

**ROUNDWAY/STERT: PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF BANKING 3 METRES HIGH AT
MONUMENT HILL WASTE RECYCLING SITE, ANDOVER ROAD, DEVIZES FOR
WILTSHIRE WASTE RECYCLING LTD
(Application No. K.50834)**

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the above application and to recommend that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

Background

2. There has been a history of tipping activity on land around Tinkersfield Farm, Grounds Farm and Monument Hill dating back to the late 1940s.
3. During the 1970s, Wiltshire County Council operated an extensive landfill at Tinkfield which accepted waste from the Kennet District. This activity continued up until 1976 when the site was transferred to W.E. Chivers and Sons Ltd. who obtained a waste management licence (K.76.0001) to continue the tipping operation.
4. In 1985 the licence was transferred to Mr. Grist, the current owner of the site who is also the applicant. The site has continued with a valid licence until the present day.
5. From 1994 onwards the nature of the operation carried out on the site has changed to that of a recycling centre, with permission granted by Kennet District Council for recycling and composting uses. Some tipping is still carried out with the benefit of a Certificate of Lawful Use for Development (CLUED) granted in March 1994.

The Site

6. The Monument Hill Waste Recycling Site is located approximately 1 km east of Devizes on the A342 Andover Road and 0.5 km north west of Stert. The application site area amounts to some 1,545 square metres of relatively flat land, some of which has previously been tipped. It lies to the west of the operational site and runs from the A342 in the north down to an existing bank to the south west of the site. A location plan is attached at **Appendix 1** and a site plan at **Appendix 2**.
7. The nearest residential properties to the application site are Grounds Farm, Turnpike Lodge and Turnpike Barn Farm to the west of the site some 80-100 metres away.

The Application

8. The application seeks planning permission to construct a bank (or bund) approximately three metres high along the western edge of the operational site at Monument Hill to provide a visual and noise screen for residential properties to the west of the site (see **Appendix 3**).

9. It is proposed to construct the bund from soils brought to the recycling site in skips and graded to form the required material. The bund would be constructed on previously made up ground.
10. The area of the proposed bund is 1,545 square metres and would be planted with indigenous tree species, shrubs and hedgerow planting which would afford additional screening over time.
11. There would be no additional vehicle movements associated with the construction of the bund as the material used to construct it is either already on site or would be screened from tipped material brought onto the site in skips as part of the main operation of the site.

Planning Policy

12. Policies 1 and 6 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Local Plan – Modifications Draft September 2004 are considered relevant to this application. Policy 1 deals with the precautionary principle and environmental protection and Policy 6 with the environmental impacts of waste related sites. These policies are set out in full in **Appendix 4**.

Consultations

13. **Kennet District Council** – No objections in principle. The Landscape and Countryside Officer comments that bunding should be kept outside the tree canopies and bank gradient should be reduced to ensure successful planting.
14. **Roundway Parish Council** – No objections.
15. **Stert Parish Council** – No objections.
16. **Environment Agency** – No objections.
17. **English Nature** – No objections.
18. **Countryside Section (Ecology)** – No objections subject to vegetation on site being trimmed ahead of works to allow any resident reptiles to move away from the area of bund construction.
19. **Countryside Section (Landscape)** – No objections.
20. **Highways Development Control** – No objections.
21. **Publicity** – The application has been publicised in the local press and by site notice. A letter of objection has been received from a local resident. His main concerns are as follows:-
 - (i) Potential impact of the proposal on his self-catering holiday accommodation.
 - (ii) Possible noise from lorries and plant.
 - (iii) The impact of constructing a bund in close proximity to the existing trees on the site.

- (iv) Possible drainage issues raised by constructing a bund.

A copy of the letter is available for inspection in the **Members' Room**.

Planning Considerations

22. The application should be judged on its merits and in the light of relevant Development Plan Policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
23. The proposal as submitted is not primarily for the management of waste at the site but is concerned with engineering an amenity bund to reduce the environmental impact associated with the operations lawfully carried out on the site. The proposal, therefore, accords with the precautionary principle in that it is carrying out engineering best practice to achieve a reduction in environmental impacts.
24. Policy 6 of the Waste Local Plan Modifications Draft September 2004 considers a range of potential environmental impacts which arise from waste related proposals. With regard to the proposal to construct a 3 metre high bund along the western edge of the site, the main impacts are considered to be as follows:-
- Visual/Landscape Impact
 - Ecological Impact

Visual /Landscape Impact

25. Although it is proposed to construct a bund of 3 metres in height, it is not considered that this will have an adverse impact on the surrounding area. The bund would screen the recycling and composting site from the nearby residential properties and, once planted and vegetated, would be indistinguishable from the surrounding landscape. The existing site already has bunding around a large part of it and it is considered that additional bunding would complement it.
26. In the letter of objection submitted by a local resident, concern was raised regarding the potential impact of constructing a bund in close proximity to existing mature trees which run along the edge of the site.
27. This matter was considered at a site meeting undertaken by the Council's Landscape Officer with the applicant and the planning case officer. It was agreed that a minimum stand-off of 10 metres should be provided which would be fenced to ensure no traffic or storage of materials in the area. This would be required by condition on any planning permission granted.

Ecological Impact

28. With regard to the potential impact on ecology, it has been mentioned earlier that the proposed siting of the constructed bund would be partially on former made up land of a previous landfill site. The County's Ecologist has looked at the site and is of the view that it supports a habitat of limited ecological value but that the potential exists to actually improve the net ecological benefit as a result of carrying out the bunding. It is suggested that the vegetation should be strimmed ahead of the works to encourage any residential reptiles to move away from the area of bund construction. Details of the proposed tree, shrub and hedgerow species to be planted on the bund would be required to be submitted and approved as a requirement of a condition attached to any planning permission granted.

Conclusions

29. The site which is the subject of the application was previously an old County Council landfill site which has been used in recent years for storage in connection with a recycling and composting operation. The proposal is to construct a 3 metre high bund running north-west to south-east along the western boundary of the site to afford a visual and noise screen for residential properties located to the west of the site.
30. Although the creation of a 3 metre bund would alter the landform within the site visually, it would fit well into the surrounding landscape of mature high hedges and trees in the local vicinity. It would be planted with trees, shrubs and hedgerows to provide both a visual and a noise screen.
31. In ecological terms, the site as it exists at present is of limited value. However, the opportunity exists for improvements to be carried out to improve the ecological potential of the area through additional vegetation.
32. One person has objected to the proposal on the grounds of the impact on his self-catering holiday accommodation and noise from the recycling site. With regard to the holiday accommodation, this was granted quite recently and so the recycling and composting uses had been established for a number of years prior to the holiday accommodation being used. A visual screening bund would provide privacy for the holiday occupants.
33. In the same manner, noise would be reduced once the bund is constructed and planted and so the concerns raised are unsubstantiated.
34. Overall, it is considered that the construction of the bund can only improve the visual and reduce the noise impacts of the site and there are therefore no overriding planning reasons which would justify a refusal of planning permission.

Recommendation

35. That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:-
 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the submitted Planning Application Number K.50834 and the bund constructed in accordance with the details set out in the drawing entitled "Typical Sketch Cross Section through proposed bund showing preferred angle of slope" dated 1st November, 2004.
 3. Prior to the commencement of the construction of the bund on the site, a fence shall be erected along the western boundary to provide for a 10 metre stand-off distance between the existing mature trees (measured from the trunks) and the base of the proposed bund.
 4. Prior to the commencement of development on the site, a landscape scheme shall be submitted to the Waste Planning Authority for approval. Such scheme shall contain details of species of trees, shrubs and hedgerow planting. The approved scheme shall be carried out in the first available planting season following the construction of the bund.

5. The proposed hours of operation in constructing the bund shall be from 7.00 – 17.00 Monday to Friday and 7.00 – 13.00 Saturdays. There shall be no bund construction on Saturday afternoons, Sundays or Bank Holidays.
6. Prior to the commencement of development on site, details of the proposed means of drainage relating to the bund shall be submitted to the Waste Planning Authority for approval.
7. Prior to the commencement of works on site the area of the proposed bund all vegetation shall be strimmed.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Consultation Replies and Correspondence