

SECTION C
MINERALS AND WASTE DISPOSAL

Background Documents - the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and also as might be additionally indicated.

Item C1

Extension to existing Hope Farm Composting Facility along with variation of conditions to planning permission reference SH/14/751 in respect of the inclusion of Bank Holiday deliveries of waste, removal of restriction on sources of material, increase in waste throughout, utilisation of processed material on other surrounding farms and increase in current restriction on vehicle movements at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 15 March 2017

Application by J Taylor & Son for an extension to the existing Hope Farm Green Waste Composting Facility along with the variation of conditions to planning permission reference SH/14/751 in respect of the inclusion of Bank Holiday deliveries of waste, removal of restriction on sources of material, increase in waste throughout, utilisation of processed material on other surrounding farms and increase in current restriction on vehicle movements at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone, CT18 7EG - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Recommendation: Permission be granted, subject to conditions.

Local Members: Miss Susan Carey and Mr Frank McKenna Classification: Unrestricted

Site

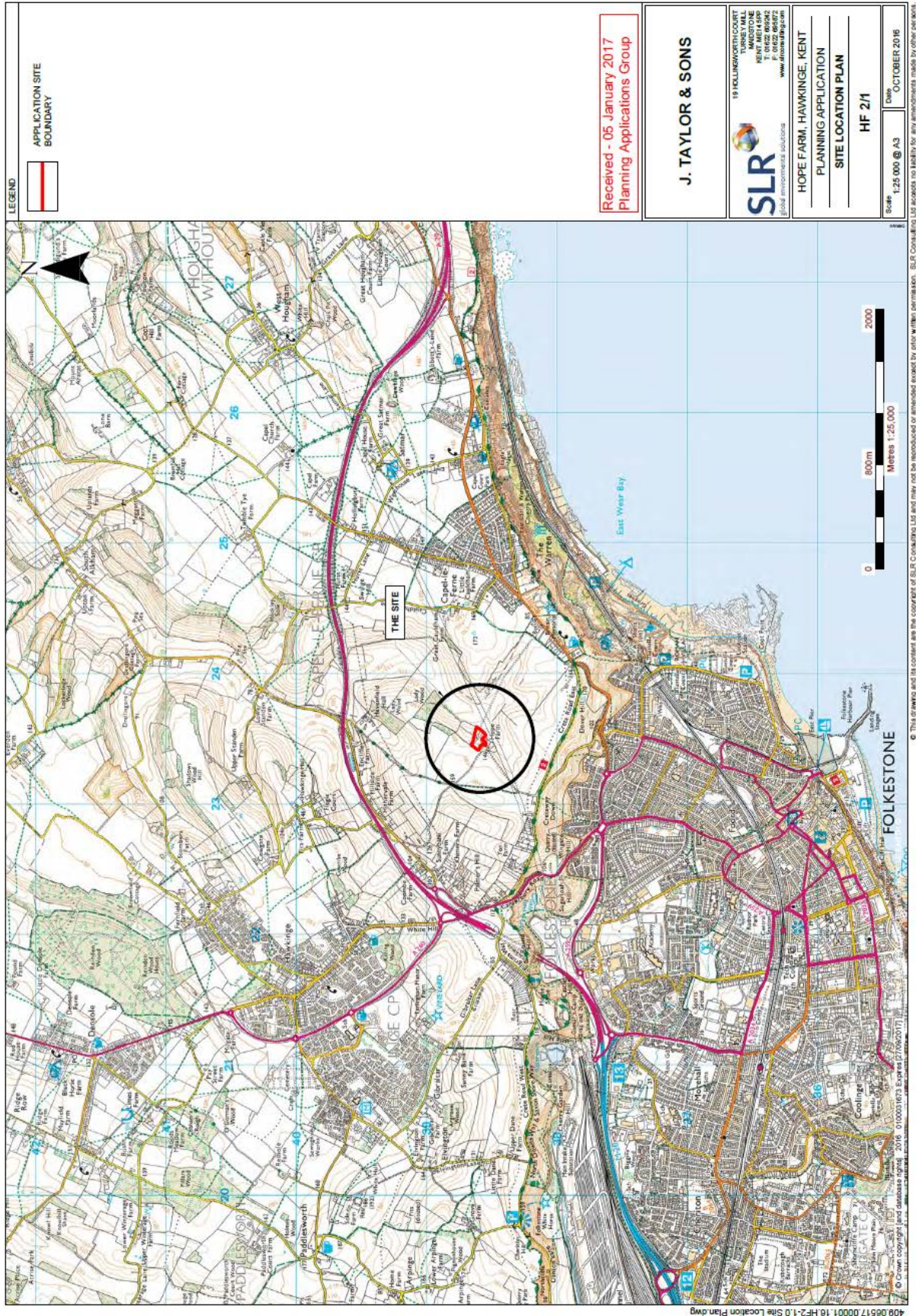
1. The Hope Farm Green Waste Composting Facility forms part of an agricultural holding extending to over 243 hectares and lies within land situated in between the urban areas of Folkestone and Capel-le-Ferne which falls within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty and Special Landscape Area. The site is accessed via a purpose built access road off the B2011 New Dover Road located 1 Km to the south east.

Planning Background

2. Permission was first granted for the composting facility in April 2003 (Ref. SH/03/62) as a means of helping to provide sufficient capacity to dispose of green waste arising in East Kent, primarily from the Dover and Shepway areas. The site has since been subject to a number of further permissions which expanded operations in order to accommodate an incremental growth of green waste in East Kent, the last of which was granted in June 2014 (Ref.SH/14/751).

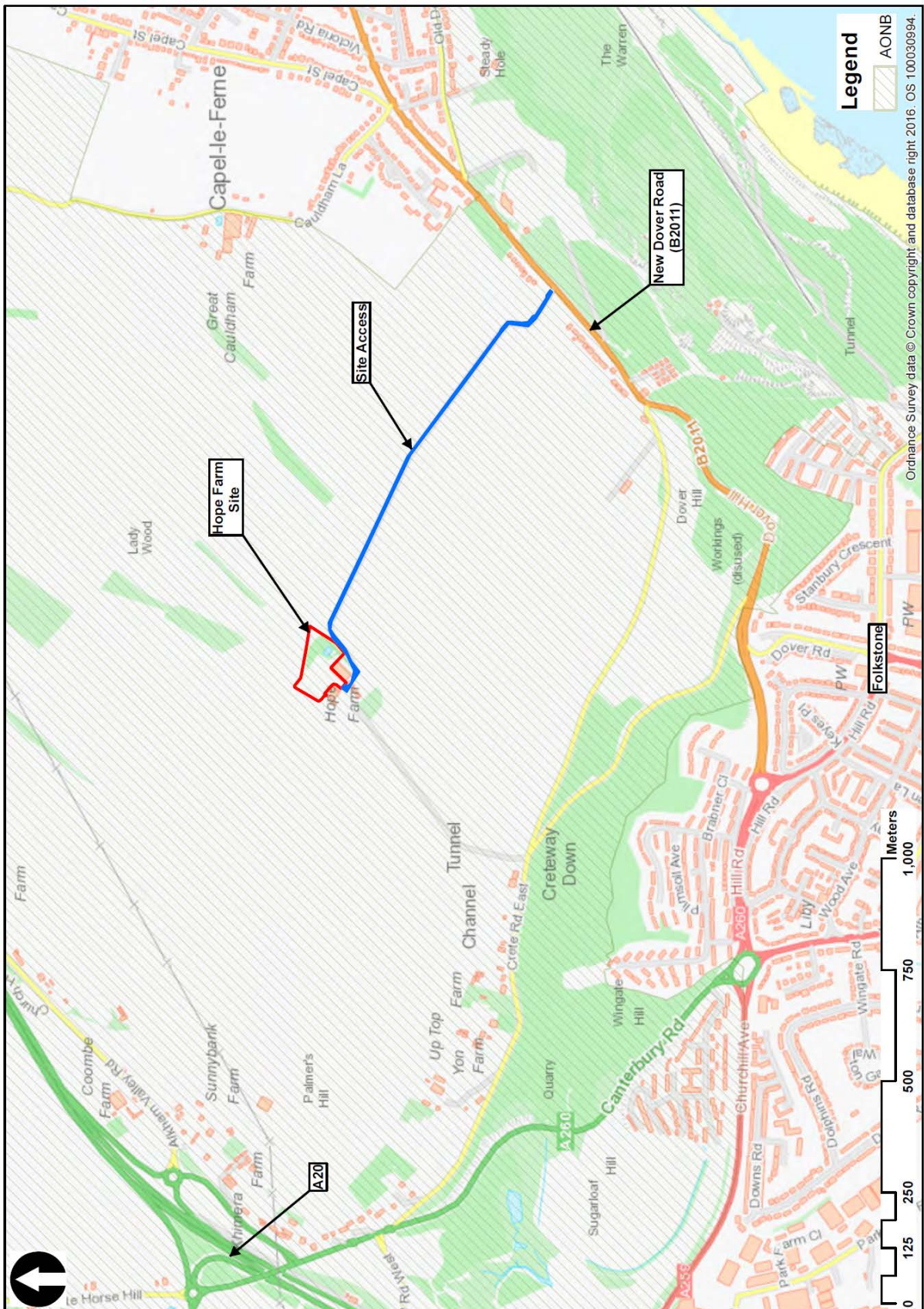
Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Site Location Plan



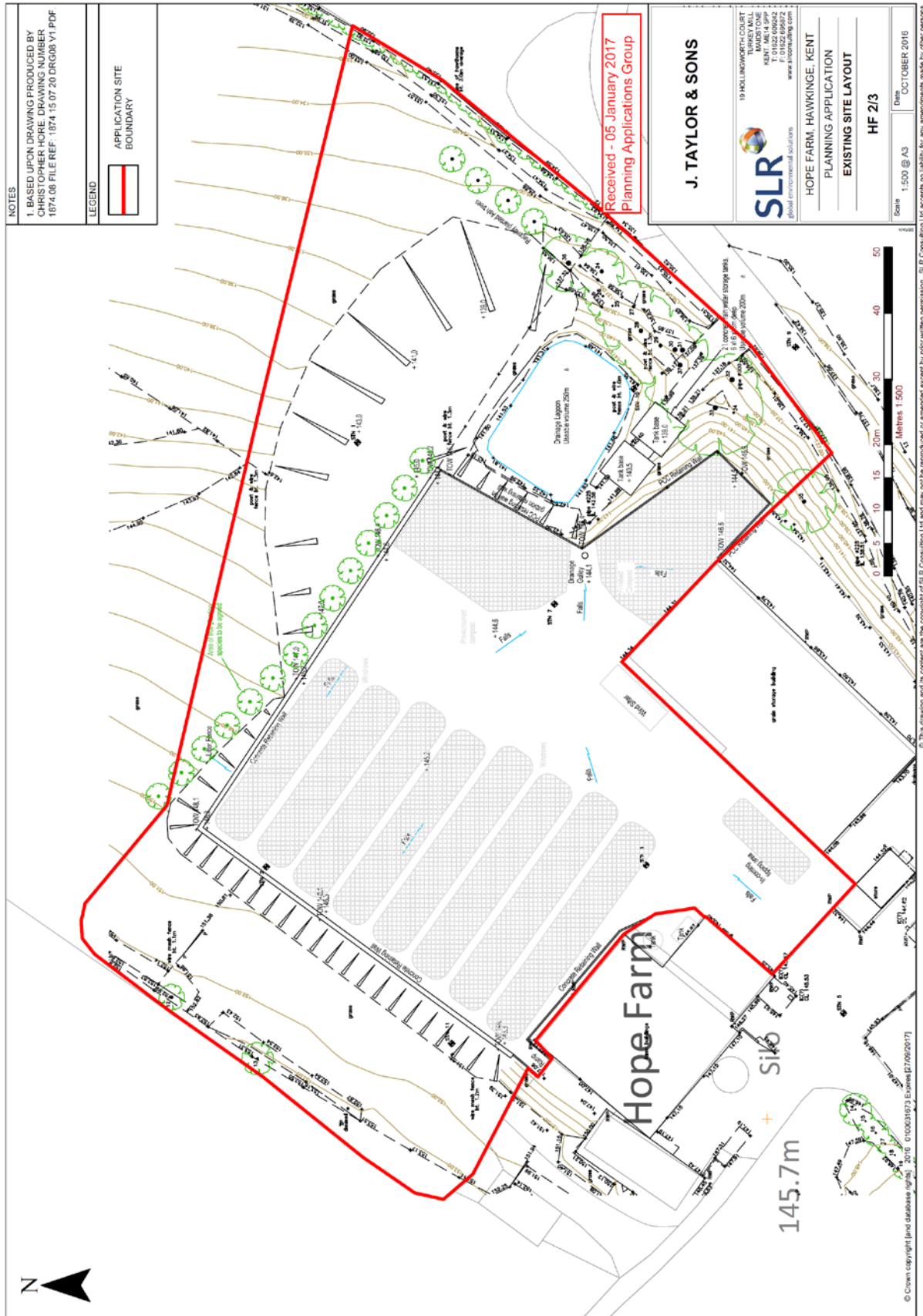
Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Site Plan



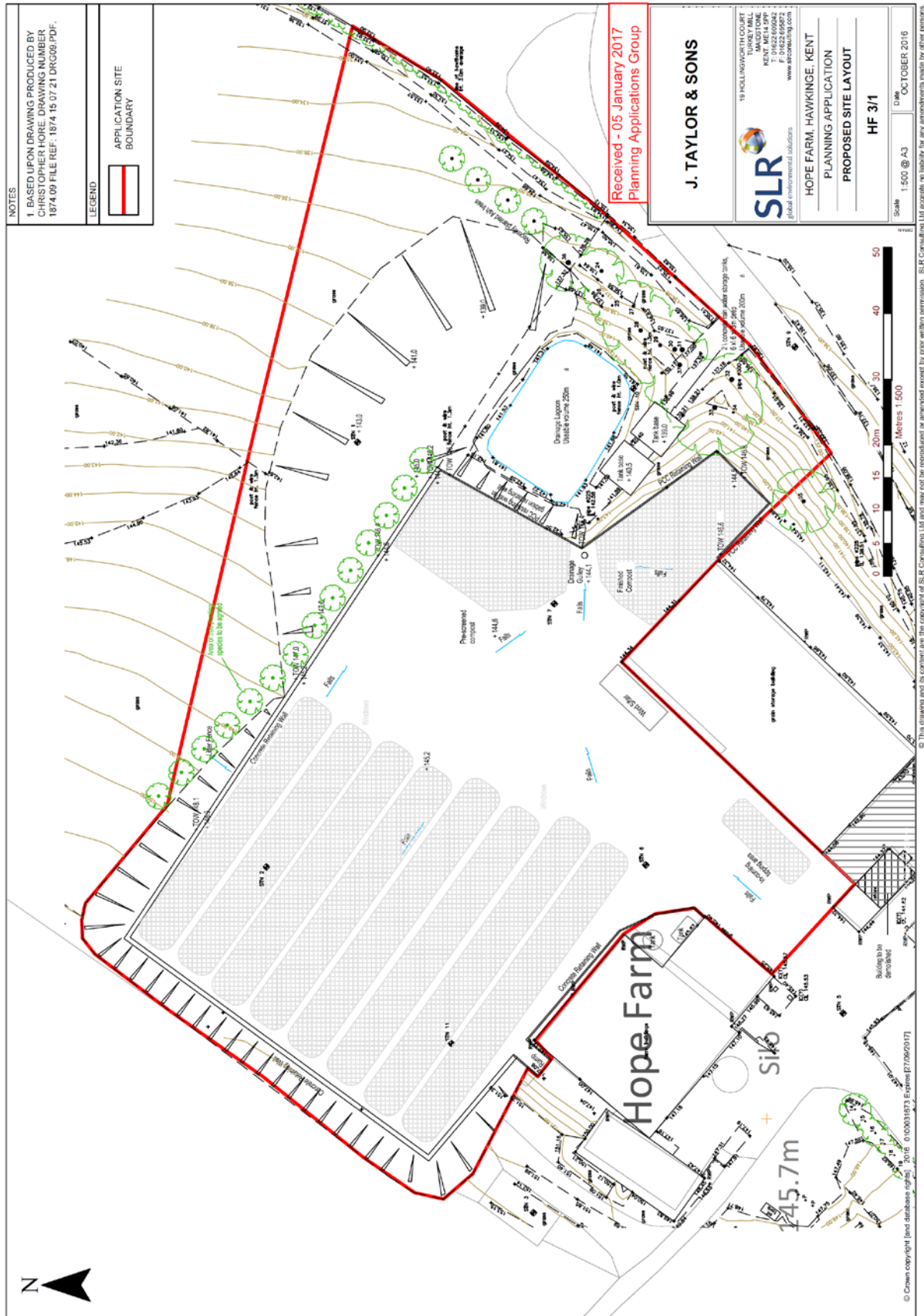
Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Existing Site Layout



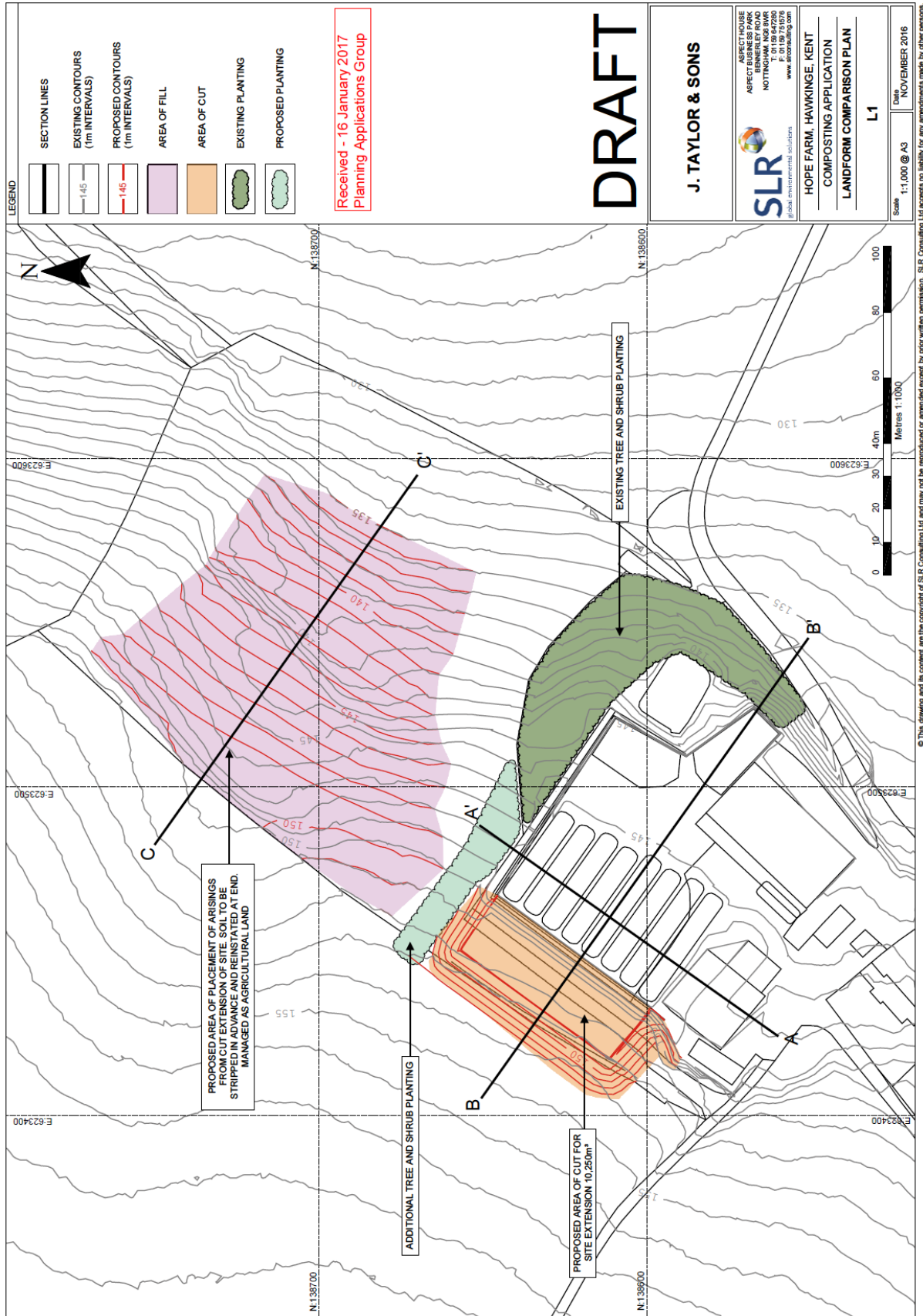
Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Proposed Site Layout



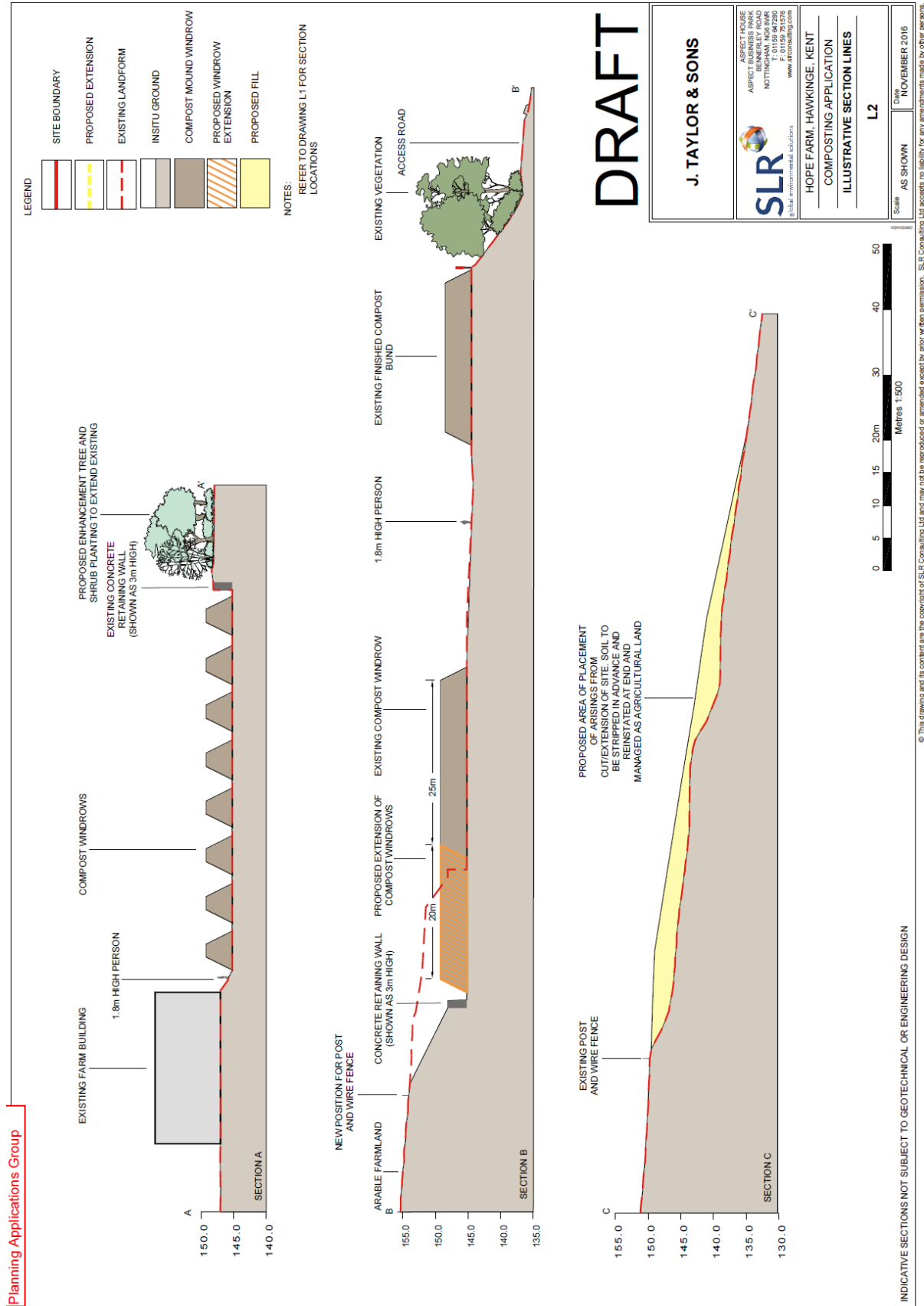
Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Landform Comparison Plan



Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Illustrative Sections



Planning Applications Group

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Recent Site History

3. The most recent permission under which the site currently operates increased the capacity of the facility to some 18,000 tonnes per annum with waste now being sourced from Hawkinge, Shornecliffe and Dover District Civic Amenity sites and/or waste kerbside collections together with Park and Gardens green waste collected from within the districts of Shepway, Thanet, Canterbury and Dover.

Proposal

4. With effect from 1 April 2017, it is anticipated that additional green waste composting capacity will need to become available as a result of the contracts secured in 2014 for all Household Waste Recycling Centres in East Kent, where there has been a phased tonnage increase due to Kent County Council's contractual arrangements with Viridor in respect of their green waste composting site located at the existing Shelford Landfill facility near Canterbury.
5. Whilst the original consented composting capacity at Hope Farm has been increased to allow for additional tonnage inputs due to limited composting facilities in East Kent, a need for further capacity has now arisen in order to accommodate the East Kent Partnership kerbside green waste contracts. Without such further capacity being made available locally a significant proportion of East Kent's green waste will be required to be taken elsewhere, with the potential for some needing to be exported out of the County.
6. In order to meet the anticipated need for additional capacity for the disposal of green waste arising from within East Kent it is proposed that waste throughputs at Hope Farm be increased from 18,000 tonnes per annum to some 35,000 tonnes per annum. To accommodate such an increase will not only require a minor extension to the currently permitted development footprint but also a number of variations to the conditions imposed on the current planning permission. The proposed extension to the permitted development footprint would increase the site area by some 0.15 ha resulting in an overall site area of approximately 1.11 ha. The existing site sits within a side slope and the intention would be for the additional 0.15 ha of land to be further cut into the side slope which would then help screen views of this additional area from outside the site. It is also proposed to carry out additional planting along the North Eastern site boundary to help assimilate the whole site into the landscape.
7. In order to accommodate the proposed increase in waste throughput it is also proposed to vary a number of conditions imposed on the current permission (Ref. SH/14/751) namely:

Condition 6 – Hours of operation

8. Condition 6 currently restricts hours of operation at the site from 0700 to 1800 hours Monday to Friday and 0700 to 1500 hours on Saturdays. The volume of green waste available typically fluctuates on a seasonal basis with the maximum volumes coinciding during the Public/Bank Holiday periods. In order to avoid any difficulties with the 'back up' of waste at the site immediately following any such holiday period it is therefore proposed that condition 6 be varied as follows:

"No activity shall take place at the site, nor shall there be any movement of any vehicles

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

to or from the site, except between the following times:

0700 to 1800 Monday to Friday;

0700 to 1500 Saturdays and Public/Bank Holidays.

No work shall be undertaken at any time on Sundays”.

Condition 7 – Source of Material

9. Condition 7 currently stipulates that waste shall only come from existing HWRC's in East Kent, along with waste kerbside collections and Parks and Garden green waste from Shepway, Thanet, Canterbury and Dover. However, under the East Kent Waste Partnership, as from April 2017 it is proposed that in addition to these areas it will also incorporate the geographical areas of Margate, Deal, Richborough, Canterbury, Herne Bay and Faversham. In order to address any future changes to contractual arrangements and to allow for 'flexibility' it is proposed that condition 7 be removed.

Condition 8 – Increase in waste throughput

10. It is proposed that waste throughputs be increased from 18,000 tonnes per annum to some 35,000 tonnes per annum in order to help accommodate the anticipated increase in additional green waste arising from the East Kent contract requirements. Accordingly it is proposed that condition 8 be varied to read:

“The maximum volume of green waste to enter the site shall not exceed 35,000 tonnes per annum”.

Condition 10 – End Product

11. Condition 10 currently restricts the end compost product to be used within the agricultural holding of Hope Farm as a soil conditioner. However, it is considered that the additional waste throughput proposed at the site would also provide an opportunity for a limited amount of the composted end product to be utilised at other surrounding farms in the locality, representing a more sustainable approach to the overall agricultural management of the area by enabling the use of artificial fertilisers to be replaced by a natural product. The applicant asserts that this is consistent with both the objectives of the Kent Downs AONB Management plan as well as those set out in National Policy. It is therefore proposed that condition 10 be removed to allow such use of the composted end product to take place in the future.

Condition 12 – Current vehicle movement restrictions

12. Condition 12 currently restricts green waste vehicle movements to a maximum of 84 (i.e. 42 in/42 out) movements per week. The proposed increase in waste throughput from 18,000 tonnes to 35,000 tonnes per annum will result in the need to increase green waste vehicle movements to and from the site above those currently permitted and which takes into account seasonal fluctuations. It is therefore proposed to vary condition 12 to read:

“Green waste vehicle movements shall be limited to a maximum of 40 (i.e. 20 in/20 out)

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

movements per day”.

13. All other conditions currently imposed on planning permission SH/14/751 will remain unchanged including a requirement that all green waste vehicles travelling to and from the site are restricted to using the dedicated access route onto the B2011 New Dover Road.

Planning Policy

14. The most relevant Government Guidance and Development Plan Policies summarised below are pertinent to the consideration of this application:

15. **National Planning Policy and Guidance (NPPF) March 2013:** came into force on 27 March 2013 and should be read in conjunction with National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (March 2014). The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies and its aim to secure sustainable development in a timely manner. The role of the planning system is seen as contributing towards sustainable development which creates 3 overarching mutually dependant roles of the planning system namely economic, social and environmental. In this context the NPPF sets out 12 core land-use principles which should underpin both plan-making and decision taking. Of particular relevance to this proposal this should include being genuinely plan-led, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving communities within it and contributing towards the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. The NPPF also requires that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas particularly that which promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses. In facilitating the delivery of these roles and objectives the NPPF requires that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems. Local Planning Authorities are therefore expected to work proactively with applicants to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area in a sustainable manner.

Local Planning Authorities should therefore now approach decision-making in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development with decision-takers at every level seeking to approve applications for sustainable development.

16. **National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) (March 2014):** The waste section of NPPG advises that the aim should be for each Local Planning Authority to be self-sufficient in dealing with their own waste in the context of the ‘proximity principle’. It states that there are clearly some wastes which are produced in small quantities for which it would be uneconomic to have a facility for each local authority and therefore there could be significant economies of scale for local authorities working together.
17. **National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) (October 2014):** The NPPW should be read in conjunction with amongst other matters the NPPF and Waste Management Plan for England (WMPE) 2013. It recognises the need to drive the management of waste up the ‘Waste Hierarchy’ and the positive contribution that waste management can bring to the development of sustainable communities. It recognises that planning plays a pivotal role in delivering this country’s waste ambitions through amongst other matters helping to secure the recovery of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment.

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

18. **Waste Management Plan for England (WMPE) 2013:** The key aim of the WMPE is to help achieve the Government's objective of moving towards a zero waste economy as part of the transition towards a sustainable economy. It summarises how the 'Waste Hierarchy' should be applied which gives top priority to waste prevention followed by preparing for re-use, then recycling, other types of recovery (including green waste composting), and last of all disposal (i.e. landfill). In this respect particular attention should be given to the location of the site at Hope Farm which helps maximise the opportunities for utilising the composted material.
19. **Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) 2013 – 2030 (July 2016):** As set out in the NPPF the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF requires that policies in local plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The KMWLP is therefore founded on this principle. Policy CSW 1 gives support where, when considering waste development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out and supported by National Policy.

Consistent with one of Government's key aims to reduce the volume of waste being sent to landfill, the KMWLP seeks to establish a policy framework against which future proposals for waste related developments that will facilitate the management of waste further up the 'Waste Hierarchy' (Policy CSW2) will be considered. Policy CSW4 of the Plan sets out the County Council's strategy for securing sufficient waste management capacity to manage at least the equivalent of the waste arising in Kent plus some residual non-hazardous waste from London. In order to achieve this, the KMWLP has to plan for all forms of waste management in the 'Waste Hierarchy' which helps accommodate the transition towards those types of waste development which sit towards the top of the 'Waste Hierarchy'. The Plan aims to address this transition by seeking to rapidly provide a more sustainable option for the mixed non-hazardous waste that is going to landfill by identifying a range of sites including those for green waste composting.

The preference identified in response to early consultations on the Plan was for a mix of new small and large sites for waste management. This mix gives flexibility and assists in balancing the benefits of proximity to waste arisings whilst enabling operators of large sites to exploit economies of scale.

The KMWLP recognises that in rural areas where either the non-processed waste arisings or the processed product can be of benefit to agricultural land (as is the case with composting and anaerobic digestion), the most proximate location for the waste facility will be within a rural area. Policy CSW6 gives effect to this where planning permission will be granted to meet the needs identified in Policy CSW7 providing amongst other matters, such proposals do not give rise to significant adverse effects upon any designated sites including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy CSW7 provides a strategy for the provision of new waste management capacity for non-hazardous waste. The policy will increase the provision of new waste management capacity for recovery while recognising the need to drive waste up the hierarchy. The additional capacity required for composting is a minimum given that it is preferable to process organic waste to produce compost rather than it being processed by way of other waste management options which sit lower down the Waste Hierarchy. Sites for

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

composting will be granted permission provided in the case of open green waste composting (facilities of less than 100 tonnes per week) are located within a farm unit and the compost is used within that unit.

Policy CSW16 seeks to safeguard sites that have permanent planning permission for waste management, or are allocated in the Waste Sites Plan from being developed for non-waste management uses.

There are also a number of Development Management Policies included in the Plan relevant to the consideration of the proposed development: Policy DM1 (Sustainable Design), DM2 (Environmental and Landscape Sites of International, National and Local Importance), DM8 (Safeguarding Minerals Management, Transportation Production & Waste Management Facilities), DM11 (Health and Amenity), DM12 (Cumulative Impact), DM13 (Transportation of Minerals and Waste), DM14 (Public Rights of Way) and DM16 (Information Required in Support of an Application).

20. **Shepway District Local Plan Core Strategy (2013):** Policy CO1 seeks to protect the countryside for its own sake and development will only be permitted in the countryside where amongst other matters proposals maintain or enhance features of landscape and the particular quality and character of the countryside; demonstrate that they cannot be practicably located within an existing settlement and essentially require a countryside location; are acceptable in highway and infrastructure terms.

Policy CO4 Defines Special Landscape Areas including the North Downs (scarp and crest) where proposals should protect or enhance the natural beauty of the Special Landscape Area.

Policy CO16 Planning permission will be granted for the diversification of farm businesses subject to all of the following criteria being met:

- a) The proposal is compatible with surrounding buildings and the location in a rural area in terms of scale and design.
- b) There would be no detrimental impact on local amenity or character, appearance or nature conservation value of the rural landscape. This criterion will be given additional weight in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty, and Special Landscape Area and nature conservation designations.
- c) Adequate provision can be made to meet access, servicing and parking requirements.
- d) The proposal would not prejudice the agricultural working of the farm unit.
- e) Where practicable, the proposal re-uses an existing agricultural building.

Consultations

21. **Shepway District Council:** Were formally consulted on 18 January 2017. Have not yet responded.

22. **Folkestone Town Council:** Were formally consulted on 18 January 2017. Have not yet

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

responded.

23. **Hawkinge Parish Council:** Support the application.
24. **Capel-Le-Ferne Parish Council:** Raise objections on the grounds that there are concerns over what is meant by future proofing any consent (i.e. in order to allow future contractual arrangements to be accommodated) by allowing flexibility in terms of materials permitted to be collected at the site, how much the increased hours of operation will be, the effect the additional traffic flow and movements will have on the village resulting from the increase in waste throughput. There will also be an unacceptable increase in vehicle movements leading to an adverse impact on highway safety due to the inadequacy of the B2011 which already accommodates large volumes of traffic. Also the existing site access located off the public highway is sub-standard.
25. **Kent Highways and Transportation:** Consider that the existing Hope Farm access onto New Dover Road (B2011) has ample vision splays and adequate warning signs on the site's internal road on the approach to the footpath/cycleway. There is no record of personal injury crashes involving HGV's in the vicinity of the site. In the immediate area of the site access, New Dover Road has ample width and is straight with good visibility. Access to the trunk road network is only 1.7 miles to the east (A20) and 2.2 miles to the west (M20/A20). Capel-le-Ferne Parish Council have for some time had aspirations to reduce the speed limit and traffic calm the B2011 as it bisects the village, however its importance locally in highway terms as the priority diversion route for the A20 make physical calming of this section of road unlikely to be acceptable. The fact remains that the resulting additional trips linked to the proposal, although an increase over previous operational levels, when considered against the existing traffic flow on the B2011 cannot be described as having a severe impact on either network capacity issues or highway safety.
- Raise no objection subject to the re-imposition of those conditions imposed on the previous permission in respect of warning signage, traffic to only use the B2011, no sales of the composted product to the general public, all loaded vehicles to be sheeted and maintenance of existing site access visibility splays. Also condition 12 be re-worded such that the number of HGV movements be restricted to a maximum of 40 per day.
26. **Environment Agency:** No objection in principle. Are reviewing the current permit application and will be addressing any environmental issues as part of this process. Until such time as a review by the technical advisory group is completed cannot advise whether it will allow the increase in tonnage and/or require additional measures such as forced aeration or covering of windrows.
27. **Kent Downs AONB:** The proposed extension of the existing facility is relatively well contained within the landscape although views of the facility are possible particularly from the south. If KCC are minded to approve the application would like to see the proposed landscaping extended to include significant tree planting along the entire southern boundary of the site to create an indigenous copse, in addition to the planting proposed to the north east of the site. This would help screen the entire operation from a southerly direction.

As soils and sub-soils will be stripped and re-spread there is an opportunity to create an area of unimproved chalk grassland on the affected land to the east of the facility. This

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

would need careful design and should incorporate seed/hay mixes of local progeny and require careful continued management.

The increase in capacity and corresponding increase in vehicular numbers has the potential to impact on tranquillity, an element of the natural beauty of the Kent Downs AONB. We are therefore pleased to see that it is proposed that access to the site is maintained from the B2011 only to avoid an inappropriate increase in HGVs on the local rural road network.

Raise concerns over the potential impact from lighting given that there is insufficient information in the application and would therefore request that any future permission should include a condition requiring full details of any lighting scheme to ensure that impacts can be appropriately managed.

28. **Public Rights of Way (East Kent PROW Team):** Have no comments to make as there appears to be no significant impact on any of the surrounding PROWs.

29. **CPRE Protect Kent:** Were formally consulted on 18 January 2017. Have not yet responded

Local Members

30. The local County Members Miss Susan Carey and Mr Frank McKenna were notified of the application on 18 January 2017. Whilst they have not made any written representations Mr McKenna has drawn attention to complaints he had received from some of his constituents regarding obnoxious odours arising in the general area, particularly during the summer months.

Publicity

31. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice, an advertisement in a local newspaper, and the individual notification of 20 residential properties.

Representations

32. In response to the publicity, 6 letters of representation have been received. The key points raised can be summarised as follows:

- No objection in principle to the proposed increase in waste throughput or the corresponding increase in vehicle movements but would request that the Highway Authority consider additional traffic calming measures including reducing the speed limit, additional signage on the public highway and the re-introduction of street lighting during the winter period.
- Object on the grounds of adverse impacts on highway safety as a result of the increase in vehicle movements along what is already a heavily congestion road.
- Object on the grounds of increased noise and odour.

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Discussion

33. In considering this proposal regard must be had to Government policy and guidance together with the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraphs (14) to (20) above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore the proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. In my opinion, the key material planning considerations in this particular case can be summarised under the following headings:

- Traffic
- Landscape (Including potential impacts on the Kent Downs AONB)
- Local Amenity
- Need

Traffic

34. The existing Hope Farm Composting facility has most recently been operating under the terms of a permission granted in June 2014 (Ref. SH/14/751), prior to which the site has been subject to a number of previous permissions, the first of which was granted in 2003 and thereafter has been subject to a number of further permissions as operations have gradually expanded in order to accommodate and treat the growth of green waste arisings in East Kent. The site has therefore become well established over the past 14 years during which time I am not aware of any particular issues arising out of the operations which have led to cause for concern either from traffic impacts or any other adverse effects on the local environment.

35. The proposed increase in waste throughputs will inevitably lead to a corresponding increase in associated HGV movements above those currently permitted. Currently the average number of HGV movements to and from the site amounts to some 80 movements per week (i.e. approximately 14 HGV movements per day), whereas the proposed number of HGV movements per week as a result of the increase in waste throughput would amount to an average of 156 movements per week (i.e. approximately 26 per day). This would result in a net weekly increase of some 76 movements and a net daily increase of some 12 movements above those currently permitted. However, on the evidence of the seasonal variations observed within the recorded site traffic the applicant is proposing that a maximum of 40 movements (i.e. 20 in/ 20/out) per day would be appropriate in order to accommodate such seasonal fluctuations and which would also accommodate the minimal trips that would be generated by the export of a small amount of the composted material to local surrounding farms.

36. On the basis of the above the applicant asserts that the additional traffic that would be generated would not adversely affect the operational capacity of the local road network or exacerbate any existing highway safety issues. Kent Highways and Transportation (KHT) in their formal response on the application concur with this view advising that although it would result in an increase in traffic above existing levels, when considered against existing flows on the B2011 it cannot be described as having a severe impact on either network capacity issues or highway safety. With regard to the traffic calming measures that have been requested by some of the local residents, KHT advise that

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

given the importance of the B2011 locally in highway terms as the priority diversion route for the A20, this makes the physical calming of this section of road unlikely to be acceptable. On the basis of the advice from KHT I do not consider there are any overriding objections on highways grounds.

Landscape

37. The site is located within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Landscape Area and as such is afforded protection from any adverse landscape impacts. With the exception of the site access road the site itself is remote from any residential areas and is well screened from most views directly into it as a result of the surrounding topography. Those properties with the most direct views of the site lie approximately 3/4 km to the south east situated along the B2011.
38. The natural landform where the existing site sits within a south facing side slope means that the proposed minor northerly extension to the permitted development footprint would be cut in to the embankment largely helping to screen the site. However, as part of the development it is also proposed to carry out additional planting along the north eastern site boundary to help assimilate the whole site into the natural landscape. I am particularly mindful of the comments made by the Kent Downs AONB Unit (KDAONBU) where they state that the existing facility is relatively well contained within the landscape although views of the facility are possible particularly from the south. In the event that members are minded to grant permission they recommend that the proposed planting be extended to include significant planting along the southern site boundary to create an indigenous copse. They also consider the surplus soils and subsoils created from extending the development footprint which are proposed to be re-spread on an area of land to the east of the site, provides an opportunity to create an area of unimproved chalk grassland. However, to be successful this would require careful design and future management. I would therefore recommend that conditions be imposed on any future permission requiring the submission and formal approval of the County Planning Authority of details of proposed tree planting along the north eastern and southern boundaries of the site together with details of an area to be created and managed located immediately to the east of the site as unimproved chalk grassland.
39. Also, whilst it is considered that the proposed increase in HGV movements has the potential to impact on the tranquillity of the area which is an element of the natural beauty of the Kent Downs AONB, the continued use of the existing dedicated access off the B2011 is welcomed which will avoid the use of rural roads.
40. Finally, the KDAONBU have raised concerns over the potential impact from lighting and have requested that any future permission includes a condition requiring full details of any lighting proposed. Whilst in my view the additional tree planting that would be required by condition would help mitigate to some extent adverse impacts from the site being illuminated during the limited hours of darkness it would operate, I would recommend that a condition be imposed on any future permission requiring the submission and formal approval of the County Planning Authority of details of any lighting proposed before being introduced to the site.
41. With the imposition of the conditions as mentioned above, in my view there are no overriding landscape objections to the proposed development.

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Local Amenity

42. Objections have been raised on the grounds of increased noise and odour that would be generated from the proposed development. With regard to noise, whilst the site itself is remote from any noise sensitive properties and therefore it is highly unlikely there would be any adverse effects from noise, the dedicated site access off the B2011 joins the carriageway at a point approximately midway between where residential properties front directly onto the highway, the nearest of which are located approximately 50 metres either side of the site entrance. Whilst the proposed increase in HGV movements to and from the site will result in a daily increase from an average of 14 movements per day to an average of 26 movements, I am mindful that the main noise source affecting these properties is from the existing traffic using the B2011 and where some of those objecting have drawn attention to what they consider is a heavily congested road. A Transport Assessment has been submitted in support of the application and includes the results of an automated traffic count undertaken of typical weekday traffic flows in either direction of the site entrance. These show that during the morning peak period (0800 to 0900 hours) a total of 929 two way movements was recorded of which 107 were HGVs. During the afternoon peak period (1700 to 1800 hours) a total of 981 movements was recorded of which 102 were HGVs. Over a recorded 24 hour period there was a total of 10,243 two way movements of which 1,338 were HGVs. It is therefore clear in my opinion that the main noise impacts on these residential properties is from the existing traffic using the B2011 and where vehicles travelling along this route pass much nearer to these properties than those vehicles associated with the Hope Farm composting operations. To date I have not received any complaints about noise since the site first became operational and I remain satisfied that on the basis of the above there are no overriding objections to the proposed development on noise grounds.
43. An objection has also been raised on the grounds of the potential increase in odour arising from the operations. One of the local County Members has also drawn my attention to complaints he has received from some of his constituents complaining about obnoxious odours arising in the locality generally, particularly during the summer period. Given the proximity of the site itself to the nearest odour sensitive receptors (i.e. some $\frac{3}{4}$ Km distant), in my view it is unlikely that operations at the site would cause any adverse effects from odour and to date I have not received any complaints about odours arising from the site since it first became operational. However, I am mindful of the comments made by the Environment Agency who in their response to the application have confirmed that they will be addressing any environmental issues through the permit application in relation to the risk to the nearest sensitive receptors. This will include the need to address any potential odour problems in the event that it is considered necessary.
44. Given the rural nature of the area generally much of which is arable farmland inevitably means that during certain periods of the year materials will be spread on the land to replace nutrient levels and which can consist of either artificial fertilisers or raw materials or a combination of both. Such operations form part of the normal yearly farming cycle and do not in themselves require express planning permission. Whilst such operations in this locality would include the spreading of the composted end product from Hope Farm, I am not aware that the use of these materials creates any more odour than that created from other materials used to fertilise the land and neither has it been demonstrated that the complaints made concerning obnoxious odour in the area are directly attributable to it. Given that there is nothing to prevent local farmers spreading

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

materials on their land for use as a fertiliser and the controls which the E.A. have confirmed they would impose under the permit controlling the composting operations at Hope Farm, I do not consider there are any overriding objections to the proposed development on the grounds of unacceptable odour.

Need

45. There is strong policy support for increasing the capacity for green waste composting as advocated in the approved KMWLP where the number of additional facilities identified over the plan period is a minimum given the preference for this method of processing organic waste over other waste management options which sit lower in the Waste Hierarchy. With the contractual changes to the way in which such waste is segregated and collected, this will inevitably result in a stepped increase in the volume of such waste needing to be managed, as already witnessed across the county. Whilst the green waste composting facility located at the Shelford Landfill site near Canterbury has taken a significant amount of green waste from East Kent in the past, due to changes to Kent County Council's contractual arrangements with Viridor in respect of this site will require an alternative facility to be made available. The applicant for Hope Farm considers that his site could accommodate the additional capacity required.
46. In light of the above I consider a strong case of need exists subject to there being no overriding objections and also to there being no adverse effects on the local environment.

Conclusion

47. The composting facility at Hope Farm has been in operation since 2003 during which time it has become well established as an integral part of the normal farming operations and which has expanded over time to provide additional capacity necessary to accommodate the growth of green waste arisings in East Kent. To date, since it first became operational I am not aware of any particular issues arising which have led to any adverse effects on the local environment neither have I received any complaints about the facility.
48. Rural diversification to support economic growth in rural areas particularly in respect of agriculture and other land-based businesses is fully supported by planning policy at both the national and local level. In my opinion the processing of green waste to produce compost which is then used on the land locally as a replacement for artificial fertilisers is fully consistent with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF and helps meet waste policy objectives at the national and local level of diverting waste from landfill helping to drive the management of such waste further up the 'Waste Hierarchy'. Furthermore such operations are also consistent with the policy objectives set out in the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan.
49. Subject to the imposition of conditions as recommended in this report in my view there are no overriding objections to the proposed development which I consider should be supported. Accordingly, I recommend that permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out below.

Extension to Hope Farm Composting Facility with variation of planning permission reference SH/14/751 at Hope Farm, Crete Road East, Folkestone - KCC/SH/0005/2017

Recommendation

50. I RECOMMEND that:

(A) PERMISSION BE GRANTED to the proposed extension to the permitted development footprint and to the proposed variations to conditions 6, 8, and 12 and the removal of conditions 7 and 10 of planning permission SH/14/751 SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions covering (amongst other matters) the following:

- Hours of operation restricted to 0700 to 1800 hours Monday to Friday and 0700 to 1500 hours Saturdays and Public/Bank Holidays with no operations on Sundays.
- Maximum volume of green waste throughput not to exceed 35,000 tonnes per annum.
- Green waste vehicle movements limited to a maximum of 40 (i.e. 20in/20out) movements per day.
- Prior approval of details of proposed tree planting along the north eastern and southern boundaries of the site.
- Prior approval of details of an area to be created and managed as unimproved chalk grassland.
- Prior submission and approval of details of any external lighting before being introduced at the site.

(B) All other conditions attached to planning permission SH/14/751 be re-imposed.

Case Officer: Mike Clifton

Tel. no: 0300413350

Background Documents: see section heading
