

KEMPSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Teresa Griffin, Winterwood, Whelford, Fairford, Glos. GL7 4EB

[Tel :0781 862 6158](tel:07818626158) email: Clerk@kempsfordparishcouncil.net

Ms Linda Townsend MRTPI
Strategic Infrastructure
Gloucestershire County Council
Economy, Environment & Infrastructure
Shire Hall
Westgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 2TH

31st March 2023

Dear Linda

Re: 23/0004/CWMAJW Temporary use of an alternative agricultural access point onto Whelford Road for infill vehicles to exit from Manor Farm Quarry

Kempsford Parish Council strongly objects to this application for the reasons set out below.

We also consider the term 'Temporary' within the application title to be ambiguous given that the proposed access point would remain for a period of up to 10 years plus as advised by the applicant.

1. Background

Condition 33 of planning permission 13/0097/CWMAJM states –

Highways

Vehicles associated with works on the site shall gain access to the site via Washpool Lane only and not via any other highway or track going west or south from the site.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ameliorate the effects of the proposal on the amenity of the area in accordance with Policy E20 of the Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 - 2006 and Policy 5 of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2001-2011.

Paragraph 7.8.4 of the associated Environmental Statement states –

The final scheme was prepared that sees the workings commence in the eastern side of the extension and works across the northern phases first which are closest to Whelford village. This scheme is considered to have less impact upon amenity as that the first phase of working starts nearest Whelford and then moves away. This ensures that any disturbance to local amenity is carried out early in the extraction process and the land restored as soon as possible. Combined with the proposed screening bund that will be erected on the northern boundary of Phase 1 at the implementation of the development, it is intended that any impacts on Whelford

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village can be minimised.

2. Planning Policies

The applicant has made reference to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Gloucestershire Mineral Plan Policies in their Supporting Statement.

Both of the above state the importance of restoration being undertaken at the earliest opportunity and this is strongly supported by the Parish Council.

The policies also state that 'adverse impacts on the amenity of local communities will be avoided, strictly controlled, or mitigated so as to ensure unacceptable impacts will not arise'.

3. Environmental Impact

The proposed access is circa 135 metres from the nearest residential property in Whelford. Whilst the applicant has recognised this and vehicles will be encouraged to turn left towards Kempsford out of the site, it does not mean that they will.

The access will be visible to the nearest properties resulting in an adverse visual impact. Depending on wind direction, noise and dust (particularly during dry periods) will have an impact on the closest residents. There is also a concern about vehicle pollution (exhaust fumes) and the noise from vehicles and wheel wash (as presumably the wheels would be washed in this area before exiting?).

The phase 1 area contains a public footpath (currently diverted,) which was regularly used by the community. Any haul road and exit will result in a loss of amenity value to users of the path. It is fair to say that operations in Phase 1 has had an impact on the residents of Whelford and that they have been eager to see the area restored and footpaths reinstated or improved.

Within the application documents there is no detail on the route through the quarry that lorries will take to reach the road access point. As the access is intended to be used for Phases 1, 2a, 2b and future phases we accept there may be some variation depending on which phase is being restored. However, as an appropriate surface will need to be constructed we presume at least within phase 1 the route will remain throughout the duration. This is important in respect of public footpaths and the proposed interception ditch included in application 21/0098/CWS73M, yet to be decided.

4. Transport & Highways

Despite proposed alterations to the road, cyclepath and hedgerow at the access point we consider the location to have reduced visibility compared to Washpool Lane, particularly for traffic coming from the Whelford direction. The Washpool Lane access is situated on a much straighter section of road.

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Despite the proposed access being situated within a 40mph speed limit there is a serious speeding problem through Whelford. The Whelford Community Speedwatch Group has recorded speeds up to 70mph and Auto Speed Watch cameras are due to be installed shortly.

The Supporting Statement states that the access will be designed to encourage vehicles to turn left towards Kempford when exiting the site. Will this be enforced?

HGV's will be required to turn relatively sharp on to the public highway which can result in rear wheels scraping the road surface leading to increased damage. We consider the main road would need to be 'hardened' to facilitate this.

We note the proposal includes wheel cleansing facilities. We already experience real problems with mud, gravel and backfill materials being dropped and spread on the public highway and cyclepath which are regularly reported to the applicant. The current road cleaning routine is insufficient for the volume of HGV's and the associated mess and is not considered to meet the current condition imposed in the permission. Full time road sweepers and vehicles of an appropriate size for the cycleway would need to be employed.

5. Airbase security

As a consultee to this application we presume RAF Fairford/MOD Safeguarding will provide a detailed response.

Although the access is intended for use by vehicles exiting the quarry, and will presumably be signed accordingly. Would there be any measures in place to prevent a vehicle accessing the site at this point and the aircraft landing lights/flightpath?

6. Biodiversity

Any proposed modifications/removal of hedgerow required to provide improved visibility splays should be made outside of bird nesting season or inspected by a qualified person prior to commencement.

7. Need for the development

The applicant states the pandemic and water management issues as the reason for delayed restoration. We disagree with this strongly and feel it is a result of poor future planning by the applicant on the restoration side of the operation as –

- a) The hydrology and water issues of this site were known, and raised on numerous occasions at the original planning stage.
- b) Failure to obtain Environmental Permit for backfill material from the Environment Agency at appropriate opportunity - The original permit was not granted until 2019 (ie. Before the pandemic). AI then realised that the permit was quite restrictive in respect of the material types allowed and the lack of availability of such material, and sought a variation

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to the permit. The variation was not approved until early 2021. We would have expected an experienced quarry operator to have foreseen this and dealt with earlier.

- c) Despite obtaining permission for an additional bridge (21/0058/CWMAJM) to aid the restoration process in November 2021, the bridge is yet to be installed.

8. Conclusion

We consider this application should be refused due to –

- the unacceptable adverse impact on the local community
- Highway safety and users of the cyclepath
- It cannot be considered 'temporary' when the applicant has advised potential use of up to 10 years and beyond.

We recognise the importance of speeding up the restoration process, both for the benefit of the local community and to ensure the applicant can proceed with extraction in other phases as conditioned in the original planning consent.

As an alternative, we would like to see a circular route for backfill vehicles created within the quarry, using the 2 bridges over the Dudgrove Brook, and all vehicles accessing and exiting through Washpool Lane. The existing bridge is currently being used by dumpers to bring in backfill material from the tipped areas to the restoration phase. This would no longer be required if vehicles bringing in the material could access the area direct and facilitate the one way circular route.

The use of a conveyor system, similar to that used to extract the gravel, should also be explored as an alternative.

Yours sincerely



Teresa Griffin
Clerk

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