

REPRESENTATIONS

RE:

MINERAL SITE ALLOCATIONS DRAFT POLICY

Representations against late submitted two possible further extensions to site at Sturminster Marshall site reference MSADAS14

Preamble

The two proposed sites brought forward for late consideration by Cemex (as now amended) represent a band of land running north from the A31 at the old railway crossing on the A31 and immediately abutting the original proposal site there and running up to the Stour River frontage and White Mill Bridge. It is proposed to extract 3 millions tonnes of sand and gravel over a period of approximately 15 years at a rate of 200,000 tonnes per annum. The proposed access would be on to the A31 trunk road and involve estimated traffic movements of 80 heavy goods vehicles per day. No background papers have yet been seen but Dorset County Council's notes of a meeting with Cemex give the foregoing details and reveal that the proposed restoration would be as "Lakes".

These Representations include some of the preliminary concerns which have already been expressed by Sturminster Marshall Parish Council who are holding a public meeting on 10th September 2009.

The extent of the estimated reserve appears almost exactly to duplicate that within the existing proposals which formed part of the Discussion Paper issued in October 2008 and it must therefore be assumed that in terms of output, traffic movements, and impact generally, the proposals now received would represent at least a doubling of the original.

Grounds of Objection

1. The impact on traffic on the A31 Trunk Road would be very serious and adverse. At this point the A31 is at its busiest and narrowest:-
 - (a) Traffic is two way on a narrow road with no dualling.
 - (b) The Highways Agency lodged substantial objections to the original proposal which must surely apply with even greater force to the proposed additional workings.
 - (c) It is already difficult to emerge from the nearby properties on to the A31 and some local drivers turn left to go up to Corfe Mullen before turning back.
 - (d) The road floods in adverse weather conditions.

- (e) Lorries and heavy plant and equipment will drag mud on to the road which will require specialised lorries with brushes to keep the road surface clean and create substantial delays and interruptions to traffic flow.
 - (f) The road has required constant repair and resurfacing because of the weight and volume of traffic already passing over it.
 - (g) There may emerge some suggestion that vehicular access could be achieved to the A350 Poole - Blandford Strategic A road and thereby on to the A31. This would lead to a fresh set of problems even closer to the residential heart of Sturminster Marshall on a tortuous narrow busy route already beset with problems and with the lorry traffic still ending up on the A31.
2. As to the road leading to the Stour it is barely wide enough for a single heavy lorry and leads to a weight restricted bridge.
 3. The impact on the landscape values of the Stour Valley at this point would be unthinkable :-
 - (a) The whole site is designated Green Belt.
 - (b) At this point the River flood plain is very flat and open so that the form of site works which have been seen for instance at Hurn would have a disproportionately intrusive and damaging effect e.g. earth bunds, hoppers, washers, conveyer belts, and lighting standards - all of which would be highly visible from surrounding countryside including the ranges of hills which to the north include the Villages of Pamphill and Cowgrove and the National Trust land which runs down to the Stour, and would be equally unacceptable at night with illumination in an area which at present enjoys an unspoilt night sky.
 - (c) The creation of Lakes in the River plain would be entirely out of keeping with and despoil the natural lie of the land.
 4. White Mill and the adjacent White Mill Bridge are ancient structures with high value listings which should not have to co-exist with a mineral working and scarred landscape.
 5. There would inevitably be interference with the public footpath which runs along the north bank of the Stour from White Mill to Wimborne.
 6. At the A31 end of the proposals there would be a risk of prejudice to the disused railway track which crosses the edge of the site on an embankment and would have formed a continuation of the recently refurbished section running to Corfe Mullen which was intended to be continued towards Charlton Marshall (East Dorset District Council Policy RODEC9).
 7. The works associated with the original proposals involved washing and drying operations, crushers, noise and dust associated with numerous heavy vehicle movements and there is no reason to suppose that the added proposals would

be free of such activities which would cause an inappropriate level of activity of an industrial nature in an agricultural setting.

8. There is a pure water source at the Water Authority's nearby works on the other side of the A31. Real issues must exist moreover in respect of interference with water tables in this environmentally sensitive and flood prone area.

Cllr. P. Bennett
EDDC Ward Member
Stour Ward

3rd September 2009