

**Planning Committee**

**16 December 2008**



**Consultation by a Neighbouring Planning Authority: Consolidation of existing planning permissions incorporating an extension to sand and gravel extraction area and extension of time for sand and gravel extraction to 31st December 2022 and restoration by 31st December 2025 at Broadoak Quarry, Newlands, Ebchester.**

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**Report of Rod Lugg, Head of Environment and Planning**

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**Introduction**

- 1 Northumberland County Council has received a planning application and accompanying Environmental Statement for continued sand and gravel extraction at Broadoak Quarry, Ebchester. The County Council was consulted for comments on the development on 12 November 2008 as a neighbouring planning authority.
- 2 Northumberland County Council's Planning and Regulation Committee considered the application on 2 December 2008. Having considered the officer report and representations made at the meeting from those opposed to the scheme, including the Ebchester Village Trust, it resolved to grant planning permission subject to no new material issues being raised by outstanding consultees.
- 3 This includes the County Council which advised Northumberland that it would not be able to provide formal views until after December's Planning Committee meeting.

**Site**

- 4 Broadoak Quarry is located 1km north of the village of Ebchester (see attached plan). It forms part of a larger site that includes Broadoak Quarry to the south (operated by Tarmac) and Hollings Hill Quarry to the North (Banks). Broadoak quarry is currently operated under planning permissions for the extraction of sand and gravel and depositing of inert waste. The consented period for extraction ceased in 2002 and for landfilling in 2007. The permission remains active with restoration of the site required by the end of 2009.

## The Proposal

- 5 The submitted application seeks to extend the current end date for extraction within Broadoak Quarry to December 2022 to allow continued extraction of sand and gravel at the north east corner of the site and extension of the previously permitted extraction area. These works would be covered by consolidating existing permissions into a single planning consent. Final restoration of the site would be completed by December 2025.
- 6 Proposals for the restoration of the southern part of the site by landfilling with inert waste originally included in the application have been withdrawn.
- 7 The proposed extraction would take place within a quarry that has been operational for many years and dates back to the 1950's. The proposal would utilize the existing quarry infrastructure and would enable the remaining reserves to be extracted from the quarry prior to final restoration.
- 8 Vehicular access to the site is taken from an independent access at the west edge of the quarry. Minerals exported from the site by HGV's would be transported via this access to the highway network south of the site. An average of 32 vehicles movements per day from the site is proposed with working hours between 07:00 and 19:00 Monday to Friday and 07:00 and 13:00 on Saturdays.

## Views Received

- 9 Ebchester Village Trust provided a copy of a letter sent to Northumberland County Council objecting to the proposed development.
- 10 The Trust objects on the basis of impact on residential amenity, visual impact, highway safety and ecology. It highlights concerns in relation to the road network serving the site and junctions and road widths within Ebchester. The Trust considers that no further workings on this or Hollings Hill should take place and that a single comprehensive low level restoration scheme for both sites should be pursued.
- 11 The views of Ebchester Village Trust were included in the report that was presented to Northumberland County Council's Planning and Regulation Committee and it is understood that a representative addressed the Committee in person.
- 12 Derwentside District Council has objected to the proposal and copied the County council into its officer response. This expresses concern about the limited consultation period afforded to the Council to consider the application and provide comment before being considered by the (Northumberland) Planning Committee.

- 13 Officers note that previously Derwentside District Council has objected to applications at these sites due to the serious concerns of the residents of Ebchester and Hamsterley regarding the impact of heavy traffic travelling through these villages. Extending the time limit for the sites would mean that the residents would suffer the existing problems for a longer period which they feel is unacceptable. In addition residents have concerns about the impact on the character of the Derwent Valley. Therefore the Council objects to the application.
- 14 The County Council Members for Leadgate and Medomsley, the Division adjacent to the application site, have expressed concerns regarding the traffic and associated community impacts within County Durham and requested that the application be discussed and considered by the Planning Committee.

### **Planning Policy Framework**

- 15 The application site lies entirely within Northumberland and therefore has to be determined in the light of policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North East, 'saved' policies in the adopted Northumberland County Council Minerals Local Plan and other relevant material considerations including Government guidance. Policies within the Northumberland County Council Minerals Local Plan variously seek to protect amenity and the environment.

### **Impact upon County Durham interests**

- 16 The detailed operational effects of continued working within the quarry area would have limited direct impact on the residential or visual amenities of Durham residents. The main issue for the County Council to consider is therefore the highway impacts on Durham roads and villages arising from the HGV numbers and routing.

### **Transport**

- 17 The planning application is supported by a transport assessment which considers the existing and future highway effects from the Broadoak/Hollings Hill site, including levels of vehicle movements, transport routes and projected transport figures and road safety implications.
- 18 Under the existing planning permission granted in 1992 a maximum of 90 loaded vehicles (Monday to Friday) can enter or leave the Broadoak site in any one day. An average of 32 vehicles movements per day from the site associated with the sand and gravel extraction is proposed (64 in total). When mineral extraction ceases at the Hollings Hill site which is forecasted to be in 2009 vehicle movements associated with the restoration of the site (through landfill) would be 70 (35 in 35 out). This is to be completed in 2012 but there is currently an undetermined application with Northumberland County Council to extend this to 2023. The combined vehicle movements for both sites would therefore be 134 movements per day (70 in and 70 out)

from 2009. The applicant estimates that the two sites currently generate 90 vehicles in and 90 out i.e. a total of 180 per day. There would therefore be a reduction in the overall number of vehicles below current levels as a result of the development.

- 19 Existing and proposed vehicle movements are primarily in a southern direction with 90% of traffic travelling through Ebchester. Of all the vehicle movements 60% travel east along the A694 toward the A1 with 25% travelling south toward Durham on the B6309. A further 10% travel north toward Whittonstall and the remaining 5% travel west toward the A68. These directions of travel are expected to continue in the future.
- 20 Having weighed the potential impacts of the extended quarry use the transport assessment concludes that the roads are operating at significantly below their capacity and that the network can accommodate the projected vehicle movements. On the issue of road safety it is noted that a limited number of private car accidents on the local road network have occurred whilst local residents have pointed to 2 occasions where lorries have failed to negotiate the ascent/descent from Ebchester. In light of these incidents the applicants propose a range of mitigation measures such as improved road markings, carriage edge lining and improved wheel washing facilities on the site.
- 21 Northumberland County Council highways officers endorse the transport assessment findings and consider that the nature of roads serving the site are of a type which, with appropriate maintenance and mitigation measures, are suitable for the proposed levels of vehicle usage. Although the site directly accesses a C class road it is predominantly served by an A and B class road network within 1km. It is also noted that proposed traffic levels remain consistent with or below those previously consented. In this context it is not considered that the proposals are unacceptable in highway safety terms.
- 22 The Head of Highway Management Services has stated that road conditions through Ebchester village are regularly monitored by Durham County Council and recently the A694 was the subject to some improvements to signing and white lining. The personal injury accident rate on the A694 is not a cause for concern and consequently does not have an objection to the continued use of this primary route by heavy traffic particularly if it will not increase. Regarding vehicle routeing, whilst a small proportion appears to travel towards Hexham via the B6309, the majority use Chare Bank to join the A694 at Ebchester and this allows such traffic to join the strategic road network by the shortest practicable route. Other minor roads within Northumberland are not suitable for such traffic due to their width or alignment and therefore have been discounted as viable alternative routes by Northumberland County Council highways officers.

- 23 The Head of Highway Management Services notes the concerns highlighted by Ebchester Village Trust about the use of Chare Bank by heavy vehicles and the photographed incidents of these vehicles losing traction. The Deputy Area Manager for Highway Maintenance has identified the poor condition of the road surface on Chare Bank and considers that this section of road (from the bottom to the top) should be resurfaced. Consequently it is recommended that as a requirement of any planning permission the applicant should enter an agreement with Durham County Council to pay for an agreed scheme for the resurfacing of Chare Bank. This scheme should be implemented as soon as possible and could be tied to some operation commencing on the quarry site.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

- 24 The County Council has been consulted on this planning application as a neighbouring planning authority. The proposal involves continued sand and gravel extraction at a long standing quarry. The scheme has generated significant public interest and concern from residents of County Durham. These issues have been reported to and taken into consideration by Northumberland County Council as the determining authority.
- 25 The main effects of the proposal on County Durham are in association with lorry movements which primarily access the site and the strategic road network from Ebchester. Whilst continued working to 2022 will mean that the use of this road by quarry traffic is prolonged it is not considered that this would be unacceptable in highway terms given the projected levels of vehicle movements and nature and capacity of the road network. Nevertheless, a series of necessary improvements to the condition of Chare Bank have been identified by the Head of Highway Management Services and should be undertaken as part of the development.
- 26 I therefore **recommend** that the County Council raise no objections to the proposals but request that proposed highway improvement works to Chare Bank be incorporated into a condition or suitable legal agreement associated with the grant of planning permission to ensure that the works are carried out. It is also requested that the Head of Highway Management Services be consulted directly regarding the details of such works. In addition the Planning Committee may wish to inform Northumberland County Council of its concern regarding the limited consultation period afforded to this Council to consider the application before it was reported to the Planning and Regulation Committee.

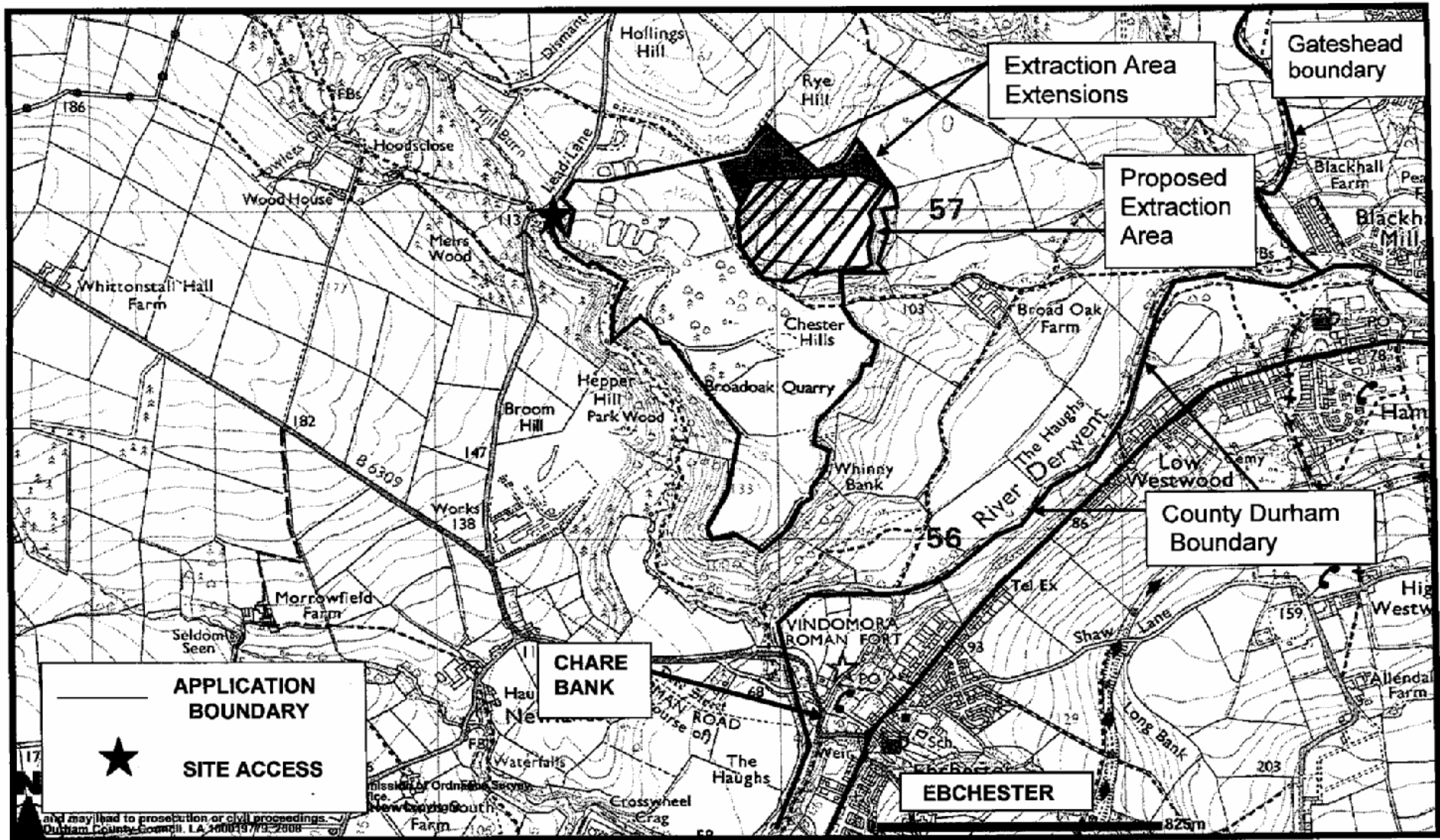
### **Background Papers**

Consultation on planning application reference 08/00060/CCMEIA received by Northumberland County Council on 2 May. Correspondence on office file reference 962/1/7.

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**Local Members:** **Councillors Shield and Stelling (Leadgate and Medomsley)**

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