

Development Control Committee: 23rd January 2017

Application Number: CM/24/16

Title: Retention of existing composting building by variation of conditions 4, 5, 9 and 10 attached to consent W/98/6313 at Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works

Site Location: Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works, Marlow Road, Little Marlow, SL7 3SB

Applicant: Thames Water Utilities Limited

Author: Head of Planning & Environment

Contact Officer: Gemma Crossley dcplanning@buckscc.gov.uk

Contact Number: 01296 382092

Electoral divisions affected: Little Marlow

Local Members: Cllr David Watson

Summary Recommendation(s):

The Development Control Committee is invited to **APPROVE** application number CM/24/16 for the proposed retention of existing composting building by variation of conditions 4, 5, 9 and 10 attached to consent W/98/6313 at Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works, subject to amended and additional conditions as set out at Appendix A below.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Compliance with Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

In determining this planning application, the County Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking resolutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application by liaising with committees, respondents and applicant/agent and discussing changes to the proposal where considered appropriate or necessary. In this particular case, an extension of time for determination of the application was agreed with the applicant to allow them the opportunity to consider additional odour control measures. This approach has been taken positively and proactively in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

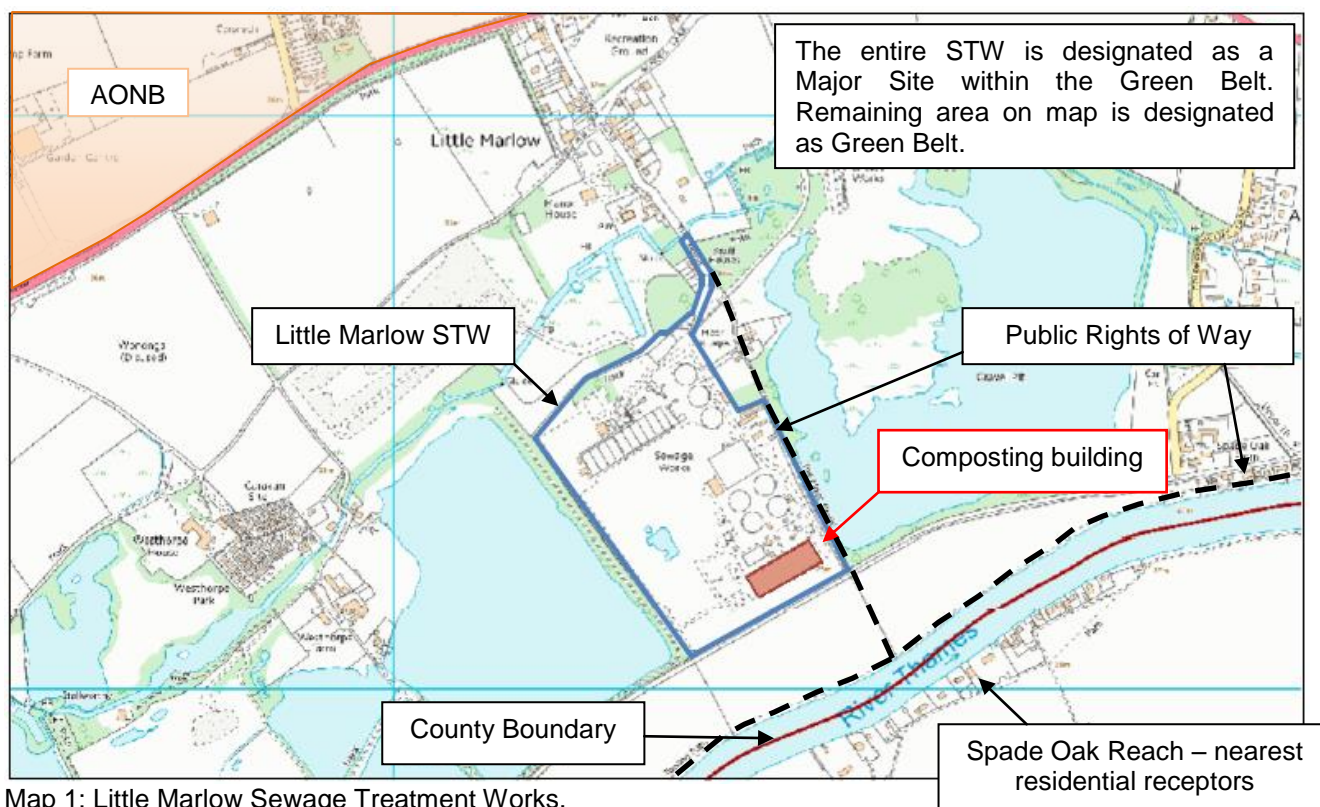
Introduction

1. Application CM/24/16 was submitted by Savills on behalf of Thames Water Utilities Limited, being received on 8th June 2016. The application was registered and sent out for consultation on 23rd June 2016. It was advertised as a departure by newspaper advert, site notice and neighbour notification. The thirteen-week determination deadline was the 7th September 2016, although this has been extended to the 30th January 2017 with the agreement of the applicant.
2. The applicant submitted a Screening Request to Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) on 22nd April 2016, reference CX/05/16, for the proposed development to be screened in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011). BCC adopted a Screening Opinion on 19th May 2016 concluding that the development is not EIA development and therefore that an Environmental Statement is not required.

Site Description

3. Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works (STW) is located to the south of Little Marlow village and to the north of the River Thames, 1km west of Marlow and the A404. The STW measures approximately 14 hectares and is accessed via a haul road from the Marlow Road.
4. The village of Little Marlow lies to the north, restored mineral extraction sites lie to the east and west and a strip of agricultural land lies to the south between the STW and the River Thames.
5. The composting building itself is located within the southeastern corner of the STW site, close to the River Thames, which marks the County Boundary with Berkshire.
6. The entire STW lies within the metropolitan Green Belt, although it is designated as a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt within the Wycombe District Local Plan. (WDLP). The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies circa 650m to the north, on the other side of the Marlow Road. The STW is located 450m to the northwest of Cock Marsh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is designated for its species-rich calcareous grassland. The STW lies within Flood Zones 2 (1 in 1000 chance of flooding each year) and 3 (1 in 100 chance of flooding), with the composting building being located within Flood Zone 3, and within Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 (Total Catchment).

7. A public footpath runs northwest-southeast alongside the eastern boundary of the STW, which connects with the Thames Path, running southwest-northeast along the northern bank of the River Thames.
8. The nearest residential properties to the composting building itself are located less than 300m to the south on Spade Oak Reach.



Map 1: Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works.

Proposed Development

9. CM/24/16 is a retrospective Section 73 planning application which seeks permission for the variation of conditions 4, 5, 9 and 10 attached to consent W/98/6313 dated September 1999 for “*the construction of a building to house the composting process and a sludge press house at Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works*”. The effect of the application would be to allow the retention of an existing building originally permitted and previously used for the composting of sewage sludge. The building is now being used for the storage of sewage sludge prior to transportation off site for further treatment, therefore this application seeks to regularise the current development.
10. Little Marlow STW biologically treats sewage / waste water, leaving a liquid fraction, which is discharged to the river (under an Environmental Licence) and a solid fraction (sludge), which was historically composted for use as a soil improver/fertiliser. The composting process took place inside the composting building, as permitted under Consent W/98/6313. On 19th May 2015 this composting process at Little Marlow STW ceased and the licence surrendered. Since this time, the sludge has been stored inside the composting building to minimise odour, prior to being transported in covered vehicles to Oxford STW for treatment in a Thermal Hydrolysis Plant (THP).
11. The sewage sludge is removed from the Little Marlow STW 5 days per week (Monday to Friday). As the STW operates 24/7, there is a requirement to store the untreated sewage sludge until such time as it can be loaded and transported off site. The existing composting building, with its Odour Control Unit (OCU), provides an enclosed

area within which this material can be stored and any potential odour impacts can be contained and minimised.

12. The building has a capacity of approximately 7000 tonnes and whilst the intention would be to remove the sludge as soon as possible, this is dependent upon the receiving outlets. Currently at least 3 lorries (20t HGV's) of sludge are removed per day. There are currently no proposed changes to the building.

13. Condition 4 states:

“The premises shall be used solely for composting sewage sludge. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority, no more than 15,000 tonnes of sewage sludge shall be composted in the building hereby permitted in any calendar year. Details regarding the half yearly throughput and the proportion of sewage sludge to other waste shall be submitted in writing to the County Planning Authority no later than two weeks following 1 January and 1 July each year.”

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what is permitted. The control of odour problem cause by the existing composting operation was considered to be a very special circumstance to outweigh the planning harm which would be caused by the erection of the composting building.”

14. The applicant suggests condition 4 be amended to *“The premises shall be used only in association with the Little Marlow Sewage Treatment process and for the storage of sewage sludge.”*

15. Condition 5 states:

“Should the composting building hereby permitted cease to be used for the composting of sewage sludge for a period of 12 months, the site shall be restored to grassland through the demolition of the composting building and associated plant. The material resulting from these demolition works shall be removed from the land. The restoration of the land shall be completed within 2 years of the cessation of the permitted use of the development.”

Reason: In accordance with para. 15 (iii) of Circular 02/98 “Prevention of Dereliction”.

16. The applicant states that this condition is no longer necessary and should therefore be deleted. Alternatively, the applicant suggests it be amended as follows:

“Should the building hereby permitted cease to be used in association with the Little Marlow Sewage Treatment process and for the storage of sewage sludge for a period of 12 months, the site shall be restored to grassland through the demolition of the building and associated plant. The material resulting from these demolition works shall be removed from the land. The restoration of the land shall be completed within 2 years of the cessation of the permitted use of the building.”

17. Condition 9 states:

“Mixing of compost windrows shall only be undertaken in the covered building when the bio filtration is working to specified design parameters which shall have been agreed in accordance with the requirements of condition 8 above.”

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of local residents and users of the public rights of way.”

18. The applicant suggests that this condition be amended to “*The use of the building shall be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition 8 above.*”

19. Condition 10 states:

“No handling, deposit, processing, storage or transfer of unprocessed composting material shall take place on site outside the confines of the building approved for this purpose and no loose unprocessed compostable material shall be deposited or stored on the adjacent open areas. This definition does not include the maturation of the composted material which will take place outside the building.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of local residents and users of the public rights of way.”

20. As composting is no longer taking place, the applicant proposes that this condition be removed.

21. The application is accompanied by a Noise Technical Note undertaken by Atkins dated January 2016. The Technical Note reports the findings of a noise assessment carried out in August 2014. The calculated noise levels associated with the existing composting operation and odour control unit are below or equal to the measures background sound level at the nearest sensitive receptors at Spade Oak Reach (to the south of the site). Whilst the odour control unit is switched off at night in response to complaints regarding night time noise levels, it starts up at 6am and therefore overlaps with night time hours of 2300-0700. The calculated noise levels between 0600 and 0700, as set out within the Technical Note, is 41dB, which is 5dB higher than the measured background night time sound level of 36dB. As set out within the report (based on guidance within British Standard BS4142:2014), this is likely to be an indication of an adverse impact. The Technical Note goes on to say that the lack of recent complaints regarding noise indicates that noise impacts during normal operations at this time are low.

22. An Odour Impact Assessment (OIA) by Odournet dated March 2016 was also submitted with the application. The OIA compared the odour situation when the composting operation was carried out, to the current situation where the building is used for sludge storage. The OIA sets out the main changes in odour terms, since the cessation of the composting operation:

- Odours from activities involving outdoor maturation of compost have been eliminated.
- Odours from transfer of compost outside of the composting building have been eliminated.
- The nature and magnitude of odours generated within the compost building which are either extracted to the odour control or released as fugitive emissions are likely to have changed since the composting bays are no longer used for active composting of sludge cake and the storage of odorous material is now limited to the sludge reception area of the building.
- A new odour source associated with the loading of raw sludge into trailers for export which occurs outside of the compost building has been introduced.

23. The OIA concludes that the site odour emissions have reduced following the cessation of composting, stating that “*although odour is generated from the storage of sludge within this building, the survey indicates that the magnitude of emissions from sludge storage are lower than those that arise from the active composting process.*”
24. The applicant states that at current sewage sludge production rates Thames Water are moving 2,000 tonnes of sludge off site per month. It is transported in 20 tonne vehicles and therefore this results in 4-5 lorry loads (8-10 movements) per day on average. This is less than the existing restriction of 20 movements per day as set out in condition 13. Whilst the applicant requests that condition 4, which restricts the tonnage of composting material to 15,000 tonnes per annum, be amended and the tonnage restriction be removed, the proposal does not result in an increase in vehicle movements above that set out in condition 13.

Relevant Planning History

25. The composting building was permitted under consent W/98/6313 dated 8th September 1999.

Planning Policy

26. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, which should be considered as a whole, unless material considerations indicate otherwise (the Town and Country Planning (General Development Order) 1990). The Development Plan in this case consists of the following, with the most relevant policies to the proposed development listed below:

Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP), June 2006

Policy 28: Amenity; and
Policy 29: Buffer Zones.

Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (MWCS), November 2012

Policy CS/LP1: The Overarching Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
Policy CS17: Sewage Treatments Works; and
Policy CS20: Green Belt.

Wycombe District Council Local Plan (WDCLP), adopted January 2004

Policy G8: Details Design Guidance and Local Amenity;
Policy G15: Noise;
Policy GB2: Green Belt; and
Policy GB9: Major Developed Sites within the Green Belt.

Wycombe District Council Core Strategy (WDCS), adopted 7 July 2008

Policy CS1: Overarching Principle – Sustainable Development
CS7: Rural Settlements and the Rural Areas
CS9: Green Belt
CS18: Waste/Natural Resources and Pollution

Policy DM1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
Policy DM11: Green Networks and Infrastructure;
Policy DM15: Protection and Enhancement of River and Stream Corridors; and
Policy DM17: Planning for Flood Risk Management.

27. Also to be taken into consideration are the National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012 (NPPF), Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) and the National Planning Policy for Waste, October 2014 (NPPW).

CONSULTATIONS

Local Member

28. Cllr David Watson is yet to respond.

Wycombe District Council Planning Officer

29. Wycombe District Council raise no objection to the proposal.

Town\Parish Council

30. Little Marlow Parish Council has no objection provided the lorries are loaded inside to prevent unpleasant odours.

Wycombe District Council Environmental Health Officer

31. The Environmental Health Officer (EHO) does not wish to raise objection and would not wish to see the building removed, but suggests that this application is a missed opportunity, in that an improved solution could be provided to further reduce odour emissions and therefore the likelihood of annoyance caused to local residents. The EHO response further states:

“Whilst it is accepted that odour emissions may decrease as per the Odournet report 10/3/2016 it is clear from the modelled results in the report that odour levels will remain above the criterion at residential premises that they consider the threshold of annoyance. This also does not take account of high intensity intermittent emissions that may occur during trailer loading. It must be remembered that we have a history of complaint under baseline conditions so this application should be aiming at continuous improvement over and above the removal of the composting operation and to allow the change of conditions as proposed without properly considering improvement is not acceptable. I believe that consideration should be given to undertaking loading operations in the composting building. I realise this cannot take place using the present arrangements of loading lorries from above due to the height restrictions of the building but all other mechanisms of loading should be explored before taking the easier option of external loading with no odour control.

I think that all opportunities should be considered as part of this application to reduce odour emissions. For instance it may be feasible to move other processes into the composting building now that space may permit and taking account of the odour control provided to this building, I am thinking in particular of the final stage of sludge generation such as the dewatering process.”

Environment Agency

32. The initial response from the EA sought further clarification, stating:

“Item 2.11 of the Savills Planning Statement states that the compost building has a capacity of approximately 7000t, depending on the 'stackability' of the sludge product. This might suggest that the sewage sludge could be stockpiled to a depth greater than that used for the previous use (composting). This may result in liquid effluent draining from the bottom of the stack. We need reassurance that the building (designed for composting) has containment and drainage facilities that are adequate for this change of use and that liquids will not be discharged to ground.”

33. The Environment Agency further responded, as follows:

“...having reviewed the Savills letter dated 3rd November 2016 and the engineering drawing for drainage from the 'composting building' and since liquids from the sludge stored in the building will pass back to the sewage works for treatment, they have no objections to the proposal.”

Natural England

34. Natural England responded to say that the application “*does not, upon scrutiny, cause any issues for Natural England that would require further comment on this matter.*”

Flood Management Team

35. The Drainage Officer responded to say that as the existing building is to be retained there should be no change to flood risk and the building will continue to utilise the existing drainage system. The Officer referred to the Surface Water Map and confirms that the buildings risk of flooding is very low. The Officer advised that due to the location within Flood Zone 2 & 3 the applicant should take a robust approach to ensuring that the proposed development is appropriately resilient and resistant to flooding.

Highways Development Management

36. The Highways Officer does not deem the application detrimental to the safety and convenience of the highway network and therefore, subject to condition 13 attached to Consent W/98/6313 being upheld, does not object on highways matters.

Full consultee responses are available at:

<http://publicaccess.buckscc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=consulteeComments&keyVal=O8VBL1DS03F00>

Representations

37. Representations have been received in response to the application, which include 6 no. objecting to the proposed development for the following reasons:

- Impact upon the amenity of local residents and users of the River Thames.
- Odour impact on local residents, river, wildlife and sports centre, particularly when the doors are left open.
- Discharges into the river affecting amenity of the river, wildlife areas and the sports centres. Polluting the river.

- Noise impacts associated with the fans / odour control system for the building. These should be relocated north of the building. One objector considers the filtration system should be removed.
- The building should be removed as it is a blight on the Thames Valley.
- Not an appropriate place for these operations.
- Green Belt / AONB
- Visual Effect – The landscaping required by planning consent is dying and should be replanted / replaced. The building is a blot on the landscape and should be removed or effectively screened with mature trees or a green bank. Impact upon the Thames Valley and Winters Hill National Trust site.

DISCUSSION

38. Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless there are other material considerations. The relevant policies of the development plan are set out above and discussed further below. The main issues for consideration in relation to application CM/24/16 for the variation of conditions 4, 5, 9 and 10 attached to consent W/98/6313 for the composting building at Little Marlow STW are sustainable development, the need for the ongoing use of the building, the protection of environmental assets, flood risk, potential amenity impacts and Green Belt.

Sustainable Development

39. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is also adopted within the MWCS, WDCCS and DSA. Policy CS1 of the WDCCS refers to the need to “*contribute positively to the social, environmental and economic improvements that comprise sustainable development.*” It goes on to say that development should achieve high quality environments for the present and protect the quality of life of future generations. Policy DM1 of the DSA states that applications that accord with the Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
40. This proposal is for the continued use of a building within the Green Belt, which supports a much needed process at an existing STW. The use of the building for the storage of sewage sludge would result in lower environmental impacts than if the sludge were stored outside of the building. The proposal meets the social, economic and environmental strands of sustainable development and therefore, in accordance with the NPPF, permission should be granted without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Need

41. Policy CS17 of the MWCS states that permission will be granted for new STW’s or extensions to existing STW’s where development is needed for Buckinghamshire arisings and the proposal complies with other relevant policies. With new housing proposed across the County and specifically within the Marlow area, there will obviously be an ongoing, and likely increased need, for the services provided by the Little Marlow STW. The storage of sludge within the site prior to being transported off site for further treatment, will therefore need to continue. The composting building provides a sensible location for the storage of this material, albeit, it has not been designed specifically for this purpose and therefore it is recommended that the applicant give this careful consideration and ensure that any future improvements to the site, also make provision for improvements to this building, to provide a more

appropriately designed storage facility ensuring odour is kept to an absolute minimum and that storage space and drainage are also carefully considered.

42. The previous composting of sludge and the current transportation of sludge for treatment in a Thermal Hydrolysis Plant (THP), meet the requirements of Policy CS18 of the WDCS by "*using waste as a resource*".

Protection of Environmental Assets

43. Policy CS7 of the WDCS seeks to protect and enhance environmental assets by "*strictly controlling development in the open countryside*". Environmental assets include the AONB and the "*conservation and enhancement of water courses*" including their settings (Policy CS17 of the WDCS).
44. The AONB is 600m to the north of the STW and 1km from the composting building and therefore it is not considered that the continued use of this building would result in any detriment to the AONB.
45. Policy DM11 of the DSA states that the Green Infrastructure Network will be conserved and enhanced. The land to the south, east and west of the Little Marlow STW is shown as proposed Green Infrastructure Network within the DSA (see figure 11 on page 70).
46. Policy DM15 of the DSA seeks to protect the functions, setting, biodiversity, landscape and recreational value of river and stream corridors.
47. The River Thames is situated just 200m from the composting building, which is the subject of this planning application. The principle of the erection of the building is not for consideration here, however, according to conditions attached to the current consent the cessation of the composting operation should result in the removal of this building and therefore the issue for consideration is the retention of the building for an alternative use than that originally intended. The retention of the building will not result in any further detriment to the river corridor, however any intensification of its use or further amenity impacts, could be considered contrary to policy DM15. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that any continued or alternative use of this building does not impact upon the functions, setting, biodiversity, landscape and recreational value of the river.

Flood Risk

48. Policy CS18 of the WDCS requires that developments "*avoid increasing ...risks of or from flooding*".
49. Policy DM17 of the DSA requires that development within Flood Risk Zones 2 or 3 demonstrate that there are no other sites available in a lower flood risk zone.
50. The majority of the STW site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 of the River Thames, with the composting building itself being located with Flood Zone 3, which has the highest risk of flooding (1 in 100 chance each year). The building itself is already permitted and constructed. Application CM/24/16 seeks to vary a number of conditions in order to retain the building and seek permission to change the use of the building from the composting of sewage sludge, to storage of sewage sludge. The proposed amendments would not result in any further built development and would therefore not result in any further risk of or from flooding.

51. The building is not proposed to be relocated, but in any case, it could not be relocated within the STW to a position less at risk of flooding due to the limited space available and the flood zones covering the majority of the site.
52. Having reviewed the drainage design for the building, the EA do not have any objections to the application. It is not considered that there is any further risk to flooding of the site or off site, or to water quality issues as a result of the storage of sludge within the compost building and the loading of vehicles either inside or outside of the building.

Potential Amenity Impacts

53. Policy G8 of the WDCLP sets out the requirements in terms of design and local amenity, stating that "*development will be required to safeguard the future amenity of residents and other occupants*" in particular with regard to visual intrusion, traffic noise and disturbance, and parking and manoeuvring of vehicles.
54. Policy G15 of the WDCLP requires that proposals which have an adverse effect on amenities of residents by way of noise or vibration will not be permitted. It goes on to say that conditions may be attached to permission to restrict such effects.
55. Several objections have been received by local residents regarding existing visual, noise and odour impacts. In terms of visual impacts, the composting building is large in scale and located close to a public right of way, the River Thames and across the river from residential properties. A belt of mature trees lies along the southern boundary of the STW, between the composting building and the River Thames. Whilst, one objector stated that these trees are diseased, they do provide some visual screening and therefore reduce potential visual impacts. Taking into account the context of the STW, the existing screening and that this proposal would not result in additional built development, it is not considered that the retention of the composting building will result in further visual impact. Having said that, the applicant is advised to review the existing boundary planting, to replace or replant any dying or diseased trees and enhance the screen planting where possible.
56. Objections have also been received with regard to the noise levels of the fans which are part of the existing odour control unit. As set out above, the application is accompanied by a Noise Technical Note undertaken by Atkins dated January 2016. The Technical Note reports the findings of a noise assessment carried out in August 2014. The calculated noise levels associated with the existing composting operation and odour control unit are below or equal to the measures background sound level at the nearest sensitive receptors at Spade Oak Reach (to the south of the site). Whilst the odour control unit is switched off at night in response to complaints regarding night time noise levels, it starts up at 6am and therefore overlaps with night time hours of 2300-0700. The calculated noise levels between 0600 and 0700, as set out within the Technical Note, is 41dB, which is 5dB higher than the measured background night time sound level of 36dB, which is likely to be an indication of an adverse impact. The British Standard (BS4142:2014) sets out that a 10dB increase is more likely to be an indication of a significant adverse impact, while 5dB is likely to be an indication of an adverse impact. The Technical Note goes on to say that the lack of recent complaints regarding noise indicates that noise impacts during normal operations at this time are low. Whilst these conclusions seem slightly at odds with the results of the assessment, the proposed variation of conditions and alternative use for the composting building would not result in increased noise levels, and may actually reduce noise levels associated with the loading of vehicles if this operation can take place within the composting building. Further, the EHO has not raised concern regarding noise levels

and therefore it is not considered that there is sufficient reason to refuse permission on this basis.

57. As set out above, objections have also been received regarding adverse odour impacts. An Odour Impact Assessment (OIA) by Odournet dated March 2016 was also submitted with the application. The OIA compared the odour situation when the composting operation was carried out, to the current situation where the building is used for sludge storage. The OIA sets out the main changes in odour terms, since the cessation of the composting operation:
- Odours from activities involving outdoor maturation of compost have been eliminated.
 - Odours from transfer of compost outside of the composting building have been eliminated.
 - The nature and magnitude of odours generated within the compost building which are either extracted to the odour control or released as fugitive emissions are likely to have changed since the composting bays are no longer used for active composting of sludge cake and the storage of odorous material is now limited to the sludge reception area of the building.
 - A new odour source associated with the loading of raw sludge into trailers for export which occurs outside of the compost building has been introduced.
58. The OIA concludes that the site odour emissions have reduced following the cessation of composting, stating that *“although odour is generated from the storage of sludge within this building, the survey indicates that the magnitude of emissions from sludge storage are lower than those that arise from the active composting process.”*
59. Whilst the results of the Odournet OIA are promising, as per the EHO response, opportunities for reducing odour emissions further should be investigated. In particular, the opportunity for loading of sludge inside the building has been discussed with the applicant. This will require a low level loading shovel, which the applicant is considering. It is also recommended that, if permission is granted, a condition is included which requires the submission and approval of an Odour Management Plan (OMP), to include measures for the loading of vehicles inside of the building. The applicant has carried out an investigation for undertaking the loading of sludge lorries within the building, which has concluded that alterations can be made within the building to allow the safe loading of lorries. It is predicted that these alterations will take 6-8 months to implement.
60. Should Members vote against the Officer’s recommendation and refuse application CM/24/16, the composting building will need to be removed in accordance with condition 5 attached to consent W/98/6313. This will result in the sewage sludge being stored in the open will it awaits transportation off site. This would produce greater levels of odour nuisance than the current operation. It could also result in greater noise levels as it is likely that the building itself provides some noise mitigation being located between the loading area and the nearest residential receptors.

Green Belt

61. The proposal is not considered to conflict with the purposes of designation and therefore it is considered to comply with Policy CS20 of the MWCS regarding the Green Belt.

62. Policy GB2: Green Belt of the WDCLP, states that development will not be permitted in the Green Belt, unless there are very special circumstances, for a number of listed exceptions, which includes Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works as it is designated as a major developed site within the Green Belt.
63. Policy GB9: Major Developed Site within the Green Belt, states that planning permission for infilling or redevelopment will only be granted in listed circumstances, which includes “1. A. *Has no greater impact on the openness and rural amenity of the Green Belt than the existing development*” and goes on to say that it should be put forward in the context of comprehensive, long-term plans for the site as a whole.
64. Policy CS9 of the WDCS states that the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development as defined by Government Policy.
65. The proposed continued or reuse of this building is considered not to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt, according to paragraph 90 of the NPPF. Further, the STW is designated as a Major Development Site within the Green Belt in the WDCLP and therefore, as long as there is no greater impact on the openness and rural amenity, that permission can be granted.

CONCLUSION

66. Application CM/24/16 seeks planning permission for the variation of conditions 4, 5, 9 and 10 attached to consent W/98/6313 for “*the construction of a building to house the composting process and a sludge press house at Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works*” to allow the retention and continued use of the composting building for the storage of sewage sludge.
67. The use of the building for this operation would provide greater mitigation against potential noise and odour impacts than if the operation were to be carried out in the open. Subject to the loading of vehicles inside the building and the conditions as listed in Appendix A below, it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable.
68. The development is considered to meet the requirements of the relevant policies of the Development Plan and is considered to accord with the Development Plan as a whole and therefore it is recommended that planning application CM/24/16 be approved, subject to condition as set out in Appendix A below.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application CM/24/16

Consent W/98/6313

Consultee responses and representations received between July and November 2016

Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP), June 2006

Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (MWCS), November 2012

Wycombe District Council Local Plan (WDCLP), January 2004

Wycombe District Council Core Strategy (WDCS), July 2008

Wycombe District Council Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (DSA), July 2013

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), March 2012

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

National Planning Policy for Waste, October 2014 (NPPW)

APPENDIX A: Recommended Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the details submitted with the application dated 6th June 2016 and the following plans and particulars:

61 WB/A1/02027 /IN.B Site Setting Out Plan
61 WB/A1/OIOOO/IN.G Ground Floor Plan and Cross Section
61/WB/AIOIOOI/1N.F Roof Plan
61 WB/A1/OIO02/1N Rev J Elevations

unless otherwise agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority .

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what is permitted and because you have so agreed in writing

2. The premises shall be used only in association with the Little Marlow Sewage Treatment process and for the storage of sewage sludge. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority, no more than 7,000 tonnes of sewage sludge shall be stored in the building hereby permitted at any given time. Details regarding the annual or half yearly throughput and the proportion of sewage sludge to other waste shall be submitted in writing to the County Planning Authority within 14 days of a written request.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what is permitted. The control of the odour problem caused by the existing composting operation was considered to be a very special circumstance to outweigh the planning harm which would be caused by the erection of the composting building

Prevention of Dereliction in a Sensitive Location

3. Should the building hereby permitted cease to be used in association with the Little Marlow Sewage Treatment process and for the storage of sewage sludge for a period of 12 months, the site shall be restored to grassland through the demolition of the building and associated plant. The material resulting from these demolition works shall be removed from the land. The restoration of the land shall be completed within 2 years of the cessation of the permitted use of the development.

Reason: In accordance with para. 15 (iii) of Circular 02/98 "Prevention of Dereliction".

Environmental Protection

4. No spoil or materials shall be deposited or stored on that part of the site lying within the area of land liable to flood.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding due to impedance of flood flows and reduction of flood storage capacity.

5. Within three months of the date of this permission, a detailed scheme of compensatory flood storage works and ongoing maintenance thereof shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall then be implemented and thereafter maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding due to impedance of flood flows and reduction of flood storage capacity.

6. The loading of sewage sludge from the building into outgoing vehicles shall only be undertaken inside the covered building, with closed doors and when the bio filtration is working to specified ventilation/filtration system design parameters, which shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority within three months of the date of this permission and thereafter be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of local residents and users of the public rights of way.

7. No handling, deposit, processing, storage or transfer of unprocessed sewage sludge material shall take place on site outside the confines of the building hereby approved and no loose unprocessed sewage sludge material shall be deposited or stored on the adjacent open areas.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of local residents and users of the public rights of way.

8. Within three months of the date of this permission, an Odour Mitigation and Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The Plan shall include measures for the reduction of odour from the use of the building, including but not limited to the loading of HGV's inside the building and details of monitoring and review. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved plan for the duration of the development.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of local residents and users of the public rights of way.

9. No development shall take place other than in accordance with the detailed scheme of drainage and disposal of surface water scheme, drawing reference 61WB/A1/02030/IN/A. The drainage scheme shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure adequate drainage of the site.

10. Unless with the prior written agreement of the County Planning Authority, heavy goods vehicle movements associated with the export of sewage sludge shall not exceed 20 movements per day.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents and in the interests of highway safety.

External Appearance and Landscaping

11. There shall be no externally visible internal lighting in connection with the use of the building.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the development is not detrimental to the character of the locality.

12. In the event of external lighting being required in connection with the use of the buildings, a detailed scheme of lighting shall be submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority. No other scheme of external lighting shall be provided other in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the development is not detrimental to the character of the locality.

13. No development shall take place other than in accordance with the existing colour scheme, including dark green cladding. Any additional external features or changes to the external appearance of the building shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the development is not detrimental to the character of the locality.

14. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the Planting Proposals Plan drawing no. 627/01. C which includes the arrangements for subsequent maintenance.

Within five years of planting, any trees, shrubs, or other plants that die, become diseased, are removed or damaged, shall be replaced in the first available planting season with others of a similar size and species in accordance with the details of the approved scheme (unless the County Planning Authority gives written approval to any variation).

Reason: The provision and maintenance of a significant degree of landscaping is considered essential in the interests of visual amenity.