

**Hampshire County Council
Director of Economy, Transport & Environment**

Applicant: Mr R Hill

Variation to composting site and variation of condition 5 of planning permission 10/96302 to increase permitted tonnage of composting material from 8,000 to 15,000 tones per annum at Newbourne Farm, Rockbourne, Fordingbridge SP6 3NT (No. 12/98401)

(Received: 1 March 2012)

General

The proposal is for the variation of the composting site and condition 5 of planning permission 10/96302 to increase the permitted tonnages of composting material from 8,000 to 15,000 tonnes per annum. As the increase in composting material will result in an increase in the amount of green waste imported into the site for processing, it was necessary to include the area used for green waste storage within the area defined as the application site, which was not include under the previous planning consent. This is therefore a holistic application which seeks to increase the permitted tonnages of composting material and include all other ancillary operations which are taking place within the site.

The site covers an area of approximately 1.2 hectares and is accessed by a single track adjoining the 'B' road (known as 'The High Street'). Newbourne Farm is situated within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and is approximately 260 metres north west of the local conservation area of Rockbourne, which includes several Grade I and II listed buildings. The site is also situated south east of Sweatsford Water, a main river which is identified as Flood Zone 3. Newbourne Farm is also situated within the Stour and Avon Tributary Valleys landscape character area.

The nearest residential property is situated 90 metres to the north of the site, with the second nearest one approximately 160 metres to the north east.

A Certificate of Lawful Use (07/90177) was granted on Appeal on 6 September 2007 for the storage, sorting, cutting-up, chipping and shredding (green waste processing) of up to 4,193.1 tonnes of green waste per annum. A subsequent planning consent (10/96302) was granted on 16 December 2010 for the continuation of composting as part of the green waste processing operation; installation of underground storage tank; provision of surface mounted weighbridge and Portacabin; extension of hard surfacing and the removal of the existing building. Condition 5 of this later permission restricted the annual throughput of composting material to 8,000 tonnes per annum.

When planning consent 10/96302 was granted in 2010, a limit of 8,000 tonnes per annum was suggested by the applicant as an appropriate limit to serve his needs for the foreseeable future. However, since that time Newbourne Farm is now accepting additional green waste from the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Pennington as the local composting site to which this was previously taken is no longer in active operation.

A figure of 15,000 tonnes per annum of composting material is therefore considered to be an appropriate limit by the applicant which takes into consideration the additional material currently being received and any future long term contracts.

The applicant has stated that from August 2011 until present 7,000 tonnes of composting material was processed, which would equate to around 12,000 tonnes per annum if the remaining four months of the year were taken into consideration and the current levels of activity sustained. The applicant has therefore not exceeded his annual limit but has demonstrated that their current operations require a higher limit if the current level of activity on site is to continue.

Due to the seasonal nature of this waste operation, it is inevitable that there are to be monthly fluctuations within the levels of green waste received and processed at the site. For example, there tends to be an increase in the amount of composted material over the summer months at Newbourne Farm when more green waste is produced and taken to the site to be processed. During the winter months when the growing season is at its slowest point, there tends to be very little green waste entering the site. Therefore, the applicant has stated that in practise, the facility is likely to continue to generate between 8,000 to 12,000 tonnes per annum, but flexibility is needed to take account of these seasonal fluctuations.

The applicant has stated that the proposal involves no changes to the composting process or operational activities. Although the proposed increase in composting material will result in additional storage of material at Newbourne Farm, there is no need to increase the footprint of the site as any additional storage space required will be provided by the existing arrangements on site.

It is anticipated that there will be an increase in vehicle movements to and from the site. The applicant has advised that larger vehicles will be used to deliver the additional material which would reduce the number of vehicles travelling to and from the site.

Development Plan

Hampshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy – Policies S4 (Recycling and Composting); S5 (Capacity Requirements for Recycling, Composting and Recovery and Treatment; DC2 (Sites with International and National Designations); DC3 (Impact on Landscape and Townscape); DC6 (Highways); DC8 (Pollution, Health, Quality of Life and Amenity, Waste Management and Recycling (DC13).

New Forest District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Adopted October 2009), Policy CS21 (Rural Economy).

Consultations

Councillor Heron	No objection, subject to conditions.
Rockbourne Parish Council	Have been informed of the proposal
Environmental Health New Forest	No objection
New Forest District Council	No objection

Environment Agency Southern	No objection
Natural England	Raises no objection to the proposal but highlighted the possible presence of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species on the site and recommended, if possible, the incorporation of biodiversity enhancements into the design of the site.
Highway Authority	No objection, subject to conditions.
Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB	Objected to the proposal on the grounds that the increased throughput would lead to a doubling of vehicle movements to and from the site which would result in heavy traffic on the existing road network. The Partnership have stated that this increase in traffic would disturb the tranquillity of the nearest villages, which is a significant attribute of the AONB.
Fordingbridge Town Council	Objected to the proposal on the grounds that the increase in composting tonnages per year would result in an increase in large lorries travelling through Fordingbridge. Fordingbridge Town Council have stated that the roads through the town are already under daily threat from large lorries. If the larger articulated lorries are unable to access Newbourne Farm via the A354, then they will have to travel through Fordingbridge, exacerbating the existing situation in the town.

Commentary

The principal development plan considerations relating to the application are the following policies in the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.

Newbourne Farm is an existing green waste recycling and composting facility which contributes towards the County Council's targets for increasing its average recycling and composting rates. The proposed development is thus in accordance with Sustainability Policies S4 and S5. Newbourne Farm has had planning permission for the processing of green waste since 2007 and is therefore also in accordance with Policy DC13.

It is recognised that Newbourne Farm sits within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and within the Stour and Avon Tributary Valleys landscape character area. Although the site is

sensitive in terms of its location, the footprint of the site is not to increase from existing and the additional material to be imported would be accommodated and absorbed into the existing arrangements on site. Although stockpile heights of green waste and processed material may increase, this can be controlled by way of condition and would not make the site visually intrusive.

Furthermore, the composting activities currently taking place are typical of rural areas such as this and operations have been ongoing since 1991 without a complaint being raised with regards to the visual amenity of the site. No objections have also been raised on these grounds with regards to the proposed development.

Taking into account the above, a five metre restriction on stockpile heights would control the development and would mitigate against any visual impact associated with the proposal. Therefore, it is felt that the visual impact of the proposal would not detract from the distinctive landscape character of the area and that the proposed development is in accordance with policies DC2 and DC3.

The main issues concern the impact of the increase in vehicle movements to and from Newbourne Farm through the villages of Rockbourne, Sandleheath and the town of Fordingbridge, which has also raised objection due to impact upon the tranquillity of the AONB.

The site currently has permission to produce 8,000 tonnes of composting material per year. The vehicle movements recorded between September 2010 until August 2011 show that there were 3,074 movements in total during that year period, resulting in 316 movements per month and 13 movements per day when low level months, as a result of stalled operations, were taken account of.

For the 8 month period between August 2011 until April 2012, when the amount of green waste imported into the site started to increase due to the closure of Thorns Farm, vehicle movements equated to 3,390 movements in total, 422 movements per month and 18 movements per day. The applicant has been operating at this level without complaint since August last year.

It has been calculated that if the applicant were to continue at this operational level for the remaining four months and process a further 8,000 tonnes of compost (thereby reaching 15,000t in total for the year), then the level of vehicle movements could remain within 422 movements per month. Extrapolated over the remainder of the year, such a limit would amount 5,088 movements per annum. An annual limit of 4,860 movements is proposed in accordance with the level of movements estimated under previous operations taken into account when the CLU was granted. As the applicant has already been operating at this level without complaint since August 2011, it is recommended that this monthly and year limit is imposed by way of condition to restrict vehicle movements to and from the site. Due to the seasonal nature of the activities taking place it is not possible to set a workable restriction on the vehicle movements per day.

As no issues have been raised over the past eight months with regards to highway capacity, road or pedestrian safety and no objections have been raised by the Highway Authority, it is not anticipated that there will be an unacceptable impact on the highway network in light of this proposal.

Although the increase in vehicle movements associated with the proposal has raised concerns in relation to the potential impact on the tranquillity of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, it is recommended that this is controlled by way of condition. As discussed, it is not considered that the scale of the increase is likely to have a major impact on tranquillity, particularly bearing in mind the times would be restricted. Therefore it is felt that the development will not prejudice the purpose of the AONB and is in accordance with policy DC2.

Although one representation has been made objecting to the proposal on the grounds of noise and odour impacts, the site has operated for several years without complaint. Subject to the continuation of existing conditions, there is not anticipated to be a significant increase in the level of noise and odour produced from the operations on site to cause an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the area or the health/quality of life of occupants of nearby dwellings. New Forest District Council Environmental Health also raises no objection to the proposal. Taking all these matters into account, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with DC8.

Recommendation

That permission be granted subject to following reasons for approval and conditions:

Reasons for Approval

1. It is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document (July 2007) policies S4 (Recycling and Composting), S5 (Capacity Requirements), DC2 (Sites with International Designations), DC3 (Impact on Landscape and Townscape), DC6 (Highways), DC8 (Pollution, Health, Quality of Life and Amenity and DC10 (Water Resources) (summary attached) and would not materially harm the character of the area or the amenity of local residents and would be acceptable in terms of highway safety and convenience.

Conditions

Time Limits

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91(as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Hours of Working

2. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Waste Planning Authority no heavy goods vehicles shall enter or leave the site and no plant or machinery shall be operated except between the following hours: 0800-1800 Monday to Friday and 0800-1300 Saturday. There shall be no working on Sundays or recognised public holidays.

Reason: In the interests of local amenity

Types of Waste

3. No waste shall be deposited at or imported into the site except green waste.

Reason: In the interests of environmental protection.

Highways

4. For the duration of the development measures shall be taken to clean vehicles leaving the site to prevent mud and spoil from being deposited on the public highway. These approved measures shall be implemented before the development commences. Once the development has been commenced, these measures shall be used by all vehicles leaving the site and maintained in good working order for the duration of the development. No vehicle shall leave the site unless it has been cleaned sufficiently to prevent mud and spoil being carried on to the public highway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

5. Vehicle movements associated with the permitted use to and from the site shall be restricted to 422 movements per calendar month and 4,860 movements per year. A daily record of lorries entering and leaving the site shall be kept at the site and made available to the Mineral/Waste Planning Authority on request.

Reason: To limit the volumes of traffic in the interests of the amenity of residents on and near the approaches to the site and to preserve the tranquillity of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Composting Limits

5. Unless with the prior agreement in writing of the Waste Planning Authority, the annual throughput of the composting material for the site shall not exceed 15,000 tonnes.

Reason: In the interests of local amenity and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

6. No stockpiles of green waste or processed material shall exceed 5 metres in height (from base to apex).

Reason: In the interests of local amenities.

Materials

7. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the waste Planning Authority, the external materials of the porta-cabin shall be dark grey/green in colour.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory development.

Case Officer

Fay Eames

Date.....

Authorised on behalf of the Director of the Economy, Transport & Environment

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Richard Read

Date.....

Annexe to Reasons for Conditions
(as required by Article 22 of the Town and Country Planning
(General Procedure) Order 1995 – as amended)

Hampshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD 2007

HAMPSHIRE MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (JULY 2007)

S4 – Recycling and Composting

There will be a progressive increase in the average recycling and composting rates for all municipal, commercial and industrial waste to 50% in 2010; 55% in 2015 and; 60% in 2020.

S5 - Capacity Requirements for Recycling, Composting and Recovery and Treatment

Waste management capacity (including specialist facilities as detailed in Policy S7) will be provided in the period to 2020, as follows:

Recycling and Composting – facilities for the reception, storage, segregation and processing of 1.86 million tonnes a year of municipal, commercial and industrial waste (and associated bulking-up, transfer and contingency storage facilities);

DC2 - Sites with International and National Designations

Minerals and waste development, which is likely to prejudice the purpose of the following designated sites and their settings, will not be permitted unless the reasons for development outweigh the likely adverse impact, taking into account the requirements of relevant legislation and guidance.

Internationally Designated Sites: European Sites (Special Protection Areas, proposed Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, proposed Special Areas of Conservation) and Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance);Nationally Designated Sites: The New Forest National Park, the proposed South Downs National Park and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest; Scheduled Ancient Monuments; Listed Buildings, and sites on the National Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest; Registered Battlefields. In all cases, applications will be subject to the most rigorous examination.

DC3 - Impact on Landscape and Townscape

Minerals and waste development will only be permitted if due regard is given to the likely visual impact of the proposed development and its impact on, and the need to maintain and enhance, the distinctive character of the landscape or townscape. If necessary, additional design, landscaping, planting and screening, including planting in advance of the commencement of the development, should be proposed.

DC6 – Highways

Major mineral extractions, landfills and 'strategic' recycling, aggregate processing and recovery and treatment facilities, will be permitted provided they have a suitable access to and/or route to the minerals and waste lorry route as illustrated on the Key Diagram. In all cases, minerals and waste development will only be permitted if it pays due regard to the likely volume and nature of traffic that would be generated by the proposal and the suitability of the proposed access to the site and of the road network that would be affected. Consideration should be given to highway capacity, road and pedestrian safety, congestion and environmental impact, and whether any highway improvements are required and whether these could be carried out satisfactorily without causing unacceptable environmental impact.

DC8 - Pollution, health, quality of life and amenity

Minerals and waste development will only be permitted if due regard is given to the pollution and amenity impacts on the residents and users of the locality and there is unlikely to be an unacceptable impact on health and/or the quality of life of occupants of nearby dwellings and other sensitive properties. Where necessary minerals and waste developments should include mitigation measures, such as buffer zones between the site and such properties.

DC10 - Water Resources

Non-hazardous landfill developments in areas that overlie major aquifers, and Groundwater Source Protection Zones I, II & III, and mineral extraction or inert landfill in areas that overlie major aquifers and Groundwater Source Protection Zone I will not be permitted. All minerals and waste developments will only be permitted if they are unlikely to have an unacceptable impact on coastal, surface or ground waters and due regard is given to water conservation and efficiency.

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY
(ADOPTED OCTOBER 2009)

Policy CS21 Rural economy

The strategy for the rural economy is to:

- (a) encourage agricultural, horticultural and forestry enterprises and farm diversification projects where this would be consistent with maintaining and enhancing the environment, and contribute to local distinctiveness;
- (b) keep existing employment sites, and encourage improvements and redevelopments that will help maintain and enhance the environment, and contribute to local distinctiveness;
- (c) allow small-scale built development for employment purposes in rural settlements (CS9, Level 3 settlements);
- (d) support local business development through the conversion of existing buildings, with particular encouragement of enterprises that have little adverse environmental impacts (e.g. design/research activities);
- (e) support the local delivery of services and the retention of local shops and pubs;
- (f) work with the New Forest National Park Authority and other neighbouring authorities to protect essential back-up grazing land to support commoning; and
- (g) allow developments essential to support a rural workforce, including agricultural workers dwellings and rural community facilities.

