

**Application Number:** 16/11544 Application to Hampshire County Council

**Site:** RINGWOOD & FORDINGBRIDGE SKIP HIRE,  
COURTWOOD FARM, COURT HILL, DAMERHAM SP6 1QD

**Development:** Erection of a building on site to house a biomass boiler and ancillary equipment along with 3 x 50m2 drying bays for material storage

**Applicant:** Ringwood & Fordingbridge Skip Hire

**Target Date:** 03/01/2017

---

## 1 REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Parish Council View in Part

## 2 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER CONSTRAINTS

Countryside outside the New Forest  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
Adjacent to Site of Importance for Nature Conservation  
Adjacent to Ancient Woodland

## 3 DEVELOPMENT PLAN, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

### Core Strategy

#### Objectives

1. Special qualities, local distinctiveness and a high quality living environment
2. Climate change and environmental sustainability
4. Economy
7. The countryside

#### Policies

CS2: Design quality  
CS3: Protecting and enhancing our special environment (Heritage and Nature Conservation)  
CS10: The spatial strategy  
CS17: Employment and economic development  
CS21: Rural economy  
CS24: Transport considerations

### Local Plan Part 2 Sites and Development Management Development Plan Document

DM2: Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity  
DM22: Employment development in the countryside

#### **4 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT ADVICE**

Section 38 Development Plan  
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004  
National Planning Policy Framework

#### **5 RELEVANT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE AND DOCUMENTS**

None

#### **6 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 6.1 Change of use of building to material recovery facility and use of land for storage of skips (96151) Granted by County on the 14th December 2010.
- 6.2 Portable cabin for office use and container for welfare facilities and storage (97340) Granted by County on the 25th July 2011.
- 6.3 Extension to material recovery facility to allow storage of waste, skips and parking of vehicles (11117) Granted subject to conditions on the 8th November 2016

#### **7 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Sandleheath Parish Council objects to the planning application. The grounds for objection are based on the significant impact this additional development will have on the residents/local amenity and the wider community, environmental/ecological issues and safety.

The residents of Tanners Lane who in some cases are less than 120M from the proposed Biomass and waste drying installation are already experiencing considerable noise and dust nuisance from activities on the site. Attention is drawn to the conditions imposed on the previously granted application 16/11117 about vehicle movements and hours of operation on the site. Despite this the applicant is now proposing to operate the Biomass boiler, associated diesel generator and blowers on a 24-hour basis that is likely to generate additional noise nuisance. No mention is made in the application on the noise levels expected from the process of preparing waste or filling/emptying the 50M bays. Further, it is possible that recycled wood may be used in the boiler, itself generating noise.

The submission suggests that installation of the Biomass boiler and associated equipment will reduce the amount of vehicle traffic taking waste to landfill. However, it is likely that over time this will be overtaken by requests for this site to handle additional material to offset the equipment costs, thus increasing overall traffic levels. Given the rural nature of the site and that key access to the main A338 is through Fordingbridge town centre the effect of any additional traffic on the surrounding community would be significant. As highlighted in one of the residents responses to this application, control needs to be exercised on the nature of business activity on this site.

The Parish Council and the residents are also extremely concerned about the lack of information on the likely emissions from the material being burnt in the boiler especially if the biomass material is sourced from recycled wood. Additionally, there would undoubtedly be emissions/smells from the material being dried, which given the proximity of the residential properties and prevailing wind would significantly impact their amenity. Worst case it could impact the wider village of Sandleheath.

The proposed site of the building and bays is bordered on 2 sides by SINC and SSSI protected land. The Parish Council is of the view that industrial processes of this kind are completely out of keeping with the location, in that they will significantly impact the delicate surrounding habitat. The desktop Ecological Assessment and site visit report fails to identify the importance of this surrounding land in the protection of wild life.

Raising the site level would not only have a visual impact on the Tanners Lane residents, but also change the course of runoff water into the adjoining woodland. The collection of waste liquid is also of concern in that all the likely sources would need to be directed into the proposed storage tanks. Leakage of any sort into the surrounding woodland and watercourses would be very serious.

Finally, 24/7 operation of such a large biomass installation in an unmanned format presents significant safety risks. Unlike Gas or Oil, biomass combustion cannot simply be immediately stopped in an emergency. The burning material must burn out so in an emergency there must be back up processes available to remove excess heat. A serious fire at this site could have a disastrous effect on local woods and vegetation. No safety plan has been submitted as part of the application. Considering the above points and the likely impact on the community and local environment Sandheath Parish Council recommends that the application should be refused.

## **8 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS**

None

## **9 CONSULTEE COMMENTS**

- 9.1 Natural England: No objection but make general comments
- 9.2 Ecologist: The proximity, surface treatment and lack of acoustic and emissions barriers may result in encroachment of materials, emissions (nitrogen and dust), noise pollution, compaction and runoff into the woodland and may impact individual trees giving rise particularly to deterioration of ancient woodland and priority woodland and the SINC. Requests that further detailed information is provided in relation to dust, noise and air quality in order to demonstrate that the proposal will not impact on protected species and the Ancient Woodland.
- 9.3 Environment Agency: Holding objection. We do not currently have enough information to know if the proposed development can meet our requirements to prevent, minimise and/or control pollution. In addition the proposed development is located within 250 metres of an ancient woodland and local nature reserve. What measures would be put in place to protect the environment?
- 9.4 Environmental Health (Pollution): It is not clear from the submitted information that adverse impact to residential accommodation in the vicinity will be prevented, and whether additional measures to control noise from the development will be required. Such measures might require a further planning application. There is insufficient information to:
- characterise off-site noise impact;
  - characterise noise breakout from the structure (there appears to be an opening to the proposed structure facing residential property in the vicinity);
  - and the application uses acoustic units (Decibels) for operational noise levels without reference to measurement distance.

- 9.5 Environmental Health (Air Quality): Objects, there is insufficient information concerning the potential emissions from the biomass boiler, the impact on local air quality at neighbouring residential properties (approximately 120m from the proposed plant) and whether additional abatement measures may be required.

The additional information required from the applicant should include the completion of a Biomass Information Request Form with particular reference to:

- The burning rate of the fuel servicing the biomass boiler in kg/hr
- Further detail of the wood being classified as Grade A which will be feeding the biomass boiler
- The impact from the operation of the biomass boiler on local air quality at sensitive locations for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter

In addition the biomass boiler may require an Environmental (Part B) Permit from New Forest District Council in order to operate. While the requirement for an Environmental Permit does not impact on the requirement for planning permission, the Permit will set emission limits for certain pollutants which may influence the height of the flue servicing the biomass boiler.

- 9.6 Hampshire County Council Highway Engineer: No objection subject to conditions
- 9.7 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Officer: The proposal could be regarded at first sight to be laudable. However looking more closely at the statement submitted there are rather a lot of unanswered questions beyond any basic policy issues. The proposal appears to be, despite assertions to the contrary, an intensification of the use of the site and all that goes with that. In addition to any policy considerations there seem to be a number of detailed matters that have been left unanswered and these need to be addressed if sympathetic consideration is to be given to the proposal.

## **10 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

N/A

## **11 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

No relevant considerations

## **12 LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

Local financial considerations are not material to the decision on this application

## **13 WORKING WITH THE APPLICANT/AGENT**

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, New Forest District Council take a positive and proactive approach, seeking solutions to any problems arising in the handling of development proposals so as to achieve, whenever possible, a positive outcome.

This is achieved by

- Strongly encouraging those proposing development to use the very thorough pre application advice service the Council provides.
- Working together with applicants/agents to ensure planning applications are registered as expeditiously as possible.
- Advising agents/applicants early on in the processing of an application (through the release of a Parish Briefing Note) as to the key issues relevant to the application.
- Updating applicants/agents of issues that arise in the processing of their applications through the availability of comments received on the web or by direct contact when relevant.
- Working together with applicants/agents to closely manage the planning application process to allow an opportunity to negotiate and accept amendments on applications (particularly those that best support the Core Strategy Objectives) when this can be done without compromising government performance requirements.
- Advising applicants/agents as soon as possible as to concerns that cannot be dealt with during the processing of an application allowing for a timely withdrawal and re-submission or decision based on the scheme as originally submitted if this is what the applicant/agent requires.
- When necessary discussing with applicants/agents proposed conditions especially those that would restrict the use of commercial properties or land when this can be done without compromising government performance requirements.

In this case the matter is to be dealt with by Hampshire County Council.

## **14 ASSESSMENT**

- 14.1 This application is to be determined by Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council are consultees.
- 14.2 The application relates to Ringwood and Fordingbridge Skip Hire which is a materials recovery facility that lies to the north west of Sandleheath. The company currently use an area of land and former agricultural building located within the west of Courtwood Farm as a material recovery facility. A very recent planning application under 11117 was approved for the material recovery facility to be extended to allow for the storage of waste, skips and parking of vehicles and part of the approved area is subject to this current application. That previous planning application essentially proposed to increase the site area to be used for the waste operation and storage, but it was not proposed to increase the importation level.
- 14.3 This current proposal is to erect a building to accommodate a biomass boiler and ancillary equipment together with three 50 cubic metre drying bays for material storage. This application should be considered in conjunction with planning permission 11117 which was for the extension to the materials recovery facility, as the proposed building and drying bays would be located in part of the site covered by that previous application. The proposed hours of use are Monday to Friday 07:00 to 18:00 and Saturday between 07:00 and 13:00 for sorting and vehicle movements..

- 14.4 The proposed biomass boiler and associated equipment would be used to burn Grade A wood chip to generate heat, then through a heat exchanger and fan blow warm air to the 3 x drying bays that would also be installed and would be operational on a 24 hour basis. The warm air will be used to lower the moisture content of the material on site. In support of the application it is stated that there would not be greater throughput of waste at the site over and above what currently exists. The process would allow better treatment of the material, which provides environmental benefits as it reduces the amount of vehicles taking a given amount of the material from the site once sorted and dried, as well as reducing the amount of material going to landfill.
- 14.5 The proposed biomass boiler would be installed within an 'L' shaped building with the main section measuring 11.2 metres, by 11 metres to 5.75 metres to the ridge. The proposed flue would rise to 9 metres in height and would protrude through the central roof of the building. The proposed building would be a simple pitched roof building constructed from profile wall cladding.
- 14.6 In assessing this proposal, there are a number of important issues to consider. The site forms part of Courtwood Farm, which lies just outside the settlement area of Sandheath. To the north and west of the site is woodland, to the south running from east to west is Tanners Lane, a small residential lane. The site is an existing large industrial area, it has a number of engineering/ industrial developments which have evolved from converting farm buildings. The site lies within the countryside and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site lies adjacent to Lower Court Wood Site and Lower Breach Copse which are sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and also designated as semi ancient woodland.
- 14.7 In policy terms, the site lies within the countryside where there are restrictive policies for new buildings. Core Strategy CS21 relates to the rural economy and states that the strategy seeks to keep existing employment sites and encourage improvements and redevelopments that would help maintain and enhance the environment. Local Plan Part 2 policy DM22 relates to employment development in the countryside and states that development will be permitted for established rural enterprise for extension to existing buildings or the redevelopment of an existing employment site, which results in environmental benefits
- 14.8 In this case, the proposed building is not for an extension to an existing building or redevelopment of the site, but would entail a new building, built over an existing area used for storage bays for waste material. The proposed biomass boiler could also provide environmental benefits in the form of a renewable energy that can reduce the reliance on fossil fuels. On this basis, there are no policy objections to the building subject to the matters set out below.
- 14.9 Visually, the site is well screened from public viewpoints and has a high degree of self containment provided by other buildings within the complex. The proposed building and bays would be located within the far western part of the site with the woodland to the rear. There are a number of buildings on the site, which vary in size and design and it is considered that the proposed building would be appropriate for this location and could be seen as an improvement when compared to the level of outside storage currently on the site.

- 14.10 With regard to residential amenity, there are residential properties located approximately 120 metres away from the site. The main issues relate to dust, noise and disturbance from the proposed biomass boiler and the impact on air quality. While concerns have been expressed in relation to additional traffic generation, it should be noted that this application does not propose to intensify the use of the site.
- 14.11 Concerning the impact of noise on the nearby residential properties, it is considered that the distance of 120 metres to the nearest residential properties is reasonable and such a building and facility could be designed without causing a significant impact on their living conditions. However, the Environmental Health Officer considers that insufficient information has been submitted to characterise the noise breakout from the structure (there is an opening to the proposed structure facing residential properties) and no information on operational noise level. Further detailed information would need to be submitted in the form of a noise assessment to demonstrate that there would not be an adverse impact on the neighbouring residential properties. For instance the noisy equipment is likely to be contained within the building but no assessment has been submitted. With regard to dust there is a dust supervisor system already on the site and due to its position at the lower end of the site, and dense trees, it is not considered that dust is an issue, but further details should be provided to demonstrate that dust would not occur from the operations.
- 14.12 In relation to air quality matters, the Environmental Health Officer states that there is insufficient information concerning the potential emissions from the biomass boiler, the impact on local air quality at neighbouring residential properties (approximately 120m from the proposed plant) and whether additional abatement measures may be required. The Environmental Health Officer objects until sufficient information is submitted. In addition the biomass boiler may require an Environmental (Part B) Permit from New Forest District Council in order to operate. While the requirement for an Environmental Permit does not impact on the requirement for planning permission, the Permit will set emission limits for certain pollutants which may influence the height of the flue servicing the biomass boiler.
- 14.13 In terms of public highway safety matters, the Highway Authority does not raise any objection and considers that based upon the details submitted, the proposed use would not increase existing vehicle movements and there are no alterations proposed to the public highway. The application states that the use of a biomass facility could reduce the current level of traffic movements into and out of the site.
- 14.14 In terms of ecological matters, such a proposal could have potential to impact on the adjacent SINC and habitat. Ancient woodland edge is habitat of high value to woodland birds, bats and the nationally rare and scarce invertebrates such as those recorded in the ancient woodland block that surrounds the site. Noise of a continuous quality and seepage to well within the designated site, may affect the capacity these species have (that favour woodland edge) to rear young, hunt or communicate.
- 14.15 The Ecologist considers that the proximity, surface treatment and lack of acoustic and emissions barriers may result in encroachment of materials, emissions (nitrogen and dust), noise pollution, compaction and runoff into the woodland and may impact individual trees giving rise particularly

to deterioration of ancient woodland and priority woodland and the SINC. The Ecologist requests that further detailed information is provided in relation to dust, noise and air quality in order to demonstrate that the proposal will not impact on protected species and the Ancient Woodland.

- 14.16 The Environment Agency states that they do not currently have sufficient information to know whether the proposed development can meet the requirements to prevent, minimise and/or control pollution. In addition the proposed development is located within 250 metres of an ancient woodland and local nature reserve and they have concerns about what measures would be put in place to protect the environment.
- 14.17 Overall in summarising the issues, and based upon the comments from consultees, there are still many matters and details in relation to noise, dust, air quality and drainage which have not been provided to demonstrate there will be no adverse impact on residential amenity and ecology. The proposal for a biomass boiler would be a facility that would provide visual and environmental benefits, and accordingly, it is considered that the applicant should be given the opportunity to provide these details and information in order to demonstrate that such adverse impacts will not arise. These could result in changes to the design or siting of the building or flue. There are no objections on the grounds of public highway safety or the character of the area.
- 14.18 Officers recommend that an objection be raised subject to the consultee objections being addressed.

## 15. RECOMMENDATION

### Raise Objections

The Council **OBJECTS** to planning permission being granted.

Overall in summarising the issues, and based upon the comments from consultees, there are still many matters and details in relation to noise, dust, air quality and drainage which have not been provided to demonstrate there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity and ecology. The proposal for a biomass boiler could provide environmental and visual benefits and accordingly, it is considered that the applicant should be given the opportunity to provide further details and information in order to demonstrate that such adverse impacts would not arise from the development and operations.

### Further Information:

Major Team

Telephone: 023 8028 5345 (Option 1)





**New Forest**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Tel: 023 8028 5000  
www.newforest.gov.uk

David Groom  
Service Manager  
Planning and Building Control  
New Forest District Council  
Appletree Court  
Lyndhurst  
SO43 7PA

**Planning Development  
Control Committee**  
January 2017

**Item No: 3g**

Ringwood & Fordingbridge  
Skip Hire Court Farm  
Damerham  
16/11544  
SU1115

Scale 1:1250

N.B. If printing this plan from  
the internet, it will not be to  
scale.

