

Planning Committee Minutes

Date: 5 March 2025

Time: 10:00 am – 11:48 am

Venue: New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald

Present: Councillors Henry Batchelor (Chair), Catherine Rae (Vice Chair), Ian Gardener, John Gowing, Sebastian Kindersley, and Andrew Wood

100. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors David Connor (substituted by Councillor John Gowing), Steve Corney and Neil Gough.

101. Declarations of Interest

None.

102. Minutes – 12 February 2025

It was resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2025 as a correct record.

103. Full planning application for the importation of controlled inert construction and demolition wastes for the buttressing and stabilisation of the southern face of a former mineral excavation face with associated screening, stockpile and storage areas

At: Saxon Works, Peterborough Road, Whittlesey, PE7 1PD

Applicant: East Midlands Waste Management Ltd

Application Number: CCC/24/078/FUL

The officer presented the application for the site at the former quarry Saxon Works, also known as Saxon Pit. Other waste management operations already approved by the Council within the waste management area and controlled by permits from the Environment Agency (EA) included:

- CCC/21/024/FUL (Johnsons Aggregates & Recycling Ltd - processing incinerator bottom ash (IBA) to create incinerator bottom ash aggregate (IBAA))
- CCC/22/092/VAR (EMWM - buttressing of the eastern pit face with imported waste)
- CCC/24/048/FUL (EMWM - metal recycling facility not yet implemented)

The officer also referred to the following applications for operations within Saxon Pit would be likely to come to Members in the future:

- CCC/24/091/VAR (to increase the throughput for the processing of IBA)
- CCC/25/006/VAR (to extend the time allowed to complete the eastern buttressing)

Members had been given a virtual site visit on 18 December 2024 and were shown maps of the site and surrounding area during Committee, providing context, background, and details of existing buildings on the site. The application before members proposed to import 216k cubic metres of inert construction and demolition waste, equating to 325k tons for the stabilisation of the pit face, needed for safety. This southern buttressing, referred to as Phase 2, would create a steep slope with a gradient of one vertical to three horizontal and would include a retaining gabion wall to the west at 5m high and 140m wide for a section. Over a third of the development area would comprise facilities shared with existing waste management operations, including highway access, internal haulage route, and existing infrastructure.

Recommended conditions of the application included:

- Temporary permission with a 7-year timescale for completion
- Restricting the type, source and amount of waste - only inert construction and demolition waste (no IBA) as monitored by the EA
- Temporary parking area to be retained and improvements to the access road to reduce dust in the area
- Noise limits, as well as a noise and a dust management, monitoring, and mitigation plan (to include publication of monitoring results, how complaints would be dealt with, regular updates to the scheme, and securing ongoing mitigation due to changes in circumstances)
- Site liaison group to include representatives from the regulators (Fenland District Council Environmental Health, Cambridgeshire County Council, EA) as well as district and county councillors, and representatives of the public
- HCV routing agreement with no right turns out of the site
- HCV limits: Phase 2 would commence once the importation of waste for the Eastern buttressing, Phase 1 would complete in July 2026, thereby requiring less waste, time and vehicle movement than Phase 1. The impact of vehicle movement was therefore considered with Phases 1 and 2 together, where Phase 1 proposed not to exceed 50 loads per day, and Phase 2 proposed an average of 45 loads per week. No objections were received from the Highways Authority.

There was an indicative plan of the restoration and a draft condition required a more detailed plan which would link with the biodiversity gain plan required as part of the national mandatory requirement for biodiversity gain.

Two neighbour representations were submitted in respect of this application, and three from the Saxongate residents' group. Whittlesey Town Council (TC) initially made comments without objections but sent a second representation in February 2025 objecting and requested conditions, some of which remained outstanding or could/would not be conditioned, such as offsite monitoring, restricting HGVs collecting locally, and pumping into Kings Dyke.

The Chair invited Mr Stephen Rice, the Agent for the applicant to address the Committee. Mr Rice stated they consulted engineers who prepared a Geotech

assessment in accordance with reg 33 of The Quarries Regulations 1999, concluding that the failure of the southern face represented a significant hazard. The first buttressing scheme used more material than the current proposal and was redesigned with reduced volume. The new solution achieved the required stability with the right safety but with a steeper buttress and a gabion wall. Although it was more expensive to create stability of the buttress, it would allow completion of work in 7 years with a lower number of daily vehicle movements. This would be the final phase of restoration of the pit, working toward long term plans of a science park at an adjacent site. The impact on the residential community was well considered. The operator would work with the Council and EA to ensure operations would proceed in accordance with the planning permission and environmental permits. Dust and noise management plans had been drafted, and an air quality monitoring device as well as a weather station had been placed three years prior. A liaison group would be formed and would consult with metal recycling liaison group to ensure consistency across Saxon Pit.

In response to member questions, the Agent:

- Confirmed that the applicant would be happy to work with Network Rail in light of its statement necessitating structural and track monitoring contingent upon construction activities and clearances with the nearest infrastructure. However, the agent stated the work on the southern buttress would not impact on Network Rail other than to protect the line, as all work on stabilisation would be below the crest of the pit.
- Welcomed a request for a sand martin wall within the gabion wall. The Agent noted the suggestion and stated the science park and wider restoration would be a beacon for biodiversity.

The Chair noted comments received from the residents' group and shared with Members in advance of meeting.

Members expressed support of the application. It was proposed by Councillor Gardener and seconded by Councillor Kindersley to approve the conditions as set out in the proposal.

It was resolved unanimously that permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 12.1.

104. Local Validation List

The Local Validation List and guidance notes would identify the supporting information required with planning applications. These local notes would sit alongside national guidance and had been updated to reference changes in planning policies. A six-week consultation on the draft began on 27 January 2025 with planning agents, parish and town councils, and statutory and non-statutory consultees (including district and county councils). Review, update and publication of the list was required by June 2025, therefore delegated authority was sought to approve the draft as well as make any necessary changes needed over the coming two years as a result of legislation or policy changes.

In response to the report, Members:

- Suggested that references to neighbourhood plans ought to be included. The officer stated that they had been considered and covered, however agreed to look into this further.
- Stated that over the years on the Planning Committee, several applications had been received to extend timescales for multiple types of work, therefore asked whether timelines could be more realistically calculated. The officer stated that the Council could ask for more detail on calculations from operators and request phasing for more accurately calibrate timescales.

It was proposed by Councillor Kindersley and seconded by Councillor Gardener.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Provide the Head of Planning with the delegated authority to make the necessary amendments to the Local Validation List and Guidance Notes, taking into account the consultation responses received.
- b) Provide the Head of Planning with the delegated authority to update links and references to documents within the LVL Guidance Notes (June 2025), which become outdated and/or are superseded during the period that the 2025 list is in use.

105. Enforcement and Monitoring Update Report

The Committee received the Enforcement and Monitoring Update Report on the formal enforcement action taken since the previous report presented in February 2025. Two planning contravention notices had been served; an importation, deposition, processing and exporting of construction and demolition waste material at Farcet Fen, as well as a breach of condition and lack of phased restoration management scheme from operators at Station Quarry, Steeple Morden.

It was resolved to note the report.

106. Summary of Decisions Taken Under Delegated Powers

The Committee received a report that provided a summary of the decisions taken under delegated powers.

A Member queried what would happen after a delegated decision of refusal to which the officer stated there was a right of appeal, and consideration of taking formal enforcement action would be reported to Committee should this option be taken.

It was resolved to note the report.

Chair