

**Planning Committee**

**20 August 2008**

**Applications to be determined  
by the County Council**



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**Report of Rod Lugg, Head of Environment and Planning**

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**Purpose of the report: To enable the Committee to determine applications for planning permission which have been received in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

**Chester-le-Street District: Proposed Waste Transfer Station and Recycling Centre on land at Unit 1 Westline Industrial Estate, Birtley for A & G Skip Hire.**

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**Introduction**

- 1 A&G Skip Hire is a local firm that owns and operates Unit 1 Westline Industrial Estate. The firm wishes to expand its business on the site to incorporate a waste transfer and recycling operation. This application relates to that proposal.

**The Site**

- 2 The site is a rectangular shaped parcel of land approximately 0.3 ha in area located immediately to the south of the St Bede's former landfill site on the southern half of Westline Industrial Estate. The site is fenced and hardsurfaced and accessed using the existing track to the industrial estate off the B1288. It currently contains one building that is used in connection with the existing skip hire business that includes two storey office accommodation to the front. A second building recently granted planning permission by Chester-le-Street District Council (288m<sup>2</sup>) is currently under construction to the rear of the existing building.
- 3 Other industrial uses on the estate include an existing materials recycling facility, 3 engineering firms, 2 fencing operations and Askern UK Ltd which manufactures cable reels and drums and other wooden packaging products.

**The Proposal**

- 4 Waste material (wood, green waste, plastics, textiles, soil, subsoils and hardcore, ferrous and non ferrous metals, glass and cardboard) would be brought to the site using the firm's skips and fixed body tippers and also third party vehicles. Following deposit in a reception area within the second building, a 360 degree excavator would be used to load material into the feed hopper of a trommel and picking line. It would then be sorted into streams, bulked and stored outside in designated bays adjacent to the southern boundary ready for removal off site for recycling (maximum storage height 3 metres). The applicant expects that up to 25,000 tonnes of waste would be received per year (96 tonnes per day) and that in excess of 70% of material would be recycled.
- 5 There are currently 40 vehicle movements generated per day (20 in / 20 out) in association with skip hire and this is not initially expected to change as result of this proposal. If the operation reaches maximum output (approximately 25,000 tonnes per year) it is expected that this figure would be 90 movements per day (45 in / 45 out) in total at the site. Current working hours at the site are between 07.00 to 17.30 Monday to Friday and 07.00 to 15.00 on Saturdays although these are not subject to planning control. The proposed operating hours would be between 7.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Fridays, 7.00am to 6.00pm Saturdays with no working on Sundays or Public or Bank Holidays. However, the applicant wishes to have the option to receive waste skips on site on

Sundays and Bank Holidays in cases of emergency where there maybe a health and safety issue.

- 6 The site currently employs 9 full time members of staff and it is expected that a further 6 full time positions would be created as part of the proposals.

### **Consultations and Representations**

- 7 Chester-le-Street District Council has no objections to the proposal providing that conditions restricting the hours of operation to Monday to Saturday only (with no working on a Sunday or Bank Holiday) is imposed, along with the implementation of a scheme of dust mitigation to be submitted to, and agreed in writing with the Waste Planning Authority.

*Comment: The applicant originally applied for working hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays but has agreed to curtail these except in cases of emergency. A relevant planning condition can be attached to any planning permission covering operating hours. The applicant has agreed to provide a scheme of dust mitigation for the site which could be provided through a relevant condition attached to the Planning Permission.*

- 8 Ouston Parish Council (consulted 03 June 2008) has not commented.
- 9 The Environment Agency has no objection to the proposal but notes that the site lies within 250m of both the former waste disposal site at Blythe Brickworks and the landfill site at St Bede's Brickworks and that responsibility for the safe development and secure occupancy of the development would rest with the developer. The Environment Agency also notes that a waste transfer operation would require an Environmental Permit.
- 10 The application has been advertised on site, in the press and neighbouring users on the industrial estate were notified. No representations have been received.

### **Planning Considerations**

#### **Policy Issues**

- 11 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant policies are contained in the County Durham Waste Local Plan (April 2005) [WLP] and the Chester-le-Street District Local Plan (Adopted 2003).
- 12 Policy W38 of the WLP supports proposals for the recovery and recycling of inert waste materials including construction and demolition waste provided that they can be located on land identified for general industrial use or on previous development land in sustainable locations or where the proposal forms part of an integrated waste management facility. Policy W33 requires waste developments to minimise any harmful impacts arising from operations.

- 13 The site is included within land designated as a local industrial estate, (Policy IN5) in the Chester-le- Street Local Plan, where proposals involving the construction of new premises for less attractive or un-neighbourly industrial uses will be permitted, providing the site is or can be well screened, will not cause a serious shortage of readily available land, incorporates substantial landscaping and does not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and highway users or the character and appearance of the area by virtue of dust, noise, smell, vibration, mud or other emissions. The proposal would accord with Policy W38 of the County Durham WLP and Policy IN5 of Chester-le-Street DLP.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 14 The site is located 320m to the east of the elevated settlement of Ouston. The nearest residential property is located at Blue Barns Cottage which lies adjacent to the access track to the industrial estate, approximately 250m to the north of the site.
- 15 The site is generally low lying and a well established copse of mature trees around the estate would screen the development in local views from the south and east. The planted landform of the St Bede's landfill site that rises to the north, and other industrial uses on the north of the estate, provide screening from this direction. Given the location of the site some distance from residential properties, the presence of other industrial uses and tree planting around the estate, there would not be any direct impacts on visual amenity arising from the proposed development.
- 16 Chester-le-Street District Council's Environmental Health Officer notes that the Waste Planning Authority may wish to attach conditions restricting noise, the acceptance of waste which may cause an odour nuisance and dust suppression measures, if planning permission is granted. The main sources of noise at the site would be from screening plant and the 360 degree excavator, but these would operate within the new building. There are no noise conditions controlling existing operations and a range of other industrial uses are close by. It is therefore not considered that formal noise limits are needed in this case and would be difficult to monitor. However, the applicant has agreed that the site would not operate on Sundays or on Public or Bank Holidays unless in the case of emergency. Planning conditions could be attached to any consent restricting the type of waste material and requiring dust suppression. These matters would also be subject to waste licensing requirements.

### **Traffic and Access**

- 17 The industrial estate has a long access track that is in poor condition (pot holes) but this connects to the A167 via the B1288 and provides a link to the wider road network. The applicant estimates that a maximum of 90 lorry movements per day (45in / 45 out) would be generated by the proposal. Existing skip hire generates approximately 40 vehicle

movements per day (20 in / 20 out). The Head of Highway Management has no objections to the proposed change of use.

### **Recommendation and Reasons**

- 18 National strategies and planning policies encourage the aim of recycling. The proposal would make a useful contribution to the wider objective of dealing with waste generated locally in a responsible way. The proposed site is located within an area designated as a local industrial use which makes provision for uses of this type and is already in use for skip hire. The proposal would accord with Policies W38 and W33 of the County Durham Waste Local Plan.
- 19 Having considered the detailed elements of the development, its location within an existing industrial estate and use of existing buildings, I am of the view that the proposal can be satisfactorily accommodated in a manner that would not adversely affect residential or visual amenity. Subject therefore to appropriate conditions to limit any potential future nuisance impacts, I conclude that the development is acceptable.
- 20 I therefore **recommend** that planning permission be granted for the provision of a Waste Transfer Station at Westline Industrial Estate, Birtley for the following reason:
- (i) The proposed use of the site would not be unduly obtrusive or adversely impact on local amenity or the surrounding environment. The proposal would accord with Policies W38 and W33 of the County Durham Waste Local Plan relating to the suitable location of Material Recycling Facilities and appropriate environmental mitigation measures.

### **No Departure**

#### **Background Papers**

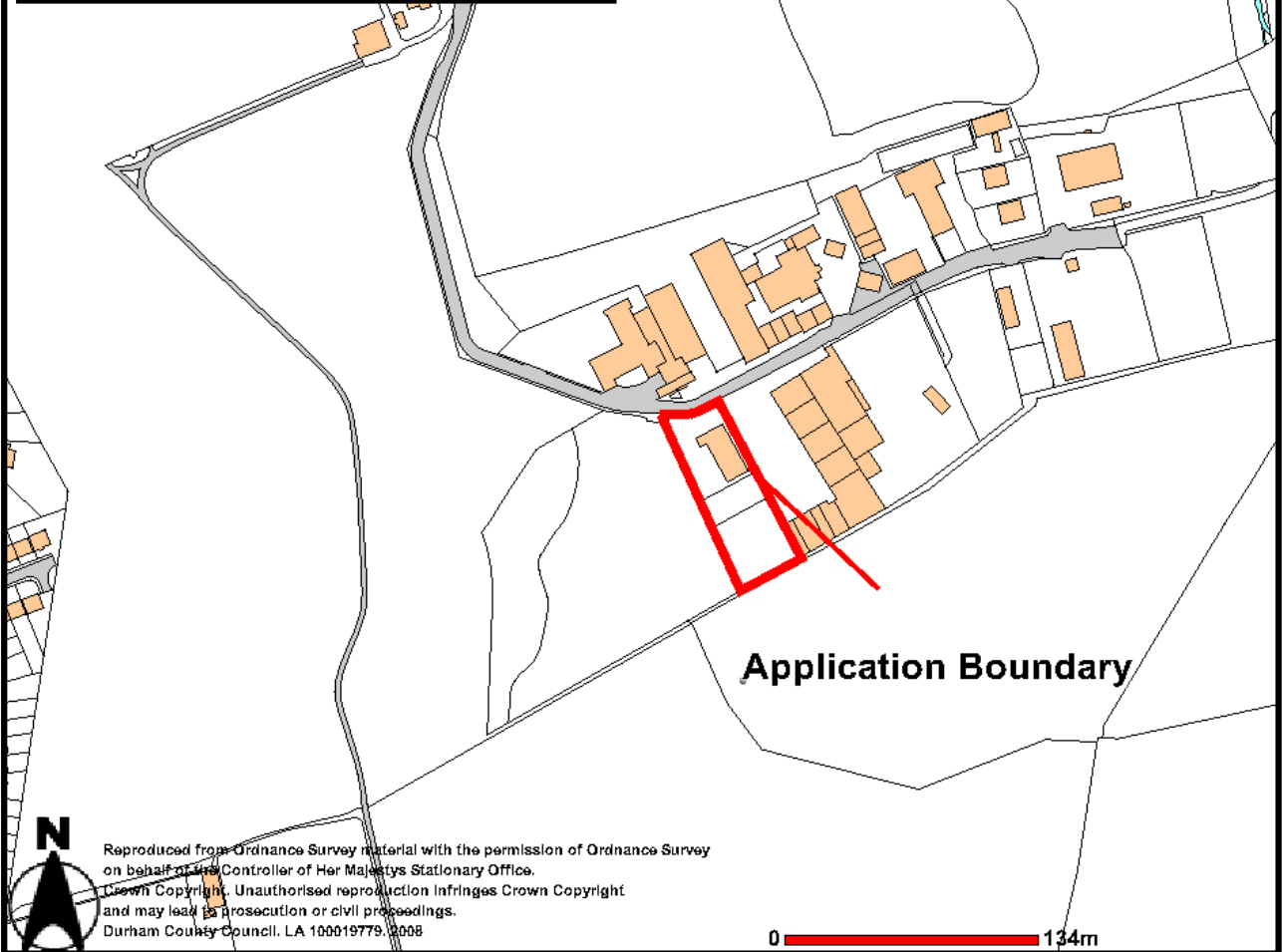
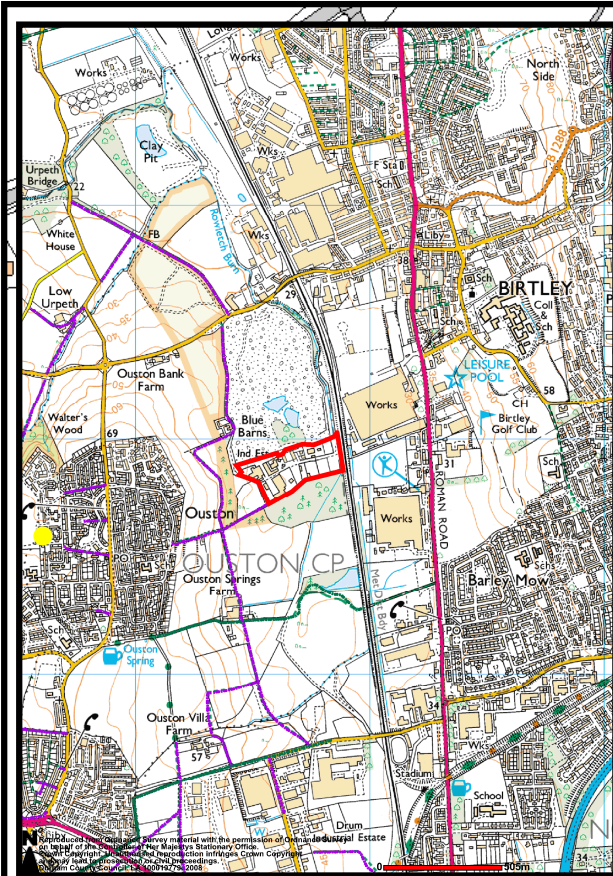
Planning application forms and plans dated 19 May 2008. Consultation letters and responses and other correspondence on the application file CMA/2/13

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**Contact: John Byers Tel: 0191 383 3408**  
**Local Members: Councillors Carr and Potts**

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