



Delegated Report

Planning Application - Schedule 6 of the CTRL Act 1996

Application no:	20220898
Location:	Singlewell Infrastructure Maintenance Depot Henhurst Road Cobham Gravesend
Description:	Approval of plans and specifications in connection with the CTRL within the Borough of Gravesham for the installation of two cable drum storage units within existing compound.
Applicant:	Mr Ben Olney, Planning And Consents Manager
Site Visit Date:	12 October 2022

Site Description

The Singlewell Infrastructure Maintenance Depot (IMD) is a railway maintenance depot for High Speed 1 (HS1 - the Channel Tunnel Rail Link) located on Henhurst Road and to the north of Church Road, Ifield and south of the new line of the A2 trunk road.

It was subject to a CTRL (Channel Tunnel Rail Link) planning consent in 2004, as it was not authorised by the CTRL Act 1996 itself, with the design and external appearance approved in 2005 and it opened in May 2006.

The complex provides infrastructure and maintenance depot facilities including:

- 360m² maintenance shed for rail vehicles
- 3600m² of offices, workshops and stores
- Rail sidings
- Open air lay down storage and training areas
- Fuelling facility
- Car parking, and
- Access road.

It is located within the Green Belt and the parish of Cobham. It was previously part of the larger area of the CTRL sidings and existing signalling room.

The maintenance shed and accommodation/workshop building are modern aluminium clad buildings.

The depot is well screened being effectively within a landscaped cutting and includes a fenced off linear parkland which together with the IMD site, siding and signalling area has an overall site area of some 30 acres (12 hectares). This is now fairly densely wooded and provides effective screening to the IMD, particularly from the south.

Access to the site is restricted to HS1/NR(HS) operatives and is made via a controlled gate off Henhurst Road into the Singlewell Infrastructure Maintenance Depot.

Planning History

Ref No	Description and Site	Decision	Date
19980046	Plans, specifications and construction arrangements of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link - Wrotham Road, Northfleet to Henhurst Road, Cobham. (Gravesham Package 4a).	Permitted	25.03.1998
19980264	Plans, specifications and construction arrangements of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link - Henhurst Road to Halfpence Lane, Cobham, Kent (PACKAGE NO 4B).	Permitted	30.06.1998
20000010	Planting proposals forming part of the mitigation works for the CTRL in the Borough of Gravesham (Section 1).	Permitted	10.04.2000
20000106	Formation of additional accommodation accesses from Wrotham Road adjacent to Shrimp Brand Cottages and Henhurst Road and to land south of Church Road, alterations to earthworks at the eastern end of the Singlewell freight loop access track and revision to fence lines. Wrotham Road & Church Road, Gravesend and Henhurst Road, Cobham (Gravesham Packages 4A & 4B - Chainages KM 40+960 - 43+150).	Permitted	10.04.2000
20000115	Selective widening of the cutting at Northumberland Bottom and revised landscaping scheme and fencelines, including the provision of a footpath route on the south side of the CTRL.	Permitted	12.04.2000
20010741	Works associated with the CTRL comprising radio masts, control and communications buildings and a small transformer. Also lighting at the Singlewell freight loops, minor changes to previously approved earthworks at Downs Road and Halfpence Lane and highway and lineside accesses and minor changes to fencelines at Downs Road. Along CTRL alignment at (1) Downs Road, (2) Singlewell freight loops (3) Halfpence Lane/Brewers Road and (4) Knights Place all in Borough of Gravesham, Kent. (Gravesham Package No. 10).	Permitted	22.02.2002
20031103	Plans, specifications for works associated with the CTRL for infrastructure maintenance depot. Matters of approval include earthworks (including for car parking, access road, laydown and training areas, siding etc.), alterations to existing vehicular access, sub-station (if required), maintenance shed for rail vehicles, fuelling facility, accommodation building, workshop and stores building, loading platform for berthing sidings, extension of existing infiltration pond, fencelines and mitigating earthworks and planting north and south of CTRL. West Of Henhurst Road and At Singlewell (CTRL Chainage KM41+880 To 43+240) Gravesend.	Permitted	28.10.2004

20050602	Approval of the design and external appearance of the structures and lighting at the Infrastructure Maintenance Depot at Singlewell. CTRL within the Borough of Gravesham, (Chainage KM41+880 to 43+240) West of Henhurst Road, Cobham on north side of CTRL, (with mitigation earthworks and planting also on south side) at Singlewell, Gravesend, Kent.	Permitted	13.09.2005
20050610	Amendments to construction arrangements previously approved under reference number GR/2003/1103 relating to section 5 - Hours of working and section 9 - Highway access, at the Singlewell Infrastructure Maintenance Depot. West of Henhurst Road, Cobham and at Singlewell (CTRL Chainage KM41+880 to 43+240) Gravesend Kent.	Permitted	13.09.2005
20070416	Approval of plans and specifications in connection with the CTRL for additional lighting to berthing siding and blasted track area.	Permitted	16.07.2007
20080747	Approval of plans and specifications in connection with the CTRL within the Borough of Gravesham in relation to the erection of an additional building for training purposes.	Permitted	10.09.2008
20160518	Approval of plans and specifications in connection with the CTRL within the Borough of Gravesham for the installation of a cable drum storage unit.	Approval	18.07.2016

Proposal

This application is for Approval of plans and specifications in connection with the CTRL within the Borough of Gravesham for the installation of two cable drum storage units within existing compound.

The application is submitted under section 9 and schedule 6 (paragraph 6) of the CTRL Act 1996 as a request for approval of Plans and Specifications

Submitted Plans and Documents

Application Form - Request for approval to Plans and Specifications
Statement/Supporting Letter dated 15 August 2022
Drawing No 16612 01: Location Plan
Drawing No 30062022-3: Coil Racking - Plans and Elevations

Details of the Development

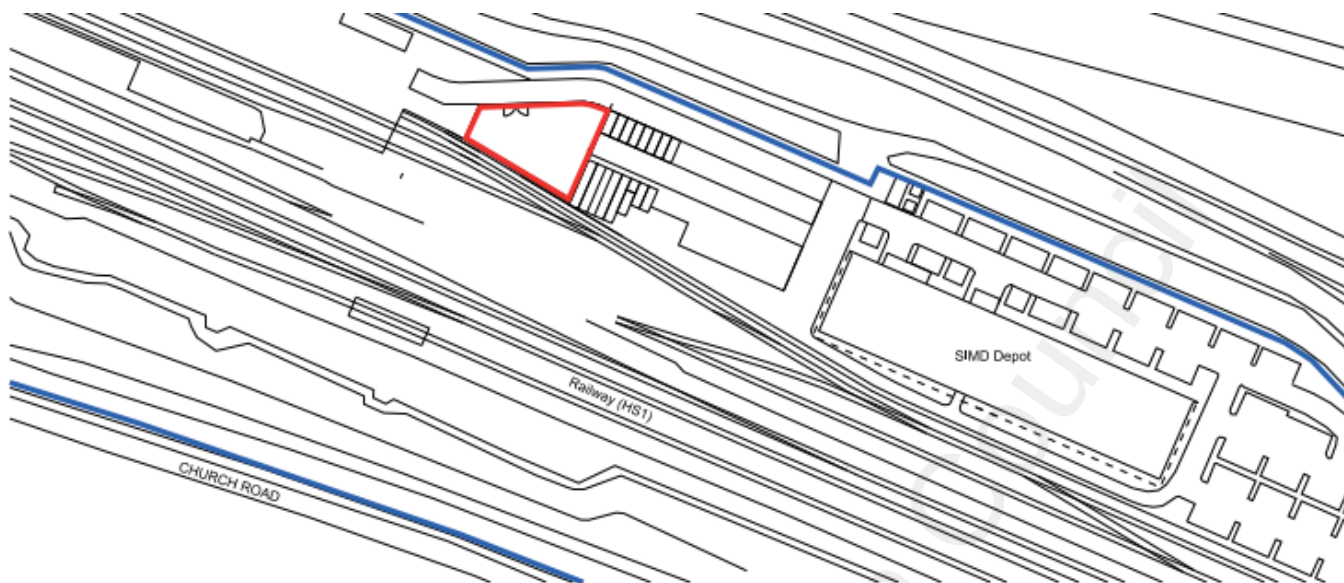
The supporting statement accompanying the application says:

HS1 has a requirement to store various cables for the maintenance of the railway, these are currently stored on cable drums within the depot, but in a very unstructured way, with cable drums being placed on the existing hard surfaced area within the fenced area.

A similar application was submitted and approved in 2016 (Gravesham ref 20160518) for a cable drum storage unit, we are now seeking a further approval for additional cable drum storage facilities within the same area of the depot.

The proposed development is for a covered 3 tier cable drum storage system which would offer safe, secure and weather protected storage.

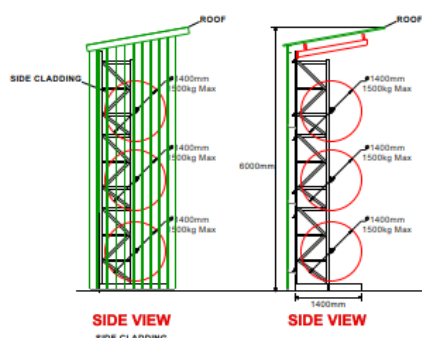
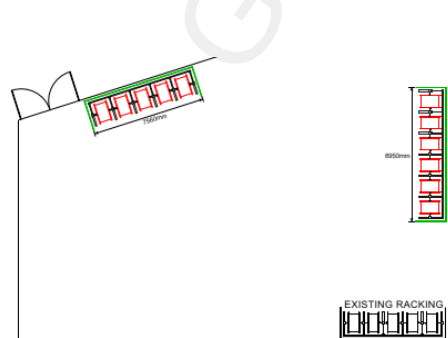
The proposed site for the cable drum storage facilities is shown in the extract plan below.



The open storage of cable drums currently taking place is shown in the applicants photographs below



The proposed storage facilities would be 6m high, 1.5m wide and respectively 7.5m and 8.9m long, and of grey cladding.



The triangular site is surrounded by 1.8m high palisade fencing and is currently used for the storage of cable drums on the surface and within the existing consented cable drum storage unit.

The statement concludes:

There is a demonstrable need for HS1 to store maintenance equipment and parts for the upkeep of the railway. Current storage facilities for cable drums are inadequate and the proposed solution will provide a safe, secure, and cost-efficient solution, whilst also providing weather protection and a more structured and tidy storage solution.

Development Plan and other related Planning Policies and Guidance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Courts have held that it is a matter of planning judgement as to whether a proposal is in accordance with the development plan when 'read as a whole' and conflict with a particular policy or policies may not pass that threshold.¹ Where there are other material considerations, the development plan should be the starting point, and other material considerations should be taken into account in reaching a decision. One such consideration will be whether the plan policies are relevant and up to date.

The Development Plan for Gravesham currently comprises:

- *The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies Map (September 2014)*
- *Remaining Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994), and*
- *The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013 - 2030 (July 2016, revised 2020)*

There are a number of other planning policy documents which are of some relevance to the consideration of planning applications and are material considerations, including national planning advice and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), and supplementary planning guidance and where they exist neighbourhood plans. There are currently no relevant neighbourhood plans.

Previous decisions on planning applications and appeals relating to the site and relevant case law etc. are also capable of being material considerations.

Local Planning Guidance

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, September 2014

The Core Strategy sets out the Council's spatial vision and strategic objectives for the Borough to 2028 and the policies which will deliver them. It identifies the main areas where major change is likely to take place and allocates sites which are key to achieving the strategy.

The application site is shown as being within a **Green Belt area** (Policy CS02) and within **the HS1 Safeguarding Area** (Policy CS11)

The most relevant policies from the adopted Core Strategy in relation to this development are as follows:

Core Strategy Policy CS01: Sustainable Development
Core Strategy Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development
Core Strategy Policy CS07: Economy, Employment and Skills.
Core Strategy Policy CS11: Transport
Core Strategy Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

¹ See the Judgement in the Court of Appeal on R(on the application of William Corbett) and The Cornwall Council and others [2020] EWCA Civ 508 at <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2020/508.pdf>

The Gravesham Local Plan First Review was originally adopted in November 1994. A substantial number of policies of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review were saved by a Direction dated 25 September 2007 of the Secretary of State under paragraph 1 (3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as transitional arrangements pending adoption of the Core Strategy.

Saved policies contained in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review should still be accorded significant weight, albeit that the weight accorded should be greater where policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, paragraph 219). Those Local Plan First Review policies that remain in force are listed in Appendix 1 of the Local Plan Core Strategy. The remaining saved policies will be replaced following the adoption of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document.

The following remaining saved policies are relevant to the consideration of this application:

Policy T1: Impact of Development on the Highway Network

Policy T5: New Accesses onto Highway Network

Policy P3: Vehicle Parking Standards

Gravesham Local Plan Regulation 18 Stage 2 Consultation Part 2: Draft Development Management Policies Document October 2020

The Council published in 2020 a Regulation 18 (stage 2) consultation on its proposed Development Management Policies Document, replacing the 2018 Stage 1 version, which will in due course form part of and update the Gravesham Local Plan. Under paragraph 48 of the NPPF 2021, policies in this document may be accorded weight in the decision-making process with this varying according to its stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections; and the degree of consistency of policy with those in the Framework. As the Development Management Policies Document is at an early stage and the fact that the consultation has only recently concluded, the policies therein should at this stage be given very limited weight. It should be noted, in any event, that many of the relevant policies reflect those set out in the Framework and for the purposes of this pre-application these should be relied on instead.

The following draft policies from the Regulation 18 (Stage 2) Development Management Policies Document (2020) show the direction of travel the Council is going albeit the weight that these emerging policies may be accorded at this stage is very limited.

National Planning Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 is a material consideration. The following paragraphs are specifically highlighted as being of importance to the consideration of the development proposals, but it should not be taken that these are the only parts of the NPPF that need to be considered.

Section 2, Paragraphs 7 - 14: Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 4, Paragraphs 38 - 59: Decision Making

Section 9, Paragraphs 104 -113: Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 12, Paragraphs 126 - 136: Achieving well-designed places

Section 13, Paragraphs 137 - 151: Protecting Green Belt land

Section 14, Paragraphs 152 - 173: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Section 15, Paragraphs 174 - 188: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Planning Practice Guidance (<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>) supports and clarifies areas in the NPPF. It contains guidance on assessing housing need; design; public consultation; open space provision in new development; travel plans, transport assessments and statements in decision-taking; health and wellbeing; water supply, wastewater and water quality; light pollution; determining a planning application; the use of planning conditions and viability, amongst other things. The NPPG gives guidance on what is a material planning consideration in determining a planning application indicating that the impact of a development on the value of a neighbouring property or loss of private rights to light could not be material considerations.

The NPPG includes more detailed advice on the use of planning conditions (replacing the cancelled Circular 11/95). It indicates that when used properly, conditions can enhance the quality of development and enable development proposals to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects of the development. The objectives of planning are best served when the power to attach conditions to a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable. It is important to ensure that conditions are tailored to tackle specific problems, rather than standardised or used to impose broad unnecessary controls.

Supplementary Planning Guidance and other Documents

The Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents, Development Briefs and Conservation Area Appraisals. These elaborate on saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review and policies in the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and are material considerations in determining planning applications.

In addition, the Council has adopted a number of documents that have been produced by Kent County Council also as Supplementary Guidance.

The following documents are relevant to the consideration of this development:

- Kent Design Guide (SPG 5 published December 2005, adopted July 2006)
- Kent Vehicle Parking Standards (SPG 4 published in 2003 and adopted in 2006)
- Vehicle Accesses on Classified Highways (SPG6 November 1992)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, May 2009, (a technical document which underpins policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy).

Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, May 2009

The application site lies within the Gravesend Southern Fringe Landscape Character Area in the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment where the key characteristics are, amongst other things, dominant settlement on urban edge of Gravesend, very gently undulating topography rising from north to south, small arable fields historically part of Istead Farmlands landscape and landscape dominated by large roads, Channel Tunnel Rail Link and associated infrastructure

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultations

GBC Regulatory Services - Environmental Protection Comments

No objection to this application or comments to make.

Cobham Parish Council

No comments received

Publicity

None undertaken due to nature of proposal and distance from any nearby properties.

Planning Analysis and Assessment

Introduction

High Speed 1 (HS1) as the nominated undertaker has deemed consent by virtue of Section 2 (Schedule 2)

of Part 1 of the Act to “make provide and maintain all such.... buildings, apparatus, plant and machinery as may be necessary or convenient”, however under Schedule 6 of the Act details are required to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

The proposal falls to be considered as a minor development application under Schedule 6 of the CTRL Act rather than as “De Minimus” in the context of the wider Singlewell Depot.

The applicant’s statement indicates:

Design and Access Statement

The key factors in the design are location, safety and security, weather protection and cost. The location within the centre of the maintenance depot enables direct and quick access to both the adjacent railway and vehicle areas, as well as offering high levels of security. The proposed structure was selected so that the cable drums can be stored in a neat and ordered manner, with safe access and with the necessary weather protection. The following statement will demonstrate that the facility continues to meet the operational requirements and does not compromise the amenity of the area.

Physical Context

The location is within a fenced compound within the Singlewell Infrastructure Maintenance Depot which is itself surrounded by a perimeter security fence. To the southwest of the site is the two storey Singlewell Depot building and carparking area, to the northeast is the main rail and maintenance yard. On other sides the site is surrounded by landscaped embankments and the A2 trunk road and HS1 rail line. The character of the site is utilitarian, and the predominant materials are concrete, galvanised metal and sinusoidal cladding. Plant and equipment dominate and underline the functional character of the area.

Appearance

The storage facility is a simple structure with clean lines which is sympathetic in character to the existing depot building. The grey cladding is consistent with other materials on the site.

Landscape

The site is located within a large open area of hard surfacing and therefore does not lend itself to additional landscape screening. However, the site in general is located within the overall railway cutting and benefits from landscaped embankments which help to screen the site from most external views.

Principle and Green Belt

The provision of the CTRL Act also gives special consideration to minor development as is proposed.

The site is within a Green Belt area.

In the rural area, Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the policies map. Development outside those settlements, i.e., in the Green Belt, will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy.

Government policy in relation to Green Belts is set out in Section 13 (Protecting Green Belt Land) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021. The NPPF indicates that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by preserving the open and permanent characteristics of Green Belts (paragraph 137 of the NPPF 2021).

However, in this case there is significant built development on the site, the extent of the new built development is minor in relation to the overall site, the site is already hard surfaced, and it is not considered that the development would harm the overall openness of the Green Belt.

The original decision to locate the IMD within the Green Belt in this location had been the subject of significant scrutiny by the then GBC Rail Link Sub Committee in 2004 and in the light of no viable or acceptable alternative locations for the IMD significant mitigation was sought in terms of screening and

landscaping. Moreover, it has been considered that the magnitude of impact on the open countryside was limited as it was part of the transport corridor on the edge of the Green Belt. The original application was accompanied by a report from the applicants that assessed the impact on the Green Belt.

Design and Impact on the Landscape

Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, one aspect of which is the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. Policy CS12 of Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 states that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes within the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that proposals will take account of the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment.

The Landscape Character Assessment states that the condition of the landscape is poor, and the sensitivity is moderate.

The proposed structures are minor within the context of the overall IMD, and the nature of the site is such that it is not widely visible from public viewpoints other than from the public footpath that crosses the HS1 to the west. The site is generally located within the overall railway cutting and benefits from landscaped embankments which help to screen the site from most external views.

There are already similar structures within the site to the west of the cable storage area and it is not considered that there are any visual amenity impacts from the development. It is also considered that there would be no harm to the overall landscape.

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The previously approved storage facility granted in 2016 was smaller structure only be 3m high, 1.5m wide and 27.5m long but similarly constructed of profiled metal sheeting Plastisol coated in Goosewing Grey. Whilst the two new cable storage facilities will be twice the height of the existing structure they would still assimilate within the overall context of the site and are of an appropriate design.

Below the case officer photograph shows the existing approved storage facility within the compound area, marked by the blue arrow.



Neighbour Impacts

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) indicates that new

development will be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in paragraph 130 also assists and seeks to ensure developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area and create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

In this case the site and buildings are sufficiently distance from the nearest residential properties in Watling Street or Henhurst Road such as not to result in either visual impact or noise detriment over and above existing impacts.

Access and Highway Impacts

Relevant policy considerations are Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS11: Transport and Section 9, Paragraphs 104 -113: Promoting Sustainable Transport of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021.

The application in this case raises no highway issues or considerations and would not generate any additional vehicular traffic to the site. The access remains as now being a restricted access via a controlled gate on to Henhurst Road.

Other Material Considerations

There are no other material planning considerations. The site had had significant archaeological importance associated with the nearby A2 Watling Street, but substantial work of investigation was undertaken during the building of the CTRL line in 1998.

Conclusions and Balancing Exercise

In summary the extent of the new built development is minor in relation to the overall site, the site is already hard surfaced, and it is not considered that the development would harm the overall openness of the Green Belt.

The nature of the site is such that it is not widely visible from public viewpoints other than from the public footpath that crosses the HS1 to the west. The site is generally located within the overall railway cutting and benefits from landscaped embankments which help to screen the site from most external views.

There are already similar structures within the site to the west of the cable storage area and it is not considered that there are any visual amenity impacts from the development. It is also considered that there would be no harm to the overall landscape.

The development raises no neighbour impact issues or highway issues.

There are no overriding planning policies or other material consideration and therefore **APPROVAL** is recommended

Recommendation:

Approval of Plans and Specifications

Conditions

None

Grounds

None

INFORMATIVES :-

1 STATUS OF SUBMITTED PLANS AND DOCUMENTS

For the avoidance of doubt the following plans and documents were submitted in support of the application for approval and were taken into account in making the decision:

Plans

Drawing No 16612 01: Location Plan

Drawing No 30062022-3: Coil Racking - Plans and Elevations

Documents

Application Form - Request for approval to Plans and Specifications

Statement/Supporting Letter dated 15 August 2022

Case Officer:	Mr Peter Price	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	24 th October 2022	Dated:	31 st October 2022

File Location: H: Plan/Typing/General/Peter/Delegated Reports/Uniform - 20220898 - Delegated Report - IMD Singlewell - Cable drum storage unit