

# Great Billing II Waste Transfer Station

## PLANNING STATEMENT

### Proposed Waste Transfer Station

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background**

- 1.1.1. It is proposed to establish a waste recycling and transfer station on redundant land within the Great Billing Water Treatment site near Northampton. The proposed application area extends to 2.79ha and is located along the northern periphery of the sewage works, and would use the existing vehicular access point off Ecton Lane. It is proposed that the site, which will replace a similar site 100m to the west, will handle a wide range of dry materials for recycling and segregation before being despatched off site. It is also proposed that a medium sized concrete batching plant would be established along with a series of aggregate storage bays. The proposed layout of the site is shown on Drg N<sup>o</sup> GB/14/02.
- 1.1.2. The proposed operations aim to handle waste in a sustainable manner which can be undertaken with minimal impact to local amenity and within acceptable criteria levels identified within both development plan policies and guidance contained within the National Guidance. Central Government advice confirms that positive planning has an important role to play in delivering sustainable waste management through the development of appropriate strategies for growth, regeneration and the prudent use of resources and by providing sufficient opportunities for improved waste management facilities in appropriate locations. Key planning objectives of the policy statement requires that planning authorities should prepare planning strategies that help deliver development whilst driving waste management up the waste hierarchy and addressing waste as a resource.
- 1.1.3. In line with such recognised sustainability objectives, and as a reflection of the growth agenda envisaged within Northampton, recycling will be undertaken on the site at Great Billing to maximise the recovery and recycling of a variety of waste materials. The development will be operated in the light of the principles for sustainable waste management i.e. sustainability, self-sufficiency, proximate management of waste, and the waste hierarchy which is reflected in development plan policies and full regard has been paid to minimising any potential environmental harm or adverse impacts. The scheme of working seeks to limit any harm to the local community as strict noise, odour and dust control measures will be applied.
- 1.1.4. The scheme has been developed to have full regard to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Planning Policy for Waste and statutory development plan of Northamptonshire County Council and this document considers the development against such policies.

### **1.2. Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations**

- 1.2.1. The planning context to the application is contained in Government policy at national level and in local planning documents (principally the adopted development plan). National policy in the form of the National Planning Policy for Waste published in mid October 2014 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which became effective in March 2012 and was originally accompanied by Technical Guidance on flooding and minerals. However, that guidance has subsequently been superseded by Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014).
- 1.2.2. Due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework,

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the greater the weight that may be given). From the day of publication, decision-makers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans. In the case of the development at Great Billing, the statutory development plan for the site comprises the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted October 2014).

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## 2. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. NPPF

- 2.1.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development is defined according to the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, *Securing the Future*, which sets out five ‘guiding principles’ of sustainable development: living within the planet’s environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.
- 2.1.2. Also, the three ‘legs’ of sustainable development – economic growth, social goals and environmental conservation are interdependent. Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards whilst sustainable development involves pursuing positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people’s quality of life, including job creation, net gains for nature and better design.
- 2.1.3. The first principle of planning law is that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At the heart of NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (*“the golden thread through plan making and decision taking”*). For decisions on planning application proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved ‘without delay’. Where the development plan is absent, silent or out-of-date, permission should be granted, unless the impacts outweigh the benefits or specific policies (like green belt) indicate that development should be restricted.
- 2.1.4. Accordingly, NPPF contains a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. In order to achieve this, planning authorities should have up-to-date plans in place to guide development. For decision making, local authorities should *“approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
- *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
  - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”*
- 2.1.5. There then follow twelve Core Planning Principles (CPPs). Planning should;
- be genuinely plan led, plans should be kept up-to-date, based on co-operation and joint working and practical,
  - be creative, finding ways to enhance and improve places,
  - proactively drive and support sustainable economic development. ‘Every effort’ should be made objectively to identify and meet various needs and respond to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals to set out a clear strategy for sufficient land,
  - always seek to secure high quality design,
  - take account of the different roles and character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities,

- support transition to a low carbon future,
- contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Allocations should prefer land of lesser environmental value,
- encourage the reuse of land,
- promote mixed use developments and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land , e.g. wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, food production,
- conserve heritage assets appropriate to their significance,
- actively manage patterns of growth focusing significant development in sustainable locations, and
- take account of local strategies for health, social and cultural wellbeing.

2.1.6. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted;
- development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted;
- opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged;
- planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

2.1.7. To prevent unacceptable risks from pollution, planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location. The effects on the natural environment or general amenity, and the potential sensitivity of the area or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution should be taken into account.

2.1.8. Planning policies and decisions should aim to: avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development; mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development; recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established.

2.1.9. Decision-taking and determining applications, local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The planning system is plan-led. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in

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accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions. In assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

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## 3. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FOR WASTE (OCTOBER 2014)

### 3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. The Waste Management Plan for England sets out the Government's ambition to work towards a more sustainable and efficient approach to resource use and management. The document confirms the view that positive planning plays a pivotal role in delivering this country's waste ambitions and states this will be achieved through;

- *“delivery of sustainable development and resource efficiency, including provision of modern infrastructure, local employment opportunities and wider climate change benefits, by driving waste management up the waste hierarchy;*
- *helping to secure the re-use, recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment; and*
- *ensuring the design and layout of new residential and commercial development and other infrastructure (such as safe and reliable transport links) complements sustainable waste management, including the provision of appropriate storage and segregation facilities to facilitate high quality collections of waste.”*

3.1.2. When determining waste planning applications, waste planning authorities are advised by the National Planning Policy for Waste that they should;

- consider the likely impact on the local environment and on amenity;
- ensure that waste management facilities in themselves are well-designed, so that they contribute positively to the character and quality of the area in which they are located; and
- concern themselves with implementing the planning strategy in the Local Plan and not with the control of processes which are a matter for the pollution control authorities. Waste planning authorities should work on the assumption that the relevant pollution control regime will be properly applied and enforced.

3.1.3. Waste Planning Authorities are required to consider the likely impact of the proposed development on the local environment and upon local amenity and in testing the sustainability of sites and areas in the preparation of Local Plans and in determining planning applications, waste planning authorities should consider the factors below. They should also bear in mind the envisaged waste management facility in terms of type and scale.

- a. *Protection of water quality and resources and flood risk management* – A detailed appraisal has been undertaken by Hafren Water to demonstrate there are no adverse impacts in respect of protecting water quality and water resources on the site and moreover there are no issues relating to flood risk.
- b. *Land instability* – The proposals do not involve any significant excavations or engineering works that could potentially result in adversely affecting the stability of the land within or immediately outside the site boundary.
- c. *Landscape and visual impacts* – A detailed landscape and visual appraisal has been undertaken by suitably qualified individuals to assess the potential impacts of establishing a waste handling facility within the confines of Great Billing Sewage



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Treatment Works. The scale of the development and extent of existing peripheral tree cover will ensure that potential impacts are negligible.

- d. *Nature conservation* – A comprehensive ecological survey has been undertaken and mitigation strategy has been developed to ensure that the nature conservation value of the site is not diminished.
- e. *Conserving the historic environment* – A detailed appraisal has been undertaken to assess the cultural heritage value of the site.
- f. *Traffic and access* – The proposals are to use the existing site access onto Ecton Lane, and the Traffic Impact Assessment that accompanies the planning application confirms there are no highways safety or capacity issues associated with the use of that access point.
- g. *Air emissions, including dust* – The site will adopt a pro-active approach to controlling dust to ensure there are no adverse impacts. The Dust Action Plan will ensure that air quality levels will be maintained.
- h. *Odours* – The application confirms that there will be a positive odour management plan, the essence of which will be the minimisation of the generation of odours by the materials handled and temporarily stored on site. The management plan will consider all site activities with the potential to generate odour, required odour control measures for normal and abnormal events and management procedures.
- i. *Vermin and birds* – The nature of the operations proposed will not generally attract vermin or birds but in any event, procedures will be put in place to ensure that traps are placed and the situation vigilantly monitored.
- j. *Noise, light and vibration* – There are no sensitive receivers in close proximity to the site operations. That being said, a noise appraisal has been undertaken to demonstrate compliance with accepted guidance levels and any lighting will be limited and in any event, will be downward facing (and a lot lower than the high lighting towers within the sewage treatment works).
- k. *Litter* – Litter will be carefully controlled and with the inclusion of an enclosed building to off-load skips, this will better ensure that issue will not become a nuisance.
- l. *Potential land use conflict* – The planning application makes clear that there is no conflict with adjacent land-uses. The site is immediately adjacent to an operational sewage treatment works and there are no residential dwellings or sensitive industrial processes taking place in close proximity to the site.

3.1.4. The proposed development at Great Billing has been considered against the policy objectives of the National Planning Policy for Waste and no conflict is found to arise.

## 4. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### 4.1. Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted October 2014)

- 4.1.1. The new Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted by the County Council on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 and contains the land use planning strategy for both minerals and waste related development within the County. The plan's vision for the County envisages sustained growth and development up to 2026 with a network of well designed waste management facilities to support that growth agenda. The new Local Plan has been prepared in the context of national and regional guidelines and strategies with the strategic context for the Plan is provided by a key policy document along with a number of European Directives which strongly influence waste management processes in the UK. The Plan has successfully passed through official scrutiny by the Planning Inspectorate and found to be sound and therefore it's provisions should be accorded significant weight in the determination of this planning application.
- 4.1.2. With respect to the County's strategy for waste management and disposal, chapter 5 of the Minerals and Waste Plan describes the nature and volumes of waste arising over the plan period, current capacities and assessed shortfalls, the spatial strategy for waste management, development criteria and site allocations needed to support a sustainable waste management network to 2031 and beyond.
- 4.1.3. The proposed site at Great Billing is relatively remote from dwellings thereby minimising any significant harm to local amenity although reasonably close to Northampton and the "A" class roads in the vicinity. The site operations will be well screened particularly having regard to the scale of the activities and the site infrastructure. The applicant currently operates an existing waste management site in close proximity which this larger site is proposed to replace.
- 4.1.4. The Local Plan advises (para 5.51) that first priority for any proposal for a waste management facility is that it must support the Plan's spatial strategy. To support sustainable waste management from the major sources of waste arisings (Northampton, Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby) a location should be within the **Central Spine** identified on Plan 5 of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The proposed site is located within that Central Spine and consequently the applicant considers that the provisions of **Policy 12** are met in that the proposed site location conforms with the adopted spatial strategy for waste management.
- 4.1.5. The submitted proposals will incorporate the activities undertaken at the applicant's existing waste management facility nearby but also enhance the range and capacity of waste recycling activities that can be undertaken. Increases in recycling activity contribute positively to the achievement of sustainable waste management activities, helping to reduce the need to landfill whilst producing products for re-use or safe disposal (e.g. following bio-remediation). Recycling is close to the top of the waste hierarchy and proposals to enhance recycling and recovery should thus be accorded significant weight.
- 4.1.6. The operations at the proposed site will positively contribute to the waste management needs arising from MSW, C&I, CD&E and green waste of the sub- region (Northamptonshire) and is well located close to the major highway network serving the Central Spine and beyond.
- 4.1.7. The land in question forms part of a wider allocation (18.5 ha) for waste management identified in the new Minerals and Waste Plan. The allocation is identified in the Local Plan **Policy 14** as

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site “**WS1 Northampton – East**” being required for integrated waste management facilities which over time will be required to make a major contribution to managing the County’s waste. The Plan anticipates that the integrated waste management facilities will incorporate a range of facilities including preliminary and advanced treatment facilities. The proposed development represents a first step towards establishing an integrated facility through waste separation of commercial and industrial waste for recycling , recycling of C&D waste and bulk transfer of black bag waste for treatment elsewhere. From practise elsewhere the establishment of a waste transfer facility (the proposed development) is an essential element of any integrated waste management facility. Waste sorting capacity at the site represents a preliminary form of treatment which could help provide feedstock for a future integrated facility within the wider allocated site.

- 4.1.8. The land on which the proposed site would be built is vacant underused land and the applicant considers that the proposal is in conformity with **Policy 13** and waste spatial strategy of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The fact that the site lies within the boundary of a major waste allocation in the Plan should be accorded significant weight in the determination of the application.
- 4.1.9. In developing the working current scheme for additional recycling operations, full regard has been paid to minimising any potential environmental harm or adverse impacts as required by **Policy 22** of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- 4.1.10. The planning application is accompanied by a comprehensive landscape and visual appraisal which confirms how the scheme has have been designed to integrate into the local landscape and minimising any harm to visual amenity as far as is practically possible. The submitted landscape appraisal confirms there are no significant landscape designations to impact upon. Furthermore, there are no designated sites of cultural heritage in the immediate vicinity that could be impacted upon.
- 4.1.11. The submitted study on flood risk does not identify issues that would negatively impact on the locality. Appropriate measures to address any risk of pollution from waste handling will be incorporated in the detailed design of facilities and their operation in accordance with the Environmental Permit regulated by the Environment Agency.
- 4.1.12. In respect of access, the existing infrastructure will continue to be provided. The vehicular route uses Ecton Lane, as a direct access onto the A45, which in turn links with the Trunk Road system as well as being in close proximity to Northampton. Finally, the scheme of working seeks to limit any harm to the local community with appropriate noise, dust and odour control measures employed following careful assessment as set out in the project’s accompanying Environmental Statement.
- 4.1.13. The submitted application includes a Design and Access Statement describing the design process whilst providing details of the proposed form of construction for the main building. The applicant considers therefore that the proposals satisfy **Policy 27** of the Minerals and Waste Plan.
- 4.1.14. The applicant considers that the proposal is compliant with **Policy 22** of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and that the impact of the proposed site on local amenity will not be adversely affected to a degree that would justify refusal of planning permission.

- 4.1.15. The applicant considers that the location of the site with its good communications links to the primary road network together with the Company's practise of maximising backloading of materials to help minimise movements and therefore impacts indicate that operation of the proposed site would satisfactorily address **Policy 23** of the Minerals and Waste Plan.
- 4.1.16. The applicant has carried out an assessment of the local landscape and the impact of the proposed development on its setting. The proposed development would not adversely affect the local landscape to the extent where refusal of planning permission is justified and the proposal is not judged to conflict with **Policy 25** of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- 4.1.17. Following survey and in the absence of significant cultural assets then the proposal is not considered to conflict with **Policy 26** of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- 4.1.18. The proposed additional waste handling and recycling facilities satisfies the relevant provisions of this policy in that the site will continue to provide an integrated waste management facility with good transportation links yet relatively remote from settlements to ensure there are no adverse impacts on local amenity.

## **5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1. Summary**

- 5.1.1. Positive planning has an important role to play in delivering sustainable waste management through the development of appropriate strategies for growth, regeneration and the prudent use of resources and by providing sufficient opportunities for new waste management facilities in appropriate locations. Such an approach is supported by Central Government advice which additionally confirms key planning objectives which require planning authorities to prepare planning strategies that help deliver development through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy and addressing waste as a resource.
- 5.1.2. The County Council is to be commended for having an up to date Minerals and Waste Plan to guide new waste management infrastructure to 2031. The scheme has been developed to have full regard to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Policy for Waste and statutory development plan. In considering the proposed development at Great Billing against local and national policy, importantly, no conflict is found to arise.
- 5.1.3. The proposed operations at the site aim to achieve this strategic objective in respect of handling waste in a sustainable manner and can be undertaken with minimal impact to local amenity and within acceptable criteria levels identified within both development plan policies and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy for Waste.
- 5.1.4. In line with recognised sustainability objectives, and as a reflection of the growth agenda in the vicinity, operations will be undertaken on the site to maximise the recovery and recycling of a variety of waste materials. The development will be operated in the light of the principles for sustainable waste management i.e. sustainability, self-sufficiency, proximate management of waste, and the waste hierarchy which is reflected in development plan policies and full regard has been paid to minimising any potential environmental harm or adverse impacts.

### **5.2. Conclusions**

- 5.2.1. The proposed scheme is located within land allocated for waste management purposes in the up-to-date and very recently adopted Minerals and Waste Plan (2014). The scheme of working seeks to limit any harm to the local community as strict noise, odour and dust control measures will be applied. The scheme is both consistent with policy and strategic development objectives, satisfying the stated aims of the recently published National Planning Policy for Waste in that the site will assist in driving waste management in Northamptonshire up the waste hierarchy.
- 5.2.2. The applicant has given due attention to the policies of the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan and following its evaluation has concluded that the proposals are compliant with Development Plan policies and therefore expects that the normal presumption in favour of the development plan and sustainable development will apply in this case.
- 5.2.3. Accordingly, the applicant commends its proposals to the Council and looks forward to a positive outcome of the application.