

DELEGATED REPORT

Reference: FUL/2024/0003
Location: FCC Environment (UK) LTD, Longwater Business Park, Costessey, NR5 0TL
Applicant: FCC Environment
Proposal: Erection and use of a (retrospective) site office and area of hardstanding.
Expiry date: 5 June 2024
Extension of time date: N/A

Site

The application site is located within the operational boundary of the existing Waste Transfer Station (WTS) and Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Costessey. The WTS and MRF site is approximately 2.6 hectares and is located on the Longwater Industrial Estate, the site is accessed via Ernest Gage Avenue.

Proposal

The application seeks permission for a retrospective site office and area of hardstanding in the WTS and MRF site. The development consists of a 6.1m x 3.7m olive green modular office and a 30m² area of hardstanding. The office is situated near the WTS site's northern boundary. Access to the proposal is via the existing site entrance from Ernest Gage Avenue, there are no planned changes to this access.

Consultation Responses

County Councillor (Mrs Sharon Blundell)	No comment received.
Costessey Town Council Parish Council	No comment received.
South Norfolk Council	No comment to make.
Green Infrastructure & Landscape Officer (NCC)	No objection.
Environmental Health Officer South Norfolk DC	No comments.
Ecologist (NCC)	No objections.
Environment Agency	Will not be providing comments as it does not fall within their remit.
Arboriculture & Landscape Team Leader (NCC)	No objections.

Lead Local Flood Authority (NCC) No comment to make at this time.

Representations

Neighbour notification letter expiry date: N/A

Site notice expiry date: 17 April 2024

Press Advert expiry date: 18 April 2024

No representations were received from third parties.

Relevant History

- C/7/2016/7003 – Application to vary condition 5 of planning permission C/7/2015/7007 to allow internal operations to be undertaken 24 hours a day 7 days a week. (Approved: April 2016)
- C/7/2016/7002 – Non-Material Amendment of planning C/7/2015/7007 to amend scheme of working. (Approved: February 2016)

Relevant Constraints

- The site is within Norwich Airport Safeguarding Area.
- The site is 36m away from Historic Landfill Sites.
- The site is within Agricultural Land Class, Non-Agricultural.
- The site is 984m away from the River Wensum, SAC

Development Plan Policy & Government Policy/Guidance

Norfolk Minerals and Waste Development Framework: Core Strategy and Minerals and Waste Development Management Policies and Development Plan Document 2010-2026 (2011)

- CS6 – General waste management considerations
- CS13 – Climate change and renewable energy generation
- CS14 – Environmental Protection
- DM3 – Groundwater and surface water
- DM4 – Flood Risk
- DM7 – Safeguarding aerodromes
- DM8 – Design, local landscape, and townscape character
- DM11 – Sustainable construction and operations
- DM12 – Amenity

South Norfolk Local Plan (SNLP): Development Management Policies Document Adopted October 2015

- DM 1.4 – Ensuring development management contributes to achieving sustainable development in South Norfolk
- DM 3.8 – Design principles applying to all development.
- DM 3.13 – Amenity, noise, and quality of life
- DM 4.5 – Landscape Character and River Valleys.

Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) (Adopted 2024):

- Policy 2 – Sustainable Communities
- Policy 3 – Environmental Protection and Enhancement

Neighbourhood Plan

There is currently no Neighbourhood Plan for Costessey.

Emerging Development Plan Policy

Policies within emerging plans are capable of being material considerations. The County Council is currently preparing a Minerals and Waste Local Plan to extend the plan period to the end of 2038. The pre-submission version of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, relevant background documents and the representations received have now all been submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination by a Planning Inspector in 2024. So, whilst at an advanced stage, it is not yet formally part of the development plan for the area and therefore the following policies have been given some weight in the planning balance:

Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- Policy MW1 – Development Management Criteria
- Policy WP16 – Design of Waste Management facilities

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Section 12. Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Section. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.

Issues

The issues to be assessed in this case are:

Principle of development including land allocation etc

The proposed retrospective development is located within the boundary of the existing proposed operational WTS and MRF and in landuse terms is therefore compliant with NMWDF Core Strategy Policy CS6. The site office provides facilities for staff and visitors of the site, which is connected to the existing drainage system. According to the Planning Statement submitted with this application, the retrospective site office is prefabricated, and it is with a scale in-keeping with the other buildings on site. Therefore, the site land is currently being occupied for the operations of the WTS and MRF, and the permission for the retrospective site office would therefore be acceptable.

Landscape/Design

As stated, the retrospective proposal is sited on a concrete slab which this application also relates to. The retrospective site office is 6.1m x 3.7m with a height of 2.5m. The exterior of the site office is decorated in olive green. The site office is accessed via the existing access point. Therefore, it accords with Policy DM8 of the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Development Framework.

Amenity

The retrospective proposed building is located within the western part of the site, located near the Waste Transfer Station. Giving consideration to the existing boundary screened by a fence and trees, also the distance from other neighbouring properties. It is considered that there are unlikely to be any unacceptable impacts in terms of amenity as a result of this application.

Overall, it is therefore considered that this proposal would accord with the principles of policy DM12 of the NMWCS.

Sustainability

A Sustainability Statement has been submitted with this application. It was noted that the welfare unit was relocated from an existing FCC site and therefore, reduced the number of materials required to construct the unit. In the Sustainability Statement it states that FCC are committed to improving their carbon management, however given the scale and nature of the retrospective development there are limited opportunities for the addition of renewable energy technologies on site, for example, there is limited roof space to support Photovoltaic Panels. It is therefore considered that this proposal accords with Policy DM11 of the NMWCS and Policy 2 of the GNLP.

Flood Risk

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a low probability of flooding from sea and rivers. Due to the nature of this proposed development, it is likely there will be no increased risk of flooding.

Groundwater / Surface water

The risk of surface water flooding for the retrospective development is low. Due to the nature of the development, there will be no additional impact on the alteration to the surface water drainage or foul system.

Agricultural land

The proposal is within the confines of the existing operational WTS and MRF and does not seek to extend in onto agricultural land.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The Environment Act 2021 introduced Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and for major planning applications lodged after 12 February 2024 applicants now must provide mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This application is not subject to BNG on the basis that the application was received prior to the commencement of BNG.

Ecology & Appropriate assessment

The application site is within 10km of the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation which is a European protected habitats. The application has been assessed in accordance with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Due the size and scale of the development, and this distance from the European site, it is considered there is no requirement for the CPA to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the development.

With regards to Natural England's letter of 16 March 2022 concerning nutrient neutrality, the proposed retrospective welfare unit would not result in new overnight accommodation and therefore would not increase the discharge to the catchment of the River Wensum SAC or any of the SSSIs notified by NE that comprise the Broads SAC/Ramsar. The proposal would therefore not result in an addition to the nutrient load of the designated sites.

International Unauthorised Development:

Following the Chief's Planner's letter of 31 August 2015 to planning authorities, international unauthorised development is now a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications received after 31 August 2015. This is therefore capable of being a material consideration in the determination of this application.

Whilst regrettable, in this instance it is not felt that the retrospective nature of the application would represent a ground for refusing planning permission for this development and no weight is given to this in the planning balance.

Response to representations received.

No responses were received from third parties to the application.

The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended)

The proposed development does not exceed 100m² and therefore does not meet the threshold to pay CIL.

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

The application was screened on receipt and re-screened at the determination stage, and it is not considered that the development would have significant impacts on the environment. No Environmental Impact Assessment is therefore required.

Conclusion & Planning Balance

The retrospective site office is part of the wider operational use of the Waste Transfer Station and Material Recovery Facility. Given the site office is small scale and is clad in olive green it is in keeping with the other structures on site and the screening of the fence and trees.

Subject to the implementation of appropriate conditions, it is considered that the proposal would not create any adverse impacts and as such is in accordance with the development plan policies identified and national policy. There are no material considerations that indicate that the application should be refused.

Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions, as attached.

Case Officer:	Sophie Mezzetti	Date:	17.05.2024
Principal Planner:	A Lambert	Date:	17.05.2024