludge treatment process

W/09/09001/WCM – Installation of new control kiosk to monitor and operate a combined heat and power plant.

### **5. Proposal**

The proposal is for the construction of an anaerobic digestion facility incorporating:

- Two anaerobic digester tanks each at 23.6 metres in height and 15.6 metres in diameter. The tanks will be of Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP), a non-reflective grey in colour with access stairs and hand railings of galvanised steel;
- A boiler house – 10.1 metres x 8.1 metres and 4.7 metres in height, with a stack at 14.5 metres in height. Steel frame and corrugated aluminium cladding construction, grey in colour;
- Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Plant – 12.2 metres x 3 metres and 5.4 metres in height with a stack at 10 metres in height. Steel container, grey in colour;
- A generator enclosure. Steel container, grey in colour; and
- 5 control kiosks – one kiosk measuring 9 metres x 4 metres at 5 metres in height and the other four kiosks each measuring 7 metres x 3 metres at 3.5 metres in height. Each of GRP, grey in colour.

The proposed development is to be located in an area in the western part of the Sewage Treatment Works.

Demolition of redundant plant and machinery and the construction of other elements of the development required for the operation of the sludge digestion facility will be carried out under permitted development rights set out in part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended), and are therefore not a consideration for the purposes of this report. The applicant has however included reference to these elements of the proposal in their supporting documents for information.

## 6. Planning Policy

### Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy DPD 2006 – 2026

Policy WCS3: Preferred Locations of Waste Management Facility by Type and the Provision of Flexibility

Policy WCS5: The Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Hierarchy and Sustainable Waste Management

### Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Development Control Policies DPD

Policy WDC1: Key Criteria for Ensuring Sustainable Waste Management Development

Policy WDC7: Conserving Landscape Character

Policy WDC12: Renewable Energy

## 7. Consultations

Local Member, Councillor Helen Osborne - The height and size of the new installation will seriously impact upon the local environment and will clearly be visible from houses on Bradford Road. It appears from the plans that it will be far higher and larger than existing plant and buildings. Is there no way that the visual impact can be mitigated?

Trowbridge Town Council - Whilst recognising the need to increase capacity at the sewage treatment works, considers the height of the proposed tanks will be so much greater than the current development on the site as to be potentially visually intrusive in the landscape. The Town Council would prefer to see an alternative proposal which is not as tall, even if it requires an extension to the area of development.

Highways - no objection to the application

Environmental Health - no objection to the application

Environment Agency - no objection to the application

Strategic Landscape Team – The photomontages are very helpful in giving an indication of the scale of the proposed tanks and their setting.

View A – Views from the west are varied mainly thanks to the large oak that masks the entrance of the site. View point A is the most difficult to mitigate as the tanks rise above the existing tree line and are visible through gaps or lower portions of planting (although this may diminish in the summer months). Planting a copse to the north west corner of the field south of the main entrance (from Trowle Road) would in time help to lessen the impact of this view, particularly if long term species such as oak are included. Hedgerow with standards along the entrance road linking up with the existing large oak tree is another consideration. Both options would provide the development with a net gain in biodiversity.

View B – this montage demonstrates how effectively the tanks fade against a grey winter sky. However, looking at the height of the existing trees in this view it is clear that the visual impact of the tanks could be mitigated by additional tree planting of large long term species within the hedge/boundary.

View C - I think this view from the rear of Francis Street has the least significant visual impact because

- the tanks are just breaking the skyline
- the vegetation buffer between the houses and the site is sufficiently wide and with a varied structure to provide an effective visual screen in the summer but allowing glimpsed views in the winter
- there is the potential for foreground distractions drawing the eye away from the tanks e.g. washing drying, children playing etc.

The other point that we discussed was the potential impact of Chalara fraxinea ash dieback disease. The applicant should be mindful that if a lot of the existing screen planting is made up of ash species there is the potential that the site could become visually exposed at some future point this requires consideration during the development of a landscape mitigation plan for the above proposals.

## **8. Publicity**

The application was advertised by site notice, press advert and neighbour consultation.

7 responses have been received by members of the public, all objecting to the proposal. The objections are summarised as follows:

- The Anaerobic Digestion vessels will stand considerably higher than the tree line, higher than shown in the photomontages, and would be visually intrusive on the countryside. The vessels should be sunk at least 12 metres into the ground.
- The increase in traffic would be unacceptable on an already busy road.
- The transport of more sewage through the town and past schools would cause added danger to the environment.
- The proposal would result an increase in odour and flies experienced by local residents and an increase in airborne bacteria.

## **9. Planning Considerations**

### Principle of the development

Wessex Water has a statutory obligation to provide for an appropriate level of sewage treatment capacity to meet the needs of the population it serves. Trowbridge and the surrounding area has grown considerably in the past 30 years since the original sludge treatment plant was constructed. The Town of Trowbridge itself has been identified in the Submission draft Wiltshire Core Strategy as one of the principal settlements in Wiltshire for further growth. As such, Trowbridge is planned by Core Policy 29 to accommodate an additional 5680 new homes and 25 hectares of new employment development to 2026.

Sewage sludge is a bi-product of sewage waste water treatment and, if not properly managed, is well known to produce strong and offensive odours. It is estimated that the Trowbridge sewage treatment site will be required to treat up to 10,950 tonnes of digested sludge per year to 2025, an increase of 4,450 tonnes per annum (the equivalent of 12 extra tonnes per day) compared to current levels. The site is also currently used to treat sludge from other smaller scale local sewage treatment sites where it is not feasible to accommodate sludge digestion plant at the scale required for efficient sludge treatment.

The existing sludge treatment infrastructure at the Trowbridge Works would not have the capacity to deal with the anticipated future growth of the Town and surrounds. There is therefore an established need for a new replacement sludge digestion facility at Trowbridge with the capacity to accommodate this growth.

Policy WCS3 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy DPD identifies the preferred locations for waste management development by waste management type. The Policy steers waste water treatment (i.e. sewage treatment) development to existing waste water treatment facilities, with other brown field or green field land being used where “*the development cannot feasibly be carried out within the capacity of existing waste water treatment sites and cannot feasibly be carried out at other waste management sites.*” The proposal will allow for the continued treatment of sludge at the Trowbridge Sewage Treatment site. Locating such developments at existing sewage treatment sites is preferential option to the alternative of developing a new sewage treatment site.

The sludge treated at Trowbridge Works is currently dosed with lime and removed from the site to be disposed of at a landfill facility. National Policy and the development plan for the area encourage development that is considered sustainable, including sustainable waste management. Policy WCS5 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy seeks to drive waste up the waste hierarchy to reduce Wiltshire’s reliance on landfill by encouraging recovery, recycling and reuse. The proposed development will offer a more advanced system by using anaerobic digestion vessels to speed up the sludge decomposition process. The digested sludge will produce methane which will be harnessed to generate heat and electricity. The heat generated will be fed back into the anaerobic digestion process and the electricity produced will meet the energy needs of the works, with surplus energy being fed into the national grid. The end product from the digested sludge will be used as an agricultural fertiliser.

The proposal will result in driving waste up the waste hierarchy by reducing the volume of waste currently going to landfill. This clearly represents an environmental benefit and is supported by policy WCS5 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Core Strategy.

In addition, Policy WDC12 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Development Control Policies DPD requires all waste management proposals to demonstrate that they have regard to “*the need to maximise the opportunities for renewable energy production both for electricity and heat generation*”. The proposal would effectively maximise the renewable energy opportunities for sludge treatment and is therefore fully compliant with the development plan in this respect.

#### Landscape and visual impact

The application site is located approximately 30 metres within the northwestern boundary of the Works and in the context of the existing installations is of limited scale at 661m<sup>2</sup>. The residential, industrial and retail units in Trowbridge provide a backdrop to the sewage treatment works when viewed from properties nearest to the proposal along Bradford Road and at Langford Road. The Works have been operational for several decades and as such has become part of the landscape of the local area and forms the baseline against which the proposal should be assessed.

The application site does fall within designated green belt land (discussed later in this report) but is situated within the footprint of an existing sewage treatment works, on the fringes of Trowbridge and is otherwise not considered to be within a particularly sensitive area in landscape terms. Nonetheless, there is still potential for adverse visual impact to be associated with development at the Works.

Policy WDC7 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Development Control Policies DPD requires applicants to undertake assessments of the impact of their proposals on the landscape, appropriate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.

The applicant has undertaken a Landscape Appraisal of the proposal, supplemented with photomontages showing the how the development would appear from viewing points at Bradford Road and Langford Road. The appraisal concludes that there would not be an unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape. Based on the fact that the application site is located within an established sewage treatment works and is not in a sensitive landscape area, as outlined above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in landscape terms.

Turning to the potential visual impact of the proposal, Policy WDC1 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Development Control Policies DPD requires proposals to be assessed against the “*extent to which the impact of any structures and buildings is minimised in terms of the appropriate use of scale and form, informed by the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment*”.

A substantial proportion of the application site is screened by an established mix of mature conifer and deciduous trees. The trees are estimated to range from 10 metres to 15 metres in height and provide a reasonably effective screen for the existing built development within the Works. Breaks in the natural screening created by the existing site entrance and small lower level gaps in the vegetation allows obscured views into the site from the site access road at Trowle and views into a small area of the site from the rear of properties nearest to the site along the Bradford Road. Currently only a telecommunications mast located near to the entrance of the site can be seen above the tree line.

A large proportion of the proposal, the combined heat and power plant, boiler house, diesel generator, belt thickeners and associated kiosks, would sit below the tree line, and below the height of the tallest existing structure on the site. These elements of the proposed development will not be visible from the Bradford Road side of the works other than obscured views via the site entrance as per the existing development. In places along Langford Road there are already clear views into a large part of the works and so these elements of the proposal will be visible from that location, particularly during the winter months.

However, the most prominent features of the new development are the two anaerobic digestion (AD) vessels each at 15 metres in width and 23.6 metres in height. The AD vessels will be located approximately 40 metres in from the boundary of the Works, near to the site entrance at Trowle, off the A363 Bradford Road. A proportion of the AD vessels would stand proud of the tree line, although this must be considered within the context of a likely viewing distance of 300-400 metres from the site (e.g the residences at Bradford Road and Langford Road), where the effect would be reduced. Both Trowbridge Town Council and the local Councillor, Helen Osborne, have objected to the proposal based on concerns regarding the visual impact of the proposals. Local residents have also objected to the height of the AD vessels and the impact this would have on their visual amenity.

The photomontages provided by the applicant are considered to offer an accurate representation of how the proposed development would appear once constructed. These show that the proposal would be visible from properties at Langford Road and Bradford Road. However, when taking into account of the distance of the sensitive receptors from the proposed AD vessels, the non-reflective grey colouring to be used and when considered against the existing urban context of Langford Road and the part rural context with an urban backdrop of Bradford Road, the visual impact that the development would have is not considered to be significant. Due to the partially rural setting of properties along the eastern side of Bradford Road near to the site entrance at Trowle and the open views across the fields to the boundary of the Works from the rear of these properties, the visual impact is however likely to be marginally more noticeable.

In response to the concerns raised by the Town Council and Councillor Osborn, Officers have explored with the applicant options to reduce or mitigate the visual impact of the proposed AD vessels. The first option considered the possibility of relocating the AD vessels and associated plant to another area within the Trowbridge Sewage Treatment Works. Whilst the overall footprint of the sewage treatment works is significantly larger than application site, the entire site is either in use for sewage treatment, or has been historically used for landfill associated with sewage treatment, rendering the land unsuitable for further or additional built development. The application site therefore reflects the only realistic option for locating the sludge treatment facility within the existing sewage works.

As a consequence of the above constraints, the limitations of the available land for the sludge treatment facility also means that increasing the width of the vessels to compensate for a reduction in height is not possible. The site boundary is flanked by oil and gas pipelines which run around



the outside of the sewage treatment works, effectively precluding extending the application site area beyond the site boundary, into the adjacent agricultural land.

The applicant was also asked to consider excavating an area to allow a proportion of the vessels to be sunk into the ground. Had this option been feasible the applicant would have pursued it, as it could potentially have brought the proposal below the 15 metre height threshold for permitted development at sewage treatment facilities. However, the nature of sewage treatment is such that to do so would present a risk of a build up of noxious gases in the sunken areas, resulting in a health and safety hazard for staff at the site. This option has consequently been dismissed for that reason.

The only remaining option to mitigate for the visual impact of the proposal is to provide enhancements to the existing screening at the boundary of the Works. The applicant has subsequently proposed landscape planting plans for land along the boundary of the Works, near to the Trowle entrance to the site. The trees, once established will not reach the full height of the proposed AD vessels, but the additional planting will fill existing gaps in vegetation, softening the effect of the proposal below the top of the tree line. This, in addition to the use of a non-reflective grey colouring to allow the visible proportion of the development to blend into the sky, will minimise the visual impact of the proposal.

Whilst it is acknowledged that there will still remain an adverse visual impact resulting from the proposal, this must be weighed against the need to increase sludge treatment capacity sufficient to meet the future waste water treatment needs of Trowbridge and surrounds. It has been demonstrated that alternative options, in terms of location and scale, for the sludge digestion plant would not be feasible. The impact of the proposal will be minimised through use of an appropriate non-reflective colour and by providing additional planting to enhance existing screening of the development site. Additionally, the backdrop of urban development associated with Trowbridge, including large prominent industrial units clearly visible to the south of the site, means that the proposed development is not entirely out of keeping with what would be expected at the periphery of a large town.

It is considered that at a distance of more than 300 metres from the nearest sensitive receptors, the visual impact associated with the proposal is not sufficient to outweigh the need for the development or the sustainability benefits of the proposal.

#### Green belt

The application site is located within the Western Wiltshire Green Belt. Paragraph 3 of Planning Policy Statement 10 provides a list of the key objectives for planning for waste development, one of which is to *“protect green belts but recognise the particular locational needs of some types of waste management facilities when defining detailed green belt boundaries and, in determining planning applications, that these locational needs, together with the wider environmental and economic benefits of sustainable waste management, are material considerations that should be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be given planning permission”*

Notwithstanding the above, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear position on development in the green belt. Paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that, *“A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt.”*, subject to a list of exceptions. The exceptions includes *“limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.”*

The proposed development is fully contained within the boundary of the Works and represents a continuation of the use of the land for sludge treatment on the site of redundant sludge treatment plant.

It is considered that the proposal would not adversely impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development and therefore meets the exception criteria of paragraph 89.

#### Lighting

Low level bulk head lights will be above the entrances to the control kiosks at a height of approximately 4 metres. No other lighting for the development is being proposed. This would result in no change to the previously permitted lighting associated with the former sludge treatment facility. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has not raised any adverse comments in relation to this aspect of the proposal.

#### Odour

With regard to odour, a number of local residents have raised concerns about a possible increase in odour associated with an increase in sludge treatment and the delivery of sludge to the site and removal of digested sludge from the site. The proposal is on an existing sewage treatment works; a use that will produce a certain amount of odour regardless of whether this proposal is granted planning permission. The tankers used to transport sewage sludge are sealed units.

The proposal is for an upgrade of an existing sludge treatment facility which will result in either no change or an improvement to the existing odour situation. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has considered the odour implications of the proposal and has not raised any adverse comments.

#### Traffic Movements

Local residents have also raised concerns about the impact of traffic on the local highway. The applicant has estimated that the proposal, when operating at maximum capacity, would result in an maximum additional 10 loads per day using the site access/egress off of Bradford Road at Trowle. This estimate includes trips associated with sludge being brought to the site and the removal of additional digested sludge, compared to current levels of site traffic. The access track to the site is approximately 400 metres in length and includes two passing points. The additional traffic would arrive at the site from both the north and south of Trowbridge.

The Council's Highways Officer has raised no objection to the proposal. The existing access arrangements and small increase in traffic are judged to be acceptable.

### **10. Recommendation:**

Planning Permission be granted for the following reason:

The new sludge digestion facility will provide increased sludge treatment capacity essential to meet the regulatory obligations of the sewage treatment statutory undertaker. The facility will provide additional sustainability benefits in terms of diverting waste from landfill and harnessing a source of renewable energy. The essential need for the development and the sustainability benefits are considered sufficient to outweigh any visual impact of the proposal.

Subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date on which this permission is granted. Written notification of the date of commencement shall be sent to the Waste Planning Authority within 7 days of such commencement.

Reason: To comply with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- D9542/7000 revision E dated 17/09/2012 – location plan
- D9542/7002 revision G dated 24/09/2012 – Proposed Block Site Plan scale 1:500
- D9542/7003 revision H dated 24/09/2012 – Proposed Block Site Plan scale 1:200
- D9542/7005 revision F dated 24/09/2012 – Proposed Digester Tanks Plan and Elevations
- D9542/7006 revision F dated 24/09/2012 – CHP Plant Plan & Elevations
- D9542/7008 revision E dated 24/09/2012 – MCC Kiosk (No. 1,2,3 &4) Plan and Elevations
- D9542/7013 revision G dated 24/09/2012 – Proposed site sections
- D9542/7014 revision F dated 19/09/2012 – Proposed Thickener Kiosk No.5 Plan and Elevations
- D9542/7015 revision G dated 24/09/2012 - Proposed Boiler House Plan & Elevations
- D9542/7016 revision A dated 13/09/2012 – Proposed Diesel Generator Plan & Elevations
- Trowbridge Sewage Treatment Works Environmental Supporting Statement prepared by Wessex Water, dated August 2012
- Trowbridge STW APD (D9542 – Proposed Landscape Planting)

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning

3. All soft landscaping comprised in the approved details of landscaping, as shown in drawing ref Trowbridge STW APD (D9542 – Proposed Landscape Planting), shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the commencement of the development. All shrubs, trees and hedge planting shall be maintained free from weeds and shall be protected from damage by vermin and stock. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development and the protection of existing important landscape features.

POLICY: WDC6 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Development Control Policies DPD

4. The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be finished in non-reflective BS 4800 00 A 05 – Goose grey and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of protecting visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>Appendix 1: Site Location Plan</b> <b>Appendix 2: Site layout plan</b>
<b>Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:</b>	Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management National Planning Policy Framework









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