

Minutes of a Meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet BA4 5BT, on Thursday, 6 June 2024 at 1.00 pm

**Present:**

Cllr Tony Lock (Chair)

Cllr Andy Soughton (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Mike Caswell

Cllr Simon Coles

Cllr Philip Ham

Cllr Matthew Martin

Cllr Martin Wale

Cllr Barry Clarke

Cllr Michael Dunk

Cllr Edric Hobbs

Cllr Wes Read

**Other Members present remotely:**

Cllr Andy Dingwall

Cllr Tony Robbins

Cllr Liz Leyshon

**31 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1**

Apologies were received from Councillors Andy Kendall and John Hunt.

**32 Minutes from the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 2**

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 21 March 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

**33 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3**

It was noted that all members of the committee had received correspondence in respect of Agenda Item 5 and the 3 quarry applications, however all confirmed that they had an open mind and would await the discussions before making any decision. Agenda Item 6: Councillor Matt Martin declared that he was the adjacent Division

Member to the site of the application, he had attended meetings for information, however he was attending the meeting with an open mind and listen to all the discussion before making his decision.

#### **34 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4**

There were no questions submitted by the Public.

#### **35 SCC/3838/2021/ROMP, SCC/3836/2021/IDO, SCC/3795/2021 Westdown Quarry, Whatley, Frome, Somerset. - Agenda Item 5**

The Planning Officer introduced the applications with the aid of a powerpoint presentation which covered all 3 applications. He updated the committee as follows:

- The phasing plan had been slightly amended with an end date of 2042, condition 1 had therefore been amended to reflect the change.
- Asham Wood had now been removed from the proposals and Condition 4 had been amended which also included reference to the highways.
- Condition 6 amended as there was no Flood risk to other parties.
- That the conditions on these applications reflected the conditions in place on other quarries within the area.

The committee were also informed that since the publication of the report:

- There had been a further 17 letters of objection and 7 supporting the proposals.
- Cranmore Parish Council now support the applications as it had been confirmed that the local highways would not be used.
- Natural England had sent in a letter making comment and the County Ecology Service had sent in a letter detailing their comments as they were unable to attend the meeting.

There were a number of interested parties that had registered to speak against the proposals, their comments included:

- Habitat enhancement and mitigation measures not clear
- Area currently had resident bats, dormice, newts and this proposal would affect their lives
- Biodiversity loss and combined with the other quarries, there would be a negative impact on the area
- Protection needed for the area as there were orchids in the quarry
- Mitigation plans won't be enough to save the varies species
- There would be harm to the water environment with no proposed measures

for the water and ponds, there would be sediment which is a pollutant and changes to temperatures of the water would be also negatively impact nature.

- Conditions should reflect current circumstances and not future issues
- Road transport affects climate and not carbon neutral, increase in HGVs as no more space for rail transportation
- Other quarries still have capacity and there was no need for working this quarry and should wait until Whatley Quarry has finished.

In response to some of these comments made, the Planning Officer confirmed that the Environment Agency had no objections and Natural England and Somerset Ecology had responded and suggested mitigation measures.

In respect to the HGVs, there had been a transport assessment and the proposal would be within the maximum levels as agreed.

A number of members of the Public then spoke in support of the applications; these comments included:

- Heidelberg a good employer and many employees live locally
- Staff are encouraged in their learning and qualifications, expanding the quarry will encourage further local employment
- Company responsible and work towards carbon goals and CO2 goal is to be neutral.
- Virgin aggregate needed for concrete and building with certain minerals only be found in certain areas
- There would be existing landscaping and new areas created for natural habitats with high class bat foraging areas and long term benefits
- Local companies and people would benefit from the proposals.

A local Parish Councillor spoke against all the applications stating that there would be removal of hedges and landscaping, that the surveys were out of date and there would be an adverse impact on the water table, land and pollution and noise from the increased traffic.

The local Division Members also spoke on the proposals, they acknowledged that the quarries were important locally for employment and businesses but they came at a cost. There were noise and traffic impacts and that Whatley Quarry still had 40 years left for working. Also that there would be harm to the natural environment and these harms needed to be considered.

The applicant explained that there had been a lot of consultation and amendments made to the application, including the removal of Asham Wood. The applicant respected the views of the neighbours but there needed to be a balanced consideration of the applications. Scheme is being put forward for approval subject to a number of conditions; with engagement on-going about ecological matters. It

was also clarified that Westdown Quarry would be not be increasing the number of lorries and that Westleigh would continue to transport materials via rail as it does now.

Members then discussed the application, Officers responded to a number of issues which included:

Quarries were monitored by the Minerals and Waste Team

Some conditions were pre-commencement conditions and that a lot of discussion and work had been undertaken to ensure all parts of the community were protected and not adversely impacted

Natural England and the County Ecology Service had taken into account all areas, surveys had been updated and there are now a number of mitigation measures which have been included within the conditions and within the update report provided.

There were still some reservations expressed by some of the Councillors, however it was accepted that there were not enough reasons to over ride the recommendations and that they were constrained by laws and procedures therefore it was proposed that the applications be approved as below.

Planning Application SCC/3795/2021 (Enabling Works):

Proposed Councillor Mike Caswell, Seconded Councillor Andy Soughton

Planning Application SCC3838/2021 (ROMP application):

Proposed Councillor Mike Caswell, Seconded Councillor Wes Read

Planning Application SCC/3836/2021/IDO:

Proposed Councillor Mike Caswell, Seconded Councillor Tony Lock

The Committee Resolved:

That in relation to Planning Application SCC/3795/2021 (Enabling Works) Permission be granted subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Agreement based on the Heads of Terms included at pages 178-188 of the committee report; and imposition of conditions set out in appendix A with the amended conditions proposed by the officer in relation to phasing of the works, the Highway works, the water monitoring and mitigation strategy and the removal of the Asham Wood condition.

That authority to undertake any minor, non-material editing, which may be necessary to the wording of those conditions, be delegated to the Chief Planning Officer.

(For 8, against 3)

In relation to Planning Application SCC3838/2021 (ROMP application)

Planning Permission be granted subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Agreement based on the Heads of Terms included at pages 178-188 of the committee report; and imposition of conditions set out in Appendix A with the amended conditions proposed by the Officer in relation to the phasing of the works, highway works, the water monitoring and mitigation strategy and the removal of the Asham Wood condition.

That authority to undertake any minor, non-material editing, which may be necessary to the wording of those conditions, be delegated to the Chief Planning Officer.

(For 8, Against 3)

In relation to Planning Application SCC/3836/2021/IDO

Planning Permission be granted subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Agreement based on the Heads of Terms included at pages 178-188 of the committee report; and imposition of conditions set out in Appendix A with the amended conditions proposed by the Officer in relation to the phasing of the works, highway works, the water monitoring and mitigation strategy and the removal of the Asham Wood condition.

That authority to undertake any minor, non-material editing, which may be necessary to the wording of those conditions, be delegated to the Chief Planning Officer.

(For 8, Against 3)

**36 SCC/4048/2023 Land at Springway Business Park, Springway Lane, Westonzoyland, TA7 0JS - Agenda Item 6**

The Planning Officer introduced the application to the committee with the assistance of a power point presentation. She provided the following updates to their written report:

Somerset Wildlife Trust had made a late representation with objection to the use of the site but support the comments from Natural England, and the Officer confirmed that mitigation measures were included within the conditions on the application. There had also been further comments from local residents objecting on road impact and Westonzoyland Parish Council had also submitted objections.

The Committee were addressed by a representative of Westonzoyland Parish Council, their comments included that there were concerns raised about health impacts, external lighting not being needed and it was important that screening was completed as the site was within a SSSI area and that an Environmental Impact Assessment was needed.

The Planning Officer explained to the committee that the report explained that an assessment was not needed due to the size of the scheme and that the cumulative

impact of the various sites in the area had been assessed. It was also confirmed that no lighting was proposed and this was conditioned; it was also confirmed that Natural England had provided advice and mitigation measures were included within the recommendation.

The applicant then spoke to the committee confirming that this was an established business within the local area, that this was for clean inert soil storage and that they were aware of the sensitive nature of the area. Traffic would come through the main road in the village and that a Transport Management Plan was to be agreed.

In response to questions from members of the committee, it was explained that the hours of operation were in line with the other sites in the area and that environmental conditions would be monitored closely. There were concerns also expressed about the traffic but it was confirmed that this would be contained as part of the Traffic Management Plan to mitigate issues that have been raised in comments made by the parish council and local residents.

It was agreed by the committee that the recommendation to grant permission be approved; proposed by Councillor Simon Coles and seconded by Councillor Matt Martin.

Resolved:

The committee resolved to grant permission subject to the conditions set out in the report and that authority to undertake any minor, non-material editing that may be necessary to the wording of those conditions be delegated to the Service Manager, Development and Planning.

(For 9, Against 1, Abstention 1)

**37 Presentations - Agenda Item 7**

**(The meeting ended at 4.05 pm)**

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**CHAIR**