Recommendation Report for County Matter Consultation

REF NO: **EG/43/12/**

LOCATION: Eastergate C of E Primary School
Church Lane
Eastergate

PROPOSAL: Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for a proposed containerised biomass boiler (this application will be determined by West Sussex County Council)

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	This is a consultation from West Sussex County Council for a containerised biomass boiler to be located at Eastergate C of E Primary School, Eastergate. The proposed 80kw biomass boiler will be housed within a containerised unit at the northwest corner of the school carpark. It will be sited on two parking spaces.
SITE AREA	Approximately 0.96ha
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DENSITY	N/A
TOPOGRAPHY	Predominantly flat
TREES	None of any significance affected by the proposed development.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	Timber post and rail fencing to front boundary. Mature trees to west and north boundaries.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	The site is a Primary School, which comprises a modern, single storey school building with playing fields to the rear (south), playground to the west and carpark to the front (north).
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	Semi-rural. The school is located on the southern side of Church Lane in the southwest corner of the village of Eastergate. There is a public house with garden immediately to the north of the school, residential development further to the west and northeast, and open countryside to the east and south.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

EG/2/95	Application under Regulation 3 of the Town & Country General Regulations 1992 for	DPC - WSCC

	extension to school to provide new general purpose hall.(This application will be determined by West Sussex County Council).	08-03-1995
EG/80/01/TC	Felling of one small tree within the Church Lane, Eastergate, Conservation Area	No Objection 01-02-2002
EG/3/03/	Erection of 1.2m high fencing around grassed area, including 3 gates. Also gate across drive.	ApproveConditionally 27-03-2003
EG/61/05/TC	Various surgery to trees overhanging adjoining public footpath and within playground within the Eastergate (Church Lane) Conservation Area.	No Objection 02-09-2005
EG/69/07/	Application under the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for single storey extension and internal alterations (This application will be determined by WSCC)	ApprvdCond-WSCC 05-12-2007
EG/10/60	Residential development dwelling house	Refused 20-07-1960
EG/10/60/A	School	Permit'd Devel 14-07-1966
EG/36/69	Primary School	No Objection 28-07-1969
EG/25/84	Erection of 3 double mobile classroom units and 2 toilet units on school playground	No Objection 25-04-1984
EG/35/84	Reinstatement of fire damage and extension	No Objection 30-05-1984
EG/2/71	Changing room and P E store	No Objection
EG/7/67	Primary school	No Decision Given

REPRESENTATIONS

Representations received:

None

Comments on Representations received:

None

CONSULTATIONS

Environmental Health

Consultations responses received:

Environmental Health:
Air Quality
It is noted that the proposed boiler is relatively small (80kW) and in a rural location with few nearby neighbours. Nevertheless Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance TG(09) requires that plant burning biomass in 50kW to 20MW units are identified and that a screening assessment is undertaken. Insufficient information is available in the application to enable such an assessment. I would therefore request the completion submission of thte attached Biomass Boiler Information Request form in support of the application. I would also draw the applicant's attention to the attached guidance leaflet.
In respect of the limited information submitted:-
The application proposes the use of pelletised fuel which will have consistent size, geometry and moisture content (a condition might be considered in respect of fuel specification). No detail is provided in respect of fuel storage.
The Air Quality Assessment appears to provide emission data for a range of boilers and does not identify the proposed plant.

In addition to the above, it is a requirement under the Clean Air Act that all new furnaces >16.12kW are notified to this authority and are capable of operating without emitting smoke. Furnaces burning solid fuel at >45.4kg/h require approval from this authority in respect of their grit and dust arrestment plant. Such furnaces also require approval from this authority in respect of the proposed chimney height, which cannot be readily ascertained from the submitted details. We are unable to approve a proposed chimney height unless we are satisfied that it will be sufficient to prevent emissions becoming prejudicial to health or a nuisance. The stack height must therefore be identified and evidence presented to demonstrate that predicted emissions associated with the calculated stack height will not unreasonably impact upon the area. Dispersion modelling may be required to ascertain an appropriate stack height.

Noise
No details are provided in respect of noise produced by the plant. The proposal states that the boiler will only operate during school hours are noted; it may be necessary to confirm this by condition.

Comments on Consultation responses:

Comments noted

POLICY CONTEXT

Designation applicable to site:
Outside built-up area boundary
Conservation Area

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Arun District Local Plan 2003:	GEN7	The Form of New Development
	GEN3	Protection of the Countryside
	GEN34	Air Pollution

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework

POLICY COMMENTARY

The above policies combine to describe the criteria against which the application will be assessed particularly with regard to visual and residential amenity.

The Emerging Arun Local Plan has recently been approved by the Council and is therefore a material consideration in the determination of this planning application. It remains subject to public consultation and the formal adoption process as a whole, and it is therefore of very limited weight in terms of the decision making process at this stage.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

It is considered that there are no other material considerations to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with the Development Plan and/or legislative background.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that there are no other material considerations to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with the Development Plan and/or legislative background.

CONCLUSIONS

The containerised storage unit in which the biomass boiler will be housed, will measure 5.9 metres in length x 2.8 metres in height x 2.4 metres in depth. It will be clad in timber. A flue, 6 metres above ground level, will be positioned at one end. The boiler will be housed within a steel shipping container to mitigate noise impact. It will be operational during school hours only.

The site is located outside the built-up area boundary, where new development is not permitted unless it relates to:
the operational needs of agriculture, forestry, the extraction of minerals or deposit of waste;
quiet informal recreation;
the diversification of the rural economy;
or essential road schemes.
The proposal does not satisfy the above criteria and is therefore unacceptable in principle.

Notwithstanding this, the general thrust of the National Planning Policy Framework and the purpose of the planning system is 'to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' (paragraph 6) and 'support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.....and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)' (paragraph 17). To this end, in order to support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should 'actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings' and 'recognise that even small scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions' (paragraphs 95; 98).

The proposal to install an 80kW biomass boiler to meet the energy requirements of the school, will reduce the school's carbon footprint and provide an educational resource for school children to understand the principles of renewable energy. It therefore meets the fundamental wider planning objective of achieving sustainable development and tackling climate change. On this basis, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

The site abuts the Eastergate (Church Lane) Conservation Area. The proposed boiler will be

housed within a containerised storage unit clad in timber with a flue at one end. The visual impact of the boiler is mitigated by its position at the northwest corner of the school carpark. However, it is a utilitarian structure of poor visual appearance that is not considered to preserve or enhance the rural character of the adjoining Conservation Area.

With regards to air quality, contamination and noise, there is residential development to the north east and the west of the site. The public house and garden is located immediately to the north of the school carpark. Environmental Health Officers have provided detailed comments regarding air quality and noise. There is currently a lack of information regarding the boiler, air emission data, fuel storage, dispersion modelling to ascertain an appropriate stack height for the flue and noise produced by the plant.

In the absence of this information in respect of air quality and noise, and having regarding to the design and visual appearance of the containerised storage unit in this rural location, Arun District Council objects to the above application.

RECOMMENDATION

OBJECTION

1 In the absence of further information in respect of air quality and noise, and having regarding to the design and visual appearance of the containerised storage unit in this rural location, Arun District Council objects to the above application.