

Application No: 12/4067M

Location: JACKSONS EDGE SERVICE RESERVOIR, JACKSONS EDGE ROAD, DISLEY

Proposal: Replacement service reservoir and valve house building, together with a temporary material storage area and a temporary contractor's parking area.

Applicant: United Utilities

Expiry Date: 24-Jan-2013

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve, subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether the development represents inappropriate development, and if so, whether there are any *“Very Special Circumstances”* that clearly outweigh the harm caused by inappropriateness and any other harm
- Highway implications
- Residential amenity
- Impact on landscape character and visual amenity
- Ecological implications

REASON FOR REPORT

The proposal is a major development as defined by The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010. Under the Council's constitution such applications are required to be considered by Committee.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

Jacksons Edge Service Reservoir is located at the top of Jacksons Edge Road, opposite Disley Amalgamated Sport Club. The reservoir is a single compartment 18.2Ml capacity reinforced concrete tank built in 1912. It receives water from Wybersley Water Treatment Works via High Lane Service Reservoir and Pumping Station. It supplies water to over 40,000 customers in the surrounding area.

The application site consists of the Service Reservoir construction site plus additional areas for temporary material storage and temporary contractor's parking.

These additional areas required for temporary excavated material storage and car parking are needed due to space constraints within the main development site.

Jacksons Edge Service Reservoir

The existing reservoir site consists of the covered service reservoir together with various structures, housing controls and staff welfare facilities. The site is mainly formed of short cut grassed areas with areas of tree planting. There are mounded areas to the eastern perimeter of the site assumed to be from the original construction.

The site falls within the north Cheshire Green Belt, and is surrounded by residential properties to the north and east, the Amalgamated sports club to the south, and a public right of way to the west, and the disused quarry.

Temporary material storage

The proposed temporary material storage area is located off Jacksons Edge Road. It is located on private land and is a Field currently used for grazing horses. The site is bounded to the north by Jacksons Edge Road; to the east and south by mature woodland and public right of way (Disley FP11) and to the west by Light Alders Lane and residential properties beyond.

The closest residential property is number 68 Jacksons Edge Road. Other properties within 50m of the proposed temporary material storage area are located to the west of this area on Light Alders Lane and the eastern most end of Lyme Road.

Temporary contractor's parking area

The proposed temporary contractor's parking area is within an existing parking area at Disley Amalgamated Sports Club off Jacksons Edge Road. The site is bounded to the north by Jacksons Edge Road with residential properties and the reservoir beyond, to the east by a hedgerow with grazed Field beyond, to the south by a sports Field; to the west by tennis courts.

The closest residential properties are located immediately to the north of Jacksons Edge Road.

The service reservoir site and the temporary material storage area will be linked by a section of Jacksons Edge Road.

BACKGROUND

In 2002, a survey of the reservoir identified cracks to the walls and roof with water lost through seepage from one wall. Particular observations were made to the Northwest corner of the reservoir where two large cracks were identified along the length of the corner of the roof extending down the walls and across the reservoir floor.

Crack monitors were installed and temporary repairs were undertaken by sealing the roof cracks. Additional surveys have since been carried out, which revealed that the condition of

the reservoir structure is gradually deteriorating with the progressive loss of integrity increasing the risk of bacteriological contamination of the drinking water and structural failure of the reservoir over time.

To reduce the risk of bacteriological and structural failure and also the risk of interruptions to supply, there is an urgent need to replace the reservoir.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for:

1. Replacement Two Compartment Service Reservoir

A replacement two compartment service reservoir. In order to maintain a water supply to customers, the first compartment of the new reservoir will be constructed and commissioned prior to the existing service reservoir being demolished. This will enable the second reservoir compartment to then be constructed.

2. Demolition Works

Various demolition works are proposed, including the demolition of the original service reservoir, the two valve houses, the meter house and the stone boundary wall (which will be rebuilt).

3. Valve House

The proposed valve house is structurally integrated with the new service reservoir. Its main function is to accommodate and provide adequate access for the operation, installation and removal of all pipework, control valves and instrumentation.

The valve house is to be constructed of reinforced concrete, complete with a rendered block work outer skin, which is to be finished with sandstone paint. To minimise the visual impact of the structure all galvanised steel elements, such as access doors, vents and hand-railing are to be finished in black.

The proposed location for the valve house has been selected due to the size limitations of the site and the requirement to position it away from the main structural cracking of the existing service reservoir. Positioning the valve house and associated access to the west of the service reservoir would require a particularly deep excavation which would only exacerbate the cracking issue. In addition this would result in increased volumes of arising material.

4. Temporary Access & Hardstanding

The new service reservoir will be served by a new heavy duty bitmac (similar appearance to tarmac) access road, which is to be connected to the existing site access road. Therefore, there will be no permanent alterations to the existing access point on to Jacksons Edge Road. The bitmac road will connect to a reinforced concrete hardstanding area outside of the proposed valve house.

5. Permanent Lighting

As part of the new development, it is proposed to install 50Lux level lighting at the main access gates on Jacksons Edge Road and adjacent to the new valve house. All other lighting will provide a 10Lux level. The use of the external lighting system is anticipated to be infrequent and will mainly be required for the first and last part of the working shift during winter months. Lighting will also be limited to the access gate, access road and valve-house.

To minimise the impact of the two pole mounted (2m high) spotlights, the fixing direction has been selected to minimise lights shining directly into adjacent properties. The steel pole mounts are to be finished in black.

5. Landscape Reinstatement

It is intended to reuse all of the arising site materials within the reservoir embankment construction and boundary landscaping.

6. Temporary working areas

Temporary working areas are required to enable the new service reservoir to be constructed and reinstated. The working area is sufficient to enable the phased construction of the new Service Reservoir and also the proposed scour pipeline

7. Excavated material storage

Excavated material from the Service Reservoir site will be stored within a temporary material storage area on land off Jacksons Edge Road/Light Alders Lane. This material will then be utilised as backfill and in the landscape reinstatement of the Service Reservoir site. The excavated material storage area needs to be of a sufficient size to accommodate the required volume of material. In order to screen the storage area from view an approximately 2m high top soil bund will be constructed to the south and west of the site, which will be seeded with an appropriate grass mix. The topsoil mound and sections of the subsoil mounds will be seeded to minimise the potential for impact from wind-blown dust.

The temporary material storage area will require an access to be created off Jacksons Edge Road. This access will be removed and the boundary of the Field with Jacksons Edge Road reinstated following completion of the works.

8. Welfare Facilities

The welfare facilities for construction staff will be located at the Jacksons Edge Service Reservoir site and will consist of 6No cabins of size 9.15m x 3.03m, stacked triple height, and 6No cabins of size 5.55m x 3.03m stacked double height. The cabins will provide facilities consisting of site offices, meeting rooms, a drying room and welfare facilities (i.e. kitchen, dining, toilets, etc.).

9. Temporary contractor's car park

The temporary contractor's car park is proposed to be located at Disley Amalgamated Sports Club. The access will need to be a two way access/egress for the duration of the construction period and will, therefore, require widening. It is anticipated that there will be parking for up to 36 vehicles.

Permitted Development

It must be noted that Permitted Development rights exist for some elements of the works. In particular, the scour pipeline route and connecting lengths of pipeline and working areas adjoining the works.

POLICIES

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1 Spatial Principles
DP3 Sustainable Economic Development
DP7 Promoting Environmental Quality
EM1 Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets
RDF4 Maintenance of the Green Belt

Local Plan Policy

GC1 Green Belt
NE2 Protection of Local Landscapes
NE11 Nature Conservation
NE14 Nature Conservation Sites
BE1 Design
DC1 Scale and design
DC3 Amenity
DC6 Circulation and Access
DC8 Landscaping
DC9 Tree Protection
DC13 Noise creation

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

CONSULTATIONS

Archaeology:

An archaeological desk-based assessment was commissioned by United Utilities in order to establish the archaeological impact of the proposals and define the scope of any archaeological mitigation that may be required.

The first point to note is that although the report considers all aspects of the development, it is clear from the supporting documentation, that much of the work is defined as permitted development. This applies particularly to the pipeline which will run east from the reservoir, which will affect a number of archaeological features where it passes through open ground. In this area, an archaeological watching brief represents appropriate mitigation but this will be achieved through discussions with United Utilities rather than by a condition secured through the planning process.

Within the part of the development requiring planning permission archaeological mitigation is only required in the temporary materials storage area, where the areas stripped of topsoil should be inspected and any archaeological deposits recorded. A report on the work should also be produced and the may be secured by condition.

Environment Agency:

The Environment Agency has no objection in principle to the proposed development but advise that the plans indicate that a stone soakaway is to be installed around the perimeter of the bunded area. It will need to be ensured that there is no possibility of contaminated water entering the soakaway without prior treatment.

Environmental Health:

Environmental Health raise no objection, subject to the following comments :-

The accompanying documents including the Design Access Statement and Construction Dust and Air Quality statements detail the intended actions towards the control and minimisation of noise and dust throughout the working period. It has been noted that such actions include the provision of a contact number to nearby residents in terms of possible problems / concerns.

It is recommend that approval is granted on the basis that the recommendations put forward in the accompanying documents are implemented throughout the demolition and construction work.

Forestry:

The application process has been subject of extensive discussion between all parties which has established a general principle in terms of the way forward in respect of the application process and implementation from an arboricultural perspective.

The main body of the relevant information in terms of tree loss and protection is contained on the three tree constraints plans. These clearly detail those trees to be removed in order to facilitate the engineering development footprint, the requisite haul roads and access to the storage Field. The tree losses correlate with the acceptance that was concluded as part of the various site visits, and are considered to be the minimum which allows the project to proceed.

The majority of the tree loss will be visible from the public vantage point of Jacksons Edge Road and the public footpath which extends from the road to the Golf Course. The losses will have both an impact in terms of the immediate and the wider landscape aspect and the amenity of the area. This needs to be balanced in terms of the requirement to provide a

replacement Service Reservoir and the quality of any replacement landscape scheme. The need to establish a balance in respect of both ecology and tree/landscape priorities will have a bearing on the content of an acceptable landscape scheme.

Highways:

CEC Highways have had some pre-application discussions with the applicant. They are aware that Stockport MBC have also had discussions with the applicant, as part of the road closures and temporary works lie within their jurisdiction, and they will need to agree with any necessary Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and other matters such as footpath closures.

Given that we have a degree of control over the operations through matters such as TROs, we can ensure the co-operation of the applicant. The following condition is recommended:

"Prior to the commencement of development a Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, which outlines the method of construction, details of deliveries to the site during construction, how and where materials will be unloaded and details of where contractor's vehicles will park. The development shall then be constructed in complete accordance with the method statement."

Public Rights of Way:

The PROW unit advise that there has been prior consultation with them, however, they do not have jurisdiction to grant temporary closures on public rights of way for longer than 6 months. The suggested period of 3 years for closures on Footpaths nos. 5, 11 and 13 will be at the discretion of the Secretary of State, however, they do not anticipate that this will cause a problem, subject to the provision of alternative routes, which are clearly signposted.

Various informatives / recommendations have been submitted for the applicant's consideration.

Sport England:

No comment.

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (Highways):

Stockport MBC Highway engineers have provided initial comments in respect of the proposals. A more detailed response will be provided prior to Committee. They advise that providing agreement can be reached with respect to:

- 1) Removal / amendment of the existing traffic calming on Carr Brow
- 2) Temporary traffic restrictions on Carr Brow
- 3) The temporary traffic calming arrangements
- 4) Replacement traffic calming arrangements
- 5) Resurfacing / reconstruction of Carr Brow, if required, following completion of the works
- 6) Traffic Management
- 7) Wheel wash / road cleaning
- 8) Cycle access along Jacksons Edge Road (in addition to pedestrian access)

then the proposal should not have a significant adverse impact on the local highway network.

United Utilities:

Initially concerns were raised by the Developer Services and Planning team at United Utilities, as they didn't appreciate that this is a United Utilities project which will clearly take account of their own existing apparatus. Their initial comments have now been withdrawn.

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

Disley Parish Council recognises that this project will have a major impact on many residents of Disley over a considerable period of time.

However, Disley Parish Council also recognises that this work is essential to ensure the future water supply to Disley and its environs.

The Parish Council is satisfied that United Utilities have explored all possible options to mitigate disruption to residents and have carried out an extensive consultation process. In view of this Disley Parish Council does not object to this application.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Thirteen letters of objection/comment have been received to date. The key objections are in respect of:

Traffic issues

- The project is going to run for a minimum of three years and will require three road closures of Jacksons Edge Road for 6-8 weeks at a time causing huge disruption.
- Proposal will result in further traffic congestion on the A6.
- Has the impact of the SEMMMS road been fully considered?
- The closure of Jacksons Edge Road will lead to the creation of a "rat run" down a single track road (Light Alders Road) and onto Lyme Road as an escape from the often congested A6.
- It is understood that Light Alders Lane is to be closed and made available as "access only" to local residents, but how is this going to be enforced?
- There is no footpath on Light Alders Road
- Is there adequate space for parking/loading/turning
- Stockport and Cheshire East Highways divisions will not get involved with highway closures unless there are continuing problems.

- No meaningful traffic survey of Jacksons Edge Road or Light Alders Road has been carried out.
- There have been several near fatal accidents on Jackson's Edge in recent years. The introduction of heavy goods vehicles on this strip of road is dangerous to traffic and pedestrians.

Residential amenity

- Our property directly overlooks the site, and loss of privacy would ensue for our bedrooms and bathrooms which directly overlook the Field.
- Noise pollution from heavy plant and machinery will cause significant disturbance and loss of the quiet enjoyment of my garden and home.

Siting of the excavated material

- Either the disused quarry or the golf course should be used to store the excavated material; this would prevent spreading the disruption or require Jacksons Edge Road to be closed. These options should be reconsidered.
- The quarry would rejuvenate more quickly than the Field.
- Not all avenues have been explored in respect of the siting for the excavated material storage.

Use of Light Alders Lane Field

- There is a restrictive covenant on the Field for use as agricultural or grazing land
- Light Alders Lane Field is sloped, at the moment water runs down straight onto the Lane. With the disruption to this Field there is the danger of more excess water and mud and the concern of slippage.
- If the application is approved, a condition should be attached to any permission to prevent the Field being used for general storage; the siting of cabins; plant and machinery or the parking of vehicles. No floodlight should be permitted on any part of the Field.
- Following completion of the project, the Field should be re-instated fully to meadowland, the contours should be reinstated and hardcore and fencing should be removed.

Landscaping

- No planting to screen the works on the south side of my boundary wall is planned.
- Loss of trees

Ecology

- We are aware that there are owls, bats and other species present in the Field and surrounding tree and woodland. Little investigation of the impact to wildlife has been carried out for the Field.

Risk of flooding

- Lyme Road and Light Alders Road already have drainage capacity issues. Light Alders Road drains (or lack of them) often overflow, and as a direct result our property and the surrounding roads are at increased risk from water damage should there be increased run-off from the Field.

Pollution

- Development will generate noise, dirt, dust and carbon dioxide emissions from heavy vehicles

Public Rights of Way

- Development will result in closure of footpaths

Response from United Utilities

- UU advise that the proposal does not take into account their requirement to maintain the water main and a revised site layout plan is required of a major diversion prior to work commencing.

Insufficient Consultation

- Only 200 people attended the two public meetings
- No explanation about why second compartment is so close to rear boundary – affecting properties on Hilton Road
- No indication is given in the application about any temporary measures that will be installed or constructed to minimise the impact of noise, visual intrusion and dust during the construction work.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The follow statements have been submitted in support of the application:

- Arboricultural report
- Archaeology report
- Badger report (confidential document)
- Construction dust and air quality assessment
- Construction noise and vibration assessment

- Design and Access Statement
- Ecology report
- Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic management plan

Within the Design and Access Statement, United Utilities advise that they looked at a number of areas as potential sites for the site compound and material storage area and has discussed the options at length with the local community. The following locations for a temporary excavated material storage area have been considered prior to making this planning application:

Discounted Options:

1. Disley Golf Course

This specifically related to an area encompassing the 16th tee and fairway plus the practice area to the rear of residential properties on Hilton Road. The land owner had a number of concerns about the potential impact of the project on their business. The proximity of this area to the Service Reservoir would have aided the construction of this scheme. It would also have had benefits in terms of reducing the public highway and traffic impacts. There were, however, significant concerns which led to the option not being pursued further:

- An initial study showed that 3 additional holes would have to be relocated to ensure the course retained its 18-hole status. This would have required significant works to the 3 additional holes to occur at least 2 years prior to the commencement of construction of the proposed new reservoir. As a result this would have had major programme implications and would have delayed works to replace the deteriorating service reservoir.
- Further to this, there would be some potential construction impacts to residents on the northern side of Hilton Road with gardens adjacent to the golf course.
- The temporary haul route would impact upon an area of heathland habitat. Dry heath is a UK BAP Priority Habitat.

2. Jacksons Edge Quarry

The residents of Light Alders Lane asked us to consider the use of the quarry site. An internal constructability review showed a temporary compound location within the quarry to be feasible. However, during pre-application consultation with Cheshire East Officers, it was confirmed that such proposals would cause long term damage to protected trees and habitats, and also impact on protected species. In addition to this, it was confirmed that the site's landscape value would take many years to recover. In light of other options available to us which avoid these impacts, such significant harm to the natural environment is wholly unsustainable and contrary to local planning policies and the National Planning Policy Framework. This option was therefore not pursued further.

Chosen Option:

Field off Jacksons Edge Road/Light Alders Lane

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed site compound within the Field has some potential for impacts on surrounding residents, mitigation measures are to be incorporated during construction that will minimise this impact. The temporary excavated material storage area whilst being present for up to 3 years will, ultimately, be for a temporary period and the land will be returned to its former condition with limited impact on existing trees, protected species and the landscape.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Green Belt, where there is a presumption against inappropriate development.

The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances, and that “Very Special Circumstances” will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The applicant accepts that the proposed development represents “inappropriate development”, and has submitted a case to demonstrate that “Very Special Circumstances”.

They contend that given the nature of the development proposals (i.e. essential water supply infrastructure) and the need to replace the Service Reservoir in the proposed location, it is considered that in this instance Very Special Circumstances exist to allow the development to be approved.

It is noted that the applicant has carefully considered the siting of the Excavated Material Storage Area, and it is regrettable that the golf course and the disused quarry cannot be used, for the reasons outlined above, as this would have reduced the impact of the development in respect of visual amenity, road closures and general disturbance to residents.

Consideration of the harm

Openness

The proposed Service Reservoir Compartments will be predominantly underground, and therefore will have the appearance of a grassed mound. This element is therefore not considered to an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

There are other elements of the development which will have an adverse impact on openness, namely the Valve House, which is a permanent building positioned to the east of the reservoir, creating 258 square metres of floorspace and measuring 4 metres in height. In addition, the temporary works including the siting of the welfare facilities, the access road,

hardstanding and the Excavated Material Storage Area will harm openness, but only for a three-year period.

Visual Amenity

The most visible element of the proposals will be the Excavated Material Storage Area on Light Alders Field. It will be clearly visible from Jacksons Edge Road, and Light Alders Lane, and the properties within the vicinity of the site. The existing Service Reservoir is well screened, and therefore the Valve House, temporary haul road, access road & area of hardstanding will not have a significant impact on visual amenity. Two permanent spotlights are proposed at the main access gates on Jacksons Edge Road, which have the potential to harm visual amenity, although the use of the lights proposed is limited.

Consideration of the Very Special Circumstance case

The Very Special Circumstance case that the applicant has put forward has some merit. The new two compartment Service Reservoir is urgently required to ensure a continued safe supply of water to 40,000 customers in the surrounding area.

Whilst the temporary works will harm openness and visual amenity, after the three-year period they will be removed and the land fully re-instated. Therefore, they will not cause permanent harm to the Green Belt.

The permanent development falls within the confines of the existing Service Reservoir site. Mitigation measures are proposed such as mounding and mature landscaping to screen the development from nearby residential properties and surrounding areas.

The applicant also proposes grass seeding the temporary topsoil mound on the Field, to improve visual amenity.

It is considered that the Very Special Circumstance case submitted clearly outweighs the harm caused by inappropriateness, and the harm caused to openness and visual amenity. As such, the scheme is considered acceptable in principle by officers.

Highway Implications

Summary:

- The use of a material storage Field to reuse site soil for the new reservoir will significantly reduce the amount of construction traffic which would otherwise use the A6, Carr Brow and Jacksons Edge Road during the project.
- A 200m section of Jacksons Edge Road from the entrance of the service reservoir site to the material storage Field entrance will be closed for through access of vehicles for approximately 5 separate periods during the project. Pedestrian access will be maintained during this time. Residents will be contacted prior to this occurring.
- At all other times traffic light control will be in place on the same section of road.

- Resident access will be maintained at all times.
- A one-way system for visiting delivery works traffic will be in place. Delivery works traffic will access the temporary material storage area and the Jacksons Edge service reservoir site off the A6 via Carr Brow and leave via Jacksons Edge Road back on to the A6.
- It is proposed that parking may be limited on one side of Carr Brow at times during the project to prevent congestion on the road. Residents will be contacted prior to this occurring.
- Existing traffic calming measures on Carr Brow will be temporarily removed and reinstated on completion of the works. It is proposed that traffic calming cushions will be installed on a temporary basis.
- It is proposed that the following local roads will be “Access Only” during the periods when Jacksons Edge Road is closed during the project: Light Alders Lane, Alders Road which leads to Lyme Road, Carr Brow, Wybersley Road and Jacksons Edge Road.

Cheshire East and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council’s Highway engineers have been consulted on the proposals, and raise no objection in principle to the proposals, subject to conditions.

Design

The Valve House has a functional design. It is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the character of the area.

Residential Amenity

Concerns have been raised by local residents particularly in respect of noise & disturbance from the construction vehicles & development. Their objections are duly noted. However, it is considered that the need for the new Service Reservoir is so important that it outweighs the potential harm. It should also be noted that there are very few residential properties within the immediate vicinity of the site that would be affected by the development.

Our Environmental Health Officer has carefully considered the proposals, and raises no objection, subject to conditions.

Landscape

The landscape proposals do not include any hedge or tree planting along the northern site boundary to screen views of the reservoir embankment from the rear of 31 and 33 Hilton Road. The grassed embankment would not be unsightly but these properties currently have pleasant views of the woodland on the site boundary. This matter has been discussed with the United Utilities landscape architect, who has confirmed that the engineers will not permit any planting on the embankment. It is essential that they are able to inspect regularly to check the integrity of the embankment and will only permit close mown grass on this structure.

However, UU have offered to provide some planting within the gardens of these properties and they are currently in discussions with the residents to agree details. This is a private matter between the parties.

The landscape proposals are generally acceptable but amendments and further details are required:

- Ash must be omitted from the proposed planting scheme to avoid the spread of ash dieback disease (*Chalara fraxinea*).
- Further details about the establishment and maintenance of the proposed woodland, woodland edge, wet meadows, bluebells and heath areas are required.
- Advance planting in the vicinity of 60 Jackson Edge Road should be indicated if possible.
- Details for the height, profile and grass seeding of the temporary screen bunds plus specifications and timescales for the restoration of the temporary storage area off Jacksons Edge Road & Light Alders Lane.

Details should be submitted for the height, materials and colour for the proposed acoustic fencing that will be erected around the site perimeter for the duration of the works to screen and protect the adjacent properties.

A ten year management plan is recommended to ensure that all proposed habitats establish and are properly managed to mitigate for the loss of protected woodland and other habitats.

A revised landscape plan will be required to resolve these matters; this can be resolved through an appropriately worded condition.

Nature Conservation

Habitats

The proposed development would result in the loss of a number of habitats of nature conservation importance including woodland, diverse grasslands, and small areas of lowland heathland. Local Plan policy NE14 is therefore pertinent to this application.

The applicant proposes to compensate for the potential impacts of the proposed development on these habitats by reinstating them on site following the completion of the works.

Bluebells (a Biodiversity Action Plan species and hence a material consideration) have been recorded on site. This species will be adversely affected by the proposed development due to the loss of woodland from the site. To mitigate the potential impacts of the development on this species, it is proposed to translocate the existing population to Bollinhurst reservoir prior to the commencement of development. The new woodlands will then be planted with native bluebell bulbs following the completion of works.

It is considered for the most part, the potential impacts of the proposed development upon valuable habitats have been satisfactorily addressed. However, the landscape proposals plan refers to an area of heathland to the north west of the service reservoir as being 'protected throughout construction'. However, the haul road is shown as encroaching within this area. Clarification of the potential impacts of the haul road on this area of heathland is required. If

this area of heathland is to be impacted by the proposed development proposals for its reinstatement are required.

Finally, a wet meadow grassland mix is proposed for the re-instated service reservoir grasslands.

Badgers

Badgers are known to forage on the proposed development site. It is not anticipated that the proposed development would have an adverse impact upon any identified sett. There will be a temporary loss of badger foraging habitat associated with the proposed development, the impact of which is likely to be low.

Bats

It is not anticipated that the proposed development would have a significant impact upon bats.

Breeding Birds

The proposed development site is likely to support breeding birds including the more widespread biodiversity Action Plan species. Measures to safeguard breeding birds are included in the submitted ecological survey report.

It is anticipated that the issues raised in respect of the heathland habitat will be addressed prior to committee. An update report will be provided which will clarify these matters.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

In conclusion, whilst the proposal represents “inappropriate development” in the Green Belt, it is considered that Very Special Circumstances exist, which clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt: namely the provision of essential infrastructure to provide safe water to 40,000 people in the area.

The Excavated Material Storage Area is considered to be the most harmful element of the proposals from both a visual amenity and residential amenity perspective, and will require the closure of Jackson Edge Road on 5 occasions for a 6-8 week period each time, which will cause significant disruption locally. However, it is considered that the provision of the new Service Reservoir is so important that the temporary harm should be accepted.

It is considered that the landscape, forestry and ecological issues can be adequately mitigated.

It is on this basis, a recommendation of approval is made, subject to conditions.

Application for Full Planning

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. A03FP - Commencement of development (3 years)
2. A01AP - Development in accord with approved plans
3. Development in accordance with accompanying statements
4. A06EX - Materials as application
5. A01LS - Landscaping - submission of revised scheme
6. A04LS - Landscaping (implementation)
7. A16LS - Submission of landscape/woodland management plan
8. A13LS - Erection of fencing / wall as required
9. A22GR - Protection from noise during construction (hours of construction)
10. Submission of a scheme which demonstrates how surface water is to be disposed of
11. Excavated Material Storage Area to be used for storage of excavated materials only
12. Light Alders Field to be fully restored to the satisfaction of the LPA following the completion of development
13. Submission of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation
14. Footpath No. 5 to be fully restored following the completion of the development
15. Submission of a Method Statement for means of construction, deliveries, contractor's parking, wheel washing and other highway matters

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