Examination – Note for Inspector

HSG14 Warren Lane Depot, Hurst Green – December 2019

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1. Introduction

This Note has been produced in response to the Inspector’s questions on the past uses of this site and potential contamination. It also responds to the Inspector’s questions regarding consultation with the water company operating the Waste Water Treatment Works, located to the west/south-west, in terms of odour.

2. Past uses of this site

A review of the planning history of this site demonstrates that it has operated as a depot since the 1950s, if not earlier. The first application found is for a garage at the depot and this was permitted in 1956. Since that point it has been the subject of a number of applications which are incidental to this use. These include the erection of a depot building to be used for the storage of building materials, a joiners shop and vehicle maintenance (GOR/4893); a motor vehicle repair shop (GOR/639/72); an amenity block (75/854); a garage building (78/917) and an office building (2005/1154).

3. Contamination

Based on the known history of the site (as detailed above) and its current use, the Council considers that there is some potential for contamination risks and has undertaken its own confidential risk assessment desk studies on this for property asset management purposes. The Council’s view is that any contamination arising would be commensurate with the use of the site both historic and current and can be remediated.

This is reflected in the Sustainability Assessment (SSHA1 – Tandridge Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Regulation 19 Stage Volume 2 Options Assessment 2018) which concludes that there would be an uncertain/minor negative effect in relation to Contaminated Land and Soils and which recommends that a contamination assessment will be required.

In light of this the policy sets out that an application will need to ensure the risk of contamination has been assessed and evidence submitted, and, where contaminated land has been identified, its remediation prior to the commencement of development.

4. Waste Water Treatment Works

Tandridge has undertaken a number of rounds of consultation and at each stage it has consulted with Southern Water, which is responsible for the Waste Water Treatment Works located to the west/south-west. In terms of site-specific responses, whilst this site was included in The Local Plan: Sites Consultation (04 Nov 2016 - 30 December 2016), Southern Water did not provide a site-specific response however they did include details of the Guiding Principles which they apply when responding to planning policy consultations. These include five aims, the last of which is to protect sensitive development from odour pollution. In relation to the Draft Local Plan Consultation (Regulation 19) (30 July 2018 – 10 Sept 2018), Tandridge did not receive a response from Southern Water.

However, the issue of odour has been addressed in the Water Cycle Study which the Council commissioned from JBA Consulting and which was carried in co-operation with various organisations, including the relevant water and wastewater companies; as such Southern Water were also involved in this process. This can be found within the Council’s Examination Library, under the heading of Water (WTR2, WTR15, WTR16, WTR17 and WTR18). This identifies those sites which are close to WwTW and where odour may become a cause for nuisance and complaints from residents. This work assigns a risk category, based on the distance from the nearest WwTW and its relative size. This site was assigned an Amber risk category and as such an odour impact assessment is recommended.
This is reflected in the Sustainability Appraisal (SSHA1 – Tandridge Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Regulation 19 Stage Volume 2 Options Assessment 2018), which notes the close proximity of this site to the waste water treatment works, and that this raises issues of concern regarding pollution and concludes by recommending that an odour assessment is required.

In light of this the policy sets out as follows: ‘Applicants will need to have early engagement with the Environment Agency and Water companies to discuss odour issues and resolve these, where necessary.’

Given the amber rating and the existence of other residential property in the vicinity of the WWTW, it would not be appropriate to prevent development of the site for residential purposes.