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Update to Planning Application WSCC/007/24

9 May 2024

Dear Edward,

I am writing to you on behalf of our client, Southern Water Services Limited, regarding the planning application for the construction of an integrated constructed wetland at Staplefield Wastewater Treatment Works, Cuckfield Road, Haywards Heath, RH17 6ES. The planning application reference is WSCC/007/24.

In response to the various consultation comments received in relation to the planning application, the Planning Statement (document reference 639529-MM-X-RPT-0001) has been updated to include Section 5.9 *Other Planning Considerations*. Section 5.9 covers the following:

- Site Selection
- Cost Implications
- Using an Integrated Constructed Wetland

As per Policies W6 and W13 of the Waste Local Plan, it is required that, where expansions to wastewater treatment facilities extend beyond existing sites, they are required in order to meet environmental standards and regulatory provisions (W6) and, where they are located within protected landscapes (W13), proposals for small-scale facilities should meet local needs that can be accommodated without undermining the objectives of the designation.

Further to this, in relation to Policy W13 of the Waste Local Plan, queries have been raised relating to the siting of the wetland within a protected landscape. In order to comply with Policy W13, a proposal should meet the criteria of the High Weald Management Plan whilst also demonstrating that the intended use of the facility would accommodate the local need without undermining the objective of its AONB designation. The High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (HWJAC) has provided a response to the application. The applicant has taken on board these comments and a response to these comments is provided below:

- Impact upon character of area

The HWJAC advised that “further information regarding the proposed track construction” be requested prior to determination; and that “the tracks should be of

permeable construction, to avoid impermeable hardstanding being introduced into the field that would adversely impact on natural beauty”.

Tracks will be of permeable construction. Drawing 752214-UAX-ZZ-ZZ-DR-EN-00005 shows the detail of the tracks, which will comprise 50mm of screening (stone chippings) and 150mm of gravel (MOT type 3).

- Proposed planting

The HWJAC requested a number of amendments to the proposed scheme planting. We have sought to adhere to these suggestions and have updated Landscape Management Plan (C02_23539_4_Landscape management Plan) and Landscape Plan (752214-UAX-ZZ-ZZ-DR-EN-00007), which reflect these updates.

- Lighting

The HWJAC has requested a condition in relation to the PIR task light referenced within the Planning Statement. However, as noted within the HWJAC response, the proposed PIR task light is located within the existing Wastewater Treatment Works, and as such is not within the planning application boundary. We would therefore request that no such condition is added.

With regards to the points associated with the local need and how the wetland represents a suitable alternative to more traditional on-site treatment processes this is addressed in section 5.9 of the updated planning statement as set out above. It highlights that Southern Water is (i) to upgrade their works to comply with a more stringent Phosphorus removal permit and (ii) to satisfy their key regulators’ demand to maximise the use of nature-based solutions where possible.

I hope that this additional information is useful in helping you determine the planning application.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely,

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