

Meeting: Planning and Development Committee **Agenda Item:**

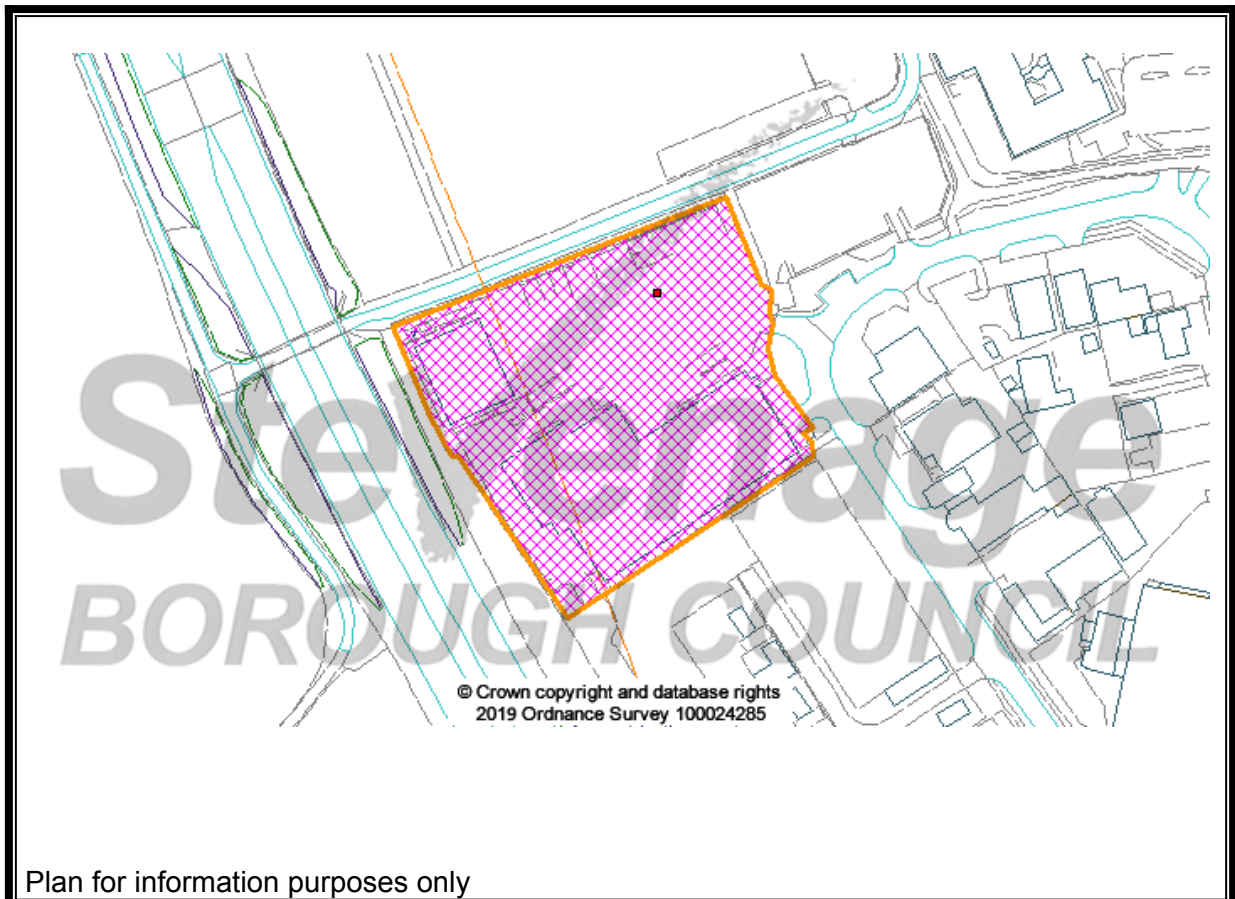
Date: 6 January 2021

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Application No:	20/00692/FP
Location:	Stevenage Borough Council Depot, Cavendish Road, Stevenage.
Proposal:	Reconfiguration of existing waste transfer bays including replacement transfer bay enclosures and the creation of 1 no. additional transfer bay with associated enclosure.
Drawing Nos.:	133A-C-008 100; 133A-C-008 120; 133A-C-008 130; 133A-C-008 140; 133A-C-008 150.
Applicant:	Stevenage Borough Council
Date Valid:	18 November 2020
Recommendation:	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site is located on the northern side of Cavendish Road which forms part of the Gunnels Wood Road Employment Area. The site itself comprises the Borough Council Waste Depot which includes the two-storey, utilitarian office building with maintenance and cleansing area, a "Dutch barn" style storage building along with the waste transfer bays with timber enclosures. The eastern end of the site consists of the staff car park which serves the waste depot. The site is generally enclosed by 2.5m high palisade fencing. The northern boundary of the site which borders Meadway consists of mature conifer trees with palisade fencing up to 3m in height.
- 1.2 To the north of the site lies the Meadway Playing Fields and to the west is the A1(M) Motorway which beyond this is undulating agricultural land. To the south of the site is an electricity substation and gas engines which serve the electricity grid. To the south-east is the wider employment area of Cavendish Road and Crompton Road. This area comprises a mixture industrial, commercial and warehouses premises.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 Under planning application 05/00103/FP permission was sought for the change of use of the site to Council Depot involving provision of facilities for domestic waste collections and recycling, environmental cleansing, ground and building maintenance with associated parking; refurbishment of and roof alterations to an existing part two storey and part single storey building and erection of a "Dutch barn" for covered storage. This application was Granted Planning Permission in May 2005.
- 2.2 Prior Approval application 08/00138/PATELE sought permission for the installation of 2no. antennae, and 2no. dishes, 1no. metre cabinet, on an existing 15m telecommunications mast. This application was granted as Prior Approval was Not Required in March 2008.

3. THE CURRENT APPLICATION

- 3.1 This application seeks permission for the reconfiguration of the existing waste transfer bay enclosures. This would incorporate the removal of the existing timber enclosures and to erect 4m high concrete enclosure with a steel support system. There would also be the creation of a new transfer bay. These bays would manage timber, glass, wood chippings, hard core, Mechanical sweepings, General Waste WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Recycling) fridge scraps and General Waste Bulk. Each bay would be approximately 6.2m in width apart from the General Waste Bulk which would be 15m in width. The transfer bays with associated concrete wall enclosures would also generally by 11m in depth.
- 3.2 This application has been referred to the Planning and Development Committee for its decision. This is because the applicant and landowner is Stevenage Borough Council.

4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 This planning application has been publicised by way of a site notice and neighbouring properties have been notified about the application via a letter. No comments or representations have been received.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Hertfordshire County Council Highways

- 5.1.1 It has been considered that the proposed development is of a small scale and does not consequently have a significant impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highway.

5.2 Hertfordshire County Council Minerals and Waste

- 5.2.1 It is understood that the existing bays (made from timber and steel) will be replaced with concrete bays and one additional bay is to be created. Whilst this is a relatively minor development and will not generate significant quantities of waste, the Waste Planning Authority would like to ask that the waste which arises from the reconfiguration, be appropriately managed and recycled in line with the requirements of Waste Local Plan Policy 12: Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition. Policy 12 requires that new and existing development, including waste management facilities, must contribute to resource efficiency, the reduction of carbon emissions and the effective management of climate risk.

5.3 Environment Agency

- 5.3.1 It is advised that the site disposes of the waste produced from the construction of the development is sent to an appropriately permitted facility under the relevant duty of care notes. Waste classification and assessment should be carried out to determine the correct European Waste Catalogue (EWC) code.

5.4 Council's Environmental Health Section

- 5.4.1 There are no comments from the Environmental Health Commercial team.

5.5 Thames Water

- 5.5.1 No comment.

5.6 Affinity Water

- 5.6.1 No comment.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 Background to the development plan

- 6.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that the decision on the planning application should be in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Stevenage the statutory development plan comprises:

- The Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan 2011-2031
- Hertfordshire Waste Development Framework 2012 and Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2012 and 2014); and
- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016 (adopted 2007).

6.2 Central Government Advice

- 6.2.1 A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019. This largely reordered the policy substance of the earlier 2012 version of the NPPF, albeit with some revisions to policy. The policies in the Local Plan are in conformity with the revised NPPF and that the Local Plan should be considered up to date for the purpose of determining planning applications. The NPPF provides that proposals which accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay (para.11) and that where a planning application conflicts with an up to date development plan, permission should not usually be granted (para.12). This indicates the weight which should be given to an up to date development plan, reflecting the requirements of section 38(6) of the 2004 Act. The NPPF with which Members are fully familiar, is a material consideration to be taken into account in determining this application.

6.3 Planning Practice Guidance

The PPG contains guidance supplementing the NPPF and with which Members are fully familiar. The PPG is a material consideration to be taken into account together with the National Design Guide (2019) which has the same status as the PPG.

6.4 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 (Adopted 2019)

Policy SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development;
Policy SP2: Sustainable Development in Stevenage;
Policy SP3: A strong, competitive economy;
Policy SP8: Good Design;
Policy SP11: Climate change, flooding and pollution;
Policy EC2a: Gunnels Wood Employment Area;
Policy EC3: Gunnels Wood industrial Zone;
Policy GD1: High quality design;
Policy FP7: Pollution.

6.5 Supplementary Planning Documents

Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document October 2020.
Stevenage Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2009.

6.6 Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

- 6.6.1 Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule in 2020. This allows the Council to collect a levy to fund infrastructure projects based on the type, location and floorspace of a development.

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of the application are its acceptability in land use policy terms, impact on visual amenity, impact on amenities, parking and highway implications and impact on the environment.

7.2 Land Use Policy Considerations

- 7.2.1 The application site is located within the Gunnels Wood Employment Area as defined under Policy EC2a of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 to 2031, adopted May 2019. Given this, Policy EC3 of the Local Plan is relevant as the site falls specifically within the Gunnels Wood Industrial Zone on Crompton Road. In these areas, the Policy states that planning

permission will be granted where a development is for use classes B1(c) light industry, B2 general industry and / or B8 storage and distribution and, in addition, any new unit or building is of an appropriate size and does not generally exceed 500m² within Crompton Road industrial area. This policy further iterates that planning permission will only be granted as an exception to the aforementioned criteria where the development is ancillary, or essential to the continued operation of an established B-class.

7.2.2 The proposed development, as set out in paragraph 3.1 of this report, is for the reconfiguration and replacement of enclosures to the waste transfer bays as well as the creation of one new waste transfer bays. Given the Council's Waste Depot is an established use in this part of the employment site and these bays are fundamental to the operation of the site, the proposed development is in accordance with the Council's employment policies set in the adopted Local Plan (2019).

7.3 Impact on the appearance of the area

7.3.1 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF 2019 stipulates that planning decisions should ensure development functions well and adds to the overall quality of the area, not just in the short term but over the lifetime of the development. It also sets out that development should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. In addition, the NPPF sets out that development should establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using arrangements of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit. It also stipulates that development should optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate mix of development and finally, create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

7.3.2 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states that "permission should be refused for development of poor design that fail to make available opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions". The National Design Guide (2019) which was published by National Government is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It sets out that Buildings are an important component of places and proposals for built development are a focus of the development management system.

7.3.3 In terms of design policies in the adopted Local Plan (2019), Policy SP8 requires new development to achieve the highest standards of design and sustainability. Policy GD1: High quality design generally requires all forms of development to meet a high standard of design which includes form of built development, elevational treatment and materials along with how the development would integrate with the urban fabric, its relationship between buildings, landscape design and relevant aspects of sustainable design. The Council's Design Guide SPD (2009) sets out that a high quality environment is essential for providing a good quality of life for residents. A well-designed and managed space not only provides a visually attractive environment, but can also help to ensure that a place is easy to move around and within, is safe and secure, and is useful for all members of the community.

7.3.4 The proposed development would comprise the removal of the existing timber enclosures and to erect 4m high concrete enclosures with a steel frame support system. There would also be the creation of a new transfer bay. Each bay would be approximately 6.2m in width apart from the General Waste Bulk which would be 15m in width. The transfer bays would also generally be 11m in depth. The bays are being replaced due to their declining condition and following the recommendations of a fire safety audit at the Waste Depot.

7.3.5 Whilst these bays and associated enclosures are much larger than the existing, they are located in a similar position which is towards the rear of the site. As such, they would be

located over 95m from the nearest public vantage point on Cavendish Road. Therefore, due to the presence of existing boundary treatment, location of buildings, these enclosures would only be visible at very acute viewing angles from Cavendish Road i.e. the site entrance. In terms of public vantage points from the Meadway, the existing trees are to be retained in order to continue to provide a natural screen. As such, you would only catch glimpses of the proposed enclosures. In terms of their design, they are utilitarian and reflect the operational design requirements for the waste transfer element of the depot which is also industrial in nature. As such, the proposal is not out of character in this established employment area.

- 7.3.6 Given the aforementioned assessment, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the site. In addition, the proposal would not harm the visual amenities of the wider street scene. Therefore, it accords with the design policies in the adopted Local Plan (2019), the Council's Design Guide SPD (2009), the NPPF (2019) and NPPG (2014) (including the National Design Guide).

7.4 Impact upon amenities

- 7.4.1 In terms of impact on residential amenities, the nearest residential properties are located 195m from the application site, the closest being Benoni, Symonds Green Lane. Due to the significant separation distance combined with the site already being in operation, it is not considered the proposal would harm the amenities of the nearest residential properties. In terms of impact on the surrounding area, the site does fall within an industrial which already has a large amount of background noise. Therefore, the proposal would not harm amenities more generally.

7.5 Parking and Highway Implications

- 7.5.1 The proposed development does not seek to increase the number of staff already employed at the Waste Depot. In addition, the proposal would not have an impact on existing parking which is already being provided on site. With respect to the impact on the highway network, the application site already benefits from an existing vehicle access offset from Cavendish Road which is designated as a local access road with a speed restriction of 30mph. The proposal does not seek to alter or create any new access points onto the established highway network.
- 7.5.2 The existing access itself is integrated into an industrial design carriageway that includes a combined verge and footway. This offers a wide envelope of visibility that provides an acceptable level of vehicle-to-vehicle inter-visibility and pedestrian visibility in accordance with Manual for Streets. The proposal, as it does not result in the creation of additional staff or alter the existing parking provision, would not generate any additional vehicle traffic. The applicant has also provided tracking data to clearly demonstrate that vehicles can also safely manoeuvre within the site and exit onto the highway in a forward gear.
- 7.5.3 Given the aforementioned assessment, Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority does not consider the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the safety and operation of the highway network.

7.6 Impact on the Environment

- 7.6.1 The existing development site already operates as a waste depot on behalf of the Borough Council, so the scheme would not create any additional environmental impacts over and above the current situation. In terms of the construction of the development, if planning permission were to be granted, the Environment Agency advises that any waste following construction should be carefully managed in accordance with EU regulations. In addition,

Hertfordshire County Council, as Minerals and Waste Authority, advise that waste generated as part of the development, including demolition of the existing transfer bays, must be appropriately managed and recycle. Given these are matters which fall outside of planning's control, it is the applicants responsibility to ensure they manage any relevant waste from the development in accordance with adopted regulations and policies.

7.7 Other matters

CIL Liability

7.7.1 Due to the nature of the proposed development, there is no CIL liability.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 In summary, the principle of the proposed development is acceptable as it would support the on-going operation of the Waste Depot. Furthermore, the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the site and the visual amenities of the street scene. The proposal would not harm the amenities of the nearest residential properties nor prejudice the safety and operation of the highway network. Moreover, the proposal would not generate any additional harm to the wider environment over and above the existing situation.

8.2 Given the aforementioned, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in line with the Council adopted Local Plan, Planning and Design Guide SPD (2009), the Council's Car Parking Standards SPD (2020), the NPPF (2019) and NPPG (2014).

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That Planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions/reasons:

1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans:

133A-C-008 100; 133A-C-008 120; 133A-C-008 130; 133A-C-008 140; 133A-C-008 150.

REASON:- For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON:- To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

3 No construction work relating to this permission shall be carried out on any Sunday, Public or Bank Holiday nor at any other time except between the hours of 0730 and 1800 on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays.

REASON: - To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Pro-active Statement

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item.
2. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents – Parking Provision adopted January 2020.
3. Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 adopted May 2019.
4. Hertfordshire County Council’s Local Transport Plan 4 adopted May 2018.
5. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.
6. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework February 2019 and Planning Policy Guidance March 2014.