

Planning Committee

31 October 2013

Reference:
APP/13/01081

Area Team:
North Team

Case Officer:
Mrs S Day

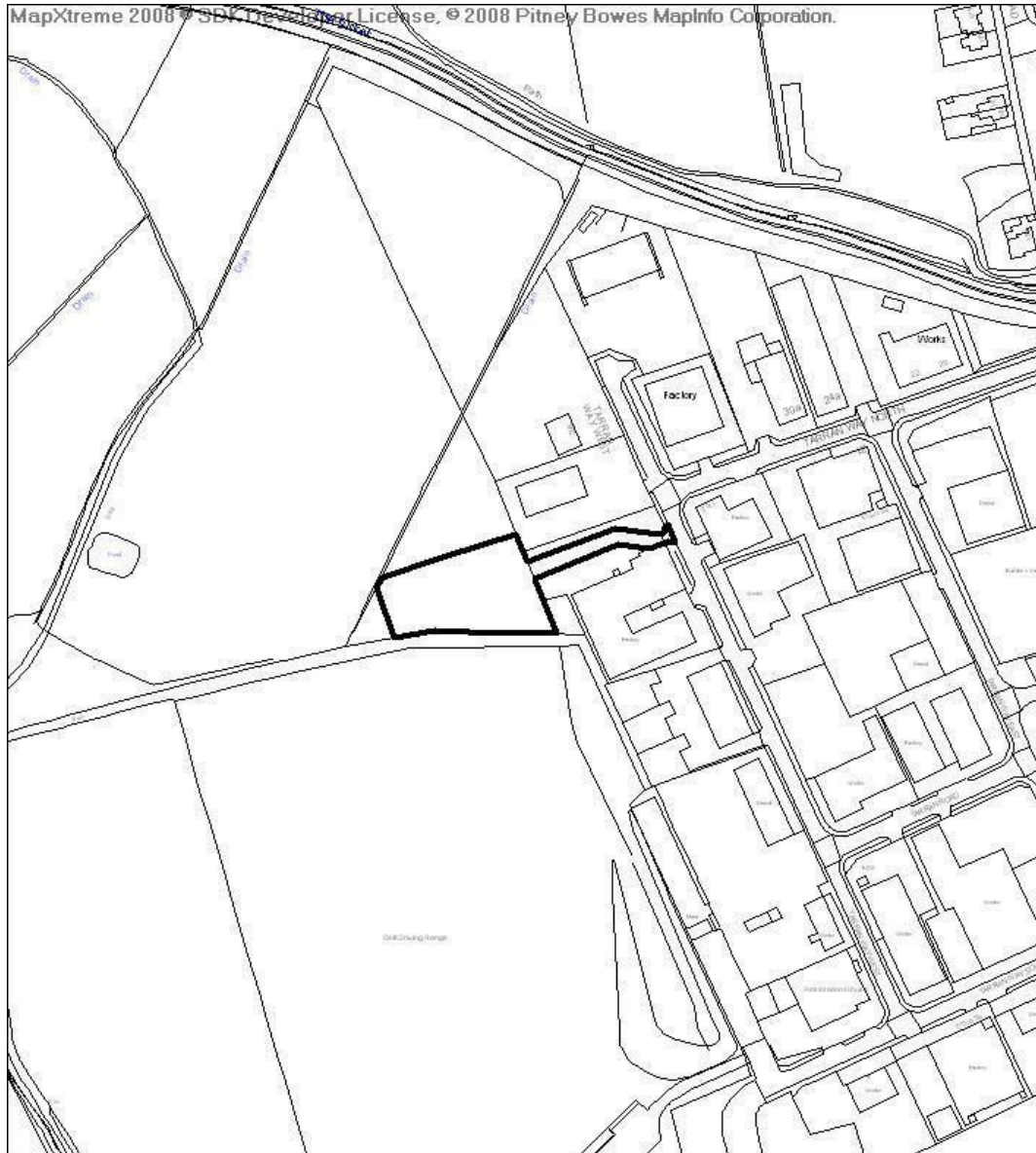
Ward:
**Moreton West and
Saughall Massie**

Location: Moreton Waste Pumping Station, Land off Tarran Way West, Moreton, CH46 4TT

Proposal: Construction of replacement Wastewater pumping station compound, control kiosk and associated works.

Applicant: United Utilities
Agent : United Utilities plc.

Site Plan:



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Development Plan Designation:

Green Belt
Primarily Industrial Area
Area Requiring Landscape Renewal

Planning History:

None relevant to these proposals

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:**CONSULTATIONS**

Environment Agency - No objection subject to the applicant obtaining the necessary licenses and permits.

Wirral Wildlife - No objection , applicant has identified protected species and obtained the necessary protected species license.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the Council's adopted Guidance on Publicity for Planning Applications, letters were sent to three neighbouring properties and a site notice displayed at the site. At the time of writing no comments have been received.

Directors Comment's:**REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The application constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt that would be contrary to the adopted Development Plan, and as such under the provisions of the Scheme of Delegation for Determining Planning Applications is required to be considered by the Planning Committee.

INTRODUCTION

The application is part of wider improvements to water quality in the Leasowe area. The works requiring planning permission consist of the construction of a control kiosk and fenced compound.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The site is located within the Green Belt, within Flood Zone 3a and close to a Site of Biological Importance designated by the Wirral Unitary Development Plan. The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt which can be acceptable if very special circumstances can be demonstrated and if issues relating to flooding can be satisfactorily resolved.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site consists of a triangle of open land immediately to the west of the Tarran Industrial Estate. The land is located within the adopted Green Belt. To the north of the site is the Meols Field Site of Biological Importance and to the south of the site a golf driving range. The existing pumping station is located some 660 m to the west of the application site.

POLICY CONTEXT

The application must be considered against advice given in NPPF in relation to development within the Green Belt and areas at risk of flooding. The relevant Unitary Development Plan policies are; GB2 - Guidelines for Development in the Green Belt, NC5, The Protection of Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation and NC6, Sites of Biological Importance.

Policy GB2 specifies which types of development are appropriate in the Green Belt and advises that where proposals are inappropriate, very special circumstances must be demonstrated which would overcome the presumption against approval. This approach is reiterated in the NPPF.

Policy NC6 identifies sites of Biological Importance and NC5 sets out the criteria for evaluating proposals which may impact on such sites. This includes an assessment of the scale and nature of the development, long term impact on the viability of the protected species and measures which could be taken to minimise damage to species and habitat.

The NPPF advises that a sequential test is applied to development within areas identified as Flood Zones 2 or 3, to consider the availability of other suitable sites within areas at less risk of flooding. Where development cannot locate elsewhere, the exception test must be applied which will indicate if the wider benefits of the development outweigh the flood risk and that a site specific flood risk assessment has been undertaken which should include mitigation measures.

GREEN BELT, ENVIRONMENTAL, APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

The proposals for a submersible pumping station and associated kiosk and compound are part of the larger Water Quality Programme between OFWAT, the Environment Agency and United Utilities. The project seeks to resolve problems of flooding and water quality issues in the area. The pumping station itself is permitted development and does not require planning permission from the Local Planning Authority, thus the proposals which are to be considered as part of this application are the control kiosk and the fenced compound.

The existing pumping station was built in 1934 and is located considerably further into the open land and Green Belt. The structure is in need of significant repair and is accessed by a long unmade path which frequently floods.

The proposed development, whilst also in the Green Belt, is located closer to the existing built up industrial estate and as such does not require a long access road and involves only one above ground structure (the control kiosk) which is smaller and less intrusive than the existing pumping station. Thus the visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt is less significant than the existing pumping station. This together with the benefits to flood control in the area would constitute the very special circumstances necessary to overcome the presumption against inappropriate development.

The application is accompanied by a flood risk assessment and an ecological survey. The flood risk assessment concludes that the site will be at risk from fluvial flooding, however this risk currently exists and the proposals will improve the accessibility for occasional operational visits. In addition the removal of the existing pumping station will improve the role of the functional plain. The Environment agency has raised no objection to the proposals.

The ecological survey has identified the presence of Great Crested Newts to the north of the site. Whilst the development is unlikely to have any direct impact on the protected species, the applicant has obtained the necessary licenses from Natural England.

The survey has also brought to light the presence of Japanese Knotweed which can be dealt with by an appropriate condition.

SEPARATION DISTANCES

Separation distances do not apply in this instance, as no residential properties will be affected by the proposed development.

HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

The proposed development will require infrequent operational access and will utilise an existing industrial access.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

The environmental and sustainability issues are set out in the main body of the report.

HEALTH ISSUES

There are no health implications relating to this application.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development will have minimal visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt and will result in improvements to water quality and flooding in the locality. This constitutes the very special circumstances necessary to support the development. The proposals will not have an adverse impact on the adjacent Site of Biological Importance. The proposals, therefore meet the requirements of NPPF and the councils UDP policies GB2 and NC5 and NC6.

Summary of Decision:

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national and regional policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

The proposed development will have minimal visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt and will result in improvements to water quality and flooding in the locality. This constitutes the very special circumstances necessary to support the development. The proposals will not have an adverse impact on the adjacent site of Biological Importance. The proposals, therefore meet the requirements of NPPF and the councils UDP policies GB2 and NC5 and NC6.

Recommended Decision: Approve

Recommended Conditions and Reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced 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.

2. Prior to commencement of development, full details of a scheme for the eradication of Japanese Knotweed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include a timetable for implementation and clearly identify the extent of the Japanese Knotweed on a scaled plan.

Reason: To eradicate Japanese Knotweed from the development site, to prevent the spread of the plant through development works and to accord with the aims of Policy NC5 in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans received by the local planning authority on 16th August 2013 and listed as follows: 6435/80029465/00/97/2001, 6435/80029465/00/97/2010 and G3000.003a.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to define the permission.

4. Prior to commencement of development, full details of the mitigation measures relating to the protection of GCN during construction, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include a timetable for implementation and the mitigation measures shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To protect the interests of a protected species which may be present on the site and to accord with Policy NC7 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

Last Comments By: 22/10/2013 14:09:04

Expiry Date: 11/10/2013