Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: **Recommendation – Approve**
AWDM/1111/12

Site: **Land South of Loose Lane, Sompting**

Proposal: **Restoration of the Teville Stream involving excavation of a new channel, creation of reed beds, infill of existing culvert and restoration of surrounding land.**

Date of site visit: 12 October 2012

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to an area of relatively flat farmland between Worthing and Sompting, to the north and east of the industrial estate on the east side of Worthing. The application affects land within both Worthing and Adur and two separate applications have been submitted (AWDM/1111/12 and AWDM/1113/12). For completeness, the report has been prepared as an assessment of the entire development (which affects predominantly land within Adur – only the access and works compound are within Worthing).

The Teville Stream runs through the site, draining the catchment area of Worthing, via a culvert which lies adjacent to an historic landfill area at Decoy Farm. It is proposed to divert the stream from its current culverted position to a more natural form with the aim of improving the ecology and water quality of the stream. It will involve excavating 700m of new channel within Adur District running north-south, with an area of reed bed covering 0.4ha in the north west corner of the site adjacent to the GlaxoSmithKline building. The new channel will be between 1.5m and 3.5m deep and will have sufficient capacity to accommodate flood flows up to 1 in 100 annual probability flood events. The proposed reed bed is an area of poorly-drained filed which is infected with Giant Hogweed. The existing culvert which is off Deacon Way will be blocked and the existing channel will be closed off and retained as a receiving area for surface water run-off only. The open channel running from the Deacon Way culvert to the proposed new channel will remain as a backwater reedbed.

The proposed new channel will require excavation of approximately 16,000 cubic metres of spoil which is to be redistributed evenly over the adjacent field to the east to a height of 1.5m. This will also assist in the remediation of the Giant Hogweed by removing contaminated soli and by burying seeds too deep to germinate.

Access will be from a temporary road to be formed from the former household waste site off Dominion Way. The site compound will also contain offices and plant storage.

Relevant site history

None

Consultations

Adur & Worthing Councils: The ***Council's Engineer*** states that the project as presented is acceptable and should benefit the residents of Adur and Worthing. The landowner and tenant farmer both support the proposals. Amendments to the proposals shown on Drawing B1629800/PS/PLAN/2, may be required at the northern extent of the diversion should GSK proceed with their intentions to reroute the surface water sewer, which currently discharges along the "existing channel", around the north of their facility. This would not affect or detract from the proposal presented. The EA and EON have liaised about the proposed route of the Teville and the EON Rampion cable and both are aware of the others requirements. Therefore he has no formal comments to make about this application.

The ***Environmental Health Officer*** recommends that a full contaminated land condition is imposed

Environment Agency: Consider that planning permission could be granted to the proposed development as submitted subject to planning conditions. Without these planning conditions, the proposed development on this site poses an unacceptable risk to the environment.

Natural England: Standing advice on protected species

Sompting Parish Council: No objection but requests that the LPA considers designating the area as a nature conservation area to protect the enhanced environment

Representations

None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AC1, AC4, AC5, AB1
South East Plan (GOSE 2009): SCT1, CC1, CC2, CC8, NRM2, NRM5, NRM9, C4
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The enhancement of the area and the improvement of the water quality and ecology of the stream are positive outcomes that should be supported in principle.

Visual amenity

The new channel and reed bed would enhance the visual amenity of the area.

The raised land resulting from the redistributed spoil would have little impact in the wider landscape, being evenly spread rising to a maximum height of 1.5m only. It will be grassed and planted with wildflowers and should blend into the landscape.

The proposed temporary access road would cut through a strip of land, formerly landfill, and would have a minor impact for a short term period. However, the landscape would be restored following completion of the works and no long term harm is expected to arise.

Ecology and Sustainability

There are slow worms on the site which have been encouraged to move away from the site of the access road to elsewhere on the site, rather than being translocated, and this work has been ongoing in the last month or so. There are no other protected species on the site.

The stream is currently failing its waterbody objectives due to extensive culverting and poor water quality provided by its urban catchment and proximity to a landfill and industrial estates. The proposed reedbed will improve water quality and increase habitat and wildlife diversity, as well as providing landscape and flood storage benefits.

Residential amenity

There are no dwellings in the proximity of the site.

Accessibility and parking

Access shall be from the former household waste site off Dominion Way. The road is already used for industrial traffic and it is not anticipated that this proposal will have a significant impact on highway safety or capacity.

Contaminated land

The proposed route of the new stream comprises natural soils although a naturally occurring higher area of contamination was found within one section. This is to be dealt with by means of lining the channel with clay to ensure protection of ecological receptors. No contamination was found as a result of the proximity of the Decoy Farm landfill site or industrial estate.

Archaeology

No archaeological features were found during an initial survey of the site. However, it is recommended that a programme of archaeological work should be carried out prior to work commencing on site.

Recommendation

APPROVE for the reason:-

The proposed development would enhance the local environment and can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the amenities of neighbouring properties. It would consequently not conflict with the 'saved' policies the Adur District Local Plan (AC1, AC4, AC5, AB1) or the policies of the South East Plan (SCT1, CC1, CC2, CC8, NRM2, NRM5, NRM9, C4)

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard 3 year time limit
2. Contamination
3. Surface water and pollution prevention measures
4. Archaeology
5. Removal of access road and restoration of land on completion
6. Permission relates to approved plans

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 24 October 2012

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 24 October 2012