

## **Item C2**

### **Construction of a motor control centre kiosk, vent stack and extension to parking area at Glebe Court, Pett's Crescent, Minster, Ramsgate, Kent. TH/08/921**

A report by the Head of Planning Applications Unit to Planning Application Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2008.

Application for construction of a motor control centre kiosk, vent stack and extension of parking bay at Glebe Court, Pett's Crescent, Minster, Ramsgate, Kent, CT12 4DX.

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr Charles Hibberd

Classification: Unrestricted

#### **The Site**

1. The application site lies on the southern outskirts of Minster near Ramsgate. The site is accessed off Watchester Lane via High Street and Tothill Street, Minster. The total area of the proposed site is 0.6 hectares. The application site is located on an area of amenity space consisting of a grassed area with a number of trees of varying standards. The site is rectangular shape covering the entire of the amenity space. Residential bungalows flank the north and the east of the site. The nearest residential property to the development is approximately 22 metres from the proposal. Three residential parking spaces and Pett's Crescent bound the western side of the site. Watchester Lane bounds the southern side of the site, across Watchester Lane further south is a drainage ditch lined with mature trees and fields used as a horse paddock.
2. The site does not lie within any designated areas for nature conservation. However the ditch habitat across Watchester Lane from the site is a suitable habitat for water voles, which are a protected species and known to be present locally.
3. The site lies within the northern edge of an area shown as a 1:75 year risk of flooding by the Environment Agency web based Flood Risk Mapping. The site is also located in the Wantsum Flood Risk Area on the Thanet District Council Local Plan.

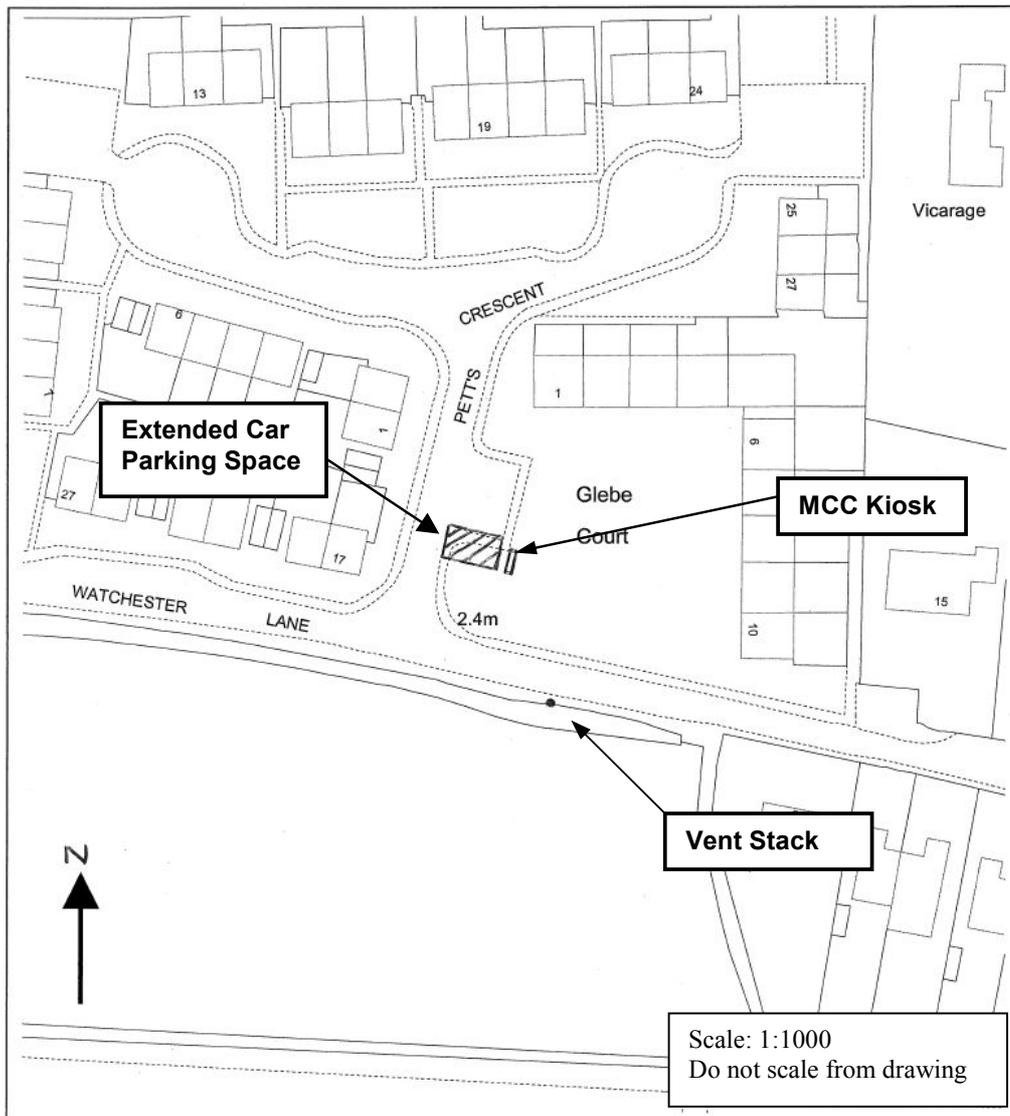
#### **Planning Background**

4. The amenity space was created during the development of the residential properties of Glebe Court to act as a pleasant open area for amenity use. There are two existing parking bays to the west of Glebe Court used for residents parking.
5. Southern Water, as a Statutory Sewage Undertaker has extensive permitted development rights, i.e., development that it can carry out without first needing to obtain planning permission. It is currently undertaking significant works in the area to ensure the sewer network can accommodate the development growth of the area and to address the potential for flood risk to residential properties in the area. This application seeks planning permission for the above ground elements of a new wastewater pumping station and associated infrastructure.

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**Site Plan – Glebe Court, Pett's Crescent, Minster.**



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6. The need for a pumping station in this area is driven by works to upgrade the sewer system. The purpose of these upgrade works are to remove four properties from the one in ten year flood register for internal sewer flooding, to protect a further five properties from risk of external sewer flooding and to reduce further the risk of highway flooding to Watchchester Lane.

#### **The Proposal**

7. The elements associated with the pumping station which require planning permission and subject of this application include an extension of the car parking bay to the west of the site, the provision of a vent stack and a motor control centre (MCC) kiosk.
8. The MCC kiosk would be located on the western side of the site as shown on the plan. The kiosk would be a rectangular box shape of dimensions 3.00m x 0.70m and 1.50m high. The dimension area is determined by the size of the equipment it is intended to house. The purpose of the Kiosk would be to house the control panel and necessary electronic equipment to control and monitor the underground pumps and detention tanks. The kiosk would be finished in dark green Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) to BS4800. The Kiosk would be mounted on a concrete plinth, which would be 0.20m wider than the Kiosk and raised 0.15m above ground level. The purpose of the plinth would be to raise the kiosk above ground level to further protect electronic equipment from damage through flooding.
9. The proposed extension to the existing parking bay would be to the west of Glebe Court accessed of Pett's Crescent. This would be used for occasional access to the MCC kiosk by Southern Water operatives to carry out routine maintenance. The parking bay would be extended by 5.00m in width, whilst keeping the same depth as present.
10. The vent stack would be located to the south of Watchchester Lane, opposite Glebe Court. The stack would be formed by a cast iron base and a GRP column, again coloured dark green to BS4800. The stack would be of 4.00m in height and of maximum external diameter of 0.25m. The stack's purpose would be to vent off air from the underground retention tank that would be displaced at time of heavy rainfall. The air would be deducted through a carbon filter, which is intended to remove odiferous molecules from the air.

#### Construction programme

11. The applicant states that construction program for the total wastewater works is estimated to last for 27 weeks. The applicants proposed hours of working are:

08:00 – 19:00 Monday to Friday  
08:00 – 13:00 Saturdays

12. There is no requested working on Sundays or bank holidays. Some tasks however may require extended working hours, as such flexibility in any condition on working hours is sought by the applicant.

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#### Traffic Generation

13. The main traffic generation would occur during the construction phase of site development. Vehicle movements would consist of daily access to the site from site personnel and delivery of plant machinery and equipment. Vehicle movements per week, during the construction phase would be approximately:

8 Light Van p/day  
8 Car p/day  
4 Articulated Lorry p/day  
8 Tipper Lorry p/day

14. On completion of construction, during the operation there will be occasional visits to site approximately every 3 months. These would be made during normal working hours by operational staff in light vans.

15. The application is accompanied by supporting information that includes environmental information, impacts upon protected species and arboricultural interests. Fifteen trees are proposed to be lost as part of the development (Including those through the permitted development elements of the wastewater scheme). These trees are proposed to be replaced on a 1 to 1 basis with replacement of trees of a heavy standard nature. Mitigation measures are identified for addressing any possible impacts on protected species.

#### **Development Plan Policies**

16. The key Development Plan Policies relevant to the consideration of the application are set out below.

#### **Policies**

(i) The adopted **Kent & Medway Structure Plan (2006)**:

Policy SP1	Seeks sustainable patterns and forms of development.
Policy EN3	Seeks to conserve and enhance Kent's landscape and wildlife habitats.
Policy EN8	Wildlife habitats and species will be protected, conserved and enhanced, especially through long term management and habitat creation schemes, particularly where they have been identified as national and county priorities in the UK and Kent Biodiversity

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	Action Plan(s), or where they are protected under wildlife legislation. Development likely to have an adverse effect on these sites will not be permitted unless there is a need which outweighs the local nature conservation interest and adverse impacts can be compensated.
Policy NR5	Requires development to be planned and designed so as to avoid or minimise pollution impacts. Where impacts cannot be reduced to an acceptable level the development will not be permitted.
Policy NR6	Requires development which would be sensitive to adverse levels of noise, light and other pollution, where such conditions exist, or are in prospect, and where mitigation measures would not afford satisfactory protection.
Policy NR8	Development will not be permitted where it would give rise to an unacceptable impact on the quality or yield of Kent's watercourses, coastal waters and/or ground water resources
Policy NR9	Development of new wastewater facilities will be required and supported where there is demonstrable need, it offers best environmental option and land use and environmental impacts are minimised through appropriate mitigation.
Policy NR10	Development will be planned to avoid the risk of flooding and will not be permitted if it would adversely affect the land to drain.
Policy TP15	Development, which generates significant increases in traffic, especially heavy goods vehicles, will not be permitted if it is not well related to the primary or secondary road network or if it would result in increased risk of crashes or significant traffic.
Policy QL1	Development should be well designed, be of high quality and respect its setting.

(ii) The adopted **Kent Waste Local Plan (1998)**:

Policy W18	Requires satisfactory controls over noise, dirt, odours and other omissions.
<i>Policy W19</i>	<i>General protection of surface and groundwater interests.</i>

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#### **17. Consultations**

**Thanet District Council:** Raise no objection to the proposals but wish to see conditioning of the colour of the MCC kiosk and vent stack to green.

**Minster Parish Council:** Object to the application on the grounds that there is a more appropriate location for the development to the south of Watchester Lane. The sites location on Glebe Court would decimate the mature trees. An alternate location would move the vent stack further away from the residential properties, it would allow for any overflow to be away from residential dwellings and allow provision of a security fence. They also would like to see a standby generator to provide power in the event of power outage.

**Environment Agency:** Raise no objection to the proposal, however offer informatives in relation to “development and flood risk” and “groundwater and contaminated land”.

**Natural England:** Raise no objection to the proposals, Natural England are happy with the mitigation strategies supplied by the applicant in relation to protected species.

**Jacobs (Landscaping):** Offer advice that landscaping should include “Heavy Standard” size tree’s to give an immediate effect in restoring the site to its prior condition. Jacobs are happy that the landscaping plan would mitigate the negative impacts of the scheme as far as practicably possible.

**Jacobs (Noise and Air Quality):** Jacobs have no concerns with the proposal in relation to noise or air quality.

#### **Local Member**

The Local County Member for Birchington and Villages, Mr Charles Hibberd, was notified of the application on 14 July 2006. No comments have been received to date.

#### **Representations**

The application was advertised in a local paper and a site notice was posted. In addition I also wrote to the occupiers of 67 residential properties who would potentially be the most directly affected by the proposals. To date I have received 1 letter of support and no letters of objection.

#### **Discussion**

18. 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 addition there is a requirement to consider relevant national and regional policy and guidance.

19. The adopted Kent and Medway Structure Plan (2006) is based on the principles of

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sustainable development. The key policies in this case are set out in paragraph 17 above. These policies identify the strategic need for improved wastewater facilities, balanced against a need to ensure that development should be sensitive to the environment in terms of its pollution impacts and its design. Where necessary the need for mitigation measures should be considered.

20. Having considered the above policies I believe the main determining issues relate to the need for the proposal, its amenity impacts and the chosen location for the proposal.

**Need**

21. This site was chosen for the location of the wastewater pumping station as it forms part of a scheme to upgrade the sewerage system in Minster, this is to accommodate future growth and to meet targets set by OFWAT. These targets are to reduce sewer flooding both internally and externally to both residential properties and to the street itself. The choice of site is therefore largely dictated by operational requirements and the availability of vacant land sufficiently large enough to accommodate the infrastructure requirements.

**Location**

22. The Parish Council has raised concern over the principle of the greater scheme in this location. I remind members that the wider scheme is permitted development and therefore not for consideration by this Planning Authority. However I would like to inform Members that the applicant initially 'scoped' out 3 alternative options to address the problem of sewer flooding in Watchester Lane. These included;

- a) Upsizing of the sewer in Marsh Farm Road – This however was not considered practicable due to the single lane nature of the road. Construction would involve the closure of a route that is required to remain open at all times to maintain access to Minster Wastewater Treatment Works.
- b) Off-line storage via a retention-tank in the field to south of Watchester Lane. This option was discounted because it would require a new permanent access to be created into the field suitable for tankers. The applicant claims it would place the development in an area more likely to flood. This would also extend the area of built development into the undeveloped countryside, and have to cross a ditch habitat suitable for water voles, a protected species known to be locally present. As such this option would therefore be less acceptable in planning terms being contrary to Development Plan policies. The Parish Council are in favour of this option.
- c) The third option is the proposal discussed in this report; which is the offline pipeline, which would go through the paddock opposite but will then cross the ditch to Glebe Court where the main pumping station and underground equipment would be located.

23. The Parish Council have raised concern over the location of the proposed development in terms of the MCC kiosk, the parking space and the vent stack. The kiosk would be located in-front of the extended parking space. This would be located at the edge of the amenity space and would be of a low scale.

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24. The vent stack, located across Watchester Lane, would be set amongst heavy standard replanted trees to help the new structure blend into the existing line of tree's which line the paddock opposite Glebe Court. This would also be painted green as per BS4800, to blend more effectively into the tree line.
25. It is considered in planning terms that the option discussed in this report would be acceptable, due to the short-term nature of the impacts and full restoration of the site on a like for like basis. All underground structures that are permitted development would be grassed over, with the exception of a manhole and access path. As the site would be restored with 'Heavy Standard' sized trees the overall impact of the development would be minimal.

#### **Residential amenity Impacts (noise, odour and visual impact)**

26. Policies NR5 and NR6 of the KMSP seek to ensure that development such as this should be planned and designed to avoid or adequately mitigate pollution impacts. Development where mitigation would not afford protection should not be supported.
27. It should be noted that the greatest impact upon residential amenity from the improved wastewater treatment works would occur during the construction period. Most of the impact (albeit temporary) would occur through the installation of the underground equipment, which is permitted development and as such is not the subject of this planning application.

#### Noise

28. The Parish Council has raised concerns over temporary disturbance through noise and loss of amenity space for the nearby residential properties of Glebe Court. It is accepted that the noise from construction could cause a temporary detrimental effect to occupiers at home during the day in the closest residential properties. However, noisier construction impacts are intended to be limited to normal working hours to minimise disturbance and would be of short duration. Kent County Council's noise advisor was consulted on this matter and raises no concerns in regards the noise impacts of the development. Once operational there would be no noticeable increase in noise levels. I am satisfied that any potential noise impacts could be appropriately mitigated by the use of planning conditions and best working practices to ensure that disturbance is minimised.

#### Odour and Dust

29. The vent stack has a carbon filter odour control system, this needs to be maintained and replaced periodically. Regular maintenance of the site will ensure that this is done as and when it is required. This could be controlled by way of planning condition. It is considered that there would not be any potential odour impacts from this development due to vent stack only operating during limited periods of heavy rainfall and the use of the carbon filter system. The County Council's Odour and Air Quality advisors did not raise any concerns over potential odour issues.

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30. Dust impacts which may arise during construction will be minimised through the adoption of best practice measures.

Landscaping of restored amenity land.

31. Upon completion of the construction of the proposal the site would be fully reinstated. The majority of the pumping station equipment would be grassed over, with the exception of a small footpath to a manhole which is required for maintenance. The landscaping plan will include replacement of trees with 'heavy standard' trees of similar size and variety to those removed, as recommended by Kent County Councils landscape consultants.

#### Visual Impacts

32. I consider that the main long term impact of this proposal would be the visual impact of the kiosk on the edge of the amenity space and the vent stack which would be located in the tree line across Watchester Lane. The County Council's landscape advisors were consulted on this aspect of the development, and consider that the kiosk and the stack would have a slight visual impact being that they are both of relatively small scale. Painting of the kiosk and the vent stack green to BS4800 would mitigate the effect of this as far as practically possible. The planting of the proposed ornamental rose bed screen, which would surround the kiosk's visible elevations from Glebe Court properties, would further reduce the kiosk's visual impact on the properties of Glebe Court. This together with the proposed planting of 'Heavy Standard' trees on the amenity space, would in my opinion, make the visual impact on the landscape of this development minimal.

#### Nature Conservation Impacts

33. The site does not lie within any designated areas for nature conservation, the applicant has however employed a qualified ecologist to undertake a desktop study and walkover survey of the site. This concluded that there would be no significant ecological impacts. Natural England and the Environment Agency raise no objections to the proposals. Further to this Natural England are satisfied with the mitigation strategies proposed to ensure protected species are not significantly impacted upon by the development in accordance with The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). In conclusion I am satisfied that the proposal will not cause any detrimental impacts on nature conservation.

#### Water Resources

34. The proposal lies just within an area likely to flood as designated by the Environment Agency and Thanet District Council. The applicant has selected this site partly because it is at a marginally higher level than the land in option b (paragraph 21). To further protect against any potential flooding issues. The kiosk would be raised on a concrete plinth 0.20 metres above ground level with sensitive electronic equipment located in the upper part of the kiosk. The applicant has also adopted specified procedures in the event of a flood. It is considered that these measures are sufficient to ensure that the development follows local and national guidance on flooding and has been designed so that it will not increase the risk of flooding.

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Extension to Parking Bay

35. The proposal includes a dedicated parking space for future maintenance of the kiosk. It is an extension to an existing parking area as such it would ensure that parking space is not removed from residential use and in my view it does not raise any unacceptable amenity impacts.

### **Conclusion**

36. The new pumping station and associated infrastructure are being proposed as part of the applicant's programme of investment to meet OFWAT targets for the improvement of the wastewater network, to prevent sewer flooding in the immediate vicinity of the development. Due to the applicant's permitted development rights, only those minor elements above ground require planning permission. The location of the site has been chosen following detailed consideration of a number of alternatives, and is well related for its purpose, it does not encroach onto undeveloped land and will be suitably restored and maintained once construction has been completed. Appropriate planning conditions could be imposed to control the temporary construction impacts and operational activities. As such I am satisfied that the proposal is acceptable in planning terms.

### **Recommendation**

37. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED subject to appropriate conditions including standard time condition, noise controls, construction hours, details of parking loading arrangements and measures to prevent mud or debris on the highway.

Case officer – Shaun Whyman	01622 221055
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Background documents - See section heading
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