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Contact Julian Ling
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Your ref.
Our ref.
Date 09.09.2020

Dear Gillian

Extension of the existing Allington Integrated Waste Management Facility statutory pre-application consultation - Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.

Thank you for consulting Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) regarding this development. TMBC welcome this opportunity to comment on the proposal and assist your company with this project.

TMBC recognise the complex nature of the project and that this information represents the preliminary evidence and proposals of the development. The Council therefore does not wish to comment fully on any initial conclusions or statements included in this consultation and these comments are given without prejudice to any future decision the Council may take regarding this development.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council LDF and emerging Local Plan

Within the borough of Tonbridge and Malling the adopted Development Plan is the Local Development Framework which comprises a suite of Development Plan documents including the Core Strategy (adopted in 2007), Development Land Allocations DPD (adopted 2008), the Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan (adopted 2008), the Managing Development and the Environment DPD (adopted 2010) and a compendium of 69 development management policies (saved in 2010). The development site is not subject to any site specific policy however it is located partly within the Strategic Gap (CP5), the Urban Fringe (OS7) and the countryside (CP14) and partly within the '20/20 Estate which is a safeguarded employment site (E1h) within the wider Urban Area (CP11).

The Council's new emerging Local Plan is now at an advanced stage where it was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination on Wednesday 23rd January 2019 for public examination and stage one hearing sessions are scheduled to take place in October and November 2020. Similar to the LDF, the development site is not the subject of any site specific policy within the Local Plan and is located partly within a rural area and partly with the existing urban area in terms of policy LP5. Policy LP24 recognises the requirement for development to comply with the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and policy LP34 safeguards the 20/20 Estate Aylesford for employment uses.

Based on the information so far, TMBC does not consider the proposal to conflict with the development strategy in the Borough Council's current LDF or emerging Local Plan but wish to make the following comments on the development proposal.

The Consultation

In relation to this consultation, TMBC continue to support the special measures put in place that take account of the constraints presented by COVID – 19, in particular the need to ensure social distancing and the extended time period given for responses to be made.

Socio-economic

Overall, TMBC welcomes the proposal in terms of the positive impact on employment generation within the borough. The Council is committed to improving economic prosperity and job creation in the borough as set out in the TMBC Economic Regeneration Strategy 2019 – 2023. The Council acknowledge the additional jobs both during construction and once operational, but would like to see a specific commitment to sourcing local trade and suppliers beyond the theoretical application of the Homes and Communities Agency (Homes England) multipliers.

When considering the labour market and current unemployment levels owing to the COVID-19 crisis (and potential vulnerabilities should a No Deal Brexit happen), it is likely that the borough will continue to experience higher unemployment levels than the historic average. Currently, unemployment levels in the borough are at 4.2% (June 2020), with unemployment in the adjoining borough of Maidstone at 5.3%. It is also worth recognising that youth unemployment (18-24 year olds) is currently at 7.8% and there are a number of pockets of higher unemployment in the borough that are located quite close to the proposal site such as Snodland East and Hamhill (6%), Burham and Wouldham (5.6%) and Aylesford South (5.3%). With this in mind, The Council considers there is a realistic opportunity for FCC Environment, and its contractors during the construction phase to engage with the Borough Council/Kent Apprenticeships/Kent Supported Employment and the Maidstone Job Centre, to explore the role that (higher level) apprenticeships, internships or graduate schemes might play in the recruitment drive. Whilst reference is made to training and skills in the economic impact assessment, the Council would like to see a stronger commitment to supporting such training opportunities.

Design

Regarding design, the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN1) states that “applying good design to energy projects should produce sustainable infrastructure, sensitive to place, efficient in the use of natural resources and energy used in their construction and

operation, matched by an appearance that demonstrates good aesthetic as far as possible. It is acknowledged, however that the nature of much energy infrastructure development will often limit the extent to which it can contribute to the enhancement of the quality of the area”.

The Council acknowledges that the design is still to be finalised and is pleased to see that the documents makes a commitment to good design. So far, the Council supports that a utilitarian modern design is proposed that seeks to visually interrelate with the existing building and utilise existing facilities (where possible), in particular a shared stack.

To reduce the visual impact upon the skyline, the design process should explore other options to further reduce the height of the building, such as lowering the existing ground levels and sinking the building further below ground and/or different plant configurations.

As the final design is progressed, the Council would recommend the use of innovative and low-carbon solutions as part of the design and build, for example, low-carbon construction methods and materials with less embedded carbon.

Biodiversity

The Council recognises the current status of the site as a non-designated nature conservation area which has limited ecological value but also that there has historically been a commitment to maintain and manage this land. A large proportion of this would be lost to the development but TMBC recognise that a strategy is proposed that seeks to off-set the loss of biodiversity by means of off-site compensatory habitat enhancement at Stangate quarry within the west of the borough. The Council supports the biodiversity net gain of 10% on baseline values that this strategy could achieve.

The proposals includes ecological restoration of the site on areas of land not needed for the permanent development. The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN1) states “Development proposals provide many opportunities for building-in beneficial biodiversity or geological features as part of good design” (5.3.15). On this basis, it is considered that there could be further opportunities for on-site enhancement by increasing habitat connectivity, contributing to wildlife corridors, improving the water environment and landscaping with pollinators. Consideration should also be given to making space for species within the design and build, for example the integration of concealed nest boxes as part of the exterior of the buildings/structures.

Construction and residential amenities

The site is situated within close proximity to residential areas of Bunyard Way and Poppy fields where people’s residential amenities should be safeguarded from noise, vibration, dust and fumes.

Within several documents the construction technique of percussive piling has been cited which The Council has significant concerns regarding how disruptive and intrusive this can be from noise and vibration. Instead it is strongly recommended that CFA pilling be used as this is a lot quieter and less disruptive. The documents also do not appear to indicate how many piles will be required to be sunk, and over what timeframe. Monitoring will be required for such activities, especially if percussive is used and the documents do not appear to give much detail into how this will be monitored.

With regard to working times, The Council acknowledges the proposed working times set out in the Construction Environmental Management Plan but consider these to be excessive, particularly on Saturday. To ensure impact upon amenities is reduced to a minimum, the Council would recommend the working and deliver times are amended to be in accordance with the Council's adopted construction site core hours of 07.30 – 18.30hrs Monday – Friday and 08.00 – 13.00hrs Saturday and not at all on Sundays and bank holidays inclusive of deliveries. In the event that construction is to take place outside of these hours, then it is strongly recommended that FCC apply for a Section 61 Prior Consent notice from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

Air Quality

Concerning cumulative impacts, it is not clear whether the air quality assessments have taken into account the recently approved development at South Aylesford – 17/01595/OAEA. It is strongly recommended that this is considered, whereby this site will become one of TMBC's closest receptors beyond the residential accommodation at Poppy fields and the first occupation may well occur before or at the same time as the new plant becoming operational.

It is also requested by The Council, that when planning transport routes, roads from the south and south west are considered in order to avoid existing AQMA's (particularly in Watlington). Site traffic coming from this direction should be encouraged to use the A228/M20 rather than the A26/Hermitage Lane.

Highways

For highways matters, TMBC are guided by Kent County Council (KCC), who are 'The Highways Authority' for the borough and TMBC are aware that they will respond separately on this consultation.

Notwithstanding comments made by KCC, of particular concern to The Council are the impacts upon junction 5 of the M20, as well as the A20 corridor. The Council acknowledges that owing to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, it has not been possible to carry out a traffic assessment of junction 5. To ensure an accurate assessment of these key junctions, The Council strongly recommends that this is carried out and included in the final Transport Assessment submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

With this in mind, the Council wishes to highlight the forecast junction capacity transport assessment on the A20 corridor including Junction 5 of the M20, commissioned as part of its Local Plan evidence base that may be of help. This can be accessed using the following link [A20 VISUM Study \(March 2019\)](#). As shown in the results, Junction 5 is modelled in both the future (2031) Do Minimum scenario (the future baseline excluding the strategy in the submitted Local Plan) and Do Something scenarios (the Local Plan strategy as submitted). The modelling shows the junction to operate within theoretical capacity, however with the development strategy factored in (DS), the position becomes more marginal.

The Council is pleased to see that traffic flows used in the Transport Assessment (TA) take account of committed growth, in particular the development land south of London Road and East of Hermitage Lane Aylesford (Application ref: 17/01595/OAEA) – now granted outline planning permission. However according to your TA, it has only taken account of 175 dwellings associated with the opening of the relief road. The Council strongly recommends

that to ensure the development takes into account the full impact of this major site, the whole quantum of development (840 dwellings, primary school and surgery) is modelled into the Transport Assessment. Concerning other committed development, the Council also wishes to highlight the recent approved applications, as set out in Appendix A below, that may have a local impact from trip generation that should be considered in combination with this application.

Lastly, to contribute to reducing carbon emissions and improve air quality, electric vehicle charging points should be proposed within the parking provision on site.

Conclusion

Overall the development is considered to present some positive aspects. Moving forward TMBC consider that further assessments are still required as well as some additional/updated details. TMBC hope these comments are of assistance to you and continue to support collaborative working with your company and the Planning Inspectorate as the project progresses through the examination process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Bailey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Ian Bailey
Planning Policy Manager
Tel: 01732 876061

APPENDIX A.

18/03008/OA - East of Clare Park Estate New Road East Malling West Malling.
Development of the site to provide up to 110 dwellings (Use Class C3) and the site access arrangement. All other matters reserved for future consideration. Approved.

19/02841/FL - 675 London Road Ditton Aylesford. Demolition of existing buildings and erection of Class A1 foodstore with associated parking, landscaping and access works. Approved.