



From: Alison Laker [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 August 2021 19:21
To: PL Planning Applications <planning.applications@westsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: A Laker - Mill Cottage RH14 0RJ - ref WSCC/030/21

REFERENCE PLANNING APPLICATION WSCC/030/21

Please accept this email as my written objection to the above planning application.

I most strongly object to this area of important woodland, which is set in a completely rural area, being subjected to totally inappropriate commercial development as set out in the above planning application. My objections are numerous but I intend to articulate the most paramount in this email.

We are all custodians of our landscape, our ancient woodlands and our rural countryside habitats. As members of the public we are dependent on you as elected decision makers for our county to make the right decision for the right reason on this application. You take personal accountability not only to all citizens in your council area now but also to future generations who will be unforgiving if you place the commercial gain of the companies sitting behind this proposal above the preservation and protection of our countryside and rural habitats.

My understanding of this application is the proposal to create a commercial waste recycling plant by the creation of a mineral extraction facility in the form of clay pits. This proposed development would require the movement of extracted clay away from, and waste into the site, by way of HGVs on the essentially narrow country roads that already have heavy usage by increased housing development in surrounding settlements.

1 The need for mineral extraction

It is recognised by WSCC in its own Minerals Monitoring Report that there is no demand for further brick making clay with over 25 years supply in reserve. Therefore there is not a need either locally or nationally for this proposed extraction. Furthermore, it is environmentally

unnecessary to expend road miles transporting clay from the proposed site to a brick making facility when these processes are typically co-located and remove the need to transport the raw material.

2 The need for a waste site

The creation of a waste site is not viable without the mineral extraction stage which as per points raised above is an unjustified requirement. Furthermore, it is recognised that there are sufficient provisions for construction and demolition waste in West Sussex in existing locations that are more appropriate settings and do not require the destruction of ancient woodland.

3 Location suitability for commercial development

The proposed location is utterly unsuitable because it is a green field site. The National Policy requires waste sites to be situated in "built-up areas or brown field sites". Additionally, the distance of 4.55 km between the site and the Lorry Route Network is mainly along unsuitable narrow roads. Point 3.6 in the application includes a grossly questionable statement implying that the road width is "in the main" not an issue. Anyone who is familiar with this rural road is fully aware that standard cars are regularly required to straddle the mid point of the road at pinch points and at these points it is not possible for vehicles such as school buses, lorries and local trades vehicles to pass an oncoming vehicle without one stopping to give way to the other.

The proposed increase of 300% HGV traffic volume would create excessive traffic issues on this route. This does not factor in that this section of road is frequently used by professional and amateur cyclists, road runners, horse riders and walkers who would be at serious safety risk from the HGVs. I have personally chosen at times to cycle this route to Rudgwick tennis courts and to visit family in Rudgwick to reduce my car usage but the proposed HGV volume would make this prohibitive for my safety.

There are currently no buildings within the pristine woodland area and it is therefore totally unreasonable to propose a 15,000 square foot building, ancillary buildings and quarrying operations which will result in the significant visual deterioration on the landscape. There would additionally be an inevitable conflict with the surrounding farming activity through the proposed commercial development.

4 Loss of amenity

The site access for HGVs will significantly negatively impact existing Public Rights of Way used by members of our community and the wider surrounding area - at points the proposed access roads will cross over, run alongside and follow the existing tracks. This presents obvious health and safety issues for people and animals as well as impacting the mental health of many regular users of this important rural woodland. Further to this, the application proposes to close footpath 792-1 for a temporary period of 33 years which is completely unreasonable and inconvenient for its many users. An additional factor to raise is the noise, dust and pollutants that will be carried by prevailing winds to negatively impact our local community.

5 Proposal that is incongruent with Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan and Chichester District Local Plan

These comprehensively prepared and publicly consulted plans require any development in rural areas to be "sensitive to its setting.... to enhance, protect and compliment the natural environment". However, the commercial operation proposed in this application does not

protect the rural nature of this area in any of these ways nor does it bring any demonstrable benefits to the local community.

6 Unreasonable and unnecessary noise and light pollution

The area relevant to this application currently has no manmade sources of artificial light and noise permanently present. This situation will be significantly altered for a period of 33 years by the instalment of artificial lighting in the processing plant, office buildings, carpark and wheel washing areas. Diesel generators, HGVs, skip lorries, processing machinery and wheel wash equipment will generate noise pollution which will be highly intrusive and have significant impact on the recreational enjoyment for those who walk, run, cycle, horse ride and play in this area, not to mention the wildlife habitats in the area. The light and noise pollution will inevitably have impact beyond the immediate vicinity of the site given that there are no other sources of these in this area.

7 Environmental impact on habitats and species

The proposed commercial development would have an unacceptable negative impact on the wildlife habitats and species in this important area of woodland. This would include affecting several species of bats which inhabit this woodland and includes the Barbastelle Bat which is an International European Protected Species and particularly rare in West Sussex, as well as affecting known badger sets in the vicinity. The proposed location of the wheel wash facility would involve the destruction of an area of designated Ancient Woodland - this is utterly irreplaceable and should not under any circumstances be allowed to be destroyed for commercial gain.

To establish the proposed development mature trees are required to be felled destroying bat roosts, removing the habitat canopy layer, disturbing the woodland floor significantly and increasing net carbon emissions by the burning of fossil fuels.

8 Traffic consequences

There are multiple factors that make the traffic impact of this proposal totally unsuitable and unreasonable, some of these have been raised above. I wish to draw your attention to point 1.6 in the application which is another grossly questionable statement - "the junction geometry [the Loxwood Road/A281 junction] is also such that the junction can accommodate the turning requirements of the vehicles likely to be associated with this operation". The reality, as all regular users of this road will be aware, is that this is a particularly difficult and busy junction where there is frequently a requirement to wait to enter the traffic on the A281 (due to the increased volume of traffic using this main road in recent years) resulting in a build up of traffic on the Loxwood Road. The traffic situation is frequently complicated further when the local bus services wait to start their service at the joining point referred to in the application together with the very busy local car sales business located at this junction making use of areas on the roadside on all sides of their operations to facilitate the movement of and viewing of their vehicles, as well as overflow parking on the roadside from the popular village pub at this junction. All of these contribute to narrowing of, and congestion on, the roads at this junction. This is a significant junction for pedestrians who are walking towards the village facilities including recreation ground, village schools, shop and community spaces as well as leaving the village towards the housing, pub, footpaths and bridleways along the Loxwood Road.

Whilst the application refers to the primary route to the Lorry Route Network being via A281 at Bucks Green there is potential risk that lorries and associated traffic including workers will access the site via Loxwood village at Station Road. This would have serious safety, disruption, pollution

and traffic impact on Loxwood village and residents due to the narrow pinch points in this village where there is significant on-street parking and high volumes of pedestrian and road traffic at core parts of the day.

The section of the road at which HGVs will enter and leave the proposed site is on a bend and with the narrow nature of this rural road between villages it presents an unsuitable and potentially dangerous junction point creating a further road safety risk. This is at a point that people park to access recreational time in this important woodland areas as well as where horse riders, walkers (some with dogs) and cyclists enter and leave the area. I understand that the proposed development will result in the access area for members of the public being reduced, further impacting the enjoyment of this popular, well-used part of our countryside.

9 Impacting wellbeing of children and adults

The proposed development has multiple factors, including pollution, destruction of wildlife habitats and removal of familiar Public Rights of Way as listed above, that will negatively impact the mental wellbeing of adults, young people and children who exercise and relax in this location as part of their strategies to maintain positive physical and mental health to enable them to cope with stress, depression, anxiety, fatigue and recuperation from periods of injury and illness.

In conclusion, there are multiple reasons why this is an unsuitable development and use of this area of natural woodland which will result in light and noise pollution, loss of amenity, negative impact on natural habitats and species, unreasonable and potentially unsafe traffic and access issues, and above all altering forever this important area of natural woodland.

Regards

Alison Laker