

Regulation Committee
Thursday 3 November 2022
2.00 pm Luttrell Room - County Hall,
Taunton



SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA

To: The Members of the Regulation Committee

We are now able to enclose a **further late paper submission** for the meeting on 3 November 2022: -

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Democratic Services, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY

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Regulation Committee

Late Paper Submissions

3rd November 2022

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Briefing for SCC
Regulation Committee by
Blackford Quarry Action
Group.

Item 8: Briefing for SCC Regulation Committee by Blackford Quarry

Action Group. Application SCC /3940/2022

Blackford Quarry - Larger and/or More Stone Hauling Lorries.

This Application:

- **Is made less than a year after a fiercely contested and tightly conditioned approval to open the quarry for commercial exploitation.**
- **Seeks to introduce articulated vehicles which double the length and increase the weight carrying capacity of allowed stone hauling HGVs, or double the number of current stone hauling HGV transits of the already dangerous haul route through a conservation village.**
- **Makes demonstrably untrue statements about current permissions. The applicant posits that a different company's 'owned' vehicle fleet (that of Ham and Doultling Stone Ltd) takes priority over SCC's extant quarrying approval and conditions.**
- **Makes unverified and highly questionable claims on stone extracted to date. (Data shows more extracted per load than claimed in application)**
- **Omits information on vehicles used for extraction today, which carry more than the vehicle type quoted to justify the application.**
- **Over-eggs what would be required to address the stated issue using current HGV by 65% or more (deduced using applicant worst case data)**

The MPA and Planning Officer:

- **Provide no evidence of independent verification or analysis of the claims of the applicant, and did not provide extraction data (despite previous written assurance that it could be obtained at any time) in response to a specific request from the community.**
- **Have provided only partial (and thus useless) data in the PO report, the key conditioned parameter of 'number of loads transported' is missing.**
- **Have failed to mention or take into account a change in Quarry Operator (and thus HGVs owned by the Operator) during the first year of operation.**
- **Have failed to take into account direct reports that stone from Blackford has been transported to multiple destinations, not just the one cleared in the Conditioned Documents referred to in the approval.**

- **Have given credence to the traffic report submitted by the applicant but there is no evidence that the professional's report provided by objectors has even been considered.**
- **Present a 100% increase in vehicle movements as 'small'.**
- **Have included extra information on stone characteristics from the applicant in the PO report that was not made publicly available during the consultation period.**
- **Have not addressed applicant track record. i.e:**
 - **the situation now known to have existed at the original Regs Cttee, where the only 'supporter' of the application (which had 50+ objections), who spoke, failed to declare his interest as an official business partner of the original applicant. Their company is now the Quarry Operator and Applicant in this case.**
 - **the Operating company(ies) have made numerous permission condition breaches since initial approval.**

The County Highways input:

- **Was generated without a reported site visit or route survey, as was also the case for the original approval.**
- **Makes no mention of a weak highway structure on the haul route which County Service Manager (Structures) previously (2021) recommended should not be subjected to more/heavier loads. (The PO simply dismisses the issue and presents no evidence of taking any specific technical advice).**
- **Ignores the context of extra stone vehicle presence on the haul route resulting from unregulated agricultural quarrying on an adjacent site.**
- **Makes no comment on the fact that the articulated vehicle capable of carrying 16 tons proposed (simply because Ham and Doultong Stone Ltd own one) is actually around 2 times the length of current stone hauling HGVs and likely to have carrying capacity of 25 Tons and a maximum gross weight of 36 Tons, approximately 50% more than the 25 Tons MGW for the currently permitted vehicles. No constraining conditions are identified.**

The impact of approval of this application would be:

- **To increase the risk to life on the Haul Route and generate further degradation of community amenity for the residents of Blackford,**

- **To cause Blackford residents to pay the price for ‘mistakes’ made by a supposedly professional quarrying company.**
- **To allow unnecessary extension of permissions which were strictly conditioned after much technical discussion only a year ago.**
- **To generate further and faster damage to the highway infrastructure (structures, hollows and verges) to that enabled by the original approval.**
- **To undermine the Committee’s reputation as it would reflect approval of an application in the absence of all relevant information.**

Summary

In the light of all the foregoing it would be completely inappropriate to approve the application presented and it should be rejected.

If outright rejection of the application is not decided, then as a minimum, a deferment must be decided to allow proper scrutiny and analysis of all the data now presented.