

Somerset County Council

Regulation Committee –

Report by Service Manager - Planning Control, Enforcement & Compliance :

Application Number: SCC/3745/2020

Date Registered: 2 September 2020

Parish: Chilton Trinity Parish Council

District: Sedgemoor District Council

Local Member: Ann Bown / Mike Caswell

Case Officer: Ana Vilela

Contact Details: AVilela@somerset.gov.uk

Description of Application: Redevelopment of site to provide relocated school transport depot. Works include; surfacing, drainage, lighting, fencing, installation of an office building and associated works.

Grid Reference: **Easting** - 330243, **Northing** - 138414

Applicant: Somerset County Council

Location: Saltlands Depot

Saltlands

Western Way

Bridgwater

TA6 3JG

1. **Summary of Key Issues and Recommendation(s)**

1.1 The application relates to the relocation of the Somerset County Council's school transport depot, currently located at the Former Library HQ & Morgan House site, at Mount Street in Bridgwater Town Centre.

1.2 The existing site does not have the capacity for the level of vehicles used by the Applicant and the relocation is proposed to the Saltland area of town, on land formerly used by Somerset Waste Partnership as a compound and an office.

1.3 The main issues for Members to consider are:

- Planning policy considerations and Principle of Development
- Visual Impact
- Impact on surrounding residents/uses
- Contamination
- Highway Safety and associated impacts
- Flood Risk

1.4 It is recommended that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions set out in section 9 of this section report, and that authority to undertake any minor nonmaterial editing which may be necessary to the wording of those conditions be delegated to the Strategic Commissioning Manager – Economy & Planning

2. **Description of the Site**

2.1 The application site is approximately 0.3 hectares in size and is located towards the northern fringe of Bridgwater, in the Saltlands area of the town. The site falls within the Sedgemoor District Council area and lies in the Chilton Trinity Parish.

2.2 The development site and immediate surrounding area are of flat ground, having the Saltlands Community Woodland to the west, trees and grazing pasture to the north, the Wessex Water Recycling Centre to the east and the highway and River Parrett to the south.

2.3 There is a slight rise in the ground level to the north of the site, but only by 1-2 metres.

2.4 The site is surfaced mainly with concrete, with a thin covering of grass and moss and with a small area of grass near the access off the highway. It is well screened, bound by an existing chain-link fence and surrounded by areas of woody scrub and small to medium sized trees. A small electrical substation was retained at the centre of the site from the previous development.

2.5 The site is accessed off a cul-de-sac private access road, owned by SCC, which forms a junction with the A39 Western Way to the south-west of the site. The access road also provides access for vehicular traffic to the Saltlands Household Waste & Recycling Centre (managed by Viridor) and to the Water Recycling Centre (run by Wessex Water), the only other sites off this no-through road.

- 2.6 The site is located outside of the settlement boundary for Bridgwater and within an area designated as Countryside around settlements, protected by Policy D31, from the current Local Plan.

3. Background and Planning History

- 3.1 The application site in itself is the former Somerset Waste Partnership compound and office, for managing the waste to go into the landfill site. The previous building on site was a large industrial building containing pulverising machinery which crushed and transported the material on conveyors onto lorries, to be tipped into the surrounding landfill. There was also an office and comfort area with showers for the staff.
- 3.2 The site has since been vacated, the office and operational buildings (and equipment) removed and the weigh station removed and backfilled.
- 3.3 The permission for the landfill was granted in 1972, with various amendments in 1973 & 1974. There were 2 further applications in 1982 & 1986 regarding the raising of the landfill, a small extension and restoration. The site was part of these applications, however, since being used as the pulverizing site, it was separate from the actual landfill and restored area, and has remained with the pits filled with inert material from where the former machinery & weighbridge had areas below ground level.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 The proposed development is for a new depot to serve staff cars, mini-buses and large coaches used to support transport for children to Somerset schools. Transport is provided at the beginning and end of the official school day from defined pick-up and set down points.
- 4.2 The existing SCC's school transport depot is located at Mount Street in the centre of Bridgwater and is no longer large enough for the Transporting Somerset business, as the fleet has increased in size. A larger site is now required.
- 4.3 Most of the activity on site would occur early in the morning from 06:00 with approximately 22 minibuses/coaches leaving the site between 06:30 and 08:30; the majority departing between 06:30 and 07:30 and almost all vehicles having departed from the site by 08:00. Drivers start to return to the depot from 09:00 onwards with 13 of the vehicles returned by 10:30 and the remainder by late morning. Staff then depart from the site in their own vehicles or on foot and by bike before returning to the depot to repeat the pattern in the afternoon, with drivers turning up from 14:30 and minibuses and coaches departing by 15:00, returning between 16:30 and 17:00, with all drivers back by 18:00.

4.4 The proposed site at Saltlands would accommodate:

- 5 coach parking bays;
- 20 mini-bus parking bays;
- 30 staff car parking bays inside the depot;
- 1 cycle parking shelter for 10 bikes;
- An office unit;
- A vehicle washing bay;
- 2 shipping containers for storage purposes (2.43m x 6.0m x 2.59m height each);
- A charging point for electric vehicles;
- A new 3.0m high single spike top palisade perimeter fence with a green finish and 2no. new 3.0m high 6.0m wide triple spike top gate also with a green finish;
- 20mm Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA) regulating layer, glass grid reinforcement and 50mm SMA wearing course overlaid on the existing concrete surface;
- A renewed drainage system with new channel drains, pipes and gulleys with silt traps.

4.5 Whilst the primary use of the vehicles would be to facilitate school transport contracts, the surplus capacity during the day and school holidays would be used to provide bus trips required for activities organised by Somerset County Council (SCC) internal departments and schools.

4.6 Transporting Somerset will also compete in the open market for off-peak and school holiday work to utilise surplus capacity. The site will operate as a base for their offices, vehicle parking and washing area.

4.7 The existing surfaced access to the site would be revealed and widened to a minimum width of 6m in line with the width of the access road leading to the site.

4.8 The internal access arrangement would take the form of a one-way system in a clockwise direction; and

4.9 Appropriate levels of lighting would be provided given that some vehicular movements would occur during hours of darkness.

5. The Application

5.1 Plans and documents submitted with the application:

- Application Form
- Planning Statement (by Somerset County Council dated July 2020)
- Updated Ecological Assessment and Bat Report (by Somerset Ecologic Services – SES_014_20)
- Tree Survey (by SSE Property & Grounds dated May 2020)
- Planting Plan – Drawing PL-07 – 1:124@A1 – dated 26/03/2020

- Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment – (by SSE Property & Grounds dated 07/05/2020)Travel Plan (by Somerset County Council – December 2019)
- Transport Statement, Report BTC20040/R/01 (by Bellamy Transport Consultancy dated July 2020)
- Site Flood Risk Assessment (by Harcombe Environmental Services Ltd – 01/09/2020)
- Drainage Layout – Drawing PL-08 – 1:125@A1 – dated 26/03/2020
- CCTV Survey of Site Drainage Report – (by S&D Services dated 26/07/2020)
- Pressure Washer Details (by B&G CleaningSystem Ltd – Mac Plantmaster)
- Cycle Shelter Specification Sheet (by Broxap Ltd)
- Email from Applicant on 26th October 2020 – Request to update scheme omitting outside site parking provision.
- Non-Licensed Asbestos Risk Assessment & Method Statement (by S. Roberts & Sons (Bridgwater) Ltd dated 20th February 2020)
- Location Plan -1 – Drawing PL-01 – 1:2500@A1 – dated 26/03/20.
- Location Plan -2 – Drawing PL-02 – 1:1250@A1 – dated 26/03/20.
- Topographical Survey – Drawing PL-05 – 1:125@A1 – dated 26/03/20.
- Proposed Enabling Works- Drawing PL-03 – 1:125@A1 – dated 26/03/20.
- Proposed Enabling Works – Section – Drawing PL-03b – 1:50@A3 – dated 26/03/20
- Welfare Facility – General Arrangement – Drawing 100 rev P01 – dated 25/10/19
- Welfare Facility – Elevations – Drawing 200 rev P01 – dated 25/10/19.
- Proposed Main Layout – Revised – Drawing PL-04c – 1:125@A1- dated October 20.
- Proposed Main Layout – Revised – Drawing PL-04d – 1:125@A1 -dated October 20.
- Transport Note to be added to Report No. BTC20040/R/02, prepared by Bellamy Transport Consultancy Ltd, dated from 26/11/2020;
- Saltlands Transport Depot – Horizontal Illuminance – Design ref.: LS30018/1, scale 1:500@A3, dated 01/12/2020;
- Surface Water and Foul Drainage Strategy produced by Harcombe Environmental Services, dated 21/12/2020.

6. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 6.1. The Town and Country (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 refer to various types of development in Schedules 1 and 2. Development proposals falling within Schedule 1 are regarded as ‘EIA development’ and trigger EIA procedures. For Schedule 2 development, consideration must be given to whether it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment by

virtue of its nature, size or location in deciding whether or not the proposed development should be regarded as EIA development.

- 6.2. A transport depot does not fall within the scope of Schedule 1 of the 2017 EIA Regulations. While paragraph 10 (b) of Schedule 2 includes urban development projects, the area of development does not exceed that listed in that Schedule, and the proposal is not within a sensitive area. The application falls below the indicative criteria and thresholds of more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development. The proposed development is therefore not regarded as 'EIA development' and submission of an Environmental Statement was not required.

7. Consultation Responses Received

External Consultees

- 7.1 **Somerset Wildlife Trust** – No response received.

- 7.2 **Parret Internal Drainage Board - NO OBJECTION.**

The Board initially objected to the proposal considering that the Applicant had not adequately demonstrated that the foul and surface water run-off generated by the site could be adequately drained. However, a Drainage Strategy Report was produced by the applicant in 21/12/2020 in response to the Board's objection. The Board found the additional information acceptable and consequently, was happy to remove its objection.

An informative condition was recommended to be attached to any condition eventually granted:

"Informative: The applicant is advised that, prior to works commencing on site, Land Drainage Consent is required under section 23 and 66 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 from the Parrett Internal Drainage Board for any construction in, or within, 9m of a watercourse and for the introduction of additional flow into a watercourse in the Board's District."

- 7.3 **Environmental Agency** – The Environment Agency has **NO OBJECTIONS** to the development subject to the comments outlined in their letter and the inclusion of the following conditions and informative in any grant of planning consent:

"Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be constructed with the finished floor levels of the office building set at 7.62 metres above ordnance datum.

Reason: To reduce flood risk to the development and future users.

And an **informative condition:**

“This development may require a permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 from the Environment Agency for any proposed works or structures, in, under, over or within 16 metres of the top of the bank of the River Parrett, designated a ‘main river’. This was formerly called a Flood Defence Consent. Some activities are also now excluded or exempt. A permit is separate to and in addition to any planning permission granted. Further details and guidance are available on the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits>. Please contact bridgwater.frap@environment-agency.gov.uk for further information on this process.”

Also, after submission of the report called “Vehicle Mobilisation During a Flood”, prepared by Harcombe Environmental Services Ltd dated 23 November 2020, the EA suggested the use of a compliance condition instead of its previous pre-commencement condition. Therefore, the condition below will be attached to any permission granted:

“On first use of the proposed development it shall operate in accordance with the scheme (information and actions) as submitted in the report by Harcombe Environmental Services Ltd – Vehicle Mobilisation during a flood, 2007-01 Bridgwater Saltlands dated 23 November 2020. The scheme shall thereafter be retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of health and safety and in accordance with Policy D1 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan (2011-2032)”

Prior to the first operational use of the site a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan for the occupants of the site must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Authority Emergency Planners. The approved scheme shall thereafter be retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of health and safety and in accordance with Policy D1 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan (2011-2032)

General guidance was also offered by the EA :

“General guidance local planning authority and applicant:
We do not normally comment on or approve the adequacy of flood emergency response procedures accompanying development proposals, as we do not carry out these roles during a flood. Our involvement with this development during an emergency will be limited to delivering flood warnings to occupants/ users covered by our flood warning network.

The planning practice guidance (PPG) to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that, in determining whether a development is safe, the ability of residents and users to safely access and exit a building during a design flood and to evacuate before an extreme flood needs to be considered.

One of the key considerations to ensure that any new development is safe is whether adequate flood warnings would be available to people using the development.

In all circumstances where warning and emergency response is fundamental to managing flood risk, we advise local planning authorities to formally consider the emergency planning and rescue implications of new development in making their decisions. As such, we recommend you refer to 'Flood risk emergency plans for new development' and undertake appropriate consultation with your emergency planners and the emergency services to determine whether the proposals are safe in accordance with paragraph 163 of the NPPF and the guiding principles of the PPG.

Any washing of vehicles or vehicle wash facilities must be undertaken in an area connected to the foul sewer, with the necessary approval from the relevant sewerage undertaker. If vehicles are refuelled on site then this must be carried out in a designated area positively drained via an interceptor, of a suitable standard, to foul sewer, subject to the consent of the sewerage undertaker.

Safeguards should be implemented during the construction phase to minimise the risks of pollution from the development. Such safeguards should cover:

- the use of plant and machinery
- wheel washing and vehicle wash-down
- oils/chemicals and materials
- the use and routing of heavy plant and vehicles
- the location and form of work and storage areas and compounds
- the control and removal of spoil and wastes.

Note to local planning authority In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 158), development should not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding

It is for the local planning authority to determine if the sequential test has to be applied and whether or not there are other sites available at lower flood risk. Our flood risk standing advice reminds you of this and provides advice on how to apply the test”

7.5 Chilton Parish Council - The Parish Council OBJECTS to the application on the grounds of traffic generation.

On 30th September the parish offered the following comments:

“The vehicle movements to and from the site would pass the recycling centre where the existing road is narrow and vehicles of various sizes are often stationary queuing to gain access to the recycling facilities. At such times it is considered that buses and coaches would experience difficulties in passing. The documents supporting the application show traffic lights where the access road meets the A39 which is incorrect. If traffic lights are envisaged (as part of this application or another programme) these would need to be sequential with the existing lights at the Chilton Street and Wylds Road junctions.

The Parish Council are aware that it is the same road that the Environment Agency intend to use as part of their route to transport construction materials to the west side of the proposed tidal barrier and associated flood defence works. Whilst the volume of traffic generated by this project would be temporary, the proposed transport depot would involve a permanent increase.”

The Highways Team and the Applicant sent additional information clarifying the concerns raised by the Parish, which were forwarded to the Parish on 09th October.

The applicant also acknowledged the error in the Travel Plan (page 5) and rectified that with the following wording: “Saltlands Way is accessed by turning off the A39/Western Way. This junction is close to two sets of traffic lights which partially affect the flow of traffic and access to and from the junction” and informed that an installation of traffic lights is not required as part of the current development scheme.

On 09th November the Parish sent their final response and maintained their objection:

“The proposal was discussed in detail at the Parish Council meeting held on 4th November. The Council considered that the traffic generation issues regarding Western Way including the absence of a filter arrow for traffic turning right into Chilton Road at the main junction have not been satisfactorily addressed accordingly, the objection remains.

The Council also wish to make reference to the planning process for the proposed Bridgwater Tidal Barrier. On 19th December 2019, the Environment Agency made an application under the Transport and Works Act 1992 to the Secretary of State for the Environment for the construction of the Barrier and associated flood prevention works. As part of the pre-application consultation with the Parish Council, the EA agreed to construct a track from Saltlands northwards leading to the

site of the western end of the barrier and beyond. This was with the specific purpose to reduce disturbance to local residents and traffic congestion on narrow bendy country roads. Clearly, the Council would not wish for that access plan to be inhibited in anyway.”

7.5. **Bridgwater Town Council** – No response received.

7.7 **Sedgemoor District Council - NO OBJECTION.**

Initially, the SDC’s Officer objected to the development for the reasons below:

“There are 10 staff parking spaces shown outside of the site adjoining the Public Right of Way network. These would be visually prominent and would result in an adverse impact on the wider policy designation 'Countryside around settlements' and would therefore be contrary to Policy D32 and D19 of the Local Plan. It is suggested that these should be removed from the scheme or as a minimum be subject to a robust landscaping scheme to reduce the visual impact of this degree of parking given the Policy designation of this area.

Given the former use of the site, the application should be supported with a contamination report outlining how the risk of construction has addressed the former use and any measures proposed. No information has been provided in this respect and therefore insufficient information has been provided to ensure that the site is safe in the interests of the future users of the site and in accordance with Policy D24 of the Local Plan.”

However, on 02nd November, the Applicant revised the scheme and the Proposed Main Layout plan (drawing number: PL-04a) was amended. Now it proposes the provision of 30no. car parking bays all positioned within the depot. Information regarding asbestos removal from the site was also provided on this opportunity.

Based on refereed additional information, the District Officer was satisfied that the previous objections raised have been met. It was suggested the inclusion of conditions about:

- A landscape scheme to ensure appropriate planting/screening to the front of the site and to the office unit; and
- A Site remediation to ensure that all the contamination risk from the site is appropriate addressed prior to the commencement of development.

Both conditions were included in section 9 at the end of this report.

7.8 **South West Heritage - NO OBJECTION** on archaeological grounds.

7.9 **Wessex Water - NO OBJECTION.**

The advice below was provided for the applicant:

“Applying for new drainage and water supply connections

If your proposals require new connections to the public water mains, notes and application forms can be found here:

(<https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/services/building-and-developing/connecting-to-a-network>).

The use of a package treatment plant is subject to EA and building control approval.

Are existing public sewers or water mains affected by the proposals?

According to our records there is an existing 4 inch public water main and 500mm public rising main crossing the site entrance. Whilst according to the submitted plans there are no buildings or structures within close proximity to these assets, the ground levels must not be altered without agreement with Wessex Water. Protection measures must also be agreed during construction as appropriate. Any damage to our apparatus by third parties will be subject to significant financial penalty.

Will the day to day operations of Wessex Water affect the proposals?

Water Recycling Centre proximity

The proposed site is between Chilton Trinity Sewage Treatment Works and Saltlands Waste Disposal Centre. Users of the school transport depot are likely to detect odours and possible fly nuisance. As this is not a residential site or employment use attracting 9-5 office workers we have no objection to the proposal in relation to this issue. The applicant will be aware of the reduction in amenity and take appropriate measures on-site to lessen the impact for employees.

The shared access route to the WRC

Wessex Water enjoys a right of way access route to the Chilton Trinity sewage treatment works. This site is frequently visited by operational vehicles, including tankers, to enable Wessex Water to carry out its statutory duties as sewage undertaker for the Bridgwater area.

The site includes an office and approximately 50 employees are based at the sewage treatment works.

We note the visibility splay on drawing "Proposed Main Layout" PL-04b. Future grounds maintenance must include regular cut back of vegetation in this area by the occupier to ensure that visibility is not compromised.

We currently contribute to the maintenance of the access track to the WRC and due to the additional traffic we would seek for this to be adjusted if planning permission is approved.”

Internal Consultees

7.8 **Ecologic Services - NO OBJECTION** pending adoption of conditions as comments below.

“To inform the proposed works Somerset Ecology services undertook an ecological assessment and a series of bat activity and one bat roost survey at Saltlands Depot, Saltlands, Western Way, Bridgwater, TA6 3JG between May – September 2020. The results of the survey were as follows:

- **Sites:** The site is not located within, or adjacent to any statutory and non-statutory designated sites of conservation importance, however the undesignated Saltlands Community Woodland, comprised of a block of broadleaved plantation woodland, adjoins the western boundary of the site.
- **Habitats:** The site is primarily comprised of concrete hardstanding, with small areas of tall ruderal herbs, spoil, scrub and earth bank and two sections of grassland. The northern section of the sites and the immediate boundary contain broadleaved trees.
- **Badgers:** There was no evidence of badger activity in the form of setts, runs, droppings, latrines and snuffle holes, however, badgers are likely to commute across the site.
- **Bat roosts:** Two-poplar trees containing woodpecker holes were initially assessed as having moderate roost potential. However, on further, detailed, inspection and following one emergence survey, which resulted in no recorded bat activity within or around the trees, along with the presence of moderate levels of light falling on the trees in question from the neighbouring Wessex Water security lighting and lighting from the Industrial units to the south of the site, the two poplar trees were reassessed to have low roost potential to support bats.
- **Bat activity:** Following 3 bat activity surveys the site was found to be used by moderate numbers of common pipistrelle, and recorded an absence of a significant (i.e. moderate to high) population of light sensitive species other than small numbers of Barbastelle, Bechstien’s and brown long-eared commuting through the site.
- **Birds:** Along with the two great spotted woodpecker holes located along with eastern boundary, the trees and areas of scrub within the site and around the boundaries, and areas of dense tall ruderal herbs have the potential to support nesting birds.

- **Reptiles and amphibians:** The site lacks any water features, therefore any amphibians on site are limited to the terrestrial habitat primarily consisting of scrub and tall ruderal herbs. The site provides suitable habitat for slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), viviparous lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), however no evidence, such as live or dead animals and sloughed skins, of the species was observed on site.

Recommendations

To comply with local and national policy, wildlife legislation, and the requirements of the mitigation hierarchy and for biodiversity net gain, please attach the following conditions and informative to the planning permission if granted.

Bats and lighting

Only small levels of bats sensitive to lighting have been recorded to date, therefore indicating the site is not used as an important foraging area, commuting route between roost sites and foraging areas, or contains a significant roost within the near vicinity. Furthermore, due to the use associated with the site, the depot will only be operational for buses returning from the after school pick up by late afternoon into early evening, and will likely leave the depot for the morning pick up no earlier 07:00. Therefore lighting will only be required during the winter months for a short period of time.

A lighting plan has been produced initially by Abacus Lighting Engineers (Appendix D) and the contours indicate light levels of between 2-5 Lux within and beyond the site boundaries. However, the lighting plot was revised on 01/12/2020 (Design LS30018/1) showing the dimmed levels.

SCC Ecology Advisor reviewed the final lighting plan and is satisfied. A lighting condition is not required.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Badgers

Although no evidence of badgers was recorded, the species is known to active in close proximity to the site, therefore as a precaution please attach the following informative:

- The developers are reminded of the legal protection afforded to badgers and their resting places under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended). It is advised that during construction, excavations or large pipes (>200mm diameter) must be covered at night. Any open excavations will need a means of escape, for example a plank or sloped end, to allow any animals to escape. In the event that badgers or signs of badgers are unexpectedly encountered during

implementation of this permission, it is recommended that works stop until advice is sought from a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

Birds

Please attach the following as a condition:

- No removal of trees, scrub, tall ruderal herbs and climbing plants shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provides written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the ecologist. In no circumstances should netting be used to exclude nesting birds.

Reason: In the interests of nesting wild birds and in accordance with Sedgemoor District Council Local Plan: Policy D20 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Reptiles and amphibians

Please attach the following condition to ensure the protection of reptile and amphibians:

- Any vegetation in the construction area should initially be reduced to a height of 10 centimetres above ground level by hand, brushings and cuttings removed and the remainder left for a minimum period of 48 hours of fine warm weather (limited rain and wind, with temperatures of 10°C or above) before clearing to minimise the risk of harming/killing any reptiles that may be present and to encourage their movement onto adjoining land. This work may only be undertaken during the period between March and October. Once cut vegetation should be maintained at a height of less than 10cm for the duration of the construction period. In the unlikely event that reptiles are encountered works must cease until reptiles have dispersed to adjacent areas of suitable habitat outside of the operational area. If reptiles do not disperse when exposed or remain within operational areas, construction personnel must seek further advice from an ecological specialist. A letter confirming these operations and any findings will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the site agent.

Reason: In the interests of UK protected and priority species and in accordance with Sedgemoor District Council Local Plan: Policy D20 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Biodiversity Enhancement (Net Gain)

As an enhancement measure, and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), please apply the following conditions to any planning permission granted.

- The following will be integrated into the design of the buildings and site plans:

- a. Installation of 4 X standard bird boxes and 2 open fronted nest boxes, purchased or built, on to mature trees on site, facing east or north, at a height above 3m.

- b. Reptile refuge habitat comprised of a pile of branches and brash, as a habitat pile, will be placed on the retained grassland along the south-eastern boundary of the site.

- c. The grassland blocks around the southern boundary and within the retained traffic island are to be managed as wildflower grassland. Planting and management prescriptions are to following Section 4.5 of the Bridgwater Saltlands: Updated Ecological Assessment and Bat Report (Somerset Ecology Services, 2020).

Photographs of the installed features will be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within the development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework

7.9 **SCC Acoustics Advisor – NO OBJECTION.**

“The application site is shown below and will house 20 minibuses and 5 coaches and is a relocation of a similar site from within Bridgwater. The operation of the site will result in minor noise impacts from these vehicles when performing journeys to provide local school transport.

The location of this depot is remote with respect to nearest housing, at 290m to the west, and with commercial development at 130m to the south. The site is located next to a waste water treatment depot that is not thought to be noise sensitive. I consider the most significant change in noise brought about by this development, to be encountered at the block of 4 storey housing 39m from the emerging road junction and the A39 Western Way.

Greatest noise impact from this development is likely to arise during the morning departures of vehicles that will arise between 06:30-08:30 during term times. While the Transport Statement does not provide traffic count information for Western Way, I think it likely that the significance of these limited movements (~25) in comparison to the expected weekday commuter and commercial traffic movements on the Western Way, would be minimal and not significant to planning.”

7.10 Flood Management Team – on receipt of amended plans and further information the LLFA have suggested conditions and informatives as below:

Please see our suggested conditions below:

- 1) No development shall be commenced until details of the sustainable surface water drainage scheme for the site, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall include measures to prevent the control and attenuate surface water and pollution and once approved the scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and maintained at all times thereafter unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development is properly drained in accordance with the NPPF.

- 2) No development approved by this permission shall be occupied or brought into use until a plan for the future responsibility and maintenance of the surface water drainage system has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved drainage works shall be completed and maintained in accordance with the details agreed.

Reason: To safeguard the long-term maintenance and operation of the proposed system to ensure development is properly drained in accordance with the NPPF.

We would welcome the following informatives / notes to be provided outlining the information the LLFA will expect to see in order to discharge the above conditions:

- Details for provision of any temporary drainage during construction. This should include details to demonstrate that during the construction phase measures will be in place to prevent unrestricted discharge, and pollution to the receiving system
- Information about the design storm period and intensity, discharge rates and volumes (both pre and post development), temporary storage facilities, means of access for maintenance (6 metres minimum), the methods employed to delay and control surface water discharged from the site, and the measures taken to prevent flooding and pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface waters. This should provide a plan of site levels post construction and locate of areas where surface water will be stored, depth, volumes and estimated length of time that the water will be present. This should clearly demonstrate that levels will allow surface water to be retained without flowing offsite

- If pumped systems are proposed, justification for the use of these systems, summary of key design principles and assessment of residual risk, with supporting calculations
- Any works required off and on site to ensure adequate discharge of surface water without causing flooding or pollution (which should include refurbishment of pumped systems and drainage infrastructure where relevant).
- Flood water exceedance routes both on and off site, flooding during storm events in excess of the 1 in 100yr (plus 40% allowance for climate change) must be controlled within the designed exceedance routes demonstrated to prevent flooding or damage to properties.
- A management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development.
- Pollution control measures considered due to surface water being retained within the topography. This may accumulate pollutants on the site, pollutants may wash off the site rather being directed through the pollution control measures, and there should also be consideration of the impact of such pollution on human health
- Details to ensure that the applicant/owner of the site understands the risk associated with this method of managing surface water in terms of operation procedures and health and safety.

7.11 Rights of Way Team- NO OBJECTION.

Rights of Way Team has NO OBJECTIONS to the proposal, subject to the inclusion of an informative note on any permission granted.

Rights of Way Team has not visited the site but has advised that there exists a public right of way (PROW) recorded on the Definitive Map that runs at the present time through the site application (public footpath BW 38/3) and a PROW that runs adjacent to the site (public footpath BW 10/12). The River Parrett Trail and England Coast Path also run through the site. A plan was sent for information.

The proposal, as originally submitted, would obstruct the footpath **BW 38/3** due to the allocation of staff parking outside the depot. Considering that, ROW Teams stated that the proposal either needed to be revised to prevent any obstruction or a diversion order applied for.

However, the scheme was revised on 02nd November 2020 and the Applicant removed the parking spaces initially proposed outside the depot. Therefore, no obstruction to the path BW 38/3 will happen and a diversion will not be required.

The informative note recommended was:

“Development, insofar as it affects a right of way should not be started, and the right of way should be kept open for public use until the necessary (diversion/stopping up) Order has come into effect. Failure

to comply with this request may result in the developer being prosecuted if the path is built on or otherwise interfered with.”

For full access to the PROW response, please visit the Somerset County Council website.

7.12 Highways – NO OBJECTION.

“After carrying out a site visit on 25th September 2020 we have the following observations on the highway and transportation aspects of this proposal:

Having regard to the Transport Statement prepared by Bellamy Transport consultancy which accompanies the application it is self-evident that prior to the submission of this application pre application advice was sought from the Highway Authority to ensure that the proposed development provided a safe and suitable means of access, whilst at the same time being in accordance with any relevant local or national Planning Policies.

After considering the Transport Statement in detail, it is clear that the proposal will not create or intensify any existing highway issues on the surrounding highway network as the vast majority of the vehicles associated with the development are already on the network and that the change in location will have the benefit of reducing vehicle movements from the current Mount Street Depot to a purpose built site with suitable access arrangements.

As such the **Highway Authority does not raise any highway objection** to the application subject to the following conditions being attached to any consent:-

- The proposed development shall be served by a new access constructed in accordance with submitted drawing BTC20040/P01/P2.
- The areas allocated for parking and turning on the submitted layout plan shall be kept clear of obstruction at all times and shall not be used other than for parking and turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.
- At the proposed access there shall be no obstruction to visibility greater than 900mm above adjoining road level within the visibility splays shown on the submitted plan. (Drawing No BTC20040/P01/P2) Such visibility splays shall be constructed prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.
- All the recommendations of the Approved Travel Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the timetable therein. Thereafter the development shall operate the Approved Travel Plan or any variation of the Travel Plan agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (in consultation with Somerset County Council). The plan shall include construction vehicle movements, construction operation hours, construction vehicular routes to and from the site, construction delivery hours, expected number of construction vehicles per day, car parking for contractors, specific measures to be adopted to mitigate construction impacts in pursuance of the Environmental Code of Construction Practice and a scheme to encourage the use of public transport amongst contractors. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan.”

Besides, on 08 October 2020, the Highways Team offered the following comments regarding the Chilton Trinity Parish comments:

“As regards the Parish Councils comments I would state that the approach road in its present form is capable of accommodating two-way traffic, albeit as a private road for the majority of its length (see attached highway record plan) as confirmed in section 6 of the accompanying Transport Statement

“6.0 Approach Road Network

Private access road

6.1 The access road from Western Way is of a very good standard. The first section as far as the entrance to the household waste & recycling centre appears to have been designed and constructed to adoptable standards being a minimum width of 6m. It provides two exiting lanes on the approach to Western Way for a distance of just over 60m.

6.2 Further along the access road towards the application site the minimum 6m width is maintained and there is an advisory 5mph limit in place. There are speed bumps along the frontage and the waste & recycling centre to encourage slower speeds - see Photo 5. There is also a no loading restriction along the access road between 08:00-09:30 and 16:00-18:00 - see Photo 6.”

Having regard to the PC’s comments on possible congestion, it’s clear that the majority of PSV vehicle movements associated with this development will be either before or after the household waste recycling centre opens or closes as outlined in paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5 of the Transport Statement, and therefore the chance of any conflicts or congestion occurring is minimal.

“5.4 Most of the activity on site occurs early in the morning from 06:00 with approximately 22 minibuses/coaches leaving the site between 06:30 and 08:30; the majority departing between 06:30 and

07:30 and almost all vehicles having departed from the site by 08:00. Drivers start to return to the depot from 09:00 onwards with 13 of the vehicles returned by 10:30 and the remainder by late morning. Staff then depart from the site in their own vehicles or on foot and by bike before returning to the depot to repeat the pattern in the afternoon, with drivers turning up from 14:30 and minibuses and coaches departing by 15:00, returning between 16:30 and 17:00, with all drivers back by 18:00.

5.5 It is evident, therefore, that there is very little impact on the road system between the normal transport network peak hours of 08:00-09:00 in the morning and 17:00-18:00 in the afternoon.”

Finally, with regard to the comment about traffic signals, I believe this relates to a paragraph in the accompanying Travel Plan that states incorrectly “Saltlands Way is accessed by turning off the A39/Western Way. This junction is controlled by traffic lights. A39 takes you quickly to the M5 and from there to other destinations including Bristol.” this is clearly not the case and no traffic signals are being proposed at the junction of Saltlands with the A39 / Western Way as part of this application, as the present arrangement, with a right turn lane facility is considered by the Highway Authority to be appropriate in all respects to cater for the traffic associated with this application.”

7.13 Transport Development Group – The Principal Travel Plan Officer confirmed on 24th November 2020 that a Measures-only Travel Statement for the development was audited and approved in April 2020 whilst in pre-application stage. The Travel Plan Officer was happy to accept the approved Measures-only Travel Statement.

Public Consultation

Saltlands Household Waste & Recycling Centre (managed by Viridor) and the Water Recycling Centre (run by Wessex Water) were specifically consulted as the only neighbours possibly affected by the development.

No response was received from Viridor.

Wessex Water has **NO OBJECTIONS** to this application, as explained in the previous section.

8. Comments of the Service Manager – Planning and Development

8.1 The key issues for Members to consider are:

- Planning policy considerations and Principle of Development

- Visual Impact
- Impact on surrounding residents/uses
- Contamination
- Highway Safety and associated impacts
- Flood Risk

The Development Plan

- 8.2 Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the development plan consists of the following documents, with their policies of relevance to this proposal being listed in Section 10 of this report:
- Sedgemoor Local Plan (2011-2032)

Material Considerations

- 8.3 Other material considerations to be given due weight in the determination of the application include the following:
- National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)
 - Planning Practice Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

- 8.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 8.5 Paragraph 11 states that a proposal should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Alongside this, the framework includes an overarching 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' which means 'approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay'. In the absence of relevant plan policies or the most relevant policies are out-of-date, the presumption allows for refusing planning permission where the application of policies in the NPPF (2019) that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusal or any adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 8.6 Paragraph 12 goes on to state 'The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.'

- 8.7 Chapter 4 (Decision making) of the framework sets out the approach that should be taken to decisions. Paragraph 38 states ‘local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible’.
- 8.8 Chapter 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy) of the framework supports sustainable economic growth. Paragraph 80 states that planning decisions ‘should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.’ Paragraphs 83 and 84 set out the Framework’s approach to supporting the rural economy.

Planning Policy Considerations

Sedgemoor District Local Plan (2019) is the relevant local plan for this proposal.

Policy context and principle of development

- 8.9 The NPPF (2019) includes an overarching ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. Paragraph 11 states that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:
- “c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
 - d) where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”
- 8.10 It is therefore important that the development proposed is demonstrated to be sustainable at its core. This is translated into the adopted Sedgemoor District Local Plan (SDLP) (2019) through Policy S1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) which states that Sedgemoor District Authority will take a positive approach to development that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF (2019), securing

developments that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

- 8.11 The present development proposes to bring back to use, previously developed land now vacant and unused, which benefits from existing services and access.
- 8.12 Policy CO3 (Brownfield sites in the countryside) supports proposals to re-use or remodelling of existing brownfield sites for employment uses where it remains of an appropriate scale and character and does not result in significant adverse impact.
- 8.13 In this case, the expression “previous development land” must satisfy the definition set out on the NPPF.
- 8.14 The NPPF 2019 defines ‘previously developed land’ as a land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes, among others: land that has been developed for waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures.
- 8.15 The application site was formerly the Somerset Waste partnership compound and office for managing the waste to go into the landfill site. The previous building on site was a large industrial building containing the pulverising machinery which crushed and transported the material on conveyors into lorries, to be tipped into the surrounding landfill.
- 8.16 The site was built before the landfill was formed and as it was being used as the pulverising site, it was separated from the actual landfill and was not part of the restored area. Consequently, the definition of brownfield land on the NPPF was met.
- 8.17 Also, Policy S2 (Spatial strategy for Sedgemoor) outlines that consideration will be given to the appropriate expansion and remodelling of existing businesses and the appropriate use of brownfield sites in the countryside.
- 8.18 Developments will be supported where it accords with relevant policies in the Local Plan which provide for sustainable and appropriate scales of development in the countryside.
- 8.19 Considering the above, the present development accords with the applicable policies contained in the Local Plan, as will be demonstrated on this report and it is considered acceptable in principle.

Need, economic impacts and benefits

- 8.20 Paragraph 80 of NPPF (2019) states that decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, including both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 8.21 Transporting Somerset provides home-to-school transport on behalf of the Children and Young Peoples Directorate of Somerset County Council
- 8.22 A key decision from cabinet members in Somerset County Council recommended the leasing and operation of a fleet of large passenger carrying vehicles within the Council's Transporting Somerset fleet operations team. The primary use for these vehicles would be to provide home to school transport in fulfilment of the Council's statutory duty under the 1985 Education Act. However, whilst the primary use of these vehicles will be to facilitate school transport contracts, the surplus capacity during the day and school holidays will be used to provide large bus trips required for activities organised by SCC internal departments and schools. Transporting Somerset will also compete in the open market for off peak and school holiday work to utilise surplus capacity.
- 8.23 Somerset Transport is a key function within the County Council required to support its services to schools and it is important that this is maintained.
- 8.24 Considering the fleet has increased in size, there is a need for a larger site. The proposed site in the Saltlands area is a previously developed land, empty and currently unoccupied, which has the capacity to provide a larger site for Somerset's school and other transports needs, therefore supported by Policy CO3 (Brownfield sites in the countryside) of the SDLP (2019).
- 8.25 The Applicant has plans to use vehicles of a higher environmental standard than vehicles currently utilised to provide school transport, thereby contributing to reduce the negative effects on climate change.
- 8.26 The existing school transport depot is currently located at Mount Street in the centre of Bridgwater. Mount Street is a busy road within the town which can experience long delays at peak times. The entry to the Mount Street site is also difficult to navigate in a large bus, as turning into the site when arriving from the east requires long vehicles to cross the opposite lane near a bend in the road.
- 8.27 The relocation of the transport depot to the proposed site would lead to a reduction in local congestion in the centre of Bridgwater, resulting in environmental and traffic improvements; and environmental improvements to the proposed site which is currently derelict.
- 8.28 The proposed site is also located in an extremely sustainable location in transport terms with a very good standard of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the vicinity of the development site, enabling employees of the proposed scheme to travel to/from the site on foot. Cycling would also represent a safe and sustainable alternative to walking. Regular bus services travel along Western Way within a comfortable walking distance of the site, and the railway station is located within a reasonable walking and comfortable

cycle distance. Consequently, the proposal would represent a sustainable form of development in transport terms and accordingly, in reference to the NPPF, a presumption in favour of the scheme should apply. It is also supported by Policy S4: (Sustainable development principles) of the SDLP (2019).

Location of the proposed development

- 8.29 Saltlands (0.3ha) is within Sedgemoor District Council area and Chilton Trinity Parish. It is west of the River Parrett and the A38 (Bristol Road) and accessed from the A39 (Western Way) onto Standish Street, a dead end.
- 8.30 The site adjoins a sewage treatment works on the edge of an urban area. There are no residential properties in proximity to the site. It is surrounded by grassland returned, as a result of the restoration of the former adjoining landfill site to public recreational outdoor space, to its west; sewage treatment plant to its east; and Recycling centre to its south-west.
- 8.31 The land rises on its western, northern and eastern sides which, together with the site's boundary trees, limits views into the site. Policy D31 of the SDLP (2019) indicates that the site lies in "countryside outside settlement" land. These are predominantly open areas, outside settlement boundaries, which retain a largely rural character and appearance. Development which does not have a detrimental effect on the landscape, countryside access, amenity, or nature conservation functions of these areas will be supported
- 8.32 Policy D31 supports development that does not have a detrimental effect on the landscape, countryside access, amenity, or nature conservation functions of these areas. The site also adjoins both the River Parrett and land to the south-west that is identified as informal open space which is safeguarded by Policy D33.
- 8.33 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted in support of this application confirms that there would be limited impact on the character of the wider area and additional planting is proposed to the frontage.
- 8.34 Concerns were raised in pre-application advice in terms of the layout, potential visual impact and transport generation from the current proposal. Based on the layout provided the site appears densely developed with a high level of parking. The application has been reduced in terms of all parking spaces and now has a comfortable layout and circulation space. The office unit located to the front of the site is a single storey in form and appears as a converted shipping container. Whilst this has limited merit there is also limited harm as part of this element.
- 8.35 There were 10 staff parking spaces shown outside of the site adjoining the PROW network, that would be visually prominent and would result in an adverse impact on the wider policy designation. However, these were removed from the scheme to reduce the visual impact and an improved landscape scheme is also been conditioned given the Policy designation of this area as 'Countryside around settlements'.

- 8.36 The site was also assessed in accordance with Policy D24 (Protecting public health, safety and amenity) of the SDLP (2019), which outlines potentially unacceptable impacts that could arise from the proposed development. Given the former use of the site and its location in the vicinity of existing sources of pollution, a pre-commencement condition is proposed for the submission and approval of a contamination report outlining how the risk of construction has addressed the former use and any measures proposed. Whilst it is proposed to have limited excavation further information is required to ensure the safe interests of the future users of the site.

Highway Safety and associated environmental impacts of traffic

- 8.37 The proposal is supported by Policy D13 (Sustainable transport and movement) which seeks to reduce congestion and encourage an improved and integrated transport network. The development scheme would support the Somerset Future Transport Plan and be compatible with the existing transport infrastructure.
- 8.38 The existing school transport depot serving the schools is located in Mount Street in the centre of Bridgwater. Mount Street is a busy road within the town which can experience long delays at peak times. The removal of the large Transporting Somerset buses from the area would assist in alleviating this problem. The entry to the Mount Street site is also difficult to navigate in a large bus, as turning into the site when arriving from the east requires long vehicles to cross the opposite lane near a 'blind' bend in the road.
- 8.39 A larger site is now required for the Transporting Somerset business as the fleet has increased in size. The new site at Saltlands would accommodate the following:
- 5no. x coach parking bays
 - 20no. x mini-bus parking bays
 - 30no. x staff car parking bays all inside the depot
 - A cycle parking shelter for 10no. bikes
 - 1 motorcycle parking bay
 - An office unit
 - A vehicle washing bay
 - 2no. x shipping containers for storage purposes
 - A charging point for electric vehicles
- 8.40 While the proposed depot at Saltlands would be larger than the Mount Street premises, it is important to note that this scheme effectively represents a relocation of an existing depot and therefore the vehicle movements associated with the depot are already present on the transport network.
- 8.41 The proposed access to the site, Saltlands Way, is an unadopted road owned by Somerset County Council and is of a very good standard. The first section as far as the entrance to the household waste & recycling centre appears to have been designed and constructed to adoptable standards being a

minimum width of 6m. It provides two exiting lanes on the approach to Western Way for a distance of just over 60m.

- 8.42 Further along, the access road towards the application site the minimum 6m width is maintained and there is an advisory 5mph limit in place. There are speed bumps along the frontage and the waste & recycling centre to encourage slower speeds. There is also a no loading restriction along the access road between 08:00-09:30 and 16:00-18:00.
- 8.43 The road is a dead-end and there are no sites past the recycling centre open to the public. Traffic levels along the road are therefore low.
- 8.44 Most of the activity on site occurs early in the morning from 06:00 with approximately 22 minibuses/coaches leaving the site between 06:30 and 08:30; the majority departing between 06:30 and 07:30 and almost all vehicles having departed from the site by 08:00. Drivers start to return to the depot from 09:00 onwards with 13 of the vehicles returned by 10:30 and the remainder by late morning. Staff then depart from the site in their own vehicles or on foot and by bike before returning to the depot to repeat the pattern in the afternoon, with drivers turning up from 14:30 and minibuses and coaches departing by 15:00, returning between 16:30 and 17:00, with all drivers back by 18:00.
- 8.45 It is evident, therefore, that there is very little impact on the road system between the normal transport network peak hours of 08:00-09:00 in the morning and 17:00-18:00 in the afternoon. Also, the majority of PSV vehicle movements associated with this development will be either before or after the household waste recycling centre opens or closes.
- 8.46 Prior to the submission of this application, pre application advice was sought from the Highway Authority to ensure that the proposed development provided a safe and suitable means of access, whilst at the same time being in accordance with any relevant local or national Planning Policies.
- 8.47 In accordance with Policy D14 (Managing the Transport Impacts of Development) this planning application has been supported by a Transport Statement. Early engagement has taken place with the local highway authority. A Travel Plan has also been submitted and approved by SCC's Transport Development Group in April 2020 whilst in pre-application stage. The development scheme would provide safe access from and to the local highway network.
- 8.48 The predicted level of traffic generated by the scheme would not compromise the safety and/or function of the local highway network in respect of the volume and type of traffic generated. The proposed parking provision has been influenced by the number and type of school transport vehicles that need to be parked at the depot and by the number of vehicles used by drivers and staff travelling to and from the existing premises in Mount Street.
- 8.49 The Transport Statement (TS) submitted shows that:
- The site is located in a highly sustainable position in terms of transport, such that the site is safely accessible on foot, by bicycle and by public transport. The existing rights of way network can be used to access the

site on foot. There is a network of cycleways on Western Way and the first section of the access road, and for the remainder of the access road Manual for Streets states that cyclists should generally be accommodated on the carriageway. The use of public transport is also an option with bus services being located within a comfortable walking distance of the site and the railway station being within a reasonable walking and cycling distance.

- The proposal, therefore, represents a sustainable form of development and accordingly, a presumption in favour of the scheme should apply.
- .In terms of the operational hours please see 7.12 above.
- The approach roads to the application site are considered acceptable to accommodate the low level and type of traffic that would be generated by the development proposal.
- The collision record indicates that the approach roads and the existing site access arrangement already provide safe and suitable access for all users. The extent of visibility splays at the entrance would accord with the national standards and the entrance would be widened to ease entry and exit.
- The proposed parking provision would meet the needs of the development scheme.
- All vehicles would be able to turn within the site using the proposed one-way system.

8.50 Therefore, in light of the evidence and arguments presented within this report, and in all information submitted within this application, there is no technical reason to support the Parish Council's objection on traffic grounds. There are no significant transportation, highway safety or access matters that should prevent the local planning authority from approving this application.

Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Proposal and Associated Flood Defence Works

- 8.51 The Chilton Parish Council's objection mentions an application made by the Environmental Agency under the Transport and Works Act 1992 to the Secretary of State for the construction of the Barrier and associated flood prevention works in Bridgwater.
- 8.52 The Parish informed that the access road to the Saltlands Transport Depot development is the same road that the Environment Agency intend to use as part of their route to transport construction materials to the west side of the proposed tidal barrier and associated flood defence works. Whilst the volume of traffic generated by this project would be temporary, the proposed transport depot would involve a permanent increase.
- 8.53 Based on the Parish's Council information, as part of the pre-application consultation with the Parish, the EA agreed to construct a track from Saltlands northwards leading to the site of the western end of the barrier and beyond. This was with the specific purpose to reduce disturbance to local residents

and traffic congestion on narrow bendy country roads and the Council would not wish for that access plan to be inhibited in anyway

- 8.54 Worthy highlight that the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier scheme has not yet been approved . At the point of this discussion, it was still near the completion for exchange of written representations by the end of November 2020. However, the development was considered in this report as far as it comes to the Parish's concerns.
- 8.55 From the Applicant side, it was confirmed that the transport depot development will not impede or obstruct the EA's plans in any way. The EA's proposed access road will actually help visibility turning right to some extent for vehicles coming from the depot as the Environmental Agency would need to remove tree and vegetation to install the trackway. All SCC's drivers will be briefed and fully aware of the possibility of traffic joining from the right as they exit the depot.
- 8.56 Sedgemoor District Council was consulted about the Parish Council's concerns on the barrier joint infrastructure project. On 13 November 2020 they informed that the construction of the mentioned access route to the barrier is identified as permanent works with the intention that post construction this will both provide future access for maintenance and form part of the improved walking and cycling network.
- 8.57 It was also mentioned that the temporary construction movements will potentially be significant but in terms of operational movements, these will be minimal, especially given that the main operational buildings and stores are at Express Park and there will be a maintenance/access bridge at the barrier site (that will also provide pedestrian and cycle access on a permissive basis).
- 8.58 From the point of view of the Parish Council concerns, Sedgemoor understands that this is in relation to development that might potentially result in additional traffic going through the village and anything that causes further queueing on the junction to Chilton Trinity given that it already is extremely difficult to turn right at peak times. However, barrier related traffic movements are fundamentally temporary and in order to reduce impact on the wider network at the peak, he believes there will be conditions around hours of work. The construction programme is currently being worked on but works are likely to commence in 2022 and continue until the end of 2025.
- 8.59 Considering all above, there is no evidence that the Transport Depot development would have negative implications on the Tidal Barrier scheme, in case it is approved in the future and, therefore, the Parish's Council concerns were not considered relevant to this case.

Landscape, Rights of Way, Nature Conservation and Ecology

- 8.60 Policy D19 (Landscape) of the SDLP (2019) seeks to ensure that proposals enhance the local landscape quality wherever possible or that there is no significant adverse impact on local landscape character.

- 8.61 The site adjoins the River Parrett Trail, a public right of way, and whilst this is already impacted by the existing vehicular access to the site the visual impact of the proposal on this should be as minimal as possible and enhanced where practicable by landscaping.
- 8.62 The impact of the proposed development from any other vantage points was considered in a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment report, SSE Property & Grounds dated from 07 May 2020.
- 8.63 The report demonstrated that development is likely to have a very minimal impact on the landscape and visual aspects of the surrounding area. The existing depot which is to be used is very well screened by vegetation cover and topography. The proposed use is in keeping with other landscape types within the locality and the landscape can accommodate a minor change such as this with minimal detrimental effect.
- 8.64 The development has a comfortable layout and circulation space. The office unit located to the front of the site is a single storey in form and appears as a converted shipping container. Whilst this has limited merit there is also limited harm as part of this element.
- 8.65 Although the impact is low, the report states that there is scope to include some improvement within the scheme to further reinforce the screening and enhance the landscape character. To the front of the site is a small bank which can accommodate some new tree and hedge planting and this would be in keeping with the proposed use and previous mitigation examples locally (such as tree planting to the front boundary of the neighbouring waste recycling centre). Planting should include native species.
- 8.66 Landscaping details were submitted on the Planting Plan (PL-07) dated 26 March 2020, which can be improved to secure better screening of the site and office unit. For that, a condition was recommended in case of granted permission.
- 8.67 Policy D20 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the SDLP (2019) seeks to ensure that development proposals should contribute to maintaining and where appropriate enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, considering climate change and the need for habitats and species to adapt to it. Somerset Ecology Services undertook an ecological assessment and a series of bat activity and one bat roost survey between May – September 2020. All the Ecology Advisor's recommendations were accepted and included as conditions. Consideration was also given to biodiversity enhancements.
- 8.68 Policy D22 (Trees and woodland) of the SDLP (2019) seeks to ensure avoidance or minimum impact to the loss or damage to trees, woodland and hedgerow. A Tree Survey by SSE Property & Grounds dated 19 May 2020 was submitted and a planting schedule was proposed on the Planting Plan (PL-07) dated 26 March 2020. Policy D30 (Green Infrastructure requirements in new developments) of the SDLP (2019) was met considering that the green infrastructure proposed is of an appropriate type, size and standard and makes provision for future maintenance. Also, considering Policy D33 (Protection of Existing Public Recreational Outdoor Space), the site is adjacent to an area of existing public recreational outdoor space which is

predominantly woodland with walks through it, but there is a significant buffer of trees between the site boundary and the outdoor space to the West, so the development will not have a negative impact on that area.

- 8.69 Somerset County Council's Rights of Way team was consulted on this application and has clarified what public safety precautions are necessary for the Right of Way prior to commencement and during the construction period and on the operation of the site as a bus depot. All their recommendation were included as informative conditions at the end of this report.

Hydrology/Hydrogeology and Flood Risk

- 8.70 Policy D1 (Flood risk and surface water management) of the SDLP (2019) relates to applying the Sequential Test, Exception Test to sources of flooding. The proposed development is directly adjacent to land safeguarded for the Environment Agency to deliver the Bridgwater Tidal Defence Scheme (Policy B15 of the SDLP (2019)).
- 8.71 The Sequential Test is required, as the proposal is for a transport depot development in an area of defended Flood Zone 3. A Site Flood Risk Assessment produced by Harcombe Environmental Services Ltd and dated 01 September 2020 was submitted. A search was conducted for suitably alternative sites in a radius of 10miles of Bridgwater. In this search 7no. potential sites were identified but discounted as being in areas of no lesser Flood Risk and with other planning issues.
- 8.72 Whilst the search area should be for the whole of the district, the officer is satisfied that based on the requirement for this site to be in proximity to main transport links and given there is no increase in flood vulnerability in terms of use the development has satisfied Policy D1.
- 8.73 An Exceptions Test was not required, but the principles of that test have been followed where practicable. The proposal is on an area redundant (Brownfield Land), surfacing will not change significantly, the office building will use sustainable materials, the development has been shown to be safe for occupants to evacuate during the early stages of an extreme flood event and to result in no impact on neighbouring properties.
- 8.74 A Drainage Strategy has been produced by Harcombe Environmental Services (HES) Ltd on 21 December 2020 to support the production of the surfacewater and foul drainage design in response to the Somerset Drainage Board's and the Lead Local Flood Authority's objections. The Lead Local Flood Authority are now content that the matter can be dealt with by appropriate conditons and an informative
- 8.75 A Vehicle Flood Mobilisation (VFM) report has been produced by Harcombe Environmental Services (HES) Ltd on 23 November 2020 to provide additional information to support the planning application in how vehicles will be prevented from mobilising during a flood event. In conclusion, it was considered that the risk of vehicles mobilising during a significant flood event and being 'washed' from the Transport Depot and on the highway or adjoining

properties is very low. The Environment Agency was satisfied with the report and suggested a compliance condition which was included in section 9 below.

- 8.76 In summary, the proposed development is on redundant land previously used for waste management, within defended tidal Flood Zone 3A and at 'Low' risk of flooding. The development will result in no significant change to the surfacing and installation of a small office unit. Flood depth calculations show the site entrance will be at a depth of 170mm and the office FFL 30mm above the flood level, in an extreme undefended flood event (0.5% AEP). There are no records of historic flooding at the site, there is little impact from surface water flooding and no significant risk from sewer flooding, raised groundwaters or large artificial sources. Drainage on the site will be improved, with the surface water system being refurbished, as required. There is a small increase in flood displacement, contained within the site, and no significant change to surface water runoff. In conclusion, the site is considered safe during a flood event and has no negative flood impact on neighbouring properties.

Amenity Impacts

- 8.77 Policy 24 (Pollution impacts of development) of the SDLP (2019) states that development proposals that are likely to result in levels of air, noise, light or water pollution (including groundwater), vibration or soil contamination that would unacceptably harmful to other land uses, human health, tranquillity or the built or natural environment will not be supported.
- 8.78 The proposed depot is located at distance to any residential properties and is not therefore likely to impact on amenities of surrounding residents. The site adjoins an existing water treatment plant and therefore would not give rise to any detrimental impact.
- 8.79 The greatest noise impact from this development is likely to arise during the morning departures of vehicles that will arise between 06:30-08:30 during term times. While the Transport Statement does not provide traffic count information for Western Way, SCC Acoustic Advisor understands it is likely that the significance of these limited movements (~25) in comparison to the expected weekday commuter and commercial traffic movements on the Western Way, would be minimal and not significant to planning.
- 8.80 Considering that all the information submitted regarding pollution and decontamination of the site was limited to an operation for asbestos removal in March 2020 and, given the former use of the site, a condition is proposed to ensure that prior occupation of the site a contamination report is submitted outlining how the risk of construction has addressed the former use, any other source of pollution and measures proposed. Whilst the development proposes to have limited excavation further information would be required to ensure that the site is safe for the interests of the future users of the site.
- 8.81 A Drainage Strategy has been produced by Harcombe Environmental Services (HES) Ltd dated 21 December 2020 to support the production of the

surfacewater and foul drainage design which includes prevention measures to protect ground and surface water.

- 8.82 A Travel Plan dated December 2019 proposed to this development was previously approved by SCC Transport Development Group and has measures to reduce carbon emissions.
- 8.83 The proposal demonstrated that it will not have any significant adverse environmental impact and, therefore is in accordance with Policy D24 of the SDLP (2019).

Conclusion

- 8.84 Somerset Transport is a key activity for Somerset County Council and therefore a county planning matter to be determined under Regulation 3 planning powers.
- 8.85 The site has not been occupied for a substantial time and is a brownfield site capable for beneficial use enabling an essential service to be provided for Somerset County Council. The proposed development would contribute to meeting the requirements of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan as it is in accordance with Policy S4.
- 8.86 The site has some beneficial characteristics for a proposed bus depot. It is well screened and some distance from residential properties which aids in the control of any eventual amenity and landscape impacts.
- 8.87 The site also has an established, suitable access that allows it to be considered in proximity to the Strategic Road Network as defined in the Sedgemoor District Plan (2019).
- 8.88 In Planning policy terms it is in accordance with the strategic or development management policies in the Sedgemoor Local Plan and is in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF.
- 8.89 It is the officer view that the proposal is acceptable.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the imposition of the following conditions, and that authority to undertake any minor non-material editing which may be necessary to the wording of those conditions be delegated to the Service Manager – Planning & Development.

COMPLETION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPROVED DETAILS

- 1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved plans and documents:

- Application Form
- Planning Statement (by Somerset County Council dated July 2020)
- Updated Ecological Assessment and Bat Report (by Somerset Ecologic Services – SES_014_20)
- Tree Survey (by SSE Property & Grounds dated May 2020)
- Planting Plan – Drawing PL-07 – 1:124@A1 – dated 26/03/2020
- Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment – (by SSE Property & Grounds dated 07/05/2020) Travel Plan (by Somerset County Council – December 2019)
- Transport Statement, Report BTC20040/R/01 (by Bellamy Transport Consultancy dated July 2020)
- Site Flood Risk Assessment (by Harcombe Environmental Services Ltd – 01/09/2020)
- Drainage Layout – Drawing PL-08 – 1:125@A1 – dated 26/03/2020
- CCTV Survey of Site Drainage Report – (by S&D Services dated 26/07/2020)
- Pressure Washer Details (by B&G Cleaning System Ltd – Mac Plantmaster)
- Cycle Shelter Specification Sheet (by Broxap Ltd)
- Email from Applicant on 26th October 2020 – Request to update scheme omitting outside site parking provision.
- Non-Licensed Asbestos Risk Assessment & Method Statement (by S. Roberts & Sons (Bridgwater) Ltd dated 20th February 2020)
- Location Plan -1 – Drawing PL-01 – 1:2500@A1 – dated 26/03/20.
- Location Plan -2 – Drawing PL-02 – 1:1250@A1 – dated 26/03/20.
- Topographical Survey – Drawing PL-05 – 1:125@A1 – dated 26/03/20.
- Proposed Enabling Works- Drawing PL-03 – 1:125@A1 – dated 26/03/20.
- Proposed Enabling Works – Section – Drawing PL-03b – 1:50@A3 – dated 26/03/20
- Welfare Facility – General Arrangement – Drawing 100 rev P01 – dated 25/10/19
- Welfare Facility – Elevations – Drawing 200 rev P01 – dated 25/10/19.
- Proposed Main Layout – Revised – Drawing PL-04c – 1:125@A1- dated October 20.
- Proposed Main Layout – Revised – Drawing PL-04d – 1:125@A1 - dated October 20.
- Transport Note to be added to Report No. BTC20040/R/02, prepared by Bellamy Transport Consultancy Ltd, dated from 26/11/2020;

- Saltlands Transport Depot – Horizontal Illuminance – Design ref.: LS30018/1, scale 1:500@A3, dated 01/12/2020;
- Surface Water and Foul Drainage Strategy produced by Harcombe Environmental Services, dated 21/12/2020.

and with any scheme, working programme or other details submitted to and approved in writing by the Waste Planning Authority in pursuance of any condition attached to this permission.

Reason: To enable the Waste Planning Authority to deal promptly with any development not in accordance with the approved plans or other submitted details

BIRDS

3. No removal of trees, scrub, tall ruderal herbs and climbing plants shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provides written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the ecologist. In no circumstances should netting be used to exclude nesting birds.

Reason: In the interests of nesting wild birds and in accordance with Sedgemoor District Council Local Plan: Policy D20 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

4. Any vegetation in the construction area should initially be reduced to a height of 10 centimetres above ground level by hand, brushings and cuttings removed and the remainder left for a minimum period of 48 hours of fine warm weather (limited rain and wind, with temperatures of 10°C or above) before clearing to minimise the risk of harming/killing any reptiles that may be present and to encourage their movement onto adjoining land. This work may only be undertaken during the period between March and October. Once cut vegetation should be maintained at a height of less than 10cm for the duration of the construction period. In the unlikely event that reptiles are encountered works must cease until reptiles have dispersed to adjacent areas of suitable habitat outside of the operational area. If reptiles do not disperse when exposed or remain within operational areas, construction personnel must seek further advice from an ecological specialist. A letter confirming these operations and any findings will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the site agent.

Reason: In the interests of UK protected and priority species and in accordance with Sedgemoor District Council Local Plan: Policy D20 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT (NET GAIN)

5. The following must be integrated into the design of the buildings and site plans:
 - a. Installation of 4 X standard bird boxes and 2 open fronted nest boxes, purchased or built, on to mature trees on site, facing east or north, at a height above 3m.
 - b. Reptile refuge habitat comprised of a pile of branches and brash, as a habitat pile, will be placed on the retained grassland along the south-eastern boundary of the site.
 - c. The grassland blocks around the southern boundary and within the retained traffic island are to be managed as wildflower grassland. Planting and management prescriptions are to following Section 4.5 of the Bridgwater Saltlands: Updated Ecological Assessment and Bat Report (Somerset Ecology Services, 2020).

Photographs of the installed features must be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation. The features must be retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework

REDUCING FLOOD RISK

6. The development hereby permitted shall be constructed with the finished floor levels of the office building set at 7.62 metres above ordnance datum.

Reason: To reduce flood risk to the development and future users in accordance with Policy D1 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan.

FLOOD RESILIENCE MEASURES

7. On first use of the proposed development it shall operate in accordance with the scheme (information and actions) as submitted in the report by Harcombe Environmental Services Ltd – Vehicle Mobilisation during a flood, 2007-01 Bridgwater Saltlands dated 23 November 2020. The scheme shall thereafter be retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of health and safety and in accordance with Policy D1 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan (2011-2032)

8. Before the site becomes operational, a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan must be prepared for the occupants of the site and approved by the Local Authority Emergency Planners. The scheme shall thereafter be retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of health and safety and in accordance with Policy D1 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan (2011-2032)

NEW ACCESS

9 The proposed development shall be served by a new access constructed in accordance with submitted drawing BTC20040/P01/P2 which shall be provided before the site becomes operational and thereafter retained and maintained as such for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy D14 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan

PARKING AND TURNING

10. The areas allocated for parking and turning on the submitted layout plan shall be kept clear of obstruction at all times and shall not be used other than for parking and turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy D14 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan

VISIBILITY

11. At the proposed access there shall be no obstruction to visibility greater than 900mm above adjoining road level within the visibility splays shown on the submitted plan. (Drawing No BTC20040/P01/P2) Such visibility splays shall be constructed prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy D14 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan

TRAVEL PLAN

12. All the recommendations of the Approved Travel Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the timetable therein. Thereafter the development shall operate the Approved Travel Plan or any variation of the Travel Plan agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To encourage sustainable transport and to reduce pollution and in accordance with Policy D14 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan

13. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include construction vehicle movements, construction operation hours, construction vehicular routes to and from site, construction delivery hours, expected number of construction vehicles per day, car parking for contractors, specific measures to be adopted to mitigate construction impacts in pursuance of the Environmental Code of Construction Practice and a scheme to encourage the use of public transport amongst contractors. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and not to cause inconvenience to other highway users and in accordance with Policy D14 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan

LANDSCAPE

14. Prior to the first operation of the proposed use, the Landscape Detail proposed on the drawing 'Planting Plan (PL-07) dated 26/03/20 must be improved to ensure appropriate planting and screening to the front of the site, including screening of the office unit. The landscape scheme and the proposed time of planting shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing and all planting shall be carried out in accordance with those details and at those times.

Reason: To minimise the loss of visual amenity occasioned by the development and to enhance the proposed development and in accordance with Policy D19 and D31 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan (2011-2032).

SITE INVESTIGATION CONTAMINATED LAND-

15. No development shall take place until:

(a) A comprehensive desk-top study, carried out to identify and evaluate all potential sources and impacts of land and/or groundwater contamination relevant to the site, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

(b) Where any such potential sources and impacts have been identified, a site investigation has been carried out to fully characterise the nature and extent of any land and/or groundwater contamination and its implications. The site investigation shall not be commenced until the extent and methodology of the site investigation have been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

(c) A written method statement for the remediation of land and/or groundwater contamination affecting the site shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of remediation. The method statement shall include an implementation timetable and monitoring proposals, and a remediation verification methodology.

The site shall be remediated in accordance with the approved method statement, with no deviation from the statement without the express written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenities and safety of future occupiers and the environment from the effects of potentially harmful substances and in accordance with Policy D24 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan (2011-2032).

SURFACE WATER INTENUATION

16. No development shall be commenced until details of the sustainable surface water drainage scheme for the site, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall include measures to prevent the control and attenuate surface water and pollution and once approved the scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and maintained at all times thereafter unless agreed otherwise in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the development is properly drained in accordance with the NPPF.

17. No development approved by this permission shall be occupied or brought into use until a plan for the future responsibility and maintenance of the surface water drainage system has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved drainage works shall be completed and maintained in accordance with the details agreed.

Reason: To safeguard the long-term maintenance and operation of the proposed system to ensure development is properly drained in accordance with the NPPF.

INFORMATIVES

1. The developers are reminded of the legal protection afforded to badgers and their resting places under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended). It is advised that during construction, excavations or large pipes (>200mm diameter) must be covered at night. Any open excavations will need a means of escape, for example, a plank or sloped end, to allow any animals to escape. In the event that badgers or signs of badgers are unexpectedly encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop until advice is sought from a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity
2. **Wessex Water**
Applying for new drainage and water supply connections:
If your proposals require new connections to the public water mains, notes and application forms can be found here
(<https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/services/building-and-developing/connecting-to-a-network>).

The use of a package treatment plant is subject to EA and building control approval.

Are existing public sewers or water mains affected by the proposals?

According to our records there is an existing 4 inch public water main and 500mm public rising main crossing the site entrance. Whilst according to the submitted plans are no buildings or structures within close proximity to these assets, the ground levels must not be altered without agreement with Wessex Water. Protections measures must also be agreed during construction as appropriate. Any damage to our apparatus by third parties will be subject to significant financial penalty.

Will the day to day operations of Wessex Water affect the proposals?

Water Recycling Centre proximity - The proposed site is between Chilton Trinity Sewage Treatment Works and Saltlands Waste Disposal Centre. Users of the school transport depot are likely to detect odours and possible fly nuisance. As this is not a residential site or employment use attracting 9-5 office workers we have no objection to the proposal in relation to this issue. The applicant will be aware of the reduction in amenity and take appropriate measures on-site to lessen the impact for employees.

The shared access route to the WRC

Wessex Water enjoys a right of the way access route to the Chilton Trinity sewage treatment works. This site is frequently visited by operational vehicles, including tankers, to enable Wessex Water to carry out its statutory duties as sewage undertaker for the Bridgwater area.

The site includes an office and approximately 50 employees are based at the sewage treatment works.

The entrance to the sewage treatment works is approximately 50 metres beyond the entrance to the sewage treatment works.

We note the visibility splay on drawing Proposed Main Layout PL-04d, future grounds maintenance must include regular cut back of vegetation in this area by the occupier to ensure that visibility is not compromised.

We currently contribute to the maintenance of the access track to the WRC and due to the additional traffic, we would seek for this to be adjusted if planning permission is approved.

Contact: Planning.liaison@wessexwater.co.uk

3. Drainage

The applicant is advised that, prior to works commencing on site, Land Drainage Consent is required under section 23 and 66 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 from the Parrett Internal Drainage Board for any construction in, or within, 9m of a watercourse and for the introduction of additional flow into a watercourse in the Board's District.

5. Environmental Permit Regime

This development may require a permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 from the Environment Agency for any proposed works or structures, in, under, over or within 16 metres of the top of the bank of the River Parrett, designated a 'main river'. This was formerly called a Flood Defence Consent. Some activities are also now excluded or exempt. A permit is separate to and in addition to any planning permission granted. Further details and guidance are available on the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits>

Please contact bridgwater.frap@environment-agency.gov.uk for further information on this process.

6. Emergency Planning (Advance Flood Warning)

You are reminded of the importance of registering the site with the Environment Agency to receive advanced flood warnings, so that any emergency measures within the Flood Management Plan can be implemented.

7. Environmental Agency General Guidance

We do not normally comment on or approve the adequacy of flood emergency response procedures accompanying development proposals, as we do not carry out these roles during a flood. Our involvement with this development during an emergency will be limited to delivering flood warnings to occupants/users covered by our flood warning network. The planning practice guidance (PPG) to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that, in determining whether a development is safe, the ability of residents and users to safely access and exit a building during a design flood and to evacuate before an extreme flood needs to be considered. One of the key considerations to ensure that any new development is safe is whether adequate flood warnings would be available to people using the development.

In all circumstances where warning and emergency response is fundamental to managing flood risk, we advise local planning authorities to formally consider the emergency planning and rescue implications of new development in making their decisions. As such, we recommend you refer to 'Flood risk emergency plans for new development' and undertake appropriate consultation with your emergency planners and the emergency services to determine whether the proposals are safe in accordance with paragraph 163 of the NPPF and the guiding principles of the PPG.

Any washing of vehicles or vehicle wash facilities must be undertaken in an area connected to the foul sewer, with the necessary approval from the relevant sewerage undertaker. If vehicles are refuelled on site then this must be carried out in a designated area positively drained via an interceptor, of a suitable standard, to foul sewer, subject to the consent of the sewerage undertaker.

Safeguards should be implemented during the construction phase to minimise the risks of pollution from the development. Such safeguards should cover:

- the use of plant and machinery
- wheel washing and vehicle wash-down
- oils/chemicals and materials
- the use and routing of heavy plant and vehicles
- the location and form of work and storage areas and compounds
- the control and removal of spoil and wastes.

8. Rights of Way

Development, insofar as it affects the rights of way should not be started, and the rights of way should be kept open for public use until the necessary Order (temporary closure/stopping up/diversion) or other authorisation has come into

effect/ been granted. Failure to comply with this request may result in the developer being prosecuted if the path is built on or otherwise interfered with.

The health and safety of the public using the PROW must be taken into consideration during works to carry out the proposed development. Somerset County Council (SCC) has maintenance responsibilities for the surface of a PROW, but only to a standard suitable for the public use. SCC will not be responsible for putting right any damage occurring to the surface of a PROW resulting from vehicular use during or after works to carry out the proposal. It should be noted that it is an offence to drive a vehicle along a public footpath, public bridleway or restricted byway unless the driver has lawful authority (private rights) to do so.

If it is considered that the development would result in any of the outcomes listed below, then authorisation for these works must be sought from Somerset County Council Rights of Way Group:

- A PROW being made less convenient for continued public use.
- New furniture being needed along a PROW.
- Installing any apparatus within or across the PROW.
- Changes to the surface of a PROW being needed.
- Changes to the existing drainage arrangements associated with the PROW.

If the work involved in carrying out this proposed development would:

- make a PROW less convenient for continued public use; or
- create a hazard to users of a PROW,

then a temporary closure order will be necessary and a suitable alternative route must be provided.

For more information, please visit Somerset County Council's Rights of Way pages to apply for a temporary closure:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/rights-of-way/apply-for-a-temporary-closure-of-a-right-of-way/>

[10. In relation to conditions 16 and 17 of the permission please adhere to the following advice:](#)

- Details for provision of any temporary drainage during construction. This should include details to demonstrate that during the construction phase measures will be in place to prevent unrestricted discharge, and pollution to the receiving system
- Information about the design storm period and intensity, discharge rates and volumes (both pre and post development), temporary storage facilities, means of access for maintenance (6 metres minimum), the methods employed to delay and control surface water discharged from the site, and the measures taken to prevent flooding and pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface waters. This should provide a plan of site levels post construction and locate of areas where surface water will be stored, depth, volumes and estimated length of time that the water will be present.

This should clearly demonstrate that levels will allow surface water to be retained without flowing offsite

- If pumped systems are proposed, justification for the use of these systems, summary of key design principles and assessment of residual risk, with supporting calculations
- Any works required off and on site to ensure adequate discharge of surface water without causing flooding or pollution (which should include refurbishment of pumped systems and drainage infrastructure where relevant).
- Flood water exceedance routes both on and off site, flooding during storm events in excess of the 1 in 100yr (plus 40% allowance for climate change) must be controlled within the designed exceedance routes demonstrated to prevent flooding or damage to properties.
- A management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development.
- Pollution control measures considered due to surface water being retained within the topography. This may accumulate pollutants on the site, pollutants may wash off the site rather being directed through the pollution control measures, and there should also be consideration of the impact of such pollution on human health
- Details to ensure that the applicant/owner of the site understands the risk associated with this method of managing surface water in terms of operation procedures and health and safety.

10 Relevant Development Plan Policies

10.1 The following is a summary of the reasons for the County Council's decision to grant planning permission.

10.2 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the decision on this application should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The decision has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in:

Sedgemoor District Plan (2019)

The policies in the development plan particularly relevant to the proposed development are:

Policy S1 (Policy for sustainable development);

Policy S2 (Spatial Strategy for Sedgemoor);

Policy S4 (Policy for Sustainable Principles);

Policy S5 (Mitigating the causes and adapting to the effects of climate change);

Policy D1 (Flood risk and surface water management);

Policy D2 (Promoting High Quality and Inclusive Design);

Policy D13 (Sustainable transport and movement);

Policy D14 (Managing the Transport Impacts of Development);
Policy D15 (Economic Prosperity);
Policy D19 (Landscape);
Policy D20 (Biodiversity and geodiversity);
Policy D22 (Trees and woodland);
Policy D24 (Pollution impacts of development);
Policy D30 (Green infrastructure requirements in new development);
Policy D31 (Countryside around settlements);
Policy D33 (Protection of Existing Public Recreational Outdoor Space);
Policy CO1 (Countryside)
Policy CO3 (Brownfield sites in the countryside).
Policy B15 (Flood Defence);

10.3 The County Planning Authority has also had regard to all other material considerations, in particular, the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance.

10.4 **Statement of Compliance with Article 35 of the Town and Country Development Management Procedure Order 2015**

In dealing with this planning application the County Planning Authority has adopted a positive and proactive manner. The Council offers a pre-application advice service for minor and major applications, and applicants are encouraged to take up this service. This proposal has been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework, Minerals Local Plan and Local Plan policies, which have been subject to proactive publicity and consultation prior to their adoption and are referred to in the reasons for approval. The County Planning Authority has sought solutions to problems arising by liaising with consultees, considering other representations received and liaising with the applicant/agent as necessary.