

Application No: 20/3090C

Location: United Utilities, Hassall Road, Alsager, ST7 2SJ

Proposal: Installation of the infrastructure to facilitate improvements at Alsager Wastewater Treatment Works, including a change of use of land to Operational.

Applicant: Miss Sarah Allen, United Utilities

Expiry Date: 23-Oct-2020

Summary

The proposed development will allow for an improvement to water entering watercourses and will deal with increased wastewater due to increases in population.

There would be no adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity due to the significant distance to the nearest residential properties.

Satisfactory access and parking provision will still be provided, and the development would not result in 'severe harm' on the local highway network.

The impact on the character of the open countryside is acceptable.

The impact on trees and nature conservation is acceptable.

The proposal is therefore found to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the installation of infrastructure to facilitate improvements at Alsager Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW), including a change of use of land to operational land.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site incorporates both existing operational and non-operational land within the confines of the existing Alsager WwTW fenced boundary. Development is proposed on the area of non-operational land to the southeast within the fenced boundary of the WwTW (approximately 5,400m²), which previously housed a large, derelict storage building and existing hardstanding forming part of the access road. The storage building has now been demolished. Dense shrubs and scattered young to middle age trees are present throughout the area and surrounding the building. Development on the operational land is largely within open grassland and existing hardstanding.

The site is designated as being within Open Countryside within the adopted local plan.

RELEVANT HISTORY

20/2540C – Temporary compound to facilitate works at Alsager WwTW– Approved 8th February 2021

20/2294N - Demolition of redundant boiler house, F magazine, gauge test centre, effluent plant and indoor range area – Approved 18th December 2015

17/2421N – Notification of demolition – Approved 6th July 2020

20/1952C – EIA screening opinion – EIA not required – 5th August 2020

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

National Policy:

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Development Plan:

By virtue of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for this area comprises the recently adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS), the Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review (CBLPFR) and the Alsager Neighbourhood Plan (ANP).

POLICIES

Development Plan

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

The following are considered relevant material considerations:

PG1 – Overall Development Strategy

PG6 - Open Countryside

PG7 – Spatial Distribution of Development

PG2 – Settlement Hierarchy
EG1 – Economic Prosperity
EG3 – Existing and Allocated Employment Sites
SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles
SE1 – Design
SE2 – Efficient Use of Land
SE3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE4 – The Landscape
SE5 – Trees, Hedgerows, Woodland
SE12 – Pollution, Land Stability and Land Contamination
SE13 – Flood Risk and Water Management
IN1 - Infrastructure

Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review (CBLPFR)

GR6 – Amenity and Health
GR7 – Amenity and Health
GR9 – Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision
GR10 - Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision
GR20 – Public Utilities

Alsager Neighbourhood Plan (ANP)

NBE4 – Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows
TTS2 – Congestion and Highway Safety
TTS3 – Car Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Points
TTS4 – Accessibility

CONSULTATIONS:

Highways: No objection.

Environmental Health: No objection subject to conditions/informatives relating to land contamination and hours of construction/operation.

Environment Agency: No objection.

Natural England: No objection.

Alsager Town Council: No comment.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of report writing.

APPRAISAL:

Principle of Development

The site is designated as being within Open Countryside and the development is required for essential works at the Alsager Waste Water Treatment Works. Policy PG6 (Open Countryside) of the CELPS allows for development of public infrastructure and essential works undertaken by public service authorities or statutory undertakers.

As a sewerage undertaker, United Utilities is obligated to provide the appropriate facilities for the treatment and storage of wastewater to the required standard by the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations 1994.

Policy IN1 (Infrastructure), requires utilities infrastructure to be provided in a timely manner to meet the needs of new development.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

Design and Character

Policy SE1 of the CELPS advises that proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings in terms of sense of place, design quality, sustainable architecture, livability/workability and safety.

Development is proposed outside the operational boundary of the WwTW but still within the fenced boundary of the site.

Outside the existing operational boundary of the site the following are proposed:

- Tertiary Pile Cloth Filters (TPCF) L15.10m x W7.30m x H4.20m
- Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR) 2no. 10.25m diameter x H8.00m
- TPCF and MBBR Motor Control Centre (MCC) Kiosk L13.10m x W3.60m x H4.20m
- Sludge holding tank 7.95m diameter x H1.10m
- Rapid mixing chamber L3.00m x W2.00m x H1.50m
- MBBR blowers 2 no. L1.80m x W1.90m x H2.00m
- Power Substation Kiosk L3.00m x W2.50m x H3.00m
- Potable Wash Water Booster Kiosk L2.70m x W2.30m x H1.50m
- Switchboard Kiosk L6.10m x W4.10m x H4.20m
- Inlet works MCC Kiosk L8.20m x W4.20m x H4.20m

Within the existing operational boundary the following are proposed:

- Ferric Dosing Kiosk L15.30m x W4.20m x H3.00m
- Caustic Dosing Kiosk L11.70m x W4.30m x H3.00m

The appearance of the buildings and structures within the site is dictated by their function and as such are of a utilitarian appearance. The site is well screened from public view by vegetation and the proposed development is within the existing fenced area of the WwTW. As such it is not considered that there would be any significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area or the open countryside.

The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of design and character and in compliance with Policies SE1 (Design), SD1 (Sustainable Development in Cheshire East) and SD2 (Sustainable Development Principles) of the CELPS.

Amenity

Policies GR6 and GR7 of CBLPFR requires development to ensure that there would be no unduly detrimental effects on amenity due to loss of privacy, loss of sunlight and daylight, visual intrusion, environmental disturbance or pollution, traffic generation, access and parking.

The development would be in excess of 200m away from the nearest residential property and as such, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on residential amenity.

The proposals are therefore in compliance with Policies GR6 and GR7 (Amenity and Health) of the CBLPFR.

Highways

Alterations are proposed to the internal access road including widening and surfacing with tarmac.

No alterations are proposed to the main access to the site and it is not anticipated that the proposed development would lead to an increase in vehicle movements, other than during the construction phase. A temporary construction compound has been approved on the opposite side of the road and vehicles would enter the site via a temporary access opposite this.

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure has no objection to the proposed development. The proposed development is in accordance with Policy GR9 (Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision) and Policies TTS2 (Congestion and Highway Safety) and TTS4 (Accessibility) of the ANP.

Ecology

Great Crested Newts and Roosting Bats

It is considered that these protected species are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

Whilst the application site offers limited opportunities for roosting bats, bats are likely to commute and forage around the site to some extent. To avoid any adverse impacts on bats resulting from any lighting associated with the development it is recommended that if planning permission is granted a condition should be attached requiring any additional lighting to be agreed with the LPA.

Other Protected Species

No active setts were recorded on site during the submitted surveys, but other protected species are known to be present in this locality. It is considered that, based on the current status of other protected species on site, this species is not reasonably likely to be affected by the proposed development. As the status of other protected species can change within a short time scale it is recommended that if planning consent is granted a condition should be attached which requires the submission of an updated survey prior to the commencement of development.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a priority habitat and hence a material consideration. The proposed development will result in a short section of overgrown hedgerow from the frontage of Hassall Road. Replacement planting is proposed in this location.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Local Plan Policy SE 3 requires all development proposals to seek to positively contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. The proposed development will result in the loss of a small area of existing vegetation, whilst replacement planting is proposed as part of the biodiversity and landscaping scheme for the site, it is considered that the proposals are likely to result in a minor loss of biodiversity.

The proposal is therefore in compliance with Policy SE3 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the CELPS and Policy NR3 of the CBLPFR.

Trees

There are existing trees within the vicinity of the proposed development. The submission is supported by an Arboricultural impact Assessment and Method Statement. The proposals would require the removal of several trees, mainly internal to the site although some roadside vegetation would be impacted. The loss of these trees is not considered to be significant.

A condition should be imposed requiring compliance with the submitted tree protection details.

The proposal is therefore in compliance with Policy SE5 (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland) of the CELPS and Policy NBE4 (Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows) of the ANP.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposal will allow for improvement to water entering watercourses and deal with increased wastewater due to increases in population.

There would be no adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity due to the significant distance to the nearest properties.

Satisfactory access and parking provision will still be provided, and the development would not result in 'severe harm' on the local highway network.

The impact on the character of the open countryside is acceptable.

The impact on trees and nature conservation is acceptable.

The proposal is therefore found to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

The proposed development complies with the relevant Development Plan policies as a whole and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Time limit.**
- 2. Approved plans.**
- 3. Materials in accordance with submitted details.**
- 4. Development in accordance with submitted tree protection measures.**
- 5. Compliance with Landscape and Biodiversity Plan.**
- 6. Protection of nesting birds.**
- 7. Submission of updated Other Protected Species Survey prior to commencement of development.**
- 8. Submission of details of any proposed external lighting.**
- 9. Submission and approval of a Phase II Contaminated Land Report**
- 10. Submission and approval of a verification report**
- 11. Details of any importation of soils**
- 12. Unidentified contamination**

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) of the Southern Planning Committee, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

