

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8/2(f)

Parish:	Leziate	
Proposal:	COUNTY MATTERS APPLICATION: The extraction of industrial sand and associated works with progressive restoration to wildlife habitat, geological exposures and a lake	
Location:	Sibelco Minerals & Chemicals Station Road Leziate King's Lynn	
Applicant:	Sibelco UK	
Case No:	20/00884/CM (County Matter Application)	
Case Officer:	Mrs K Lawty	Date for Determination: 15 July 2020

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Referred by the Assistant Director

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

The application is a County Matters application for the extraction of industrial sand and associated works along with the progressive restoration of the site to wildlife habitat, geological exposures and a lake at Mintlyn South Quarry.

The planning application boundary extends to an area of 56.1 hectares. The proposed extraction area covers an area of circa. 15.3 hectares of the site.

The application site is in Leziate/ Bawsey, approximately 2.5 km north west of the centre of East Winch, and 2.1 km to the north of Middleton.

The application site extends either side of Station Road, Leziate, which runs north south through the application site. The proposed extraction area is to the west and the Leziate Plant Site is to the east.

The northern and central parts of the proposed extraction area and other parts within the application area have been previously worked for sand extraction. These areas have been left to re-colonise naturally without any interference or formal restoration, with the exception of some smaller areas of tree planting.

The land within the south-western part of the proposed extraction area is in agricultural (grazing) use.

This application is a County Matters application whereby Norfolk County Council is the Determining Authority and the Local Planning Authority is one of a number of statutory consultees.

Planning Committee
9 September 2020

The application has been submitted with an accompanying Environmental Statement which includes assessments of all likely significant environmental effects.

Key Issues

Principle of development
Highways issues
Neighbour Amenity
Ecology
Other Material Considerations

Recommendation

NO OBJECTION – but recommend that conditions are imposed including those requested by the Council’s CSNN and Environmental Quality teams

THE APPLICATION

The site extends to 56.1 hectares. 15.3 hectares are proposed for the extraction of industrial sand which will be restored once the sand has been extracted.

The application site extends either side of Station Road, Leziate and incorporates the proposed extraction area to the west and the Leziate Plant Site to the east.

It is estimated that sand reserves within the proposed extraction area are likely to be in the region of 1.1 million tonnes. Sand will be extracted from Mintlyn South Quarry over a period of 8 years. The sands will be extracted from the quarry face before depositing it into dumper trucks for transfer, via the internal haul route, to the intermediate stockpile. Sand will be loaded from the intermediate stockpile into the conveyor feed hopper by a front-end loading shovel. From there the conveyor will transport the sand to the stockpile at the Leziate Plant Site via the existing conveyor tunnel under Station Road.

It is proposed that the sand will be extracted on a campaign basis of up to around 37,500 tonnes of sand each campaign, up to a total of approximately 150,000 tonnes per year (i.e. 4- 5 campaigns per year). Each campaign will last circa 5 weeks. Outside of campaigns, the stockpile will require 'topping up' as the sand extracted from Mintlyn South Quarry is consumed by the Leziate Plant Site. Therefore, up to once a week a front-end loader and the conveyor will be in operation.

The northern and central parts of the proposed extraction area and other parts within the application area have been previously worked for sand extraction. For the most part these areas have been left to re-colonise naturally without any interference or formal restoration, with the exception of some smaller areas of tree planting. The land within the south-western part of the proposed extraction area is in agricultural (grazing) use.

Mintlyn South Quarry is in a semi-rural area characterised by large areas of agricultural land to the south and south west, extensive areas of plantation woodland to the east, west and within the application area itself.

There are large waterbodies to the north as well as within the application area itself. The areas of woodland and the waterbodies present in the vicinity of the application area are typical of those features created by past mineral extraction across the wider area.

There are two residential properties to the immediate north of the Leziat Plant Site access from Station Road and a further property is located to the south where Station Road intersects the railway.

There are several residential properties and outbuildings to the north of the Leziat Plant Site along Holt House Lane. There are further residential properties on an unnamed access track to the south of Holt House Lane, the majority of which are owned by Sibelco and leased to tenants.

There are two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) - which pass through the application area; Bawsey RB8 runs east / west along the northern edge of the application area and Bawsey RB9 runs north /south from Station Road and adjoins Bawsey RB8 to the north of Blue Lagoon.

The application proposes the following:-

- the installation of 1.8 metre anti-climb fencing around the boundary of the works area (extraction area plus any other land required for operational purposes within the application area i.e. internal haul roads, conveyor route and any other ancillary equipment);
- the installation of a controlled crossing where the proposed haul route between the extraction area and the intermediate stockpile crosses Bawsey RB9;
- the installation of the conveyor and associated ancillary equipment (including a new switch house circa.3 x 3 x 2 metres high)from the proposed location of the intermediate stockpile (on land to the west of Station Road) to the proposed location of the radial stockpile at the Leziat Plant Site (on land to the east of Station Road);
- any vegetation clearance required prior to the undertaking of the aforementioned works;
- the planting of a circa 420 metre native hedgerow along the southern boundary of the application area; and
- the installation of a range of ecological enhancement features (reptile hibernacula, bat boxes and bird boxes) within the application area.

The duration of the site establishment works is likely to be around 6 months and would commence shortly after all the requisite consents are obtained which is anticipated to be in late 2020.

Sibelco anticipates that site establishment works will commence in late 2020. Once site establishment has been completed, sand extraction will be undertaken over a period of 8 years with a further 2 years to complete restoration.

The proposed hours of mineral extraction and use of the conveyor are as follows:

07:00 –18:00 Monday to Friday; and

07:00 –13:00 Saturdays (with no working on Sunday, Bank Holidays and Public Holidays)

The King's Lynn Complex employs 45 people locally. Around 80 more are employed in contracted related roles (earthworks, land management, road transport and rail transport). The proposed development will therefore help secure the continued direct employment of the applicant's existing workforce and contractors.

Access to and from the proposed extraction area by mobile plant will be via the existing access point off Station Road. Plant will cross Station Road from the Leziate Plant Site at the start and end of each day during campaigns.

The 15.3 hectares restored extraction area will comprise:

- 6.16 hectares of acid grassland / heath / inland dune
- 0.16 hectares of retained geological exposure; and
- 8.94 hectares of water.

The application area will be managed for nature conservation and will be managed for 5 years following restoration –to ensure successful establishment. The 5 year aftercare period for each Phase will begin once each restoration Phase is complete. It is not proposed that any additional public access be provided within the application area.

The Application Area is allocated for silica sand extraction in Norfolk County Council's Minerals Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document. The proposed development is required to maintain the steady and adequate supply of industrial silica sand.

SUPPORTING CASE

Sibelco operates the 'King's Lynn Complex' at Leziate, Norfolk, where it excavates silica sand from a number of quarries, transfers it to the Leziate Plant Site, processes it to produce different industrial sand products and exports it by rail and road to customers all over the UK.

In order to continue to meet current demand Sibelco wishes to excavate silica sand from an area to the west of the Leziate Plant Site (and to the west of Station Road) - known as Mintlyn South Quarry.

The application has been supported by a raft of documents including an Environmental Statement which includes assessments of all likely significant environmental effects. The key environmental issues assessed are: Alternatives; Ecology; Landscape and Visual; Cultural Heritage; Noise; Air Quality; Hydrology and Hydrogeology; and Soils and Agricultural Land.

A Planning Statement sets out the key policy considerations.

The Environmental Impact Assessment has assessed the baseline conditions of the application area, identified the impacts of the proposed development and where significant effects have been identified mitigation measures (the majority of which are) embedded within the design of the development) reduce the effects to acceptable levels.

It is considered that, subject to the incorporation of the mitigation measures as proposed, the development will not have a significant effect on the local environment.

The embedded mitigation measures included as part of the design of the proposed development would allow for the maturation and enhancement of the application area over the period of working, leading to the long term enhancement of the site with beneficial residual impacts identified.

PLANNING HISTORY

Sibelco currently operates two quarries which form part of the King's Lynn Complex-Holt House Quarry and Grandcourt Quarry.

Planning permission for the working of Grandcourt Quarry was granted in 2007 (planning permission reference C/2/2004/2034) and is currently the subject of two further applications –one for an extension to the quarry (application reference C/2/2018/2016) and one to allow the existing quarry to be worked until the end of 2025 (application reference C/2/2018/2017).

Holt House Quarry is currently operated in accordance with planning permission number C/2/2014/2004 which was granted on 14th May 2018 and which extended the end date for extraction until 21st December 2022.

Mintlyn South Quarry also forms part of the King's Lynn Complex, but the working of the quarry was suspended in the 1980s due to difficulties in processing the extracted sand to the required grade (a technical processing problem which has now been overcome).

Wicken South Quarry was formerly part of the King's Lynn Complex, but the working of this site has now finished, and the site has been restored. Some of the areas on the south of the site remain in formal aftercare.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

NB The following consultation responses were sent directly to Norfolk County Council as the Determining Authority. The responses from other teams within the Local Authority have been given in full. This is because they are specifically referred to in the following report and your officers are requesting the inclusion of certain conditions they recommend if permission is granted.

Environmental Health & Housing – Environmental Quality (BCKLWN): NO OBJECTION

Contaminated Land

The site is on agricultural, woodland and previously developed land which has a history of mineral extraction. The land is not a priority for inspection under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act as there is no evidence of landfilling or harm to sensitive receptors. We note that the stripped soils are proposed to be used in restoration and that there is expected to be minimal impact on groundwater from the mineral extraction.

Therefore we have no objections regarding contaminated land.

Air Quality

An Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken, with the results detailed within the Environmental Statement (ES). Nearby receptors to the site have been identified; the closest being less than 50m from the application area. Embedded mitigation measures have been included within the air quality assessment, which include ensuring water is available to wet potentially dusty materials, limiting the use of the conveyor to one weekday per week, and the phasing of works to limit the area of extraction, and thus the risk of dust impacts.

As detailed within the ES, the development is considered to have a negligible to slight adverse effect on most of the dust sensitive receptors in close proximity of the site. However, at receptors R2 to R11, the effect is considered to be potentially significant due to the proximity of the conveyor belt. Therefore, mitigation through the shielding of the conveyor near to receptors along Station Road is proposed. This mitigation reduces dust effects at receptors to slightly adverse. The overall effect is considered to be not significant.

The ES states that IAQM guidance says that if the long-term background PM10 concentration is less than 17µg/m³, there is little risk that the Process Contribution from the

proposed development would lead to an exceedance of the annual mean or daily objective. Background PM10 concentrations at the site are below 17 µg/m³. It can therefore be concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to result in exceedances of the PM10 air quality objectives.

Additionally, the extraction process will be undertaken in stages from south to north, with concurrent progressive restoration. The soils stripped from Phase 1 will be stored in a bund, which will provide additional screening. The bund and central soil storage mound will then be seeded at the first opportunity to again reduce dust emissions.

We therefore have no objection to the proposal regarding air quality as long as the mitigation detailed within the ES is carried out.

Community Safety and Neighbourhood Nuisance (BCKLWN): NO OVERRIDING OBJECTION

Dust

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken. The results are detailed within the Environmental Statement (ES). Nearby receptors to the site have been identified; the closest being less than 50m from the application area. Mitigation measures have been included within the air quality assessment including ensuring water is available to wet potentially dusty materials, limiting the use of the conveyor to one weekday per week, the phasing of works to limit the area of extraction. The ES advises the development is considered to have a potentially significant effect at receptors R2 to R11 due to the proximity of the conveyor belt, therefore mitigation through the shielding of the conveyor as it passes receptors along Station Road is proposed, which will reduce dust effects at receptors to slightly adverse. The overall effect is considered to be not significant.

The extraction process will be undertaken in stages from south to north, with concurrent progressive restoration. The soils stripped from Phase 1 will be stored in a bund, which will provide additional screening. The bund and central soil storage mound will then be seeded at the first opportunity to again reduce dust emissions.

Please attach a suitably worded condition to ensure that the mitigation detailed with the ES is carried out and complied with.

Drainage

There are no foul or surface water drainage concerns regarding this site.

Lighting

The ES advises that there will not be any static lighting located within the extraction area. The only required lighting in this location will be from the mobile plant - at the start and end of the day during winter months. There will be a requirement for one downlight at the intermediate stockpile and two downlights on the radial stockpile within the Leziat Plant Site. Any downlights would be installed with Passive Infrared (PIR) sensors and so will only be used when necessary.

The location and separation distance from the intermediate stockpile means there should not be any impact from the single light in this location. The bund may also assist in limiting impact. My concerns regarding using PIR lighting are that there is the risk of wildlife movements during the night activating the lights to the radial stockpile which could cause light disturbance to receptors along Station Road or to the north. Although it appears there may be a separation distance of more than 120m to the nearest receptor, I am unable to ascertain from the information provided how high the lights may be mounted, where they are to be located and whether there are any physical barriers between their locations and the

receptors. As it may not be possible to provide this information at this time, I recommend that the radial stockpile lighting is hooded/cowled and/or angled to shine directly downwards from the horizontal in order to limit any impact on residential amenity.

I recommend a suitably worded condition to require the two radial stockpile lights to be hooded/cowled and/or angled to shine directly downwards from the horizontal.

Noise

The ES, Planning Statement and EIA Appendix F state the proposed hours of mineral extraction and use of the conveyor are as follows:

07:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday; and

07:00 – 13:00 Saturdays (with no working on Sunday, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays)

As these hours are the same as the existing hours for the company's other sites (as per planning refs C/2/2014/2004 and C/2/2004/2034), I confirm that we would not object.

Although the hours of work are included in the ES and EIA, I recommend that they are conditioned as a stand-alone condition (ideally incorporating the prevention of use of the conveyor on Saturdays).

Ten measures have been embedded in the scheme design to minimise noise and vibration levels at the receptor locations (ensuring minimal disturbance from the operational site) including the limited use of the conveyor to one weekday each week to restock the radial stockpile, use of 'quieter option' vehicle reversing alarms, avoidance of unnecessary revving of engines, switching off plant when not in use, minimising materials drop heights etc.

Please attach a suitable worded condition to ensure that the mitigation measures detailed with the ES and EIA Appendix F are carried out and complied with.

The EIA provides information on background noise surveying undertaken to identify the existing noise levels for the dwellings closest to the site, in various directions. Table 4.1. on page 14 provides a Summary of Baseline Noise Measurement Results and Noise Limits. The table indicates the maximum daytime (07:00-18:00 Mon-Fri and 07:00-13:00 Sat) noise levels are:

R1 White House Farm 52

R2 Fir Cottage / Gomo Re Gumbo 52

R3 No.33 and 37 Station Road 55

R4 Holt House 54

R5 Forestry Cottage 53

Planning Practice Guidance states that quarrying activity noise should not exceed background noise levels by more than 10db(A) between the hours of 07:00 to 19:00. The document reports that background noise levels recorded during the survey should not include existing quarrying operations, as these were not heard by the site engineer at the monitoring locations, therefore it is assumed that these noise levels are suitable for reference.

I request that the maximum noise levels which are not to be exceeded are conditioned – either as a stand-alone condition using the details above, as a condition requiring compliance with the maximum noise levels as shown in Table 4.1, page 14 of the EIA Appendix F, or as compliance with the contents of the EIA Appendix F as a whole.

REPRESENTATIONS

No third party responses received by the local planning authority.

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS12 - Environmental Assets

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM2 – Development Boundaries

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
National Design Guide 2019

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

Principle of development
Highways issues
Neighbour Amenity
Ecology and
Other Material Considerations

Principle of development

The relevant development plan documents in this case comprise:

- NCC Core Strategy and Minerals and Waste Development Management Policies DPD;
- NCC Norfolk Minerals Site Specific Allocations DPD;
- King's Lynn & West Norfolk Core Strategy; and
- King's Lynn & West Norfolk Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan.

The King's Lynn & West Norfolk Core Strategy policies which are particularly relevant to the determination of this application are policies CS06 (Development in rural areas), CS08 (Sustainable development), CS11 (Transport) and CS12 (Environmental assets).

Relevant policies of the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan are policies DM1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development) and DM15 (Environment, design and amenity).

Nationally, NPPF paras 203, 205, 208 refer. In relation to the last of these policies, NPPF footnote 68 explains that these reserves should be at least 10 years for individual silica sand sites.

The proposed development:

- involves the working of a mineral which is of local and national importance (as defined in NPPF Annex 2);
- ensures that the mineral is put to best use;
- will help to maintain a steady and adequate supply of industrial minerals;
- will not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts in terms of the matters listed in NPPF paragraph 205 b) and c) (as demonstrated in the ES which accompanies this application); and
- provides for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity and for this to be carried out to high environmental standards,

Accordingly there is no conflict with NPPF paragraphs 203, 205 and 208 -as well as the great weight which the Government expects MPAs to give to the economic benefits of mineral extraction (as set out at NPPF paragraph 205).

The application site is a former site of mineral extraction and is located in close proximity to existing minerals infrastructure (processing and dispatch). The application site is allocated for minerals extraction under Policy SIL01 of the SSAP and the submitted Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is compliant with the criteria set out in this policy.

Accordingly it is considered the application site is an acceptable location for minerals extraction.

The Planning Statement shows that there is a demonstrable need for the proposed development in that it is necessary to maintain a steady and adequate supply of industrial mineral.

The principle of development is considered acceptable.

Highways issues

It is proposed that the sand will be extracted on a campaign basis of around 37,500 tonnes of sand each campaign, up to a total of approximately 150,000 tonnes per year (i.e. 4-5 campaigns per year). Each campaign will last around 5 weeks.

The sands will be excavated from the quarry face before depositing it into dumper trucks for transfer, via the internal haul route, to the intermediate stockpile. Sand will be loaded from the intermediate stockpile into the conveyor feed hopper by a front-end loading shovel. From there the conveyor will transport the sand to the radial stockpile at the Leziat Plant Site via the existing conveyor tunnel under Station Road.

Outside of campaigns the radial stockpile will require regular replenishment as the sand extracted from Mintlyn South Quarry is consumed by the Leziate Plant Site. Therefore, around once a week, a front-end loader and the conveyor will be in operation.

Final restoration of the extraction area and the removal of the associated conveyor and ancillary equipment / features will all be achieved within two years of the date when sand extraction is completed.

Processing and dispatch of products to customers will continue to take place from the Leziate Plant Site (to the east of Station Road) in accordance with existing operational and management practices / protocols.

Access to and from the proposed extraction area by mobile plant will be via the existing access point off Station Road. Plant will cross Station Road from the Leziate Plant Site at the start and end of each day during campaigns.

Aside from the occasional movement of mobile plant at the beginning and end of each working day during the extraction campaigns, the proposed sand extraction at Mintlyn South Quarry will not directly generate any vehicle movements on the local highway network.

The Leziate Plant Site currently produces around 750,000 tonnes of sand per annum of which around 70% is dispatched by rail. The balance is transported by road via Station Road / Hill Road and the A47.

This level of traffic generation will not be increased by the working of Mintlyn South Quarry.

The movement of mobile plant to and from the extraction area at the beginning and end of each working day during campaigns will require mobile plant to cross RB9. In order to ensure the safety of users of the PRoW it is proposed that gating and signing be put in place to manage this. The arrangement will consist of traffic lights activated by pedestrians to alert mobile plant to their presence. When the lights go red mobile plant stops and the gates are raised to allow pedestrians to pass.

The NPPF identifies that "Development should only be prevented or refused on transport ground where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe". From the information provided no highways concerns are raised as a result of this proposal and there is no conflict with planning policy in this regard.

Neighbour Amenity

The application area is bisected by Station Road running roughly north-south and the Leziate Plant Site lies to the east. There are two residential properties to the immediate north of the Leziate Plant Site access from Station Road and a further property is located to the south where Station Road intersects the railway.

There are several residential properties and outbuildings to the north of the Leziate Plant Site along Holt House Lane. There are further residential properties on an unnamed access track to the south of Holt House Lane, the majority of which are owned by Sibelco and leased to tenants.

Environmental Quality and the CSNN team have both reviewed the supporting documents, which include details of mitigation measures relating to dust suppression, lighting and noise. Ten measures have been embedded in the scheme design to minimise noise and vibration levels at the receptor locations (ensuring minimal disturbance from the operational site) including the limited use of the conveyor to one weekday each week to restock the radial

stockpile, use of 'quieter option' vehicle reversing alarms, avoidance of unnecessary revving of engines, switching off plant when not in use, minimising materials drop heights etc.

For this reason neither Environmental Quality nor the CSNN team raise objection to the proposal in principle. CSNN request, however, that these mitigation measures are referred to in specific planning conditions.

In summary, the use of the site will generate a degree of noise and disturbance from the equipment used to extract and transport the sand.

However, these would not be excessive in level or duration provided that appropriate mitigation measures are in place.

In summary, planning conditions are recommended to be imposed regarding the following: -

- Ensuring water is available to wet potentially dusty materials,
- Limiting the use of the conveyor to one weekday per week,
- Phasing the works to limit the area of extraction,
- Ensure mitigation through the shielding of the conveyor near to receptors along Station Road. This mitigation reduces dust effects at receptors to slightly adverse,
- Ensuring the bund and central soil storage mound will be seeded at the first opportunity to reduce dust emissions.
- Ensuring that the radial stockpile lighting is hooded/cowled and/or angled to shine directly downwards from the horizontal in order to limit any impact on residential amenity.
- Ensuring that the hours of work are conditioned as a stand-alone condition (ideally incorporating the prevention of use of the conveyor on Saturdays)
- Ensuring the ten measures to minimise noise and vibration are monitored
- Requiring the maximum noise levels which are not to be exceeded are conditioned – either as a stand-alone condition using the details above, as a condition requiring compliance with the maximum noise levels as shown in Table 4.1, page 14 of the EIA Appendix F, or as compliance with the contents of the EIA Appendix F as a whole.

Other Environmental Issues

Once the sand has been extracted the proposal includes works to restore the land and enhance the landscape. The application proposes protected species benefits including the installation of a range of ecological enhancement features (reptile hibernacula, bat boxes and bird boxes) within the application area.

The proposed development includes mitigation measures which will be followed to ensure that the environment is appropriately protected. The findings of the EIA confirm that the proposed development will not result in significant residual effects. It is noted that the proposed development will result in a biodiversity net gain of 13%.

As recognised by the NPPF, development that seeks to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported. This should be afforded considerable weight in the planning balance.

Other Material Considerations

Economic benefits

The proposed development will release approximately 1.1 million tonnes of industrial silica sand.

Specifically, at the King's Lynn Complex, securing this reserve will help to maintain existing employment. Approximately 45 people locally are employed at the site and around 80 more are employed in contracted related roles (earthworks, land management, road transport and rail transport).

The King's Lynn Complex contributes substantially to the economy in terms of wages, the purchase of goods and services, business rates and investment in plant, equipment and other services. It is estimated that Sibelco's operations at the King's Lynn Complex contribute at least £15 million annually into the economy.

The importance of industrial silica sand extends to the wider economy through the downstream consumer industries and the related employment associated with them. The sand extracted from the application site will be used in the production of glass within the UK. The UK glass industry as a whole contributes around an estimated £1.5 billion per annum in terms of sales revenue for glass products and significant further downstream contribution for goods and services. This underlines the national importance of industrial sands at the site when considered against the scarcity of the mineral.

As recognised by the NPPF, the benefits of mineral extraction to the economy should be afforded great weight.

Adverse Effects of the Proposed Development

The benefits of the proposed development far outweigh any perceived adverse effects associated with the proposed development. The submitted Planning Statement has also demonstrated that the proposed development is compliant with the Development Plan. As such, this planning application should be approved without delay in accordance with paragraphs 11(c) and 47 of the NPPF.

Summary

A need has been identified for the extraction of sand.

The applicant has demonstrated that the proposal can overcome constraints including ecology, drainage and contamination subject to the imposition of appropriately worded planning conditions.

The development is acceptable from a traffic and transport perspective.

At a local level, Core Strategy Policy CS06 relates to development in rural areas. This states that beyond the villages and in the countryside the strategy will be to protect the countryside for its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, and its natural resources to be enjoyed by all. CS12 seeks to protect and enhance the historic environment and landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity.

The site is an existing quarry area and is therefore by its nature located at a lower level to the surrounding area. Views from the surrounding area into the site are very limited; the site is in essence quite self-contained.

Provided the supporting information shows that the development will have no long term harm to landscape character, biodiversity, geodiversity, heritage assets and public amenity the proposal is supported in planning policy terms.

Subject to conditions it is not considered that the proposed development would have any material detrimental impact on the amenity of the locality or, due to the distances involved, the amenity of any residential properties.

Conclusion

The proposed development is for the proposed extraction of industrial sand and associated works with progressive restoration to wildlife habitat, geological exposures and a lake at Mintlyn South Quarry, Bawsey near Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

The application site is allocated for silica sand extraction in Norfolk County Council's Minerals Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document. The proposed development is required to maintain the steady and adequate supply of industrial silica sand.

No objection is raised to the proposal, subject to conditions recommended by the Local Authority's CSNN and Environmental Quality teams in their direct comments to the applicant.

The Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is compliant with the Development Plan and that the benefits of the proposal far outweigh any perceived adverse effects. As a result, this planning application should be approved without delay in accordance with paragraphs 11(c) and 47 of the NPPF.

Adequate provision has been made to ensure that the development can occur without significant long term harm to the character of the countryside, protected species or biodiversity. The site has been operating for some time and is well set up for vehicle movements. The landscaping is established and provision is made for improved planting schemes long term. The proposal accords with the aims and provisions of national and local policy requirements.

On this basis it is considered the proposal will have no significant long term effect on the character and appearance of the countryside as the area will be restored after use. After due consideration the proposal is considered acceptable.

In conclusion the LPA considers that the proposed development accords with the overarching government guidance in relation to such proposals and that it would not result in any significant detrimental harm to the locality. It is therefore recommended that no objection is raised to this proposal subject to the imposition of planning conditions recommended by the CSNN and Environmental Quality teams.

RECOMMENDATION:

NO OBJECTION – but recommend that conditions are imposed including those requested by the Council's CSNN and Environmental Quality Teams.