

# PLANNING APPLICATION TO REPLACE THE ROOFS ON THE PRIMARY DIGESTERS, PART OF AN UPGRADE OF BASINGSTOKE SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS

Design and Access Statement,  
incorporating Planning Statement

B&V PROJECT NO. 176680

PREPARED FOR

Thames Water Utilities Ltd

JANUARY 2013

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Black & Veatch Ltd on behalf of Thames Water Utilities Ltd, hereafter referred to as Thames Water, in support of Thames Water's planning application to replace the roofs on the primary digesters at Basingstoke Sewage Treatment Works (STW).
- 1.2 The proposal forms part of an upgrade scheme that is designed to enable more of the biogas, which is an inevitable by-product of the sewage treatment process, to be recovered and reused to generate the energy needed to operate Basingstoke STW. The majority of the scheme will be delivered using Thames Water's permitted development rights. However, the replacement of the roofs and associated valves, pipe-work, and safety railings on top of the primary digesters, require planning permission. This is because those components of the upgrade scheme will result in the overall height of the primary digesters structure exceeding 15 metres (m).
- 1.3 The proposal is located within the administrative area of Hampshire County Council, which is the relevant waste planning authority responsible for determining this planning application. Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that a statement covering design concepts and principles, as well as access issues, be submitted with an application for planning permission. This statement, which has been prepared by Black & Veatch Ltd on behalf of Thames Water, outlines the background to the planning application. It includes a design component and an access component. It describes the relevant policy background including an appraisal of the proposals against planning policy.
- 1.4 The guidance contained in Circular 01/2006, the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) publication 'Design and Access Statements; how to read, write and use them' have been drawn upon in the preparation of this Statement.
- 1.5 The upgrade scheme does not involve a form of development listed in Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended) (EIA Regulations). It does involve a change to a form of development covered by one of the categories listed in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations – paragraph 11 c) Waste water treatment plants (unless included in Schedule 1). However, the area of the development does not exceed 1000m<sup>2</sup> and the site is not within or adjacent to a 'sensitive area' as defined by the EIA Regulations. Therefore neither EIA, nor an EIA Screening Opinion is required.

## 2. The Need for the Upgrade Scheme

### INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Sewage treatment works are vital community infrastructure. Basingstoke STW treats sewage from the Basingstoke area. The population equivalent of this catchment is approximately 106,000; this is predicted to increase to 135,000 by 2021.
- 2.2 Thames Water is the licensed sewerage undertaker for the Basingstoke area. As such it has a statutory duty under the Water Industry Act 1991 to provide, improve and extend a system of public sewers and effectually deal with the contents of those sewers. This duty is enforceable by the Secretary of State and the industry's financial regulator, the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat).
- 2.3 The sewage treatment process at Basingstoke STW involves the settlement of solids, and treatment of the remaining effluent using a biological process where bacteria breakdown sewage matter through an activated sludge treatment process. The biogas produced in the primary digesters used in this process is stored in a gas holder. The gas is sent to two gas boosters which feed a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant, which generates electricity, and a boiler that heats the digesters. The treated effluent is discharged into the River Loddon and the sludge is dewatered and the residual cake is applied to agricultural land as a fertiliser.
- 2.4 The upgrade scheme is necessary to replace equipment and structures that are in poor condition, and to enable more of the bio-gas that is an inevitable by-product of the sewage treatment process to be recovered and used to generate the STW's energy needs.

### REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

- 2.5 The roofs of the primary digesters are supposed to move up and down, depending on the volume of sludge being treated. However the roofs, which were installed in 1968, are in a state of disrepair and urgently need to be replaced. Corrosion of the roof steelwork has enabled air to enter the digesters. This is a health and safety concern due to the explosive potential of oxygen mixed with methane and there is a risk of complete failure of the sludge digestion process.
- 2.6 The concrete structure of the primary digesters has been eroded by hydrogen sulphide, which is leading to cracks on the external surface, and leaks. This will be repaired as part of the upgrade and safe access to the primary digester roofs will be provided.

### REDUCING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT

- 2.7 The existing biogas bag has exceeded its design life and is in poor condition. Also it is too small to store all of the biogas that the STW is capable of producing, and which could be used to generate power to operate the STW. As a result excess gas has to be wastefully burnt off. As part of the upgrade a new larger gas storage bag will be installed.
- 2.8 Gas pipe work and valves associated with the primary digesters will be replaced as part of the upgrade and a siloxane filter is being installed on the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) gas feed pipeline to prevent silica build-up. These works, together with the replacement roofs and larger gas storage facility, will significantly improve biogas production and recovery at the site. This will enable increased renewable energy generation, reduce wasteful excess gas burning, and thereby reduce the carbon footprint of the STW.

## 3. The Site

### LOCATION

- 3.1 Basingstoke STW is located to the east of Chineham; vehicular access to the STW from the A33 is via Whitmarsh Lane, which also provides access to Integra North (Chineham) (refer to Location Plan B851-A1-00686). The STW, which is approximately 17ha in area, comprises substantial areas of treatment plant, machinery, tanks and buildings. Drawing B851-A1-00680 illustrates Thames Water's land ownership. Drawing B851-A1-00681 illustrates the footprint of the proposal.
- 3.2 Basingstoke STW is sited on 'operational land'; as defined in the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended). Operational land is specifically used and held for the purposes of carrying out Thames Water's statutory undertaking. Therefore this planning application is accompanied by a Certificate A.

### SURROUNDINGS

- 3.3 Integra North (Chineham) energy from waste facility is immediately to the west of Basingstoke STW, to the north is a large area of woodland, and beyond these immediate surroundings is agricultural land.
- 3.4 A railway line runs 1.5 km to the west of STW. The River Loddon is 200m to the east. The closest residential property is approximately located 500m to the west. A Public Right of Way follows a route along the site access road and to the north of the STW.
- 3.5 There are no international or national designated nature conservation sites, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, or archaeological priority areas within or adjacent to Basingstoke STW. There are areas of ancient woodland within 2km of the site.

### HISTORY

- 3.6 Thames Water continues to invest in upgrades at Basingstoke STW to ensure that it meets regulatory and growth requirements. The majority of these improvements have been delivered through the use of Thames Water's permitted development rights. Where works have been outside the scope of permitted development rights, Thames Water has submitted full planning applications.
- 3.7 The relevant planning history for Basingstoke STW includes:
- BDB/040778:** Planning permission to erect a Thames Water Sign (February 1997).
  - BDB/66030:** Planning permission for new blower building, the installation of equipment kiosks, and an extension to the inlet works (July 2007).
  - BDB/73192:** Planning permission to construct and operate a sludge cake storage barn and equipment kiosks, part of the Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) Upgrade scheme (November 2010).

## 4. The Proposal

### THE DESIGN COMPONENT

- 4.1 The design component of this Statement outlines the design process that has been undertaken in the context of the physical, social and economic environment of the STW and its surroundings. This includes descriptions of the amount, layout, scale, and appearance of the proposal.

#### Description of Development

- 4.2 The locations of the proposed and permitted installations are illustrated on Drawing B851-A1-00680.
- 4.3 The majority of the upgrade works are permitted development. However those components that exceed 15m in height or the height of anything being replaced, whichever is greater, require planning permission. Therefore those components of the upgrade scheme that are the subject of this planning application comprise:
- Replacement fixed roof structures on the primary digesters, including gas pressure valves, pipes and hand-railings. Installation of the replacement roofs and associated supporting structures to the top of the concrete walls of the existing digesters will result in the overall height of the digesters increasing from 15m to 17m at its highest point.
- 4.4 The components of the upgrade scheme that are permitted under the General (Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) (GPDO), Schedule 2 Part 16, Class A (e) any other development in, on, over or under their operational land, other than the provision of a building but including the extension or alteration of a building, comprise:
- Installation of a biogas storage bag (13m in height), with associated pipes and valves;
  - Replacement of cast iron pipework and valves with stainless steel;
  - Repairs to the Primary Digester concrete structure;
  - Installation of a siloxane filter to the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) gas feed pipeline;
  - Installation of a walkway/bridge between the two digesters, with a metal staircase.
- 4.5 The temporary construction materials storage area and site compound is permitted under the GPDO, Part 4, Class A the provision on land of buildings, moveable structures, works, plant or machinery required temporarily in connection with and for the duration of operations being or to be carried out on, in, under or over that land or on land adjoining that land.

#### The Design Process

- 4.6 The design rationale for the upgrade scheme is informed and constrained by:
- Operational parameters, including the existing STW layout and the location and function of plant.
  - The need to carry out routine maintenance to ensure the STW operates effectively.
  - The need to provide a safe and secure working environment for Thames Water operatives and contractors, and to ensure public safety.
  - The aim to maximise renewable energy recovery.

- Making effective use of physical resources, including the use of established infrastructure and an operational site.
- Potential environmental effects and the context of the surrounding landscape, including the topography, ground conditions and above-ground features.
- Thames Water's land ownership.
- The unique way in which Thames Water is funded to deliver the scheme, which includes set annual price limits, and the drive to ensure value for money for customers by Ofwat, the economic regulator of water companies.

**Use**

- 4.7 The proposal is to replace the roofs on the primary digesters and to provide safe operational access to them. The upgrade works will enable the digester to continue to operate effectively and safely, and will allow more of the biogas, which is an inevitable by-product of the sewage treatment process, to be used to generate the energy needed to operate the STW.

**Amount**

- 4.8 Basingstoke STW site is approximately 17ha. Drawing B851-A1-00680 illustrates the footprint of the upgrade works, including the proposals that are the subject of this planning application. The existing footprint of the digesters will remain unchanged at 432m<sup>2</sup>.
- 4.9 The amount of development is dictated by the function it needs to perform in the sewage treatment and bio-gas recovery process. The amount of development proposed is relatively small in relation to the existing STW infrastructure. It will not extend the footprint of the digesters or the STW. The proposals are considered to be appropriate in size and in respect of the functional requirements of this existing STW.

**Layout**

- 4.10 The proposed layout is determined by the location of the existing primary digesters that need to be repaired. It is also a product of the function that the equipment needs to perform and the requirements of health and safety legislation.

**Scale**

- 4.11 Drawings B851-A1-00680, B851-A1-00682, and B851-A1-00683 illustrate the relationship between the existing site structures; those components of the scheme that are permitted under the GPDO, and the replacement roofs and associated structures that are the subject of this planning application.
- 4.12 The overall increased scale of the proposed roofs is a function of the footprint of the existing digesters and the supporting frame that needs to be attached to that existing concrete structure so that the fixed roofs can be securely and safely installed. The scale of the existing digester is a function of the volume of sewage being treated and the volume of biogas generated by that treatment process, which is a consequence of the size of the catchment.

**Landscaping**

- 4.13 The mature woodland to the north of the STW and the substantial Integra North (Chineham) to the west of the site effectively screen the STW. Semi-mature trees and hedging along STW boundary and tree planting within the site itself provide additional visual screening.

**Appearance**

- 4.14 The layout of the STW and the locations of the proposed above-ground structures are dictated by the engineering processes and the requirements of safety legislation. The

upgrade scheme replaces existing plant and structures. The new infrastructure is similar in operation and appearance to the existing plant and the design conveys the common architectural language of this full operational STW.

- 4.15 The upgraded roofs will be 16.65m in diameter and at the highest point (the top of the gas pressure relief valve), the structure will be 17m in height. The existing digesters are 15m high when fully extended. The existing roofs, which are made of galvanised steel, will be replaced by fixed roofs, glassed lined with an external galvanised steel finish. The safety hand-railing will also be made of galvanised steel.
- 4.16 Basingstoke STW is largely screened from view from outside the site by mature vegetation and the Integra North (Chineham) waste facility, which is the dominant visual feature in the area. Where the STW can be seen, those views of sewage treatment processes and plant will not be altered by the installation of replacement and upgraded structures and equipment, which will be seen in the context of the existing on and off-site waste treatment facilities.

#### **Construction Timetable and Hours of Working**

- 4.17 It is estimated that the construction of the whole proposed scheme will be carried out over a 10 month period.
- 4.18 The normal construction working hours will be from 0700 – 1800 Monday to Friday, and 0700 – 1400 on Saturday. There will be no work carried out on Sundays or Public Holidays. Working outside of these hours will be infrequent and the County Council would be notified prior to such work taking place.

#### **STW Operational Working House**

- 4.19 Basingstoke STW operates on a 24-hour basis throughout the year, as will the upgraded works. The proposals are therefore consistent with the existing land use and hours of operation of the site.

#### **Site Environmental Plan**

- 4.20 Construction of the proposed upgrade will be managed through the implementation of a Site Environmental Plan (SEP). The SEP sets out the identified environmental actions pre-construction, during construction and post construction. The scope of the SEP includes:

- General Environmental Guidelines, including the proposed environmental management measures and any additional requirements set by the consenting authorities.
- Environmental monitoring procedures during the construction.
- Best Practice Guidance.
- Normal working hours.
- Communication and training methods.
- Environmental Incident Reporting Systems.
- The roles of environmental staff and others in implementing the SEP.

## **THE ACCESS COMPONENT**

- 4.21 The access component of this statement explains the vehicular and transport links to the development and how the principles of inclusive design, including the needs of disabled people, have been integrated into the proposal.

- 4.22 Circular 01/2006 advises, *“the requirement for the access component of the statement relates only to ‘access to the development’ and therefore does not extend to internal aspects of individual buildings’.*
- 4.23 Basingstoke STW is accessed from Whitmarsh Lane, off the A33. Whitmarsh Lane also provides access to the Integra North (Chineham) site. The junction with the A33 is traffic-light controlled. It includes a right-hand feeder lane on the northbound carriageway and a short section of feeder lane from the southbound carriageway, which allows approaching vehicles to turn safely into Whitmarsh Lane.
- 4.24 It is anticipated that construction of the upgrade scheme will generate approximately 10 heavy goods vehicle (HGV) movements per week during the main 5 months of construction. It is anticipated that this will rise to 30 HGV movements during the peak week in construction. Operation of the STW generates regular deliveries and it is unlikely that the additional construction related HGVs will lead to a noticeable increase in vehicle movements to and from the site. There will be no change in the number of vehicles using the STW once the digester roofs have been replaced.
- 4.25 For security and safety reasons, the STW is only accessible to employees of Thames Water and its contractors. Thames Water’s health & safety requirements govern access and movement around the site. The proposal has been designed to enable the replacement roofs to be accessed in a safe and secure manner.

#### **The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)**

- 4.26 The DDA (as amended) places positive duties on organisations and employees to think carefully about the needs of people with disabilities. Employers have to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace so that disabled workers are not disadvantaged. However, due to the nature of the proposal, which is to replace an existing high level roof structure; the residual health and safety risk for disabled employees, and the costs involved, it is considered unreasonable for Thames Water to provide disabled access to the primary digester roofs.

## **5. Development Plan**

- 5.1 In determining applications, planning authorities are required to have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application; to any other material planning considerations, and any representations made to them.
- 5.2 The statutory development plan, together with the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Policy Statement 10, and other statutory and non-statutory guidance documents have informed the design.

#### **NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)**

- 5.3 The policy guidance contained in the NPPF (published on 27 March 2012), which is of relevance to determination of this planning application, includes:
- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving places that the country needs;
  - Seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;

- Supporting the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, encouraging the reuse of existing resources and the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);
- Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution, and
- Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.

## NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR WASTE WATER

5.4 The Waste Water National Policy Statement (published 27 March 2012) sets out Government policy for the provision of major waste water infrastructure. Although it guides decision-making on development consent applications for wastewater Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects the following policy objectives are considered to be of relevance:

- Sustainable development – to seek wastewater infrastructure that allows us to live within environmental limits and that helps ensure a strong, healthy and just society, having regard to environmental, social and economic considerations;
- Public health and environmental improvement – to continue to meet the UK’s obligations under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive by providing suitable collection and treatment systems to limit pollution of the environment; and
- To improve water quality in the natural environment and meet obligations under related European Directives.

## THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.5 The statutory development plan comprises:

- The South East Plan;
- Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan ‘saved policies’;
- Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and New Forest National Park Minerals and Waste Core Strategy, and
- The Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan.

### **The South East Plan**

5.6 Whilst the South East Plan (SEP) does form part of the Development Plan, the coalition government has made it clear that it intends to abolish regional strategies. The Localism Act enables the Secretary of State to revoke the whole or any part of a regional strategy by order and whilst no order has been made at the date of submission of this application, the intention has been upheld as being a material consideration in determining planning applications. This statement therefore incorporates consideration of the Regional Policies of relevance to the proposal, which include:

Policy CC1:	Sustainable Development
Policy CC2:	Climate Change
Policy CC3:	Resource Use
Policy CC4:	Sustainable Design and Construction
Policy CC7:	Infrastructure and Implementation
Policy NRM2:	Water Quality

Policy W17: Location of Waste Management Facilities

- Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Adopted Mineral and Waste Local Plan**
- 5.7 The Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1998 has been almost entirely superseded by the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Core Strategy (2007).
- 5.8 Four policies from the Local Plan have been retained including Policy 43, which identifies Chineham (Wildmoor) Incinerator adjacent to Basingstoke STW as a preferred site for the development of integrated waste processing plants.

**Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and New Forest National Park Minerals & Waste Core Strategy**

- 5.9 The Minerals & Waste Core Strategy (HMWCS) was 'adopted' in July 2007. However as a result of a legal challenge three policies relating to wharves and rail depots were quashed.
- 5.10 Policies contained in the 'adopted' Core Strategy that are of relevance to determination of this planning application include:

Policy S1	(Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition)
Policy S7	(Specialist Facilities)
Policy S16	(Location of Waste Management)
Policy DC1	(Sustainable Minerals and Waste Development)
Policy DC3	(Impact on Landscape and Townscape)
Policy DC6	(Highways)
Policy DC7	(Biodiversity)
Policy DC11	(Flooding)
Policy DC13	(Waste Management and Recycling)
Policy DC22	(Additional Plant, Buildings and Minor Development)

- 5.11 The legal challenge and the need to update other parts of the Core Strategy resulted in consultation on proposed changes, which ran from 23 November 2009 to 29 January 2010. Following the consultation period the council accepted that with the quashing of some of the policies there was an opportunity to develop a single Minerals and Waste Plan.

**Hampshire, Portsmouth, New Forest & South Downs Minerals and Waste Plan (Draft)**

- 5.12 The Draft Minerals and Waste Plan (HMWP) was submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2012. The Planning Inspector conducted the first stage of a Public Examination of the HMWP and adjourned the hearings on the 15 June pending a further consultation on main changes to the plan. Consultation on the proposed changes to the submission plan ran from the 22 October 2012 until 17 December 2012. The plan is due to be adopted in autumn 2013.
- 5.13 The Draft HMWP policies (October 2012) of relevance to determination of this planning application include:

Policy 1:	Sustainable mineral and waste development
Policy 2:	Climate change-mitigation and adaptation
Policy 3:	Protection of habitats and species
Policy 10:	Protecting public health, safety and amenity
Policy 12:	Managing traffic
Policy 13:	High-quality design of minerals and waste development
Policy 26:	Safeguarding – waste infrastructure
Policy 28:	Energy recovery development
Policy 29:	Locations for waste management development
Policy 31:	Liquid waste and waste water management

### **Basingstoke and Deane Borough Adopted Local Plan (2006)**

5.14 The Basingstoke and Deane Borough Adopted Local Plan 1996 - 2011 (adopted on 17 July 2006) sets out a vision for the future development of the Borough for the period to 2011. On 30 June 2009 the Secretary of State issued a Direction saving specific policies in the adopted Local Plan after 17 July 2009.

5.15 The 'saved policies' of relevance to the determination of the application include:

Policy E1	Development Control
Policy E6	Landscape Character
Policy E7	Nature/Biodiversity Conservation
Policy A6	Renewable Energy
Policy A7	Water and Sewerage Infrastructure

5.16 The Borough Council has prepared a number of Supplementary Planning Documents or SPDs, to provide additional guidance to the policies in the Adopted Local Plan. The Landscape and Biodiversity SPD and Design and Sustainability SPD has been reviewed and considered.

## **6. Commentary**

6.1 The key planning issues are:

- Principle of development
- Sustainability
- Visual impact and townscape
- Ecology
- Water resources and flood risk
- Construction amenity issues: air quality, traffic, noise

### **PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

*(SEP Policies: CC1, CC3, NRM2 & W17; HMWLP Policy 43; HMWCS Policies: S7, DC13, & DC22; HMWP Policies: 10, 26, & 29; Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan Policy E1)*

6.2 Basingstoke STW is vital community infrastructure, which is safeguarded under HMWCS Policy DC13 and HMWP Policy 26. The site is operational land which is specifically held for the purpose of Thames Water's statutory undertaking. The existing sewage sludge digesters and biogas recovery facilities need to be repaired and upgraded.

6.3 The HMWCS acknowledges with regard to sewage that "*as a result of planned or future growth, or as a requirement of new legislation or regulatory control, new treatment facilities or expansion of existing treatment facilities may be required. Such development is generally supported...*" HMWCS Policy S7 supports the expansion of existing sewage treatment facilities. The NPPF highlights the importance of ensuring the resilience of existing infrastructure and it is acknowledged that "*there is also a need to generally maintain, extend or improve the infrastructure of varying ages*".

6.4 The majority of the upgrade is permitted development under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended); only the proposed replacement roofs, and associated valves, pipe-work and safety railings require planning permission because they exceed 15m in height. The HMWCS recognises the need for a mechanism for considering such ancillary development that falls outside permitted

development rights and HMWCS Policy DC22 specifically permits additional plant, buildings and minor developments at active waste sites where *“they are ancillary to the operation of the site or they provide for the co-location of complementary minerals and waste activities”*. Moreover HMWP Policy 29 supports the development of waste management facilities within sewage treatment works. HMWP Policy 10 supports proposals that seek to avoid the release of emission to the atmosphere and to avoid compromising health and safety. Hampshire County Council has previously granted planning permission for upgrades of the Basingstoke STW

- 6.5 It is concluded that the principle of the proposed repairs to existing infrastructure, at an established sewage treatment works, which will improve the environmental performance and reduce the carbon footprint of the treatment process, is acceptable.

## SUSTAINABILITY

*(South East Plan Policy: CC3; HMWCS Policies: S1, S16 & DC; HMWP Policies: 2, 28 & 31; Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan Policies: A6 & A7)*

- 6.6 In accordance with HMWCS Policies S1 and S16, and HMWP Policy 2, 28 and 31, the proposal improves the capability of Basingstoke STW to recover biogas from sewage, to reuse it to generate the energy and use that energy to operate the STW. The proposal demonstrates energy efficient design and facilitates low carbon technology to maximise energy recovery. It therefore fully accords with SEP Policy CC3, HMWCS Policy DC1, HMWP Policy 2 and Local Plan Policy A6 and A7.
- 6.7 The NPPF and HMWP Policy 1 emphasise the presumption in favour of such sustainable development

## VISUAL IMPACT AND TOWNSCAPE

*(South East Plan Policy: C2; HMWCS Policy DC3; HMWP Policy 13; Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan Policies E1 & E6)*

- 6.8 In accordance with HMWCS Policy DC3 careful consideration has been given to the potential visual impact of the upgrade works.
- 6.9 Basingstoke STW is a large developed site. The replacement roofs, valves, pipework and railings; which are the subject of this planning application; are on top of two existing digesters within the operational site boundary, which are 15m in height. Drawing B851-A1-00681 illustrates that the new roofs will be 17m high at the top of the gas pressure relief valves. Although these existing structures are substantial, the STW is well screened from public view by areas of woodland immediately to the north of the site, landscape planting on the northern and eastern boundaries of the site and by the imposing Integra North (Chineham) waste facility, which is immediately to the west of the STW and the dominant built structure in the surrounding landscape. The relatively small increase in the height of the primary digester roofs will not cause unacceptable adverse visual impact and in accordance with HMWP Policy 13 it will contribute to achieving sustainable development by improving energy recovery and thereby the carbon footprint of the STW.
- 6.10 Where the replaced roofs, valves, pipework and railings can be seen, it will be in the context of the existing buildings, structures and operational equipment on site (refer to Drawings B851-A1-00680, B851-A1-00682 and B851-A1-00683). The proposal is to replace existing roofs, thereby enabling the continued use of the digesters. Materials of similar galvanised steel appearance will be used. The proposals therefore respond to the local context and respect the function of the host structure in accordance with Local Plan Policy E1. There will be no change in the character of the digesters or the site overall, this is in line with the aims of Local Plan Policy E6.

## ECOLOGY

*(HMWCS Policy DC7; HMWP Policy 3; Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan Policy E7)*

- 6.11 In accordance with HMWCS Policy DC7, HMWP Policy 3, and Local Plan Policy E7, which seek to safeguard biodiversity, a preliminary ecological and archaeological sustainability appraisal of the STW and its surroundings was carried out by an Environmental Scientist and an Ecologist. The appraisal did not identify any designated nature conservation areas, protected species or habitats within or adjacent to the site. There are areas of ancient woodland within 2km of the STW. There are no records of any protected species present on Basingstoke STW.
- 6.12 No adverse impacts on ecology are anticipated. However, the SEP, which will be implemented during construction, will include best practice as advised by the Ecologist on measures to avoid impacts on ecology. If protected species are encountered during construction, then work in that area will cease and a trained ecologist will visit the site to advise on appropriate measures to be employed before work can recommence.

## WATER RESOURCES AND FLOOD RISK

*(HMWCS Policy DC11; Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan Policy E8)*

- 6.13 The primary digesters are located on land defined as Flood Zone 1 in Table D1 of PPS25 and is classed as 'Less Vulnerable Development' in Table D2. The development area does not exceed 1ha in size and therefore a Flood Consequence Assessment/ Flood Risk Assessment is not required under HMWCS Policy DC11. In the context of Table D3 of PPS25 the repairs and upgrade of existing sewage treatment infrastructure is considered to be appropriate. In accordance with Local Plan Policy E8 the proposal will not increase flood risk or the severity of flooding elsewhere.

## CONSTRUCTION AMENITY ISSUES: AIR QUALITY, TRAFFIC, NOISE

*(HMWCS Policies: DC6 and DC8; HMWP Policy 12; Basingstoke & Dean Local Plan Policy E1)*

- 6.14 In accordance with HMWCS Policy DC8, the upgrade scheme has been designed with due regard to the potential effects of construction on the residents and users of the area. The SEP for the scheme will set out best practice measures that will be employed to reduce the impact of noise, dust emissions, traffic and temporary lighting arising from construction activities and reduce the risk of construction-related pollution incidents occurring.
- 6.15 **Air Quality** – the generation of dust during construction will be managed through the employment of suppression methods, such as dampening down and use of on-site speed limits.
- 6.16 **Traffic** - in accordance with HMWP Policy 12, HMWCS Policy DC6 and Local Plan Policy E1, the STW has a safe and suitable access to the road network. Whitmarsh Lane links to the A33, which is identified in the HMWCS as a Mineral and Waste Lorry Route. The A33 links Basingstoke STW to both the M3 and M4. The site access has sufficient capacity and benefits from traffic light controls. The upgrade works will not result in inappropriate traffic generation or compromise highway safety, and no highway improvements are required.
- 6.17 **Noise** – construction activities will be managed in accordance with BS5228: Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites. This includes use of considerate working hours; the proper use of tools and equipment, and the shutting down of tools and plant when not in use.

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposal to replace the roofs on the primary digesters at Basingstoke STW has been reviewed against the requirements of the statutory development plan and emerging policy framework. The need to carry out the upgrade and repair works is compelling and the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.2 The majority of the scheme is permitted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. Replacement of the roofs requires planning permission but only because following the works the height of the digesters will exceed 15m (the highest point, the top of the pressure releases valves will be 17m).
- 7.3 This increase in height will not be visually intrusive in the landscape, which is dominated by the adjacent Integra North Energy Recovery Facility. On completion, the upgrade works will generally become part of the existing operational development and will therefore be seen in the context of existing land use and will represent a small change to the existing view. At longer distances the development will become indistinguishable in the wider context of the site and surrounding uses, which are characterised by operational waste facilities and plant. The upgrade scheme has significant environmental, health and safety benefits that are material considerations.