



Blackstone Wastewater Treatment Works – Proposed Motor Control Centre (MCC) Kiosk

Planning Application Supporting Statement

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1. Introduction

This document is in support of a planning application relating to the installation of a new Motor Control Centre (MCC) kiosk at Blackstone Wastewater Treatment Works (WTW), Blackstone Lane, Blackstone, West Sussex, BN5 9SZ (grid reference: TQ 24296 16596).

Blackstone WTW is a key Southern Water Services Limited (Southern Water) operational site that provides wastewater treatment services to the surrounding local area. As a sewerage undertaker, Southern Water is obliged to provide the appropriate facilities for the treatment of wastewater to the required standard by the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations 1994.

The proposed development is required in connection with upgrade works being carried out at Blackstone WTW that will enable compliance with an enhanced discharge permit for phosphorus and iron, as set by the Environment Agency as a part of the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP3). The WINEP3 is a set of actions that the Environment Agency have requested all water companies operating in England, to complete between 2020 and 2025, in order to contribute towards meeting their environmental obligations. The works will therefore improve the quality of the treated effluent that is discharged to the environment.

In order to comply with the enhanced environmental permit and increase in effluent flowrate to be treated, new plant and equipment will be required and is to be installed under Southern Water's permitted development rights for operational land (under Part 13, Class A (g) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015), as: "any other development in, on, over or under operational land other than the provision of a building." The proposed MCC Kiosk will be an integral part of the WTW upgrade and will contain electrical control equipment that is necessary to operate the new plant and equipment.

2. Application Site

2.1. Site Location

The proposed development is located within the existing operational site at Blackstone WTW at grid reference TQ 24296 16596, approximately 2.4km northeast of Henfield and 2km west of Albourne. The WTW is located west of Blackstone Lane as shown on the Site Location Plan (752215-MWX-XX-XX-DR-T-00001 REV P01). The WTW site includes plant and equipment used in the wastewater treatment processes along with areas of amenity grassland. The Motor Control Centre (MCC) kiosk is to be located towards the east of the WTW.

2.2. Surrounding Area

The immediate area surrounding the WTW site comprises the Chess Stream 40m north, and to the west and south is agricultural land. The area across Blackstone Lane comprises woodland that includes scattered trees following the Chess stream along its bank. The WTW is enclosed by trees and hedgerows, which provide visual screening in views from outside.

The wider surrounding area is countryside in character with hedge-bound roads and fields with scattered woodland. The location of the WTW is outside of Settlement Boundaries, reflected by the limited development within the area. The closest residential receptor is approximately 250m south of the proposed MCC kiosk.

The MCC Kiosk is to be placed towards the east WTW boundary within an area that is currently amenity grassland.

2.3. Planning History

The table below summarises the planning history of the site:

Reference	Address	Description	Decision	Date
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DC/05/2312	Sewage Works Blackstone Lane Blackstone West Sussex	Prior Notification to erect 15- metre-high telecommunications "Cypress tree" style mast with antennae, microwave dish, cabinets and fencing	Application Permitted	18 November 2005.
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2.4. Planning Designations

Blackstone WTW and the application site are located within the administrative area of Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council. In planning terms, the site falls within an area defined as Countryside, as it is outside of the Defined Villages Boundary. The closest Public Right of Way is 215m southeast of the WTW.

Blackstone WTW is not located within any other designations. The closest Listed Building is Blackstone Farmhouse (Grade II) 525m to the southwest of the MCC and Old Timbers (Grade II) is 565m southwest.

The northern part of the WTW is within flood zones 2 and 3, as shown on the gov.uk flood map for planning. However, the MCC Kiosk and application site will be entirely within flood zone 1 where there is a low risk of flooding.

3. Proposed Development

3.1. Planning Application

The proposed development for which planning permission is required comprises the installation of a single Motor Control Centre Kiosk (MCC) within the existing Blackstone WTW. The MCC kiosk will be an integral part of essential upgrade works that are being carried out to enhance effluent quality and efficiency at the site.

The outer dimensions of the kiosk will be 7.75m length x 3.3m width x 2.8m height, as shown on the MCC Kiosk Plan and Elevations (drawing no. 752215-MWX-XX-XX-DR-T-

00004 REV P01). The kiosk will be constructed from Glass Reinforced Plastic and coloured Holly Green (BS 4800 14 C 39). The MCC kiosk will contain electrical control equipment that will be used to operate the new plant and equipment.

The existing WTW access road will provide access to the proposed kiosk. The vehicular access to the WTW will remain as existing, via a gate located directly off the public road (Blackstone Lane) to the east.

4. Planning Policy Context

4.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023. The policy guidance it contains which is relevant to the determination of this application includes provision for:

- A presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- Approving development proposals that are sustainable and accord with the development plan without delay.
- Proactive drive and support for sustainable economic development to deliver infrastructure that the country needs.

4.2. Local Planning Policy

The development plan for the proposed development comprises the West Sussex Waste Local Plan (2014). The development plan policies that are relevant to the assessment of the proposals are considered to be:

[West Sussex Waste Local Plan \(2014\):](#)

- Policy W3: Location of Built Waste Management Facilities
- Policy W6: Management of Wastewater and Sewage Sludge

- Policy W11: Character
- Policy W14: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy W15: Historic Environment
- Policy W16: Air, Soil, and Water
- Policy W17: Flooding
- Policy W19: Public Health and Amenity

5. Planning Assessment

5.1. Wastewater Infrastructure

The policies of the development plan are supportive to the provision of infrastructure necessary for effective treatment of wastewater. Policy W3 supports proposals for new facilities within the boundaries of existing waste management sites unless there would be an unacceptable impact on local communities and/or the environment. Policy W6 sets out that proposals for the management of wastewater and sewage sludge will be permitted provided that where possible new facilities are accommodated within existing wastewater treatment sites.

The proposed MCC kiosk will be an integral part of an essential upgrade to the wastewater treatment process at Blackstone WTW to improve the operational efficiency and environmental standards. The MCC kiosk is to be located within the existing operational boundary of Blackstone WTW and will not have an adverse impact on local communities or the environment. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with Policies W3 and W6.

5.2. Landscape and Visual Impact

Policy W11 supports proposals for waste development that would not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the surrounding area. The WTW is not located within an area that is subject to any landscape designations.

The proposed development will be a relatively minor addition in the context of the existing Blackstone WTW site and will not be prominent in views from outside the WTW. The proposed MCC kiosk will be located within the existing WTW operational boundary and the WTW is screened by broadleaved trees and hedgerows to the south, east and north with few if any distant views available into the WTW.

The dimensions, specifications, and placement of the MCC are appropriate for the proposed location and will not harm any valued components of the landscape. The proposed development is therefore consistent with Policy W11.

5.3. Ecology / Biodiversity

Policy W14 supports proposals for waste development where there are no adverse impacts on areas, sites or features of regional or local biodiversity importance.

The development proposals have been assessed by a Southern Water ecologist. There are no statutory designated sites for nature conservation within close proximity of the proposed works. The proposed MCC kiosk is to be located on an area of amenity grass within the existing operational boundary of Blackstone WTW and is unlikely to have any adverse impacts on biodiversity.

The proposed development is therefore consistent with Policy W14.

5.4. Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage

Policy W17 supports proposals for waste development that are not in 'areas at risk of flooding'. The MCC kiosk and application site is within Flood Zone 1, as shown on the GOV.UK Flood Map for Planning, where there is a low risk of flooding.

The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy W17.

5.5. Noise and Local Disturbance

Policy W16 requires proposals for waste development to have no unacceptable impacts on the intrinsic quality of, and where appropriate the quantity of, air, soil, and water resources. Policy W19 supports proposals that generate no unacceptable impact on lighting, noise, dust, odours, and other emissions, including those arising from traffic.

The MCC kiosk will contain electrical control equipment and will not generate any significant noise, odour, vibration, or dust. The development is to be implemented in accordance with the enclosed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP addresses the potential environmental issues associated with the construction works and identifies any mitigation measures proposed. The purpose of the CEMP is to reduce the risk of adverse impact of construction on sensitive environmental receptors, including human health, and to minimise disturbance to the surrounding area.

The proposal will have no significant impact on amenity and is therefore in accordance with Policy W16 and W19.

5.6. Heritage Assets

Policy W15 sets out that waste development proposals will be permitted provided that known features of historic or archaeological importance are conserved and where possible enhanced. This Policy also requires that currently unknown heritage assets would not be adversely affected.

The closest listed building is Blackstone Farmhouse (Grade II), 525m southwest of the MCC and Old Timbers (Grade II) is 565m southwest. Given the distances to these buildings it is unlikely that their settings or historic interest will be affected.

The WTW and application site have been assessed by Archaeology South-East on behalf of Southern Water. It has been concluded that there is unknown potential for archaeological and geoarchaeological remains to be present in the areas of the site which have not been developed. It is therefore proposed that the proposed works are to be

carried out in accordance with the enclosed Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief (ASE ref: 230461).

No significant adverse effects on designated cultural heritage features, including listed buildings, will result from the proposed works. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy W15.

6. Conclusion

The proposed development comprises a relatively minor addition to the existing Blackstone WTW site, which will be an integral part of an essential upgrade to the wastewater treatment process to improve the quality of effluent being discharged to the environment. The upgrade works will enable compliance with an enhanced discharge permit for Phosphorus and Iron as set by the Environment Agency as a part of the Water Industry National Environment Programme.

The proposed development is consistent with the existing use of the WTW site and will not result in any significant visual impact. The proposed development will not impact on habitats, protected species or any sites that are designated for nature conservation. The proposals will have no significant impact on amenity and will not increase the risk of flooding.

The proposed development is in accordance with the policies of the development plan, and it is considered that planning permission should be granted.