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CONSTRUCTION OF A HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND COMMERCIAL WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE COMPRISING:- NEW VEHICULAR ENTRANCE/EXIT ROAD; NEW PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE/EXIT FOOTPATHS; NEW TARMAC ROADWAYS INCLUDING VEHICLE RAMPS UP TO ELEVATED WASTE DISPOSAL AREAS; TRAFFIC BOLLARDS/CRASH BARRIERS; TARMAC PARKING SPACES; NEW CONCRETE HARD STANDING AREAS FOR SITE OPERATIONS AND WASTE SKIPS/CONTAINER STORAGE; CONCRETE RETAINING WALLS AND UPSTAND WALLS; NEW STEEL-FRAMED CANOPIES SITUATED OVER THE VISITOR PARKING ADJACENT TO THE HOUSEHOLD WASTE DISPOSAL AREAS; A NEW SINGLE-STOREY PRINCIPAL BUILDING CONTAINING OFFICES AND WELFARE ACCOMMODATION AND A REUSE STORE; ANCILLARY STORAGE AREAS INCLUDING A FENCED COMPOUND FOR STORAGE OF EXTERNAL RE-USE MATERIAL; A SMALL LEAN-TO EXTERNAL STORE AND A STAFF 'MEET AND GREET' KIOSK; EXTERNAL LIGHTING; CCTV SYSTEM; INTRUDER ALARMS; FOUL WATER AND SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEMS; FREESTANDING WASTE SKIPS, CONTAINERS AND BOTTLE BANKS (APPLICATION AMENDED TO PROVIDE AN EXPLANATORY NOTE OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS; AMENDED TRANSPORT STATEMENT; AMENDED PLANNING JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT AND ADDENDUM TO THE SITE SELECTION REPORT)

Report by the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Growth and Infrastructure)

Location: Langford Lane, Kidlington, Oxfordshire

Application No: R3.0167/10

District Council Area: Cherwell

Introduction

1. This application seeks planning permission for the change of use and development of land for a household and commercial waste recycling centre (HWRC) at Langford Lane, Kidlington.

Location (see site plan)

2. The site is located in the Oxford Green Belt to the north west of Kidlington approximately 6 miles north west of Oxford city centre. Langford Lane itself

provides a link between the A44 from Oxford to Evesham and the A4260 from Oxford to Banbury.

Site and Setting (see site plan)

3. The site is currently open and in agricultural use (classified as predominantly grade 4 agricultural land). To the west is Oxford Spires Business Park and a Thames Water utilities depot and to the east Langford Meadows Local Wildlife Site (LWS), which is ecologically important wet meadowland. The Rushy Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 500 metres to the south. North of the site is open agricultural land and south, on the opposite side of Langford Lane, are commercial developments such as offices, business uses and car sales. Other land uses on Langford Lane include Oxford Airport and Campsfield House Immigration Detention Centre.
4. There is a footpath designated as a public right of way along the eastern boundary of the site. The western and eastern boundaries are screened by belts of tree and shrub planting of varying size and maturity. The southern boundary contains just a hedge and post and rail fence whilst the northern boundary is open.
5. There are no residential properties directly bordering the site. The closest dwellings are about 190 metres to the south east. Further beyond these dwellings and business uses to the south east is the Oxford Canal. Beyond the canal are further residential properties with the closest being approximately 200 metres from the edge of the site, these are 'sandwiched' between the canal and a railway line. Those residential properties within Kidlington and beyond the railway line are about 350 metres from the site. There is a pub approximately 230 metres from the site on the A4260 leading out of Kidlington. The nearest residential properties to the west are those on Evenlode Crescent to the south of Oxford Airport, these are about 500 metres away.

Background and Details of the Development

Strategy for HWRC's in Oxfordshire

6. The County Council as Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) has a statutory obligation to provide places for members of the public to deposit their household waste. The Government does not specify the number of sites that should be provided but at present there are eight HWRC's in Oxfordshire. The role of these HWRC's is changing, notably because of the expansion of district council kerbside collection services. Every house in Oxfordshire now has a comprehensive kerbside service providing for collection of a full range of wastes and recyclables. This means that the need for people to travel to HWRC's to dispose of recyclable materials has reduced.
7. The County Council in its role as WDA has therefore decided that the network of eight HWRC sites can be reduced and services refined to maintain an efficient and effective service to the public. Some of the existing sites also

require investment in the infrastructure and some have temporary planning permissions. The intention therefore is to provide facilities fit for the future that are well located to the main centres of population.

8. The details of this strategy are provided in the 'Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy' report to Cabinet (19 April 2011). In summary the strategy proposes to reduce the number of HWRC's in the County from eight to six. Sites at Dean Pit, Ardley and Stanford in the Vale would close. Existing facilities at Drayton, Dix Pit and Oakley Wood would be retained. New facilities would be constructed at Kidlington (Langford Lane) and near to Banbury (to replace Alkerton - the exact site is yet to be finalised). The existing site at Redbridge would be temporarily closed for refurbishment (after Kidlington becomes operational) and then reopened as a commercial waste facility during the week and a household facility at weekends and bank holidays. The aim is to implement the strategy by December 2014.
9. The HWRC strategy aims to relate facilities to major areas of population as follows:
 - New Kidlington facility – Oxford/Kidlington/Bicester
 - Relocated Alkerton facility (Banbury area) – Banbury/Chipping Norton
 - Existing Drayton facility – Didcot/Abingdon/Wantage
 - Existing Dix Pit facility – Witney/Carterton/Chipping Norton
 - Existing Oakley Wood facility – Wallingford/Henley
 - Existing Redbridge facility – Oxford/Abingdon

Proposed HWRC at Kidlington

10. The applicant has carried out an assessment of potential sites north of Oxford and has concluded that the Langford Lane site is the most suitable available site for this facility. An explanatory note of the assessment is included at Annex 2. Having regard to the imminent closure of Dean Pit HWRC and the location of Redbridge HWRC, the facility would aim to serve the population of Kidlington, Bicester, the northern half of Oxford and outlying villages not readily served by other facilities. The aim is to bring the site into operation by the Summer 2012.
11. The HWRC would function similarly to existing sites in Oxfordshire. It would provide a collection point for household (municipal) waste brought to the site by the public and commercial waste brought to the site by tradesmen. Members of the public would drive around the site and deposit waste into different skips depending on its type. Once full the skips would be taken off site for recycling or landfilling elsewhere as appropriate. A building providing ancillary offices, welfare facilities and a re-use store is proposed. The re-use store would allow storage and display of reusable household items brought to the site, for example second-hand furniture, toys, etc. These items would be offered for resale to the public.
12. The WDA propose that the site would accept a wide range of household waste materials, for example - cardboard, glass, paper, plastics, metals, wood

and waste electronic items. The site is also intended to accept materials classed as hazardous waste such as asbestos, plasterboard, paints, fluorescent tubes, batteries, fridges and televisions.

13. Based on current use of the Redbridge HWRC the WDA anticipate that the annual throughput of waste would be approximately 20,000 tonnes. They estimate there would be around 7,600 visitor vehicles accessing the site per week and an average of about 38 site operator vehicles accessing the site per week (these figures would be subject to seasonal variations).

Planning history

14. The Langford Lane site was promoted by the WDA for inclusion in the 1996 Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. It was considered in the Inspector's Report into the Plan and a policy supporting the development of the site for a HWRC (subject to certain criteria - see paragraph 30) is contained within that plan.

Hours of use

15. Opening hours to the public and trade are proposed to be between 08.00-17.00 seven days per week including on some bank holidays (not Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Years Day). Between 1 April and 30 September it would operate late night opening until 20.00 on a Thursday in line with existing site opening times at other Oxfordshire HWRC locations. Staff working on site would start and finish before and after these opening hours.

Proposed building and structures

16. The waste skip areas would be covered by steel framed canopies with either pre-finished metal or fabric cover. These are to be provided to give customers a degree of shelter so that the facility can be considered 'all-weather'. The site would be enclosed on all sides by a 2.1 metre high weld mesh fence. Floodlighting would be provided on 10 metre columns across the site.
17. The reuse, office and welfare building would be single storey measuring 48 metres long by 9.5 metres wide. The roof would be a south facing mono pitched with a height of 5.9 metres. The walls would be predominantly timber clad mixed with areas of facing brick; the roof covering would be colour-coated profiled metal. The position of the building would be parallel with Langford Lane in order to maximise the façade of the public building towards the street and to help screen the recycling activities from the site frontage. The submitted planning application states that the building would achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'. The applicant has since indicated that this rating may not be achieved due to budget constraints although renewable energy solutions are being specified for the building, for example photovoltaics on the roof.

Parking and vehicle and pedestrian access

18. There would be provision for 24 cars to use the main skip area at any one time. There would be 12 visitors spaces for the re-use store (including 2 disabled spaces) and 18 staff spaces. A new access is proposed to be created into the site from Langford Lane, this would require relocation of an existing bus stop.

Hard and soft landscaping

19. The majority of the surfacing of the facility would be tarmac road surfaces and concrete hard standings although there would be a number of grassed areas in and around the waste collection areas. The perimeter of the site would be planted with a mix of plant, tree and wildflower planting. The existing hedge along the Langford Lane frontage would be removed and replaced with low level bunds and cover planting. Two reed planted ponds would be provided on either side of the facility to provide attenuation storage for surface water.

Documents submitted with the planning application

20. The application includes the following supporting documents:

- Justification Statement
- Site Search Report
- Transport Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Ecological Assessment
- Drainage Assessment
- Lighting Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment
- Tree Survey
- Landscape Report

Consultation

21. The application was originally submitted to the Planning Authority in November 2010. As a result of responses to the first consultation we sought further information from the WDA which we decided was needed before the application could be determined. Specifically this was an amended Transport Statement/Assessment, clarification regarding the selection of the proposed site and clarification of the County Council's strategy for HWRC's in the County. This amended information was the subject of a second consultation. As a result of concerns raised by Cherwell District Council the submitted Noise Assessment was amended to clarify the impact on neighbouring properties and a revised landscaping plan submitted. This amended information was available for further comment.
22. A summary of the consultation responses and third party representations is set out at Annex 1. Copies of all responses are available in the Member's Resource Centre.

Development Plan and other Policies

23. Planning applications should be decided in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant development plan documents are:

Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England 2026 (SEP) - adopted May 2009. Policies: W5, W6, W17, NRM5.

Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1996 (OMWLP). Policies: W3, W4, W5, W6, PE14.

Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (CLP). Policies: C1, C7, C8, GB1, ENV1.

Other relevant policy documents are:

Planning Policy Statement 10 (PPS10): Planning for Sustainable Waste Management and Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2): Green Belts are also relevant.

The Non Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (NSCLP). Policies: TR4, TR5.

24. The South East Plan (SEP) forms part of the Development Plan. However, the Government has made it clear that it intends to abolish regional strategies. Whilst this intention is a material consideration, legislation to achieve this is at an early stage of development in the parliamentary process and, therefore, the weight attached to that intention is limited accordingly.
25. All relevant policies are set out in the Policy Annex attached to this Agenda.

Comments of the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Growth and Infrastructure)

26. The key planning issues to be considered with this application are:

- (i) Waste Management.
- (ii) Development in the Green Belt and in the countryside.
- (iii) Traffic and Highways Matters.
- (iv) Other Environmental Matters.

- (i) Waste Management

27. The development of a new household waste recycling centre at Langford Lane is an important component of the new strategy for household waste recycling centre provision for Oxfordshire's residents. The purpose of this facility is to provide a service for the people who live on the north side of Oxford including Kidlington, and stretching towards Bicester and Woodstock.

28. Government policy in PPS10 seeks to push waste up the 'Waste Hierarchy'¹ by reducing disposal to landfill. PPS10 explains that positive planning has an important role in delivering sustainable waste management by providing sufficient opportunities for new waste management facilities of the right type, in the right place and at the right time. Policy W5 of the SEP sets targets for the diversion of waste from landfill whilst policy W6 of the SEP sets targets for the recycling of waste throughout the SE region.
29. Providing the Langford Lane facility would aid the diversion of waste from landfill and enable its movement up the waste hierarchy supporting the reusing and recycling of waste. Whilst the doorstep collection of recyclable waste has become more sophisticated HWRC's will, nevertheless, continue to play an important role in minimising waste to landfill. The Council's new waste recycling centre strategy seeks to achieve this more efficiently. The development of the Langford Lane site is an important element of this strategy. The proposal supports the objectives of PPS10 and the SEP in terms of helping to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill and increasing the amount of waste that is recycled or reused.
30. Development Plan Policy W6 of the OMWLP promotes the development of a waste recycling facility at Langford Lane subject to:
 - there being no more acceptable site on the north of Oxford;
 - that the proposal will not cause unacceptable nuisance in terms of noise, dust, fumes, smell, visual intrusion or traffic;
 - and that the development must be properly screened from the surrounding landscape.
31. Whilst the policy criteria set out important matters that need to be assessed, there is strong waste policy support for the proposal.

(ii) Development in the Green Belt and in the countryside
32. The Langford Lane site is in the Oxford Green Belt. The OMWLP gives policy support for development of the site as a HWRC. Nevertheless, the proposal does not fall within the list of activities that are considered appropriate to the Green Belt so you must be satisfied that the proposal represents very special circumstances which justify overriding normal policy in this respect.
33. National planning policy relating to Green Belts is contained within PPG2. This states that 'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness'. In considering whether very special circumstances exist for this development, regard must be had to PPS10, which states that the particular locational needs of some types of waste management facilities should be given significant weight. Policy W17 of the SEP states that waste management facilities should not be precluded from

¹ 'By more sustainable waste management, moving the management of waste up the waste hierarchy of prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, other recovery, and disposing only as a last resort, the Government aims to break the link between economic growth and the environmental impact of waste': PPS10: Communities and Local Government (March 2011).

the Green Belt and should be well located to the areas that they would serve. Policy W6 of the OMWLP requires a Langford Lane proposal to demonstrate that there are no *more acceptable* sites north of Oxford for such a facility.

34. Objectors argue that very special circumstances do not exist for development in this location and that the HWRC would impact on the openness of the Green Belt. They argue that whilst an assessment of alternative sites has been carried out this does not justify locating the development at Langford Lane and that the assessment exercise is not appropriate. The District Council considers that there are no special circumstances for the development in the proposed location.
35. The applicant argues that very special circumstances exist by virtue of the fact that: a) provision of this facility represents an important part of the strategy to deal with household waste and meet recycling targets, b) the proximity of the development to the population that it would serve, c) there are no suitable alternative sites available, d) the site would be well screened, e) there would be ecological benefits and f) the development would not harm best and most versatile agricultural land.
36. The applicant has carried out a site search exercise which is described at Annex 2. They have explained that the purpose of the site search submitted with the application was to find a site that fits with the delivery of a network of facilities that are well located to the main centres of population.
37. The search identified a final short list of three possible sites: i) land north of Langford Lane; (ii) land at Stratfield Brake south of Kidlington and (iii) Gosford Grain Silo. All of these sites are in the Green Belt.
38. The applicant argues a) that land at Stratfield Brake is inappropriate due to its impact on the setting of Oxford, coalescence of settlements and complex issues around providing access to it b) that Gosford Grain Silo is not appropriate due to its impact on the setting of Oxford, coalescence of settlements, poor access and its deliverability due to other uses proposed on the site. So, whilst the applicant has identified that there are alternative sites available that score well against the site selection criteria and would serve the required catchment population, they have concluded that Langford Lane is the most appropriate.
39. The relative merits of the impact of the development at different sites can be debated long and hard. From the short list all sites can serve the identified catchment reasonably well, though one might argue that those at Stratfield Brake and the Grain Silo are closer to Oxford and closer to the strategic road network. Stratfield Brake has the impacts the applicant describes and some particular access difficulties onto the dual carriageway. The Grain Silo site would have merit, but is not available because of two other competing proposals (Grundon's permitted (commercial) Materials Recovery Facility and Evergreen 3 (rail station)). The Langford Lane site is adjacent to existing built development and would need to be well screened from the rest of the Green Belt. The access is good and the site well located to serve the required catchment population.

40. OMWLP policy W6 requires a Langford Lane proposal to demonstrate that there are no *more acceptable* sites north of Oxford for such a facility. I am satisfied that (subject to the matters addressed in the remainder of the report) an appropriate site search exercise has been carried out that demonstrates whilst there are other sites that might also be acceptable, none have been identified that are clearly *more acceptable*. The criteria used in the site selection process have been selected in order to select a site that can be delivered and the sieving exercise has sought to carry forward those sites that are least constrained. In this respect therefore the proposal meets policy W6. I am also satisfied that the development would be well located to serve the required catchment population and as such accords with policy W17 of the SEP.
41. The development site is open countryside on the edge of a built up area. Whilst this built up area contains the site on the south and west edges the development would encroach into the open countryside beyond. Policy W4 of the OMWLP states that waste facilities will not normally be permitted in the open countryside.
42. The policy requires the development to demonstrate that there is a need for the facility and there are no suitable alternatives. The need for the facility is based in a HWRC strategy that seeks to provide and rely on fewer facilities better placed in relation to the main centres of population in the County. Even before the development of the present HWRC strategy, the need for a facility to serve the north side of Oxford was long established (hence the allocation of the site in the OMWLP in 1996). Potential alternative sites have already been discussed. I therefore consider it to be acceptable that the facility would be located in an area of open countryside and there is no conflict with Policy W4.

(iii) Traffic and Highways Matters

43. Policy W6 of the OMWLP supports the development of a facility of this nature in this location provided that the proposal will not cause unacceptable nuisance in terms of traffic. Policies TR4 and TR5 of the NSCLP require developments to provide appropriate mitigation measures and not compromise road safety. SEP policy W17 requires waste proposals to have good accessibility from existing urban areas or major new or planned development and good transport connections. Policy W3 of the OMWLP also requires the proposed site to be close to the source of waste and well related to the appropriate parts of the transport network.
44. Objectors are concerned that the development would severely impact on the immediate and surrounding highway network and increase traffic through nearby settlements, for example through Kidlington. During the first stage of public consultation people questioned the appropriateness of the transport assessment (TA) submitted with the application.
45. The applicant has amended the submitted TA to reflect the changes to the household waste recycling strategy in the county so that the traffic impacts of the development can be properly assessed. Transport officers have assessed

the TA and consider that the information contained within it is a fair and appropriate assessment of the impact the development would have on the local highway network and specifically sensitive junctions in the local area. They conclude (subject to conditions) that the development would have a negligible impact on the function and capacity of the local highway network and therefore would not result in any significant delay to highway users.

46. The site is close to the areas of population from which the waste will arise. The transport connections to both the local road and strategic road network are good. The applicant has assumed that the majority of traffic accessing the site from the south and south east would do so via the A44. It is possible that some drivers might choose the route through Kidlington (A4260) in preference to the A44. It would be preferable to discourage this and as recommended by transport officers a scheme for directional signage encouraging the use of the A44 route could be instigated. Site operator's lorries can be required to avoid the A4260 through Kidlington by way of a suitable condition.
47. Transport officers consider that the proposed access from the development site onto Langford Lane does not raise highway safety concerns. A new right turn lane would need to be provided in the centre of Langford Lane and details of this along with final details of the site access and the relocation of a bus stop can be agreed through condition.
48. I am satisfied that an acceptable TA has been carried out and provides full details of the impact of the development on the immediate and surrounding highway network. Whilst the development would lead to some increase in traffic on the local and surrounding highway network I share the view of transport officers that this would not be to unacceptable levels. I consider the proposal accords with policy W6 of the OMWLP in this respect.

49. Other Environmental Matters

Impact on neighbouring land uses and residents

50. The development proposed is a modern recycling facility designed to collect waste materials. However, it would handle wastes such as garden waste, soil and chemicals that may produce odours and fumes. The depositing and collecting of waste may also generate noise and dust and the initial construction phase may cause temporary nuisance. The development site is located adjacent to commercial developments to the south and to the west. To the south are offices (Langford Business Park) and car sales showrooms. To the west is the Oxford Spires Business Park, the nearest building at this business park to the proposed site is occupied by Thames Valley Police as its headquarters. This building would be closest to the noisiest operations on the site, namely the loading and unloading of skips. Those residential properties nearest to the site are to the south beyond Langford Lane. There are a number of development plan policies that aim to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents and uses to the proposed development site. Policy W6 of the OMWLP is important as it requires that a waste facility at Langford Lane does not cause unacceptable nuisance in terms of noise, dust, fumes and

smell. Policy ENV1 of the CLP also seeks to control environmental pollution of this nature.

51. Objectors argue that the development will result in these impacts on both neighbouring businesses and nearby residents by way of its general operation as a waste facility. Concerns have been raised by neighbouring businesses that the development is not in keeping with the types of premises currently around the site. Concern was also raised by the operators of Oxford Airport about potential increased risks to airport traffic from bird strike. This latter issue has since been addressed through discussions and recommended conditions.
52. The District Council Anti Social Behaviour Manager originally expressed concern that the noise assessment submitted with the application was not carried out in an appropriate manner and it was not clear what impact there would be on those nearest neighbouring properties. An amended noise assessment has been submitted. This seeks to assess the impact of the proposed HWRC on the local environment from noise. In particular it looks at the impact on:
 - The Thames Valley Police Headquarters (TVPHQ) building and its outside amenity area.
 - Endeavour House (located on Langford Business Park).
 - The car sales showroom to the south of Langford Lane.
 - The residential properties on Evenlode Crescent (from road traffic noise).
53. The amount of noise that would be generated at the Kidlington site has been assessed using noise data from the existing Redbridge HWRC. This was then compared with the ambient noise levels at the Kidlington site which at the time of the survey was an open field. The anticipated noise levels are assessed against British Standard (BS) document 8233 – 1999 ‘Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings Code of Practice’. This BS tabulates noise levels for various internal spaces within buildings and lists two acceptable levels of noise ratings – ‘good’ and ‘reasonable’. The District Council are satisfied with the use of this BS in assessing the application. The applicant has sought to demonstrate that noise ratings from the proposed development meet the good and reasonable noise ratings as follows.
54. The TVPHQ building is the nearest property to the noisiest activities on the proposed site and its eastern elevation is constructed on three floors facing the site. The ground floor of the building has openable windows (albeit restricted) and is used for office space and a canteen. The first and second floors have sealed windows. The noise assessment demonstrates that the impact on the first and second floors and the canteen space would meet a ‘good’ rating whilst the impact on the ground floor office space would meet a ‘reasonable’ rating. The outside amenity area for this building is situated in a courtyard with a three storey building acting as a barrier between it and the proposed site. The assessment demonstrates that activities from the HWRC would unlikely to be heard above the general ambient noise in this amenity area.

55. Endeavour House to the south of Langford Lane is a modern building with sealed windows on the elevation that faces the HWRC site. The impact on this building would be 'good' rating. The car showroom building has openable windows; the impact on this building would be a 'good' rating. The impact of increased traffic noise to those residential properties on Evenlode Crescent has been assessed against the HMSO document 'Calculation of Road Traffic Noise – 1998'. This demonstrates that the impact of noise from increased traffic on these properties would be negligible.
56. The District Council Anti Social Behaviour Officer has considered the amended noise assessment and is satisfied with the way in which the assessment has been carried out and raises no objections to the application in term of noise impacts. He considers that a number of noise reduction measures as set out in the submitted noise assessment should be required through condition, these would include measures such as reducing noise from plant and equipment and only using machinery during specified operating hours. In my view, on the advice of the District Anti-social Behaviour officer, the applicant has carried out an appropriate assessment that demonstrates the noise generated from the HWRC meets the requirements of BS document 8233 and would not have a significant impact on those neighbouring properties and uses to the site.
57. An air quality statement has been submitted with the application which shows that mitigation measures can be put in place to reduce dust from the construction phase and reduce odours from the handling and storage of waste. Waste would be collected and stored on the site in skips. The waste would only remain on site in the skips for a limited period, in some instances only up to 24 hours, before being taken away. Skips are also proposed to be covered to reduce potential odours and dust. Dust from the construction of the facility can be minimised by measures to be included within a construction phase management plan, details of which can be agreed through condition.
58. The layout proposed for the site is designed so that the areas where waste would be deposited into skips and stored would be on the northern half of the site beyond the proposed reuse building. This would ensure that these operations are as far away as possible from those nearest commercial and residential properties to the south of the Langford Lane. The existing and proposed landscaping around the site would in my view reduce the impact to the nearest adjacent neighbouring properties, particularly those to the west. The nearest dwellings are about 190 metres to the south east. A greater number are further to the south and south east and are separated from the site by existing commercial activities. In my view these dwellings are a sufficient distance from the site that the impact on them would be limited.
59. The public opening hours of the site would be limited to 8am to 5pm, the hours that site operations could take place would be limited to 7pm. The facility would open for late night opening (until 8pm) for one night a week in the late spring, summer and early autumn. In my view these hours are not excessive and would limit the hours during which noise would be generated.

60. Comments have been received that the type of development proposed is not in-keeping with the types of development that currently surround the site. As mentioned previously the site has been a long standing local plan allocation for the use that is proposed. The facility proposed is modern in terms of its appearance and operation and as discussed in other sections of this report the impact on neighbouring properties and uses is not considered to be detrimental and the appearance of the built development can be satisfactorily softened by the proposed landscaping.
61. The applicant has sought to demonstrate that the development would not cause unacceptable nuisance to the surrounding area. As well as planning permission, the site would also be subject to Environmental Permitting Regulations. This permit issued by the Environment Agency would include control of a) permitted activities on the site; b) the types of waste that could be accepted; c) emissions of substances to air, water and land, d) odour and e) noise and vibration. Conditions can be imposed which seek to control nuisance and reduce the impact on neighbouring commercial and residential uses. The District Council have no objection to the application in respect of noise, odour and dust. I am therefore of the opinion that the application fully satisfies the requirements of policy W6 of the OMWLP and ENV1 of the CLP.

Visual intrusion

62. The site is bounded by open countryside to the north and east, by Langford Lane and commercial development to the south and further commercial development to the west. It is important that the visual impact of development here is minimised.
63. Policy W6 of the OMWLP requires the development to be screened from the surrounding landscape. Policies C7 and C8 of the CLP protect landscape and open countryside from development. Objections to the application have been received on the grounds that the development will harm the landscape. The District Council have also raised a number of detailed concerns in relation to the visual impact of the proposed canopies and areas of hardstanding, and consider that the proposed landscaping could be improved, the need to protect retained trees adjacent to the site and to keep the site tidy and free from waste.
64. The site is already well screened to the east and the west. The submitted revised landscaping scheme shows planting on all sides of the development. This proposed planting varies in its density around each boundary. Nevertheless in conjunction with existing landscaping it would provide screening from each viewpoint around the site, including from the surrounding open countryside. The view of the development from Langford Lane would be more open as the current hedge along this frontage would be removed. However, it would still be screened by areas of landscaping in each corner of the site and low level planting up to the vehicle entrance. Trees outside of the site but adjacent to its boundaries can be protected by tree protection measures which can be imposed by a suitable condition.

65. As already discussed in paragraph 58 the waste operations on the site would be set back from the Langford Lane frontage. The maximum height of the reuse building and the waste skip canopies would be 5.9m and 5m respectively which would not be of a greater scale than the surrounding development. The proposed canopies over the waste skip areas are not essential to the operation of the recycling facility. However, they would provide cover for the visiting public and would enable the facility to be considered 'all-weather'. As already discussed the existing and proposed landscaping around the site can be sufficient to ensure that the visual impact of the development is limited, this in turn can reduce the wider impact of the canopies. There is proposed of necessity, significant areas of hardstanding. The landscaping scheme would reduce visual impact of the hard surfaces and soften the overall appearance of the site. The hard surfaces proposed are needed to provide a safe and efficient facility for use by staff and visitors. The hard surfaces would incorporate the use of a sustainable drainage system (SUDS).
66. In my view the existing and proposed landscaping combined with the heights of the structures would ensure the visual impact of the development is minimised and, where needed, softened. I do consider that further tree planting could be incorporated within and along the boundaries of the site to further enhance the submitted landscaping scheme. Conditions are recommended that require the final details of a landscaping scheme to be submitted and agreed which could incorporate additional tree planting. This would ensure that the landscaping is appropriate in terms of its location and mix of species. There is therefore no conflict with policy W6 of the OMWLP and C7 and C8 of the CLP.
67. Operations at the site would be monitored by the County Council's Waste Management team through a monitoring performance framework. The framework would cover all on-site practices and would ensure that good house-keeping is in order. The Environmental Permit needed for the site to operate would include a requirement to keep stored waste in containers to prevent waste being blown around and to keep the site tidy and in good order.

Biodiversity

68. The application site is adjacent to the Langford Meadows LWS. The Rushy Meadows SSSI is located approximately 500 metres to the south. The site itself is not considered to be of any value in terms of its biodiversity.
69. Policy NRM5 of the SEP and C1 of the CLP seeks to protect and improve the regions biodiversity and aims to ensure that nature conservation sites and SSSI's are not damaged from development. Policy PE14 of the OMWLP also protects sites of nature conservation importance from waste developments. Concerns have been raised that the development could have a negative impact on the LWS and the SSSI. In particular, the concerns relate to the impact on watercourses that feed into these sites. Policy W3 of the OWMLP and CLP ENV1 seek to protect the water environment.

70. Natural England and the Council's ecologist have both been consulted on the application. They raise no objection to the application subject to the final details of a drainage scheme being submitted to demonstrate that water from the site will not run off into watercourses that feed into the SSSI or LWS. This can be imposed by condition.
71. In my view the proposed development is sufficient distance from the Rushy Meadows SSSI to ensure that there would be no direct impact in terms of its visual appearance and setting. It is important that watercourses that feed this SSSI are not affected and, as recommended, by consultees a suitable condition is proposed that will ensure the drainage scheme for the site addresses this. This condition will also protect the adjacent LWS. There would therefore be no conflict with policies W3 of the OMWLP and ENV1 of the CLP. In terms of the visual impact on the adjacent LWS I consider this would be minimal due to existing and proposed screening between the two sites.
72. It is proposed that the development site itself would benefit from biodiversity enhancements such as woodland planting and wildflower grassland creation compared to its existing use as an arable field. This is welcomed and consistent with policy NRM5 of the SEP and C1 of the CLP.
73. The Council's ecologist has assessed the application in terms of its impact on European Protected Species such as Great Crested Newts. She considers they are unlikely to be present. In such circumstances no further consideration of the Conservation & Habitats Regulations is necessary. The ecologists recommend a number of conditions to ensure protection and enhancement of biodiversity. These are set out in the recommendation.

Conclusion

74. The proposed HWRC at Langford Lane is an important component of the Council's strategy (as Waste Disposal Authority) to provide places where the public can bring surplus waste materials which are not normally collected through District Council's collection services. HWRC's are managed to ensure that the maximum amounts of this waste can be re-used and recycled.
75. The principles behind the proposal are strongly supported by waste policy.
76. The site itself is in the Green Belt, but it is specifically allocated in the OMWLP (policy W6) for the development as proposed subject to it not causing unacceptable nuisance, being well screened and to it being demonstrated that there is no more acceptable site available for the facility. Policy W6 is a saved policy within an adopted local plan and as such forms part of the Development Plan against which individual planning applications should be assessed.
77. I am satisfied that the site search undertaken demonstrates that there is no more acceptable site. I am satisfied that there would not be unacceptable harm to safety or amenity arising from the traffic generated by the site. Site operator lorries can be directed to avoid the A4260 through Kidlington.

78. I am satisfied that the overall site design and layout proposed is good, and that the site and activity is and can be well screened from its neighbours. The application is acceptable in terms of the impacts of noise, odour and dust and the District Council Anti Social Behaviour Manager raises no objection in respect of these matters. Biodiversity can be protected and enhanced.
79. In my view therefore I believe that the proposal is consistent with all aspects of W6 of the MWLP and that there are very special circumstances justifying the development being allowed in this Green Belt location by virtue of the fact that the need for this facility has long been established; a Green Belt location for this facility is considered the most appropriate for the area of population that it must serve (principally to the north of Oxford); there are no more acceptable sites to serve this area of the County and the benefits of dealing with the county's waste in a sustainable manner.

Recommendation

80. **It is RECOMMENDED that subject to the development not being called in by the Secretary of State that Application No. R3.0176/10 be approved subject to conditions to be determined by the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Growth and Infrastructure) to include the following matters :**
 1. **That the development must be carried out strictly in accordance with the particulars contained in the application and the plans accompanying (as amended) subject to conditions covering matters below.**
 2. **That the development shall commence within 3 years of the date of the permission.**
 3. **That samples of the external materials (including roof materials) proposed to be used shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of development.**
 4. **That the final details and location of the design of waste skip canopies shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development.**
 5. **That details of the sustainable features of the proposed building shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development.**
 6. **That no development shall take place until the trees, bushes and hedgerows on and immediately adjacent to the site which are to be retained and which are adjacent to or within the development area, have been protected during building operations by means of a protective fence or other suitable measures.**
 7. **That the site be landscaped and planted with trees and shrubs in accordance with a comprehensive planting and landscaping**

scheme submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development.

8. That all planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner.
9. The development permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application.
10. A surface water drainage scheme shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development (in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England). Drainage from the site shall not link into any ditches or watercourses which may lead directly or indirectly to the Rushy Meadows SSSI. Measures shall be secured to ensure the proposal does not cause contamination to ground water which may in turn pollute the SSSI.
11. Vegetation shall only be removed between 1 September and 31 March as this is outside of the bird breeding season.
12. Ramps shall be installed into any deep excavations left open overnight to ensure wildlife can escape.
13. That details of bat roost features on the proposed building shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development.
14. An Ecological Management Plan shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development.
15. A Construction Phase Management and Travel Plan shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development (in consultation with the local highway authority). The Plan shall include details of measures to reduce dust from construction activities.
16. That the final details of site access from Langford Lane shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development (in consultation with the local highway authority).
17. That a scheme of directional signage for vehicles accessing the site shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development (in consultation with the local highway authority). The scheme shall be implemented prior to the first use of the site.
18. That the details of the routes used by site operator heavy goods vehicles accessing the site shall be submitted and approved prior

to the commencement of the development (in consultation with the local highway authority). Heavy goods vehicles shall not access the site through Kidlington via the A4260.

19. Within 3 months of the first use of the site the bus stop adjacent to the site shall be moved to a location approved by the local highway authority.
20. Within 3 months of the first use of the site a travel plan statement shall be submitted to and approved by the local highway authority.
21. That the details of the proposed lighting columns, their cowlings and predicted light overspill levels shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development.
22. Details of measures to control noise from the site (as set out in paragraph 2.4.2 of Addendum to Environmental Noise Survey Report dated April 2010 – August 2011) shall be submitted and agreed prior to the commencement of the development. All measures to control noise shall be implemented for the life of the development.
23. Details of measures to control dust and odour from the site (as set out in paragraphs 6.1 to 6.2.4 of Air Quality Statement dated July 2010) shall be submitted and agreed prior to the commencement of the development. All measures to control dust and odour shall be implemented for the life of the development.
24. That the details of coverings for waste containers shall be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of the development.
25. The hours of use of the site shall be restricted to the following times:
 - Public opening hours to be between the hours of 8.00am to 5.00pm
 - Operating hours to be between the hours of 7.00am to 7.00pm

In addition:

- Public opening hours to be between the hours of 8.00am to 8.00pm on Thursdays (1 April – 30 September)
- Operating hours to be between the hours of 7.00am to 8.30pm on Thursdays (1 April – 30 September)

No operations on Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day.

Informatives

Environment Agency:

- The site will require an environmental permit
- It is a legal requirement to have a site waste management plan for all new construction projects worth more than £300,000.

Ecological

If any protected species are found all work should cease immediately and no further work shall take place until the protected species officer has been consulted.

Archaeological

If archaeological finds do occur during development, the County Archaeologist shall be notified in order that he may visit the site and advise as necessary.

MARTIN TUGWELL

Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Growth and Infrastructure)

Background papers: File Ref: R3.0176/09 8.3/6089/6
September 2011

ANNEX 1**Consultation Responses and Third Party Representations** (Copies of all responses are available in the Member's Resource Centre)

An initial period of consultation and notification was carried out in December 2010/January 2011. Further periods of consultation were carried out in June/July 2011 and August/September 2011 on amendments to the application. A summary of all responses is set out below:

1. ConsultationsDecember 2010/January 2011 comments:

Cherwell District Council (CDC) - CDC deferred commenting on the application until further information was submitted in relation to the strategy announcement for household waste recycling centres.

Kidlington Parish Council - Objected for the following reasons:

- Because the site now needs to accommodate a much wider catchment area this automatically rules out the idea that 'very special circumstances' exist to overrule Green Belt objections;
- Green Belt considerations have not been given sufficient weight and very special circumstances have not been demonstrated;
- The site is not sustainable given that it would have a much wider catchment area than originally envisaged;
- Other identified sites are now more suitable, for example the Gosford Grain Silo;
- The site selection criteria is arbitrary and biased;
- The traffic modelling is inaccurate given that the traffic generation would be from a wider catchment area. There is no information explaining how the applicant proposes to mitigate traffic impacts;
- Unclear how much waste the site will handle given that it would accommodate more than just local waste;
- The site has not been included in previous consultations on the Minerals and Waste Development Framework;
- The development is not compatible with neighbouring land uses of Spires Business Park and would impact on local amenity;
- Proposed screening is inadequate;
- Insufficient information provided on the operation of the site – hours of opening, lighting, construction process, etc;
- Impact on the hydrology of adjacent wildlife sites.

Begbroke Parish Council - Insufficient traffic data has been provided. Concerned about the impact on the village as northbound traffic heading for Langford Lane would come through Begbroke.

Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Council - No objection but concerned that:

- The closure of Redbridge and other sites will put more of a focus on Kidlington bringing more traffic on roads in and around the village;
- Another site should remain open to the south of Oxford;

- Concern about pollution to neighbouring wildlife areas.

Woodstock Town Council - Object for the following reasons:

- The site will have a much wider catchment for users than was originally intended, for example from Oxford and towns in the north of the County;
- Traffic modelling data used appears to be out of date;
- Impact on the Green Belt and ecology;
- Increased traffic on the A44;
- Lack of consultation on the proposal with the Town Council as the development will impact the town from increased through traffic.

Oxford Green Belt Network - Recognise the sustainability advantages of a site to the north of Oxford but this seems contradictory to closing the Redbridge site. Civic amenity sites of this nature should be located on industrial sites and the present status of the land is not a justification for its development, therefore have concerns as to whether very special circumstances exist. Ecological implications on nearby sensitive sites need to be considered carefully.

Oxford Airport - Initially concerned from an aerodrome safeguarding perspective as the development could constitute a serious bird attractant which could increase the numbers of birds transiting across and in the vicinity of the airfield. On receipt of further information raise no objection provided that:

- The ponds operate as dry ponds only;
- The roof of the proposed building is not green;
- All waste containers should be covered;
- All planting should be as indicated on the proposed site layout plan;
- The airport reserves the right to have the site operator instigate a Bird Management Plan if in the future there is perceived to be a significant rise in the number of birds as a result of operations at the site.

Campaign to Protect Rural England Oxfordshire (CPRE) - No objection but concerned about:

- The sustainability of the site now appears to be in question given that other sites will be closing;
- The development constitutes another creeping urbanisation of the Green Belt and loss of its openness. If there is a need to develop in the Green Belt it should be directed to a brownfield site;
- Impact on ecology, wildlife and the landscape of the area;
- Impact on adjacent land uses.

Environment Agency (EA) – No objection subject to conditions to cover:

- That the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment;
- The submission of a sustainable surface water drainage scheme prior to the commencement of the development.

Natural England – No objection subject to conditions to cover:

- The submission of an appropriate drainage scheme which does not link into any ditches or watercourses which run directly or indirectly to the Rushy Meadows SSSI;
- Measures to ensure that the proposal does not cause contamination of ground water.

Archaeology – No objection.

Transport Development Control (TDC) – Originally objected to the application on the basis that there was a significant lack of supporting data and a number of unjustified assumptions made. A number of shortcomings of the Transport Statement needed to be resolved to provide a fair appraisal of the local highway network and impact of the proposed development.

County Ecologist – No objection subject to conditions to cover:

- Restrictions on the time period of works to protect breeding birds, reptiles and amphibians;
- Protection of badgers;
- Details of new bat roost features to be provided around the site;
- Protection of existing vegetation and landscaping and confirmation of an agreed landscaping plan, including long term management;
- Submission of an ecological management plan prior to the commencement of development.

June/July 2011 comments:

Cherwell District Council – The proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, taking into account the closure of existing household waste sites, it is considered that there are no very special circumstances for the current proposal in this location which outweighs the harm by reason of its inappropriateness and the harm caused to the openness of the Green Belt, which would set aside the normal presumption against such inappropriate development. The proposal is considered to be contrary to PPG2: Green Belts and Policy GB1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

If the County Council considers that the principle of the scheme to be acceptable the following detailed points should be considered:

- Concern over the proposed canopies situated over the visitor parking adjacent to the household waste disposal areas as this results in further built development encroaching into the countryside and Green Belt and these canopies are not considered to be wholly necessary;
- Consider that the proposed landscaping could be improved, particularly along the eastern and northern boundaries of the site to provide a better screen to the development;
- Would suggest a management scheme is put in place to ensure the good house keeping of the site to stop waste being swept to the surrounding areas;
- Consider the amount of tarmac is a significant amount and would request that this be kept to as little as possible;

- Suggest the recommendations in relation to ecology are carried out and adhered to, to ensure the development complies with protected species legislation prior to the commencement of the development;
- The Anti Social Behaviour Manager has questioned the way in which the acoustic survey has been carried out due to the comparison exercise carried out. The usual approach and indeed that recommended in PPG24 Planning and Noise is to compare the activity noise level (measured as an LAeq(t)) with the current background noise level at the development site (measured as an LN90) applying British Standard BS 4142:1997 if appropriate. Would ask the County to ensure that they are happy with the conclusions set out in the report and the way in which it has been carried out;
- Suggest that the recommendations in relation to ecology are carried out and adhered to;
- Raise concerns in relation to the loss of the hedgerow on the site frontage to Langford Lane, would suggest that this is retained. The planting proposed on the northern boundary of the site is outside the site boundary so it is important that this can be accessed and maintained. Would suggest additional information is provided relating to the protection of trees on the west boundary of the site as some are protected by TPO's. Additional tree planting could be provided within the site and along its boundaries in various locations in order to appropriately screen it.

Kidlington Parish Council - Objected for the following reasons:

- The current proposal remains unacceptable on Green Belt, sustainability and traffic grounds;
- The proposed waste strategy is unsound, it fails to address development plans and waste needs for Oxfordshire up to 2026;
- The site selection criteria ('within a five mile radius north of Peartree roundabout') is not appropriate and excludes the 'northern gateway site' to the north of Peartree. By excluding this site the applicant has not complied with the proximity principle that sites should be located as close as possible to the source of waste;
- The development of the grain silo site for this facility should be fully explored with Chiltern Railways;
- The facility will provide for more than just 'minor trade' waste;
- Policy W6 of the OMWLP is out of date and should not be relied on;
- Economic benefits of the facility are not very special circumstances to overrule Green Belt objections;
- Concerned that the weekend opening of Redbridge for the public will not be realised due to the need to find private investment;
- Impact on adjacent wildlife site and Oxford Airport due to birdstrike;
- Impact on existing and future adjacent businesses;
- A future waste facility at Bicester Eco Town may not come forward and should not be relied upon;
- The submitted TA includes a number of inaccuracies and underestimates current traffic problems;
- Appreciate the Council's need to save money but the development puts a significant blight on the Kidlington economy, traffic levels and local wildlife.

- Conclusion remains that the site is unacceptable on traffic grounds. The process to identify the site is badly flawed and the strategy that underpins the application is unsound and misleading.

Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Council - Concerned about the amount of traffic that would be generated through the Parish, in particular from the Bicester area. Also concerns over the impact on the adjacent field which is an important habitat for birds.

Begbroke Parish Council – Consider there is insufficient traffic data for the site and that this could impact unfavourably on Begbroke. North bound traffic heading for Langford Lane will use the A44 and come through Begbroke, this will cause problems for residents crossing the A44. Also consider that the development will have a detrimental environmental impact on our village, locality and local SSSI.

Bladon Parish Council - Wish to ensure that the development does not result in an increase in heavy goods vehicles through Bladon. Bladon suffers from a considerable amount of HGV traffic at present. Clear and designated routes should be put in place to direct traffic away from the A4095 and the Parish Council would be pleased to receive details of any routeing agreements.

Oxford Green Belt Network – No additional comments to those previously submitted.

Environment Agency (EA) – No additional comments to those previously submitted.

Natural England – No additional comment to those previously submitted.

Transport Development Control (TDC) – No objection. Officers make the following points:

- The conclusions of the submitted Transport Assessment (TA) are fair and appropriate. The assessment demonstrates that the development would have a negligible impact upon the function and capacity of the local highway network and therefore would not result in any significant delay to highway users;
- The A44 from the west of the site is a more desirable route for motorists than the route via Kidlington along the A4260. To promote this route it will be necessary to provide an appropriate scheme of signage which should be agreed prior to opening. It is imperative that HGVs and other large vehicles follow this route and the local planning authority may wish to consider a routeing agreement for larger vehicles;
- The proposed access from the site to Langford Lane does not raise any concerns of highway safety or convenience. A right turn lane would be provided and no significant impact of this is foreseen;
- The bus stop next to the site would need to be relocated. A condition should be attached requiring the bus stop to be relocated in accordance with an approved scheme, including any appropriate footway links or pedestrian crossing;
- Conditions should be imposed which require – the submission of a construction phase travel plan; a final plan of the site access to be submitted and agreed and a travel plan statement prepared and submitted.

Rights of Way Officer – No objections.

August/September 2011 comments:

Cherwell District Council – The Anti Social Behaviour Manager has confirmed that he has no objections to the application in respect of noise, odour and dust and would like conditions imposed in line with the BS 5228 recommendations contained within the addendum to the Environmental Noise Survey Report dated August 2011.

Transport Development Control (TDC) – No objection, previous comments and recommendations remain appropriate.

Environment Agency – No further comments to make.

2. Third Party Representations

December 2010/January 2011 comments:

11 letters were received from neighbouring residents and other third parties. They made the following points:

Potential impacts on the Green Belt:

- The development is inappropriate in the Green Belt and would have a clear impact on its openness;
- The 'need' for the facility does not amount to very special circumstances of development within the Green Belt;
- The Council needs to be satisfied that very special circumstances exist for the development in the Green Belt and the applicant has demonstrated robustly that there are no suitable available sites;
- No locational need has been demonstrated for this type of waste management facility within the Green Belt.

Potential impacts on local people and businesses:

- Unacceptable land use adjacent to a business park where there will be impacts on amenity due to increased traffic, noise, light pollution and smell;
- A waste recycling centre will detract from the profile of the adjacent business park;
- High quality and substantial screening should be provided between the application site and the Oxford Spires Business Park;
- The application does not fully consider the impact from noise, traffic and dust on all nearby residential and employment properties;
- Increase in traffic and pollution through and in Kidlington.

Potential impacts on the environment:

- Impact on adjacent protected wildlife, landscape areas and important habitats
- Concerns over litter and other pollution and dumping outside of the entrance gates;

Traffic:

- Concerned that appropriate capacity for traffic is provided at the junction to the site and the surrounding network junctions;
- The submitted traffic assessment is void if the intention of the Kidlington site is to now take more waste than originally thought (because of the closure of other sites);
- The traffic assessment does not take account of traffic along Langford Lane itself and the impact of the entrance to the site has not been fully considered. Langford Lane is an important route for local businesses and emergency vehicles;
- The recycling centre will bring extra traffic down Langford Lane or through Kidlington and cause more congestion, this road cannot take more traffic and will need to take more with the extra offices being developed;

General comments:

- Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan waste policy W6 identifies Langford Lane as being suitable only if it can be demonstrated that no alternative suitable sites are available. It was decided that an application would be made on this site before the site search document was carried out;
- The thresholds and criteria in the site search document do not appear to be appropriate. For example, no justification is made as to why sites shouldn't be within 100 metres of residential properties, the exclusion of brownfield sites and sites that are not entirely within flood zone 1. Some identified sites do appear to be suitable so therefore the site search has not proven categorically that the application site is the only alternative and therefore special circumstances do not exist. A full re-examination of all potential sites should be carried out prior to the determination of these proposals;
- The site is described as vacant but in fact has been used for agricultural purposes (the growing of arable crops);
- The application states that 55 tonnes of hazardous waste will be processed through the site each year, this is however contradictory to question 23 of the planning application form;
- The recycling facility should be considered in an alternative location;
- The site studies are no longer relevant as other recycling centres will be closing;

June/July 2011 comments:

9 letters were received from neighbouring residents and other third parties. They made the following points:

Potential impacts on the Green Belt:

- Concern about the impact on the Green Belt, that more suitable brownfield sites exist and the impact on the Green Belt would now be greater due to the greater catchment area of the facility;
- The need for the development in the Green Belt has not been justified;
- The development is inappropriate and there is insufficient justification of very special circumstances;
- The very special circumstances put forward do not mitigate against the impact on the openness of the Green Belt;
- Green Belt land should be kept open and boundaries maintained;

- Sites in the Green Belt should not have made it through the first sieving assessment of alternative sites due to the impact on landscape.

Potential impacts on local people and businesses:

- Continued concerns relating to noise from increased traffic and operations on the site and air pollution to nearby residential properties;
- The facility would degrade the character of the area in the long term because it is a use that is not compatible with the surrounding area, for example high-end offices and business that attracts additional employment. The impact on these would be a material consideration;
- The impact on local businesses has been underplayed in the application;
- Concerned about the impact on the amenity of neighbouring business tenants from noise, smell, traffic and dust;
- Impact on the working environment for those at Oxford Spires Business Park;
- Windows in neighbouring businesses will need to remain shut due to noise, smell and dust;
- Hours of operation are unacceptable and excessive (including operating hours) to neighbouring uses.

Potential impacts on the environment:

- Impact on adjacent wetland and protected and priority species on this land and the actual development site.

Traffic:

- There would be an increase in traffic through the centre of Kidlington due to the huge numbers of vehicle movements. Langford Lane already suffers from long queues and this would be worsened impacting on nearby properties. It would add another entrance onto a busy road;
- The submitted transport assessment does not assess the impact on all surrounding areas and the impact on local traffic flow and traffic generated pollution;
- The site layout and access arrangements close to existing junctions on Langford Lane are unacceptable.

General comments

- Policy W6 of the WOLP is now out of date, little weight should be given to it given that more up-to-date policies are in place;
- The location at Kidlington is unsustainable to serve the populations of Oxford and Kidlington; an alternative site to the south would be more sustainable;
- The application is a departure from the development plan and should be referred to the Secretary of State should permission be granted;
- Langford Lane is an important route for emergency vehicles;
- The development would provide a much needed facility to the north of Oxford but concerned that the closure of other facilities would lead to more fly tipping;
- The application states that the site hasn't grown crops since 2009, this is inaccurate;
- Concerns over the site selection process and its suitability in terms of assessing constraints and ruling out of sites that may be acceptable, alternative sites have been dismissed too readily. For example the failure to consider sites not entirely

within flood zone 1, the ruling out of sites put forward for the LDF and the criteria for distances to residential properties;

- A brownfield site should be chosen over Langford Lane;
- Why a location in the countryside as opposed to on an industrial site has not been demonstrated;
- The tests for selecting sites in PPS10 have not been followed;
- The levels of need for the facility have not been demonstrated and this is a material consideration;
- The existing pattern of HWRC's would be suitable in the county;
- The facility should only take trade waste in the week and open to public at weekends only.

Site Search

This Annex describes the process of the applicants site search. The full assessment document is available with the application in the Members' Resource Centre.

1. The applicant has carried out a site search for a new household waste recycling centre to the north of Oxford. The objective of the search was to find a suitable site to the north of Oxford to serve its intended catchment population and thus improve recycling rates.
2. In establishing the criteria to be used within the site search the applicant has used guidance contained within PPS10 (Annex E) and policies within the OMWLP to identify physical, environmental, community and transport constraints to assess potential site locations against. This criteria for the initial search exercise were as follows:
 - Site size a minimum 4 acres (1.62 hectares)
 - Within a 8km (5 miles) radius of Pear Tree Roundabout (a semi circular search area to cover north of Oxford i.e. no further south than the centre point of Pear Tree)
 - All of the site in Flood Zone 1
 - All of the site >100m from the nearest dwelling
 - Within 5km of an A road
 - Not within 8km (5 miles) of an existing/proposed HWRC
 - Site is not a Local Development Framework housing site
3. In order to identify a long list of potential sites to assess against the criteria the applicant has looked at a variety of sources of information, for example commercial property websites, Local Development Framework submission sites, etc. 162 sites were identified (including some multiple occurrences of the same site), each were assessed against the above criteria. Sites that met all of the above criteria were included within a short list. Where data was unavailable for a site it was included within the short list for comprehensiveness. The short list of sites was reviewed and research undertaken into some sites to investigate outstanding issues.
4. The final short listed sites (in total seven) were then subjected to options appraisals which assessed them against the following criteria:
 - Housing amenity assessment
 - Economics of developing a suitable site
 - Highways – accessibility and technical issues (getting to site and access to site/visibility)
 - Proximity to end processing plant/facilities
 - Landscape and environmental issues
 - Deliverability within timescales/availability

- Area of demand/service location requirement – proximity to main population centre
 - Existing/allocated land use type
5. The seven sites were assessed and then scored/ranked against the above option appraisal criteria. Criteria relating to economics of developing the site and deliverability were given extra weighting to reflect their importance. Table 1 below sets out the seven identified sites, their scoring against the assessment criteria and their overall ranking as a result of the scoring.
6. The top three ranked sites in Table 1 were:
- **1st** Land North of Langford Lane/East Spires Park, Kidlington
 - **2nd** Land at Stratfield Brake south of Kidlington
 - **3rd** Gosford Grain Silos
7. The applicant considered that land to the north of Langford Lane should be pursued because it performs best against the criteria in the option appraisal.
8. The site search exercise was reviewed to take account of the County Council's HWRC strategy approved in April 2011. It was not considered necessary to amend the original criteria or weighting of the criteria to reflect the County Council's revised strategy.

Table 1 – Option Appraisal

| North Oxford Site Search | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|---|---|--|------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| QUALITY MATRIX | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SITE REF | OPTION | Housing amenity Assessment | Economics of developing a suitable site | Accessibility / Technical Highways Issues | Proximity to end processing plant/facilities | Landscape and Environmental issues | Deliverability within timescales/ availability | Area of demand/service location requirement | Existing or Allocated Land Use Type | TOTAL | Ranking |
| CDD50 | Begbroke Employment Zone (SEE ALSO CLP 11) | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 300 | 7 |
| CLP1 | Oxford Spires Bus Pk, Kidlington | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 310 | 6 |
| MWLP2 / 181 | Land North of Langford Lane / East Spires Park, Kidlington | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 380 | 1 |
| OCC2 | Land at Stratfield Brake south of Kidlington | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 370 | 2 |
| CL-01 / SR-15 / 121 | Old Brickworks / Brickworks Farm, Bletchington | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 330 | 4 |
| 012 | Gosford Grain Silos | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 350 | 3 |
| 070 | Spires Business Park (TWA Depot), Kidlington | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 320 | 5 |
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| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
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| Housing amenity assessment | highly significant adverse impacts | major adverse impacts | limited adverse impacts | Adverse impacts but mitigation would make acceptable | No adverse impacts |
| Economics of developing a suitable site | land, development and abnormal costs | | | | modernisation/refurbishment works |
| Highways- accessibility and technical issues (getting to site and access to site / visibility) | poor | | | | good |
| Proximity to end processing plant/facilities | furthest | | | | nearest |
| Landscape and Environmental issues | major | | some | | minor |
| Deliverability within timescales/ availability | no | | possible | | yes |
| Area of demand/service location requirement-proximity to main population centre | furthest to Pear Tree Roundabout (</= 5 miles) | </= 4 miles | </= 3 miles | </= 2 miles | closest to Pear Tree Roundabout (</= 1 mile) |
| Existing / allocated land use type | major conflict | | | | compliance |

Factors include NNRs, SSSIs, LNRs, AONB, Green Belt, Ramsar, SPA, SAC, NVZs, Ancient Woodland, Common Land, Section 15 land, ESAs and Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Kidlington - HWRC

App No: R3.0167/10

