

## Item C3

# **Proposed alteration and extension of the existing Studd Hill Householder's Waste Recycling Centre, Westbrook Lane, Herne Bay, Kent – CA/09/1903**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Unit to Planning Applications Committee on 15 June 2010

Application by Kent County Council Waste Management for proposed development at Studd Hill Householders Waste Recycling Centre, Westbrook Lane, Herne Bay, Kent.

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions

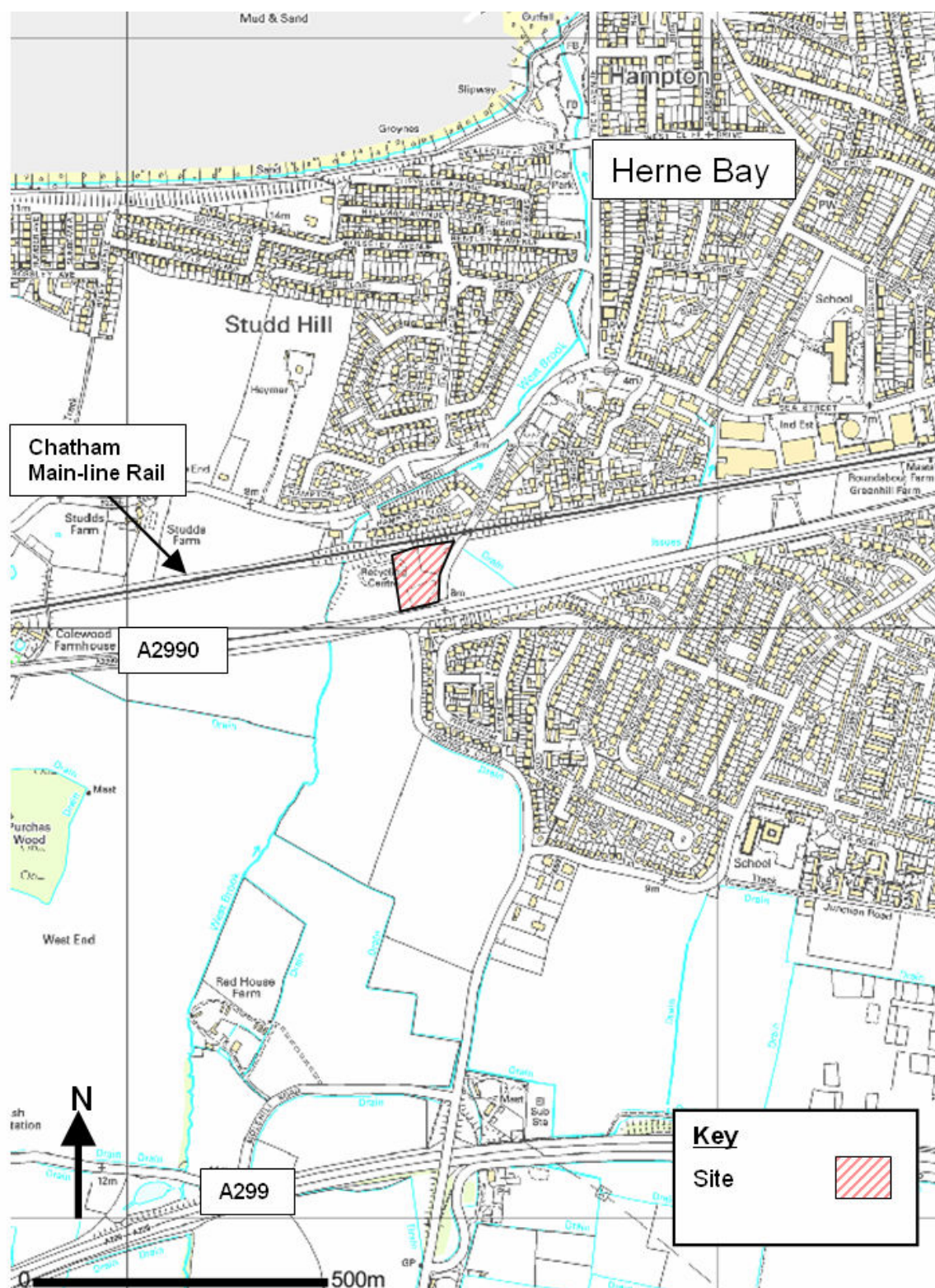
Local Member: Jean Law & David Hirst

Classification: Unrestricted

### **Site description and background**

1. The application site is located on Westbrook Lane in Studd Hill. The site is approximately 2km south west of Herne Bay and approximately 4.5km east of Whitstable. The site is accessed by two entrances; A HGV entrance directly off the A2990 Old Thanet Way and a public access off Westbrook Lane, which is directly off Whitstable Road.
2. The application site consists of 1.14 Ha of uneven disturbed land. This land currently contains the existing 0.23 Ha Householder's Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) hardstanding area, part of a disused roller skating rink and a disused car park associated with the rink. The rest of the site is covered with a mixture of undulating land covered with dense shrub.
3. The site is bounded to the south by the A2990 Old Thanet Way, with the rear gardens of the residential properties of Blackburn Road beyond some 40m from the site boundary. The north boundary of the site adjoins the raised Chatham to Ramsgate railway line, beyond this lies the rear gardens (23 metres) and residential properties of Hampton Close approximately 35 metres from the site boundary. The site is bounded to the east by Westbrook Lane and to the west by the disused roller skating rink and associated car park with agricultural fields beyond.
4. The site is not located directly in or adjacent to an area of nature conservation such as a SSSI and is not located in any other statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation. However the site is located within 2km of the Thanet Coast Special Site Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Thanet Coast Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site.
5. Part of site currently has planning permission for the existing HWRC which processes approximately 11,500 tonnes of waste per annum.

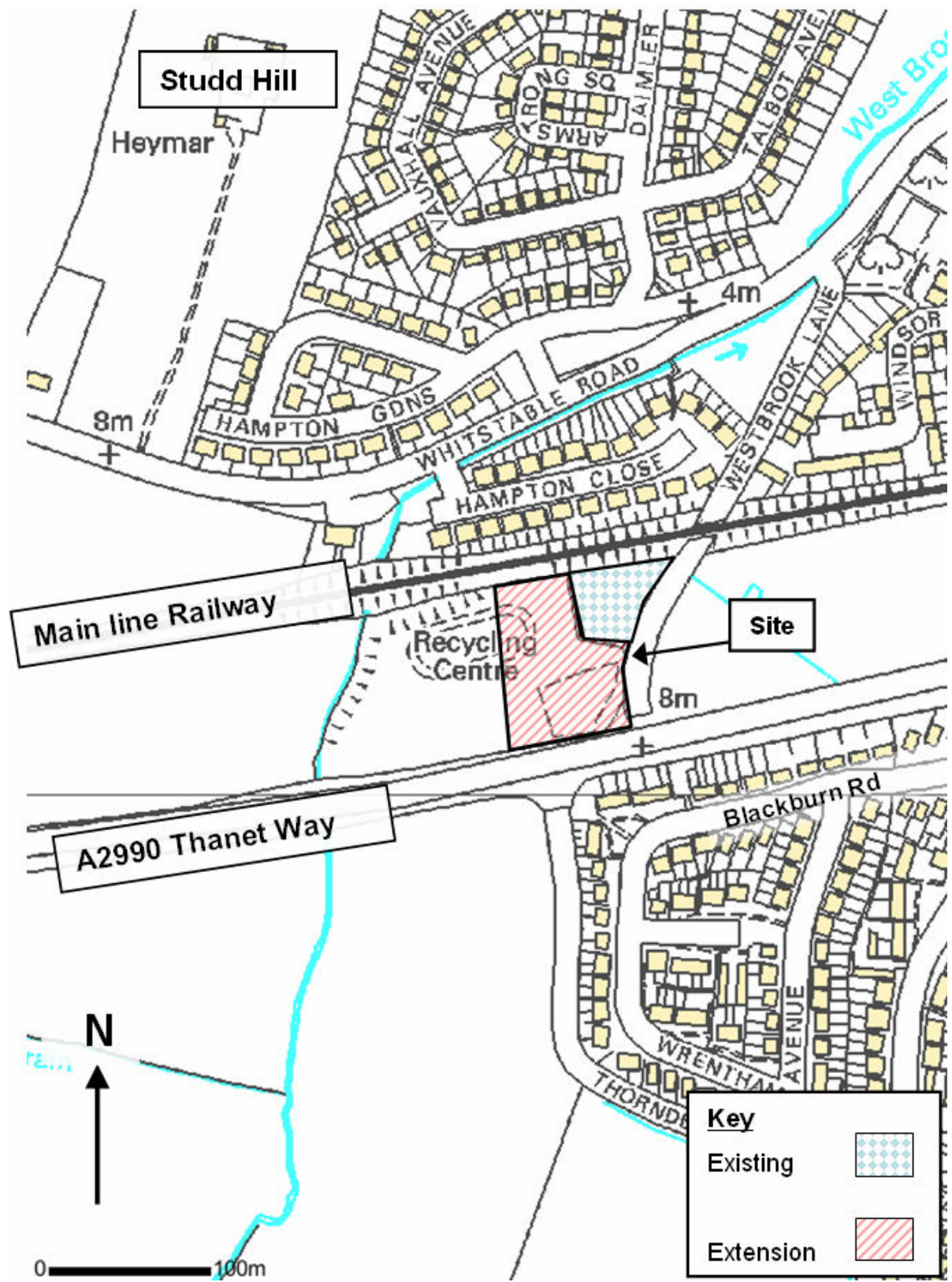
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**Figure 1 : Location map**

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**Figure 2 : Map at smaller scale**

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**Figure 3: Proposed Layout Plan**

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**Proposal**

6. This application proposes the alteration and extension of the existing HWRC to expand the facility to cover 1.14 Ha. The increase in site area would enable the complete remodelling of the facility. The facility would be reconfigured to relocate the waste management operations from the north eastern corner of the site to a more central location within the site area. There is proposed to be a 6 metre planted margin between the operational area and the northern edge of the site and a 23 metre bunded margin between the operational area and the southern edge of the site.
7. The proposals include the separation of the members of the public from the waste management operations. This would be through the creation of a split level segregated facility, and separation of entrances and exits. The public recycling area would cover approximately 1400m<sup>2</sup>, consisting of up to 8 'roll on – roll off' bins ('ro-ro' bins) and up to 5 travelling compactors and access and parking facilities. The layout would be altered to create two parking areas and a public one-way through route with separate entrance and exit. This would also create a drop off area to enable the public to drop off various wastes without causing queuing through the site.
8. The operations area would cover approximately 1890m<sup>2</sup>. This would consist of a compactor zone, bulk recycling / residual bins, up to 10 open 'ro-ro' bins and storage containers. Only HGVs and staff members would have access to this area, there would be a split level physical separation to prevent access by public site users. A separate HGV entrance would be created directly onto the A2990 Thanet Way with appropriate vision splays. The HGV entrance / exit would be left turn in, left turn out only to ensure vehicles do not cross the carriageway. The proposal also includes provision of parking for staff including 4 car parking spaces and 5 cycle parking spaces.
9. The proposal includes extensive landscaping around the northern, eastern and southern site boundaries of the site. This includes two new landscaping bunds to the north-west and southern areas of the site. New planting would surround the entire perimeter of the site. The details of the landscaping can be seen in figure 3 above.
10. The site currently has a throughput of 11,500 tonnes per annum. The new site arrangement would enable this to increase to 16,000 tonnes per annum within ten years of the facility becoming operational.

**Hours of operation and opening**

11. The operating hours proposed for the site are based on The County Council's policy for their other HWRC's. The operating hours and opening hours for the proposal facility would mostly remain the same as for the current facility. This is with the exception of extended opening proposed on Wednesdays during the spring to autumn period, where the site would remain open up to 20:30 in the evening. The applicant justifies this as it is both in line with other KCC HWRC opening hours and in order to reduce the use of the site at weekends.

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*Operating Hours*

12. The operating hours allow for preparation at the beginning of the day and tidying up time at the end of the day. The proposed operating hours are as follows;

1st April to 30th September

Monday to Saturday	07:30 to 18:00 hours
Wednesday	07:30 to 20:30 hours
Sunday and Bank Holidays	08:30 to 16:30 hours

1st October to 31st March

Monday to Saturday	07:30 to 18:00 hours
Sunday and Bank Holidays	08:30 to 16:30 hours

*Opening Hours to the public*

13. The opening hours, when the facility would be open to members of the public, are proposed as follows;

1st April to 30th September

Monday to Saturday	08:00 to 16:30hours
Wednesday	08:00 to 19:00 hours
Sunday and Bank Holidays	09:00 to 16:00 hours

1st October to 31st March

Monday to Saturday	08:00 to 16:30 hours
Sunday and Bank Holidays	09:00 to 16:00 hours

*Vehicle movements and traffic routes*

14. It is predicted that the site would not generate more than 2 HGV movements per hour (1 in / 1 out) at the busiest of times. This would equate to, at most, approximately 14 HGV movements per day (7 in, 7 out). HGV movements would use the separate entrance/exit onto the A2990 Old Thanet Way. Vehicle movements would only be within the operating hours of the site.
15. The site would attract a number of vehicle movements from members of the public during the opening hours. These would access the site from the redesigned public entrance and exit on Westbrook Lane.

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**Planning Policy Context**

16. **National Planning:** Policies PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), PPS10 (Planning and Waste Management), PPS23 (Planning and Pollution Control) and Waste Strategy for England 2007.
17. **South East Plan (May 2009):** Policies CC1 (Sustainable Development), NRM9 (Air Quality), NRM10 (Noise), W3 (Regional Self-Sufficiency), W4 (Sub-Regional Self-Sufficiency), W5 (Targets for Diversion from Landfill), W6 (Recycling and Composting), W7 (Waste Capacity Requirements), W13 (Landfill Requirements), W14 (Restoration), W17 (Location of Waste Management Facilities), and C4 (Protection of Landscape)
18. The new coalition government has announced that it intends to abolish the Regional Spatial Strategies (in this case, the South East Plan). Until it does so and there are alternative policy arrangements in place, the South East plan remains the development plan for the purposes of determining planning proposals.
19. **Kent Waste Local Plan (March 1998):** Policies W1A (Integrated Waste Management Facilities), W3 (Locational Criteria), W6 (Need), W18 (Noise, Dust and Odour), W19 (Groundwater), W20 (Land Drainage and Flood Control), W22 (Road Traffic and Access).
20. **Canterbury City Council Local Plan (2000):** BE1 (Design and Sustainability), C39 (Air Quality), C40 (Controls to mitigate pollution)

**Consultations**

21. **Canterbury City Council:** raise **no objection** to the planning application. The City Council requests that consideration be given to the closure of the public access from Westbrook Lane with a new access off the Old Thanet Way providing access to the site for all vehicles.
22. **Environment Agency:** raise **no objection** to the proposals. The EA offers advice to the applicant in regards to drainage, contaminated land, fuel and chemical storage and waste management.
23. **Natural England:** has **no objection** to the proposed development, subject to appropriate conditions to ensure the petrol/oil interceptors for surface water run-off as detailed within the drainage strategy are installed and regularly maintained. Natural England (NE) note that the site is located close to habitats which form part of the Thanet Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area and Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar Site). Whilst nearby to these habitats, NE considers that subject to the above mitigation measures the proposal would not be likely to have an effect on the above sites and permission may be granted under the terms of the Habitats Regulations. Natural England also welcomes the submission of the ecological survey and recommends that KCC's own ecologist is consulted on the proposals.

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24. **KCC Biodiversity Officer:** raises **no objection** to the proposals. The Biodiversity Officer initially identified a number of areas which needed to be addressed prior to the granting of planning permission. The applicant subsequently produced further information to address the points raised. The Biodiversity Officer now considers that all pre-determination information has been supplied and issues concerning reptiles, Bats and Badgers may be appropriately mitigated by condition.
25. **Kent Wildlife Trust:** No comments have been received to date.
26. **Divisional Transportation Manager:** raises **no objection subject to conditions**. The Divisional Transport Manager (DTM) is satisfied that the proposals would not generate an unacceptable impact to the local highway network subject to the following conditions. Prior to commencement of development details should be submitted in regards to parking arrangements for site workers / visitors. Details should also be provided to ensure adequate space for the loading / unloading and turning of operative and construction vehicles on site. Prior to commencement of development details for the redesign of the service access onto the Old Thanet Way (A2990) to incorporate an enlarged island, cycle refuge and to further discourage right turns. Details of surface water drainage to ensure no discharge to the public highway, and details of facilities to guard against the deposition of mud and debris on the public highway, both during development and operations.
27. The DTM has also raised concerns over the safety of the HGV access onto the A2990 Old Thanet Way. The Old Thanet Way is to be reinstated to a 60mph road, as such lorry movements onto and off of this road could conflict with vehicles on the A2990. The absence of a deceleration lane could potentially increase the likelihood of shunts and cause interruption of the free flow of traffic. These problems would be exacerbated during peak hours. In considering this information the DTM considers that the use of the service access should be limited by condition to off peak hours only. This would be between 0930 and 1500 hours Monday to Friday. The service access should be used solely by HGV service vehicles. The means of vehicular access for staff and site users/visitors should be solely from Westbrook Lane.
28. **KCC Noise Advisor (Jacobs):** Raise **no objection subject to conditions** ensuring noise limits are adhered to. After consultation on the initial and secondary noise assessment, KCC's noise advisor considered it unlikely that noise emanating from the site, when measured in line with BS4142, would exceed the existing background levels at the nearest residential properties of Hampton Close. To ensure that this is the case the noise advisor suggests that two conditions should be added to any consent if permission were to be granted;
29. The first condition would limit noise to ensure the development did not produce noise in excess of background levels when measured in accordance with BS4142 at the nearest noise sensitive receptors.
30. The second condition suggested calls for noise monitoring to be carried out, in accordance with BS4142, 3 months after commencement of development. This would further establish background levels and ensure that the development was not exceeding background levels when measured at the nearest residential receptors. If it were found that operations were in excess of the background levels all operations



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should cease until details for appropriate mitigation have been submitted to, and approved by the County Council and implemented as approved. Subject to these conditions being added to any future planning consent Jacobs does not object to the proposal.

31. **KCC Odour & Air Quality Advisor (Jacobs):** Raise **no objection** to the proposals. It is noted that the site lies within close proximity to residential properties and it is essential to keep dust and odour to a minimum level. Best practice mitigation measures should be implemented and maintained to ensure that no problems arise.
32. In regards to air quality; the background air pollutant concentrations are currently extremely low in the vicinity of the site. The proposals will result in some increase in vehicle movements; however the modelled emissions from this increase would be negligible. As such the development proposed would have a negligible impact on the overall air quality of the area, and therefore be unlikely to result in detriment to local air quality.
33. **KCC Street Lighting Advisor (Jacobs):** Raise **no objection** to the proposals. The lighting levels proposed for the site are acceptable. The proposed equipment limits the light spill very well, with low lux levels outside the site boundary. Further to this point the lanterns proposed, being the flat glass type, eliminate light spill above the horizontal and thereby minimise light pollution and visual impact. When considering these factors and the hours of operation it is considered that the impact from lighting would be fairly minimal and therefore no objection is raised.
34. **KCC Landscape Advisor (Jacobs):** Raise **no objection** to the proposals. The advisor considers that the reorganisation of the space and proposed planting would not have a significant adverse impact on landscape or visual impact. The extent of the proposed landscaping would mitigate the loss of 8 existing trees (none of which are assessed as being of high arboricultural value), further to this the advisor states that they do not consider the proposals would have any significant adverse impact on existing vegetation. The advisor also gives recommendation for alteration to the planting mix, perimeter landscaping and bund gradients. This information was subsequently supplied and the Landscape Advisor is now satisfied that all landscape matters have been appropriately addressed.

**Representations**

35. The application was advertised in a local newspaper and a site notice was posted. 2 letters of objection have been received to date. The main areas of concern which these raise include;
  1. Increased noise levels
  2. Visual impact
  3. Air pollution
  4. Traffic impacts

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**Local Members**

36. The Local County Members for Herne Bay Jean Law and David Hirst were consulted on the application on 17 December 2009 to date no responses have been received.

**Discussion**

**Introduction**

37. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In the context of this application, the policies outlined in paragraphs (16 -20) are of greatest relevance.
38. Until the Kent Waste Development Framework has been adopted as a replacement for the Kent Waste Local Plan (1998), and any identified sites and locational criteria have been subjected to a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of that process, PPS10 requires that planning authorities should ensure proposals are consistent with its policies.
39. The South East Plan advocates a growth in waste management facilities reflecting the waste hierarchy, which priorities reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery (in that order). The Plan seeks to reduce waste that is directed to landfill and, in these terms, Policy W5 (Targets for Diversion from landfill) states that a substantial increase in recovery of waste and reduction in waste to landfill is required in the region. Also, as part of the Plan are targets for the recovery of waste. The proposed facility would therefore help contribute towards the Plan's objectives of reducing the amount of waste to landfill and improve waste recovery.
40. The need for the expansion and renewal of HWRC's across Kent is clear to increase efficiency of operations and help meet targets for recycling. However this need should be balanced against locational criteria and potential harm to local amenity. There is policy protection for amenity in general, and specifically from waste operations set out within the South East Plan, the Canterbury City Local Plan and the Kent Waste Local Plan. Whilst the principle of the type of development at this location has already been established, the impact of expansion of and re-arrangement of the facility on amenity should be thoroughly considered.
41. Given the policy background discussed above and from the consultation process the main issues to be balanced against the need for additional recycling facilities relate to local amenity impacts, highways, traffic, landscape and visual amenity and biodiversity and ecology impacts.

Amenity Impacts

42. The site lies within close proximity to sensitive residential receptors. The closest of these receptors are those of Hampton Close to the North of the site across the Chatham to Ramsgate Main Line Railway and the properties of Blackburn Road to the south across the Thanet Way. The Hampton Close properties rear facades are

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approximately 35 metres from the site boundary; those of Blackburn close are approximately 40m from the site boundary. It is the proximity of these sensitive receptors to the site which raises the need for consideration of the potential impacts on local amenity. In particular regard should be had to noise, air pollution, dust, odour, light pollution and visual and landscape amenity impacts. Two letters of objection have been received from local residents concerning the potential amenity impacts.

Noise Impacts

43. The noise impacts of the proposal should be considered in light of close proximity to residential properties. The proposals include expansion and re-arrangement of the facility over a larger area. The proposals would bring operations closer to some rear gardens of properties along Hampton Close. The proposal seeks to maintain the existing opening hours with the exception of on Wednesdays between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> September where the site would be open to members of the public until 1900 hours and open for site operations until 2030 hours. These extended hours would bring the centre in line with opening hours for other Householders Waste Recycling Facilities across Kent. However, the proposed extended opening hours would have the potential to cause an additional noise impact on the nearby sensitive residential receptors. Objections have been received from 2 local residents specifically concerning the increased noise impact on their properties from the proposal. The key noise policies which the proposals should be considered against are NRM10 of the South East Plan and W18 of Kent Waste Local Plan. These policies require the planning authority to be satisfied that noise is appropriately controlled before granting planning permission.
44. In recognition of the close proximity to residential receptors the applicant carried out a noise impact assessment which was submitted with the application. This provided evidence that the proposals would have a slight impact on local residents once proposed mitigation measures were taken into consideration. The new arrangement of the site is via a split level facility in which the operations level would be set down from the public accessed area. This set down once taken into consideration with the landscaping bunds proposed to the north and south of the site would provide some mitigation to reduce the potential noise impacts. Following initial consultation with Jacobs concerning the noise assessment a further assessment was carried out to further inform the potential noise impacts.
45. The noise assessments were carried out in accordance with the standards and guidance set out in BS5228 – 1:2009, Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites Part 1, BS4142:1997 Method for Rating Industrial Noise Affecting Mixed Residential and Industrial Areas, Planning Policy Guidance 24 (Planning and Noise), Calculation of Road Traffic Noise (CRTN) and World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines.
46. The noise monitoring surveys were carried out at 3 locations, the first position was representative of the rear gardens of Hampton Close, the second at the Westbrook Lane user access and the third alongside the Old Thanet Way access. These monitoring locations enabled the applicant to determine the background (baseline) noise levels of the area and then to use these levels in conjunction with noise data from a HWRC facility of similar size and nature to estimate the potential impact of the

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development. The Foots Cray (Maidstone Road, Bexley) HWRC was used as a comparable operational site in order to predict and assess the noise impact arising from the proposed facility. Two surveys were undertaken at Foots Cray to take into account the different noise levels on weekdays and weekends. In total 5 noise activities were recorded on the site which included mechanical compactions equipment. The survey of this site concluded that the dominant noise sources were from lorries unloading and loading containers, deposit of hard and heavy objects such as metal, glass and wood into their containers and the operation of compacting containers. The noise levels from the mechanical compactors were the most dominant at 88.6  $L_{Aeq, 5 \text{ mins}}$  (at 10m dB) and 105.6  $L_{AMAX}$  (at 10m dB) and therefore used to provide the basis of a 'worst-case' scenario in the noise modelling process. (For reference, the general noise levels inside a bus is between 80-90 dB(A) and an alarm clock which is 1 metre away is between 100-110 dB(A)).

47. The noise levels recorded from the Foots Cray site and the background noise levels at the proposed site were then used to predict the noise levels at the façade of the nearest residential properties. The World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines were used to assess the predicted noise levels. The WHO recommends an external noise limit of 50dB. The assessment concluded that noise levels at the façade of the nearest residential properties to the site would be below the WHO recommended external noise levels. The estimated noise levels would be between 3.7dB and 16.2dB below background level when estimated at the nearest surrounding residential receptors.
48. The noise level data was also used to predict the noise levels arising from road traffic to and from the site on the nearby residents between 2010 and 2020. Following clarification, Jacobs are satisfied that potential noise levels arising from road traffic will not be significant.
49. The noise assessment concludes that potential noise levels from the operations at the proposed facility and from road traffic would not produce a significantly adverse impact on amenity. The County Council's Noise Advisor has requested that to ensure that noise is adequately controlled, conditions be imposed on any future consent. These conditions would restrict noise levels to measured background levels at nearby residential receptors during operations. If these levels were found to be breached operations would cease until appropriate mitigation measures were submitted and approved by the County Council and implemented as approved. To reinforce this condition the County Council's Noise Advisor has further recommended that noise monitoring should be carried out by the applicant 3 months after commencement of development to ensure compliance. Subject to these conditions no objection has been raised from the County Council's noise consultant and therefore, under these terms, I consider the proposed facility to be acceptable from a noise impact perspective.

#### Air Quality, Dust and Odour Impacts

50. Air quality impacts from the development could potentially be caused through the increase in site operations and increase in general traffic using the site. Objections have been raised by two local residents in regards to detrimental air quality impacts from the proposed development. No objections have been raised from any other statutory consultee or the County Council's Dust and Air Quality Advisor. The main

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policies relating to the air quality impacts from such development are NRM 9 of the South East Plan and policy C39 of the Canterbury District Local Plan First Review (saved policies). Policy NRM 9 calls for best practice to be followed, mitigation of the impact of development and reduction in the exposure to poor air quality through design. Policy C39 states that development which may worsen air quality should not be permitted without adequate mitigation.

51. The applicant has submitted an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) which has assessed the impact of traffic emissions and also the effects of dust and odours that could arise from the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. Dust and odour mitigation measures have also been proposed to reduce any adverse impact on the users of the site and surrounding sensitive receptors. In addition, future predicted road traffic flows have been used to model air pollution levels.
52. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with specific international, national and local policy and guidance such as the EU Air Quality Framework Directive 96/62/EC, EU Framework Directive on Waste, UK Air Quality Strategy 2007, Environment Act 1995, Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Kent Waste Local Plan 1998. The assessment identified the location of the main sensitive receptors to the site. In this case the main sensitive receptors were those of residential properties.
53. In terms of traffic emissions, the assessment has calculated the concentration of NO<sub>2</sub> (Nitrogen Dioxide) and PM<sub>10</sub> (fine particles) levels at selected sensitive receptors for 'without development' and 'with' development scenarios. The assessment recognises that there are many sensitive receptors within the immediate vicinity of the site. The calculations took into account the background pollutant levels which in this area are considered well below the Air Quality Strategy objective levels. The assessment demonstrates that at the worst affected receptor it is predicted there would only be a "*very small increase*" in NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> which would have a negligible effect on these receptors.
54. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed development would facilitate an increase in the number of site users, the County Council's Air Quality Advisor considers that this increase would have a negligible impact on the air quality of the local area. The proposed development whilst increasing the capacity of the site and facilitating additional trips to the site, also includes the development of a more efficient site layout and opportunity for more modern controls. The new site layout would provide facilities to reduce queuing of vehicles to use the site. The applicant states that currently in busy periods queuing is experienced along the site access road Westbrook Lane. The proposals include a one way system and additional drop off spaces which should reduce this vehicle queuing and therefore reduce associated air pollution.
55. In terms of dust and odour nuisance, the assessment has considered the effects from the construction and operational aspects of the proposed development and proposed measures to mitigate any adverse effects on surrounding receptors. As with the traffic emissions assessment, the development has been assessed according to the location of sensitive receptors. Considering the close proximity of the residential receptors and the type of facility there is potential for the generation of dust from the development. This could be through both the construction and operational phases of the development. However, given the type of facility proposed there is only limited

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potential for dust impacts, in which case best practice mitigation measures should be implemented to minimise potential impact particularly during the construction phase though transport of material off site. The assessment advises on a number of way to reduce dust emissions in terms of site management, wetting and washing techniques, barrier techniques and direct clean up, such as:

- Limiting vehicle speed
- Paving any dirt tracks on the approach to the site
- Ensuring roads on site meet certain standards to give a smaller surface area for the settling and re-suspension of dust
- Washing down wheels of vehicles entering and leaving the facility
- Periodic washing down of roads and other hard standing areas
- Sheeting or netting vehicles and skips
- Making covered transfers between waste containers
- Using sealable containers
- Installing rubber doors/strips sheeting at the entrances to enclose waste
- Erecting windbreaks around areas where waste is moved or stored
- Installing shaker bars and dry wheel spinning rollers to aid removal of dust and mud from vehicles.

56. In terms of odour, as the site lies within close proximity of residential housing it is not in my view suitable for the acceptance of putrescible or odoriferous wastes. The proposals detail the types of waste to be accepted at site. Whilst it is acknowledged that this facility would not deal with any putrescible or odiferous wastes, the handling, treating or disposing of bulk wastes has the potential to generate offensive odours. The Air Quality Assessment sets out simple operational and procedural controls which when employed would successfully control any potential odour. The assessment concludes that subject to the implementation of best practice measures, where relevant, the development is unlikely to have a significant effect on nearby sensitive receptors. This is accepted by the County Council's Air Quality Advisor who concludes that best practice mitigation measures should be implemented and maintained to ensure that no problems arise. In these terms, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in this regard. However, if permission were to be granted conditions should be applied to ensure the mitigation measures proposed are implemented and maintained as approved.

#### Highway and traffic issues

57. In terms of impact on the local highway network the proposal would provide two separate access one for service vehicles and HGV's and the other for users of the site, staff and visitors. HGV's would enter and egress directly onto the A2990. This would remove current vehicle movements from smaller more residential routes and therefore can be seen as a positive benefit in planning terms. The proposal would also provide for improved public site access to the facilities including more parking provision and one way vehicle flow within the site. This would remedy current problems experienced with members of the public queuing along Westbrook Lane. The proposed amendments are seen as creating positive impact on the local highway network.

58. The City Council requested that consideration be given to the closure of the public

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access from Westbrook Lane with a new access off the Old Thanet Way providing access to the site for all vehicles. Conversely the Divisional Transport Manger (DTM) in responding to consultation welcomed the separation of site user and service vehicle entrances and exits. The DTM in his response to consultation has express concerns regarding the future increase in the speed limit of the A2990 Old Thanet Way which the service access enters and egresses onto. This future speed limit change from 40 Mph at present to 60 Mph raises concerns over the potential for shunts due to the decelerating and slow accelerating HGV's using the site. Notwithstanding this and considering the relatively small number of vehicle movements involved, the DTM is satisfied that subject to certain conditions the proposals would not generate an unacceptable impact to the local highway network such as to warrant a refusal on highway grounds. The DTM suggests conditions including an enlarged island and cycle refuge to discourage right turns out of the service access, restriction of the use of the service access to allow off peak use only between 0930 and 1500 Monday to Friday and the separation of user and site accesses.

59. In terms of traffic impacts the proposals seeks a modest expansion in throughput over and above that which is currently permitted for the site. The throughput of the site is expected to increase from 11,500 tpa to 16,000 tpa between 2010 and 2020. The applicant supplied a Transport Assessment to assess the impact of this increase in throughput on the local highway network both through increase in HGV movements and increase in site users. The proposals would see at maximum 2 HGV movements (1 in, 1 out) per hour, which would see a daily maximum of 14 movements (7 in, 7 out) per day. This equates to 1 or 2 movements more than the current situation. Considering this and the fact that these movements would be directly onto the A2990 and not through residential roads, subject to the limiting of hours of use of the service access, the DTM is satisfied that there will be no detriment to the local highway network from HGVs.
60. To assess the impact of the development on the existing highway network the applicants used base year (2009) survey traffic flows with growth factored up to 2020 using the national traffic model. This data was then compared with predicted trip generation data related to householder movements. In real terms Saturday peak hour (12.00–13.00) movements would increase from the 2009 observed 160 movements (77 in, 83 out) to potentially 205 movements (99 in, 106 out) by 2020. This equates to an increase of 45 movements (22 in, 23 out) at the sites busiest time. These movements would consist of approximately 1 or 2 HGV movements and the rest would be made up of public site user movements. The predicted traffic data was then run through the junction capacity program (PICADY). This data predicted that in 2020 the local highway network would be operating with spare capacity during all peak periods with the development in place.
61. The traffic assessment concludes that in considering this the proposal would not have any material impact on the local highway network. The DTM agrees that there would not be any significant impact from the proposals increase site use and subject to conditions referred to above there would be no material impact to the local highway network. Subject to these conditions no objection has been raised from the DTM and therefore, under these circumstances, I consider the proposed facility to be acceptable in terms of highway and traffic impacts.

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Landscape and Visual Amenity Impacts

- 62 The southern and western extension and alteration of the site expands over the disused site of the Herne Bay Rollers roller skating rink, associated car park and overgrown dense shrub vegetation in between. The land to the north of the site is bounded by the Chatham to Ramsgate Main Line Railway which is raised on an embankment. To the south and east the site is bounded by the A2990 Thanet Way and Westbrook Lane. Whilst no objections have been raised on landscape or visual amenity grounds by the County Council's landscape advisor or any of the other consultees, local concerns have been raised concerning the visual impact of the proposals from the properties in Hampton Close.
- 63 The existing site is currently visible from the upper storey windows of properties along Hampton Close to the north of the site. Without landscaping the extended footprint would increase the visual prominence of the site and allow views across the site from more properties. However the applicant is proposing a comprehensive landscaping scheme to mitigate the visual impact of the site as far as practically possible. The applicant is proposing 1 – 2 metre raised bunds on the north western and southern areas of the site. The bunds and boundaries of the site would also be planted with heavy standard trees and woodland species and shrub ground cover creating dense foliage which would further reduce visual intrusion and soften the site appearance from the most affected properties of Hampton Close.
- 64 The proposals would require the removal of 8 existing trees which are not of high arboricultural value from the site. However the proposed planting scheme would compensate the loss of these existing trees. The County Council's Landscape Advisor considers that whilst the extended footprint of the site would increase the prominence of the site, the existing railway line and proposed landscaping scheme would help mitigate any adverse visual impacts. Further to this they consider that any other views into the extended site would not incur any significant adverse visual impact. The level and type of landscaping proposed is considered to be appropriate and is considered an acceptable means by which to mitigate any concern regarding visual impact. Considering that there are no overriding objections and on the advice of the Council's Landscape Advisor I consider the proposals to be acceptable in terms of landscape and visual impact.

Biodiversity and Ecology

65. The site is not located directly in or adjacent to an area of nature conservation nor is it located in any other statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation. However the site is located within 2km of the Thanet Coast SSSI and the Thanet Coast Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site. Considering this the applicant has submitted an Ecological Scoping Report which advises that the area of the proposed facility has limited ecological value. Further to this subsequent additional surveys have shown that the site does not support amphibians, reptiles, badger, bats, and notable invertebrates.
66. As discussed above the applicant's landscape plan illustrates the areas of new



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planting around the operational area including woodland and shrub planting. The new planting would be of native species to the area and could be conditioned to this effect. The landscaping measures proposed are considered to be suitable in addressing any concerns regarding nature conservation and would in my opinion contribute towards improving the flora and fauna of this area.

67. Natural England, Kent Wildlife Trust and the County Council's Biodiversity Officer were consulted on the proposals. Natural England welcomes the applicant's submission of the ecological scoping report and offered no objection to the proposals. Kent Wildlife Trust has not commented on the application to date. The County Council's Biodiversity Officer offered a range of comments and requested the additional surveys to be carried out for presence of amphibians, reptiles, badger, bats, and notable invertebrates. These surveys confirm that there was no evidence of any notable species in or around the site. The Biodiversity Officer is now satisfied with the proposals and does not offer any objection subject to appropriate lighting for the development to ensure foraging and commuting bats are not disturbed. On this basis I do not consider there to be any overriding impacts from the development in terms of biodiversity.

Conclusion

68. There is an ongoing need and policy support for additional recycling facilities to enable the diversion of waste away from landfill. Such facilities are to be supported where they do not give rise to unacceptable amenity and local impacts. In this particular case part of the site already accommodates a HWRC to serve the local catchment area. The proposal seeks to extend this facility onto previously built land and provides an opportunity to improve the local infrastructure and reconfigure the internal layout for a more effective and efficient site. Having assessed the proposed development and supporting technical documents in conjunction with the relevant national guidance, regional and development plan policies, I consider the proposed expansion of the existing HWRC is acceptable at this location. The expansion proposed is onto previously developed land which is of relatively low ecological value. Any landscape and visual impacts from the proposals have been adequately mitigated by the proposed landscaping scheme for the site.
69. Two objections were received from the neighbour notification process. These objections related to noise, air pollution, highway issues and visual impact. In all respects having regard to comments made by consultees including the County Council's Noise, Landscape and Biodiversity Advisor's and the DTM I am satisfied that the applicant has provided sufficient information in order to demonstrate that the proposed facility would not have any significant adverse impact on local amenity, the local highway network or through landscape or visual impact, subject to appropriate conditions.
70. In conclusion, I am satisfied that provided appropriate conditions are imposed to control any potential adverse impacts there are no overriding objections to the proposal and consider the facility would be of benefit to the local community of Herne Bay. On this basis, I recommend that permission be granted subject to conditions.

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**Recommendation**

71. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED for the proposed alteration and extension of the Studd Hill Householders Recycling Facility SUBJECT TO conditions including limiting noise emissions, noise monitoring to ensure compliance, a Grampian condition regarding the redesign of the service access to discourages right turns out of the access onto the Old Thanet Way, limits to hours of use and operation, limited times of use of HGV service access, details of parking arrangements, details of parking and loading arrangements, dust mitigation measures, controls to prevent dirt and debris on the highway, site drainage controls, conditioning of landscaping and nature conservation measures amongst other operational and standard conditions.

Case Officer: Shaun Whyman
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Background Documents: see section heading.
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