

**PROPOSED WASTE TRANSFER STATION AT UNIT 13, THE BISON  
ESTATE AT IVER, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.**

**APPLICATION SBD/8212/00**

**APPLICANT: MR BUTLER**

**BUCKS STREET ATLAS PAGE 207 D3**

**To: Development Control Committee**

**Date: 5 December 2000**

**Author: Head of Spatial Planning**

**A PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1 To determine the above application.

**B PROPOSED ACTION**

2 **The Sub Committee is invited to REFUSE application no. SBD/8212/00 for the operation of a waste transfer station at unit 13, the Bison Estate at Iver, Buckinghamshire, for the following reasons:**

- i The proposal is contrary to Policy GB3 of the County Structure Plan, Policy WLP15 of the Adopted Waste Local Plan and Policy GB1 of the Adopted South Bucks District Local Plan. A waste transfer station is not listed as an exception to Green Belt policy and therefore the proposal is inappropriate development for such a location. Furthermore the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the development is required to meet a proven need which cannot be satisfactorily met elsewhere.**
- ii The proposal is contrary to Policy WLP4 of the Adopted Waste Local Plan for Buckinghamshire because it does not satisfy any of the listed locational criteria for waste transfer facilities. Furthermore no compelling reasons have been demonstrated by the applicant as to why an exception should be made to this policy.**
- iii The applicant has failed to provide detailed drawings in support of the application contrary to Policy WLP21 of the Adopted Waste Local Plan for Buckinghamshire. Also, the lack of detailed information provided means that the application is contrary to the provisions of Policy WLP 20 of the Adopted Waste Local Plan. Accordingly, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposal would not give rise to an unacceptable impact in terms of noise, dust and odour to the users of the nearby Grand Union Canal.**

- iv **The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposal would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on the landscape of the Colne Valley Park, which Policy UF2 of the Structure Plan, and Policy L6 of the Adopted South Bucks District Local Plan, seeks to maintain and enhance.**

## **C RESOURCES APPRAISAL**

- 3 Not relevant.

## **D SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4 The application was received on 21 August 2000. Consultations were sent out on 24 August 2000.

### **Application**

- 5 The application seeks temporary consent for a seven-year period for a waste transfer station to be sited on an existing vacant concrete yard that forms part of the Bison's Industrial Estate in Iver.
- 6 The transfer station would have a weighbridge control office housed in a portacabin. A concrete sorting bay would be provided with "pushing walls" constructed of steel stanchions and sleepers. Litter nets would be provided on the northern and eastern boundary of the sorting bay. The 0.7-hectare site would be secured by a post and wire fence and steel security gates.
- 7 In terms of plant and machinery, the site would have a mobile screener, a telescopic grab loader, a mini crusher and two lorries to remove the stock from site. The applicant states that machinery would be provided with equipment to suppress noise and dust such as mist spray booms and conveyor guards on the crusher and screener. A sealed drainage system would be provided with interceptor tank to collect all liquids, which would then be pumped out and taken off site for disposal. No permanent buildings are proposed at this stage.
- 8 The site will handle category A and B wastes, which are inert and industrial and commercial wastes. It is stated that the throughput would be in the region of 100 tonnes per day. An estimated 100 HGV movements would be generated per day. Incoming material would be handled in the sorting bay with all extracted soils and hardcore screened on site for sale and re-use elsewhere. Metal, timber and other extraneous material would be removed from the waste stream and stored in bins for disposal at licensed sites. The applicant states that 75% of incoming material would be recycled with the remaining 25% sent to landfill. The maximum height of stockpiles would be 4 metres.
- 9 In support of the application, the applicant states that a waste transfer station is justified for the following reasons:
- The site is visually enclosed within the site and as such does not form a perceivable role as Green Belt;

- The site has a history of commercial uses and activities including as a construction base for the Heathrow Rail link;
- There is a proven need for the facility because the only long term facility that exists in the district of South Bucks is situated at Wapseys Wood, Gerrards Cross;
- Failure to relocate the operation would result in some 9 jobs being lost and some 180,000 tonnes of material per annum being processed elsewhere;
- Some 30,000 tonnes of reject product would be moved from the Bison Factory to the proposed site, crushed to their specification and returned to them for re-use in production. The applicant states that this equates to 15,000 loads per annum which would not go out onto the highway system, as has previously been the case. Also, there is insufficient room within the estate to undertake this activity.

10 For your information, I have attached the applicant's letter dated 13 November 2000 as Appendix A.

### **Planning Policy**

- 11 The majority of the Bison Industrial Estate is identified as an Industrial Area (Policy E3) by the Proposals Map of the South Bucks District Local Plan (Adopted March 1999). It is also excluded from the Green Belt. Policy E3 states that consent will be given for general industrial (B2) uses proposals within the industrial area. The applicant used to crush reject concrete products made by Bison in the south eastern corner of the factory site but this operation has passed to a new contractor.
- 12 In contrast, the new waste transfer facility is proposed on a small part of the Bison Estate that is not included within this E3 industrial designation and is not excluded from the Green Belt. Structure Plan Policy GB3 contains a general presumption against development within the Green Belt subject to a number of listed exceptions of which waste transfer is not one. A similar policy is contained within policy GB1 of the South Bucks District Local Plan (SBDLP). Policy WLP15 of the Waste Local Plan (WLP) states that permission will not be given for waste management facilities in the Green Belt.
- 13 Also, the site is situated within the Colne Valley Park. Structure Plan Policy UF2 states that local planning authorities will seek to maintain and enhance the Park's landscape and resist urbanisation and to safeguard existing areas of countryside from inappropriate development. A similar policy L6 forms part of the SBDLP.
- 14 Policy WLP4 states that the County Council will, in general, encourage the establishment of transfer facilities to meet local needs and increase the recycling of inert waste in either locations where land is allocated for industrial purposes in local plans or existing waste management facilities (excluding landraising/landfill sites).

- 15 Other policies to be considered in the Waste Local Plan are WLP16 (planning constraints) and WLP18 (Proximity Principle). Policies from the South Bucks District Local Plan are attached as Appendix B.

### **View of the District Council**

- 16 The view of South Bucks District Council will be reported.

### **Consultations**

- 17 The local member for Iver objects on the grounds that the scheme is inappropriate in the Green Belt and would give rise to an unacceptable number of HGV movements on the already busy local highway network to the detriment of the amenity of local residents.
- 18 Iver Parish Council states that it has grave concerns with the continuous breaches of Green Belt. It maintains that past industrial uses should not be allowed to continue. Also the Parish Council advise that another site has been granted at Colnbrook.
- 19 The Highway's Development Control Engineer has no objection subject to a condition making the use of the site personal to the applicant. The Rights of Way officer has no objection provided that the schemes does not extend beyond the boundary to the site shown on the application plan. He comments that the canal towpath is a well used path which is not recorded as a public right of way but may well have public rights.
- 20 British Waterways strongly object to the proposal on the basis that it is an unsuitable use so close to the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal. It is stated that the scheme will have an adverse effect on the amenity of this recreation facility and may lead to pollution, dust, noise and disturbance to the users of the canal and the towpath.

### **Representations**

- 21 I have received two emailed letters from local residents raising the following grounds of objection:
- i The proposal is contrary to the development plan. The whole Bison Estate does not fit into the local environment and the proposed development would exacerbate an already unsatisfactory situation within the Colne Valley Park and the Green Belt.
  - ii The site is unsuitable for such an activity and will generate noise, dust and wind blown litter.
  - iii The local highway network is inadequate to cope with the additional HGV traffic generated by the scheme. It is stated that the use should be made of the canal and railway to move bulk transfer of waste.
  - iv The activity would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of local residents and their health. It is stated that industrial noise from the Bison Estate is already a problem for residents in Richings Park.

## Assessment

- 22 The proposed waste transfer site is located on a small remnant of the Bison Industrial Estate situated to the east of the main factory on land that is not identified for industrial use and is not excluded from the Green Belt.
- 23 Therefore, the proposal is contrary to the County Structure Plan, the South Bucks Local Plan and the Adopted Waste Local Plan. Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts) makes it clear that it is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. (Paragraph 3.2 of PPG)
- 24 The applicant has canvassed a number of reasons as to why he considers that very special circumstances apply. Some of these reasons are relevant in my opinion and some are not. The applicant states that very special circumstances should apply because he argues that the land has been used previously for commercial purposes and that he contends that there is a lack of harm to the Green Belt. While it is not clear whether there is a lawful use for the site or not, PPG2 makes it clear that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. (Para 3.2) Furthermore, although Green Belts often contain areas of attractive landscape, PPG2 makes it clear that the quality of the landscape is not relevant to the inclusion of the of land within a Green Belt or to its continued protection of the land. (Para 1.7 PPG) Therefore, in my view, these are not sound reasons for suggesting that very special circumstances should apply.
- 25 Equally, I believe little weight should be given to the applicant's contention that a refusal would result in job losses because another contractor is now operating the applicant's former site within the Bison factory site and crushing the reject concrete products under contract. This leaves the issue of "need" and recycling.
- 26 In terms of need, in addition to the consented inert recycling operation at Wapseys Wood landfill site, I am aware of at least twelve other licensed waste transfer facilities within a 10 mile radius of the site. A letter from the Environment Agency to this effect is attached as Appendix C. The applicant has seen the list and contends that as many seven of these are not open to skip waste and therefore should be discounted. Even if this were the case, it still leaves at least five or six waste transfer/recycling facilities in the locality. Therefore, it seems to me that there are alternative sites available.
- 27 Finally, with regard to the Green Belt arguments, the applicant contends that he will be in a position to increase the recycling element for Bison to a standard where more of their reject concrete can be crushed, screened and re-used in concrete production. According to the applicant's latest figures, approximately 30,000 tonnes of crushed concrete each year could be returned each year for production amounting to a saving of nearly 30 HGV movements per week.
- 28 Given the need to encourage recycling, I consider that such a link could in principle amount to a very special circumstance to warrant making an exception to Green Belt subject to the following two caveats:

- the applicant demonstrating that the screening operation could not be accommodated within the Bison factory, say alongside the existing crushing operation; and
- a planning condition (that fulfils all the tests for conditions set out in Circular 11/95) that could be imposed to ensure that a durable link between the Bison factory and the recycling site is maintained.

29 Certainly, based upon the information before me at this time, I take the view that neither of these points has been proven.

30 I turn now to the level of information provided. The regulations governing County Matters permit only full applications to be submitted for minerals and waste matters. The reason is that considerably more detailed information is required to consider the environmental impacts of minerals and waste development compared with other types of development. In this instance, the applicant submitted a hand drawn plan with the application in August of this year with a letter stating that a full detailed plan would follow. The application was registered in good faith with the precaution that formal notice was served (under Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning Application Regulations 1988) on the applicant indicating that the application would not be properly considered until this detailed information is provided. No scaled drawing has been submitted.

31 A busy waste transfer operation such as this will undoubtedly generate a level of noise and dust and, possibly, some limited visual impact from stockpiles and infrastructure. However, given the lack of information, it is difficult to assess the degree of impact that the site might have on the character and amenity of the Colne Valley Park or for that matter the users of the nearby Grand Union Canal. I note, however, that with regard to the canal, that British Waterways has objected.

32 With respect to traffic, the applicant estimates that 100 movements per day would be generated by the development. However, the basis for this estimate is unclear. Therefore, while it is acknowledged that the Highways Development Control Engineer has not objected, I am reluctant to form any firm views at this stage.

33 In conclusion, I consider that this application should be refused. The applicant has failed to demonstrate a proven need for the development sufficient to outweigh Green Belt policy. Also, the applicant has failed to provide the detailed information that the County Council stated that it needed to consider the application properly.

34 Moreover, I am not confident that the applicant will be able to overcome these grounds in an expedient manner. Therefore, I can see no advantage in delaying the determination of this application any longer because the applicant is entitled to submit a further application free of charge provided that it is lodged within twelve months of the date of the previous refusal. However, I would welcome the Committee's views on this point.

**E BACKGROUND PAPERS**

County Structure Plan  
Adopted Waste Local Plan  
Adopted South Bucks Local Plan

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