

Compliance and Sustainability Appraisal

My name is Allan Murdoch and I represent the Communities of Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton.

Our concern is that WCC have not complied with all the Rules and Regulations when putting together the Minerals Plan despite assertions to the contrary.

This conclusion follows a detailed review of the Plan by our professional advisors, namely:

- Richard Kimblin QC, planning barrister at No 5 Chambers in Birmingham
- Wardle Armstrong, Multidisciplinary Engineering, Environmental and Mining Consultants.
- Jane Mulcahey of JAM Consultants, experts on Sustainability Assessment

There are 3 key areas which give us the greatest concern which I would like to share with you:

The first is sustainability. The choice of sites is so very important to the communities affected and if done properly should not give them cause to dispute the choice. That is not the case here due to a number of failings.

Let me mention some of these as an example;

The reasons for the selection and rejection of sites has not been outlined within the SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT report contrary to the Regulations and Guidance. It should provide conclusions on the overall sustainability of the different alternatives. Any assumptions used in assessing the significance of effects of the Local Plan should be documented in accordance with the NPPG.

The key findings of the consultations and how they have been taken into consideration, particularly the Statutory Consultees, have not been included within the SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT report. This omission means the SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT has failed to comply with both the Regulations (Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) and the NPPG.

The viability and deliverability of the proposals have not been assessed contrary to the NPPF.

The selection of the sites is not linked to any evidence base. The failure in the SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT process alone means that the Plan can not be found sound.

There has been no Landscape assessment which is crucial to a decision of this magnitude.

There has been no Heritage assessment with a site containing so many heritage assets.

Many of these points have already been made in response to the consultation procedure but unfortunately they have been brushed aside as having little or no relevance. We hope that this body will take note of what we are saying. You must realise that non-compliance of Regulations allows us to challenge the validity of any decision and we propose to do this if we are put in a position of having to fight a decision.

Thank you for your attention.

Traffic

I am the member of the WDC Executive and the portfolio holder for development. My biggest challenge is the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which needs to address the demand on our infrastructure for over 16,000 new homes over the next 15 years. Locally those of us who use the A429 on a regular basis are aware of the current traffic congestion problems on this road before most of the new homes are completed.

In the initial planning for the District's Local Plan, Barford was originally identified as being capable of taking 60 new homes. The final number has now increased to 150 homes (an increase of 150% from that seen as capable for this community). Wellesbourne has already been identified by Stratford DC as being capable of taking hundreds more houses. We then fast forward to the day when these many houses are completed and the problem only gets much worse.

We are all aware that consideration is being given to the development of the Wellesbourne site for housing and/or industry. This is a large site and will generate an even more large volume of traffic (both private and commercial).

Let us also not forget that Jaguar Landover are also expanding their operations and this will only add to today's traffic congestion. In addition, the largest construction project this country has undertaken since the war – HS2 – will involve a massive increase in construction traffic for the next five years.

Now consider what a large industrial scale quarry will do. The developer has indicated that the quarry will add 700 trucks per week to this road. We then have to add road sweepers which are necessary to clear mud from the main road, we have cars for those people working at the site and finally there are the trucks delivering infill to the quarry.

This over view I have painted is for the reasonable foreseeable future, the workings at the quarry will continue for at least 20 years. There is no doubt that over that period of time even more development will take place meaning more traffic.

Heavy trucks are large, slow moving, noisy, cumbersome and dirty. The addition of such vehicles is a recipe for disaster on a local highway network never designed for such a heavy volume of commercial traffic and the impact on traffic flow will be massive. We know that frustration leads to accidents and the potential for even more accidents on this already accident-prone road will be increased. Trucks are noisy and the A429 passes very close to the nearby villages and there is no doubt that the quality of life for those living close to the road will be adversely affected. The exhaust from these heavy trucks will add to the air pollution in the local environment already at unsafe levels and will further affect the quality of life of those living near the road.

I urge you to consider these adverse impacts when considering the viability of such a massive intrusion on this local community

Dust Health and Safety

Presentation to Cabinet, WCC, 10th October 2017, reference Sand & Gravel Minerals Plan – Sites 4 & 5. Edward Kirkby, Barford.

When this current plan was first mooted two/three years ago a team from Warwickshire County Council came to the village of Barford to present the plan. That team could not only NOT identify where Barford was in relation to Sites 4 & 5, they made no mention of any Dust or Health & Safety issues, convincing the villagers that the proximity of the quarries to Barford and the likelihood of Dust and Health & Safety issues were never EVER considered.

Open-Cast-Mining, which is what this is, is probably the most efficient method of dust generation known to man, short of exploding a nuclear bomb.

We understand there will only be one processing plant for the two quarries and that sand & gravel will be moved from source to process plant via a conveyor belt, another very efficient method of dust generation.

We also have the hundreds of Lorries entering and leaving the quarry each week churning up the dust and these are not only a major source of dust generation with their huge wheels, but also diesel fumes of nitrous oxides that they generate in the process, which will be added to the dust, making a lethal cocktail.

The experts divide dust into three sizes:

- 30 microns (PM30)
- 10 microns (PM10) and
- 2.5 microns (PM2.5).

PM30s are generally believed not to travel very far, but of course in this case they will be carried out of the quarry on the wheels of the Lorries and onto the A429 a few metres away, to be distributed by the thousands of vehicles driving passed the quarry towards Barford and the M40.

PM10s are however a different matter, this is the stuff that creates the clouds of dust you can easily see and usually remain suspended in the atmosphere for long periods of time and are capable of being inhaled into the lungs. PM10s can be carried not just hundreds of metres but potentially thousands of metres given, as here, there is nothing much in its way; other than the village of Barford of course a few hundred metres away.

Then we have the PM2.5s this is the stuff you can't see and is the real killer as it penetrates into the gas exchange region of the lungs, causing permanent damage, particularly in the underdeveloped lungs of young children.

Barford has a very successful primary school which educates approximately 150 pupils a year, we also have a successful preschool nursery which has some 30/40 children.

The prevailing wind which carries this lethal cocktail generally blows from the quarry toward Barford School.

Barford is also blessed with an above average age adult population with a 30% increase in recent years of people over 75.

What these two groups have in common is their susceptibility to serious damage to their health caused by the inhalation of dust. With the young suffering from increased asthma attacks and the elderly from co-morbidity i.e., dust added to everything else.

Be under no illusion you are talking about dumping tonnes of toxic dust on to the heads of the people in Barford, both young and old over the life of this project.

Thank you.

Heritage Report to Cabinet October 2017

Heritage Wasperton and Barford, are blessed with numerous Heritage assets - either in close proximity to, or immediately adjacent to sites 4 and 5 – The most immediate being Thelsford Priory, a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Seven Elms and Wasperton Farm which are Grade 2 Listed buildings.

As part of plan preparation, County were required to consult with statutory bodies, one of which was Historic England. Within their response Historic England stated that:

A full Archaeological Assessment and analysis prior to allocation is required. This has been totally ignored by County's planning dept. The recent report to cabinet includes Heritage as having –

“either been assessed or will be assessed as part of the planning application”. This DIRECTLY CONTRAVENES the advice of Historic England who are key in these matters. Heritage has not been assessed by Warwickshire County Council and it should not be left to be done at the planning stage as advised by the officer.

The officers continue in their observations of Site 5 to state that with regard to tonnage they - “have no evidence to contradict the developer”, which of course is the Counties Estates Department.

However, as part of the consultation process the planners have received detailed information demonstrating HOW the figures quoted by the Estates Department are not possible. -- The tonnage they claim as available is based on data prepared in the 1980s and does not allow for standoffs specified by the planners to –

- key heritage assets
- the protection of Thelsford Brook and hedgerow
- and the legal requirement to maintain the access track

Yet again the officers' observations ignore recent professionally prepared, calculations - supplied by respondents in favour of antiquated estimates.

The Observations in this report also fail to update the cabinet of their own “in house” assessment report which concluded:

“it will not be possible - to appropriately mitigate in landscape and heritage terms for mineral development in this location. It goes on to say –

“Visibility, inherent rural character and heritage setting are key considerations” and recommended that in landscape terms Site 5 should not be put forward.

Finally, the inclusion of a site in a Mineral Plan now generally carries a presumption to grant at planning application stage.

In the light of recent legal challenges, it is now enshrined in law to have “special regard” for the preservation of heritage assets. It says

“where adverse effects are significant –An Environmental Impact and Heritage Assessment should be correctly applied and transposed in decision making”. Again, there is no evidence that Warwickshire County Council Planning Department have adhered to this advice either.

Thank You for your time.

Andy Steel

Landscape Report

We have had an independent Landscape Assessment carried out by Wardle Armstrong as the evidence base for the Draft Plan does not include a landscape assessment.

Consideration of Landscape and visual impacts is limited to a question on landscape character within the site assessments undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal produced for the Draft Plan. Both assessments state that there will be a negative outcome for landscape character.

The key conclusions from the report commissioned by the local community are:

1. Due to the proposed major loss of key landscape features and the introduction of new, incongruous features that would affect the currently intact rural character of the area it is considered that mineral extraction within sites 4 and 5 would have significant adverse effects on landscape character.
2. The sites have high visibility due to their size and flat topography. The sites are generally open, with limited screening provided by vegetation within the site. Therefore receptors in the surrounding area (often at a higher elevation) would experience significant adverse visual effects as a result of mineral extraction within sites 4 and 5.
3. It would not be possible to mitigate the significant adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity predominantly due to the sensitivity of the existing landscape character and the size and scale of the sites.

It is worth reminding you that the Warwickshire Landscapes Project, which is a report prepared by your own Council and the Countryside Commission talks about the need to retain landscapes such as this.

Let me quote from this report:

“We must recognise the key factors which characterise each landscape and manage the land accordingly”

“ Ultimately they aim to ensure that the diversity and beauty of Warwickshire, Shakespeare’s County is conserved for present and future generations to enjoy”

“ The historic house and well preserved deer park at Charlecote are a special feature of this landscape”

and what do Natural England have to say;

The sites are located within National Character Area (NCA) 106: Severn and Avon Vales, adjacent to the boundary with NCA 96: Dunsmore and Feldon.

Natural England describes NCA 106 as follows: “Woodland is sparse and it is a generally open landscape... On the eastern boundary the area flows more subtly into the Arden and Dunsmore and Feldon NCAs... the Warwickshire River Avon meanders over a wide flood plain...” Natural England also highlight the important cultural associations of NCA 106, due to the “sense of history which is internationally important due to its links with Shakespeare.”

Barford St Peter's Board of Governors Representation to Warwick County Council Cabinet
Meeting 10 October 2017

Matter of Proposed Sand & Gravel Site

- Chris Harris/ Governor of BSP/ Nominated by BoG.
- BSP/Primary School growing to 220+ pupils
- Few hundred yards (300) / path of prevailing winds
- Duty to investigate potential impacts of proposed site on the school's pupils and staff

Our findings:

- We are not aware of any schools so close to quarries.
- Extraction/Dust/Silicosis
- Health impacts acknowledged:
 - Mitigation at point of extraction / measures to protect workers
- No attention to subsequent movement and people in local communities
- No studies/evidence of causal link to silicosis in nearby communities

BUT

- No evidence there is not
- History littered with examples of the consequences of making convenient or profitable choices. Exx:
 - Leaded petrol / asbestosis
- We ignore the lessons of history at our peril

Our Conclusions:

- No question that hundreds of staff and pupils at BSP would be exposed to silica dust over many years should the proposed site be developed.
- I repeat: we have a duty of care to our staff and pupils.
- Unanimous conclusion: object to the site
- In all conscience we cannot allow the site to go unchallenged and expose the school community to avoidable health risks over many years.
- We would expect the council to demonstrate the same duty of care and conscience.
- This is an avoidable risk that does not have to be taken.

Thank you for hearing our representation