

## **Public Participation – Cabinet 23 January 2023**

### **1. Question from Philip Eades**

Following the response to my Question to Cabinet of 1 November 2022, the following question to the PFH for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy arises:

Given that the Council eventually decided to credit to over 15,000 Council tax accounts directly the sum of £150 how much did the policy of not automatically crediting all 121,000 eligible Council Taxpayers accounts cost the Council in administration time, letters, bank payments and any other associated costs?

### **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy**

You are referencing the Governments £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme from 2022. The scheme was as stated a Government initiative supported by firm guidelines. Government recognised that they required the assistance of Local Authorities to administer this scheme and set out the initial requirements supporting the intention that they wanted those eligible to be issued a payment of £150. This was undertaken by either a direct payment for most who paid their Council Tax at the time via a direct debit payment method or alternatively via the issuing of a payment after an application was received and validated.

Government set a fixed deadline for the closing of this initiative. Dorset Council did not want any eligible person to miss out on this financial support. A decision was therefore taken, supported by the guidelines at the time, ensuring that those who had failed for any reason to take up the council's official letter of invite guiding them on how to make an application, we would at this stage credit the remaining eligible persons Council Tax accounts with the £150.

As this was a Government initiative each council received funding from Government to cover the cost of administration so that this would not come at a cost to Dorset Council and the Local Tax payer. I can confirm that the funding received did cover the costs Dorset Council incurred in full.

### **2. Question from Alistair Chisholm, Dorchester Town Council**

What sites in Dorset were considered and evaluated for the siting of a "garden village" other than the area north of Dorchester referred to as "Dor 13" in the Dorset Local Plan?

### **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning**

The options for possible development sites in the local plan were identified by looking at all of the land around each of the main towns and other larger settlements and assessing their constraints and sustainability in order to refine the options down.

The opportunity later arose to suggest potential larger development sites for the Garden Communities programme and the only one that fitted the criteria was the

North of Dorchester site. As such, no alternatives have been considered as garden communities.

No decisions have been made at this stage about which sites will be included in the plan as it goes forward.

### **3. Question/Statement from Arthur Schaefer**

#### **Question :**

With regards to the proposed increase in council tax on “second homes”, will there be any exemption from this surcharge, for retirement properties which are age restricted and warden controlled?

#### **Statement:**

Our flat (in Lyme Regis) is not a second home to us – it’s our only UK home. Although we spend a large portion of time at our flat, in Lyme Regis, we are forced to declare it as a <second home> because of the greater portion of time we spend in France.

We wish to clarify that this type of property cannot be used as a holiday let and it is not sublet.

Our council tax is band D and we pay full rate with no discounts.

The Property also has a service fee of in excess of £4000 per annum.

If the 100% increase in council tax is imposed we would, like others in our situation, be left with no alternative but to sell our home.

I consider this proposal is extremely unfair, our long term retirement plan would be ruined and overall it would not be of benefit to anyone in the local community

#### **Response from the Deputy Leader of the Council**

There are no suggested exemptions however any final prescribed exemptions or scope for exemptions will be confirmed when final National legislation is enacted. I am unable to comment further at this time.

### **4. Question/Statement from Andrew Holt on behalf of Alderholt Parish Council**

I understand we should be submitting questions to Dorset Council as they appear to be in favour of supporting the Hampshire Councils idea of extending the quarry into Alderholt and would like to request answers to the following

questions please so I and Alderholt residents can try and understand why Dorset Council appear to be backing this plan.

- What has changed since this site was considered as a Planning Application in June 1995 and recommended for refusal 92/NFDC/050721 application (withdrawn), following it being an “omission site” in the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan of 1993? Subsequently this site was not included in the previous HCC Minerals and Waste Plan of 2013. It should also be noted that a greater number of dwellings now front directly onto or lie within a few meters of Harbridge Drive and Hillbury Road, notably at Drove End Farm, Braemoor, the Bungalow, Primrose Cottage, Hill Crest, new dwellings at Bleak Hill Farm, Christmas Rose Cottage and Daffodil Cottage. All of these properties lie within the first 1.2Km south of the proposed site access and will be adversely impacted by the daily HGV. Please explain why Dorset Council have not complained about this proposed plan.
- This rural area on the extreme edge of the HCC authority area abuts the village of Alderholt and is very close to important biodiversity sites (as listed extensively on page 61 of the HCC M&W Proposal Study for the site and page 25 of the Ecological Statement). Why is this site even being proposed?
- Loss of good quality agricultural land grades 3a and 3b within the site – “a significant quantity of best and most versatile agricultural land, a national resource for the future”: of particular importance due to the Climate Change Emergency, and the need for food security, again why is this site even being proposed?
- Negative impact on Alderholt Dorset residents who are outside the accountable HCC area, with respect to excessive increased noise brought about by the extraction, processing and transportation, together with associated vibration, dust and air pollution. EDDC clearly objected to the 1995 application on the grounds of the “likely detriment to amenity that will be caused to the adjacent residential neighbourhood and outlying individual dwellings” at para 5.6 of the officer’s report on PA 050721. My father of 84 suffers from Asthma along with I am sure a number of people in the village, please confirm how this will affect their health and what claim and medical plans will be put in place to protect the health and well-being of these people if this plan was given the green light.
- The 1995 application proposed the use of lower weight capacity HGVs, compared to today where the gravel HGVs have a weight in excess of 32 tonnes with the associated increase in vibration and noise. Page 64 of the Site Proposal Study quotes 110 two-way HGV movements per day. Such increased road usage will impact heavily on Dorset’s roads. Given that with this new project there will be in excess of 90 lorry journeys a day on a road where in some cases two cars can’t pass each other without slowing down or feeling threatened and in danger when a lorry is coming towards you can I please ask again why this plan is even being considered. The roads leading to Alderholt are poorly maintained by Hampshire Council and will not take this capacity of traffic and will result in accidents which Dorset Council &

Hampshire Council will be responsible for if this plan goes to the next stage, please confirm if this has been looked at and what plans have been put in place.

- It is noted on page 62 of the site Proposal Study under landscape character, that the remaining parts of the Avon Valley that are intact ie that below the ridge at Midgham Farm, are becoming more important and that this is considered to be a highly sensitive area (water meadows) with regard to ecological interest and biodiversity. You would hope that with the green issues of today this would of been looked at before the proposed plan had been put forward, please explain why this has not been taken into consideration.
- In the 1995 refused application 057021, the officer's report majors on the ecology in para 10.11.1&2 and the extensive hydrology issues under section 10.13 where the numerable springs are mentioned alongside the potential removal of water storage within the gravel aquifer. This is of a concern considering the increasing pressure on water supplies with global warming and climate change as per last summer (2022). Please confirm if this has been taken into consideration, we appear to be building on local flood plain land which is flooding local towns and this polluted water is not being stored.
- The concerns raised in representations relating to impact on the groundwater are noted. The EA conclude that overall, the effects of the proposed extension on water resources is insignificant, and although there could be significant impacts on water quality, these can be mitigated for. Long term impacts on groundwater levels and stream flows are also ruled as not considered to be significant, but all the same it is proposed that monitoring will be undertaken, and mitigation measures implemented if required. However, given the scale and duration of the proposed extension any dewatering raises concerns that adequate monitoring and mitigation measures may not be in place for the protection of groundwater, surface water and private wells. The Applicant will need to apply for a Water Resources Abstraction Licence for the proposed Transfer for any dewatering is to be carried out from the excavation void(s) and conditions will be imposed to require review of the ground water monitoring data and a Monitoring Strategy based on that review. Please confirm how Dorset Council will be supporting this and what will be put in place when it is found the water quality and peoples health is being affected.
- This proposal will affect the "Quality of Life" particularly as the machinery is to be located at the northern edge of the site closest to Alderholt, so having a severe negative impact on Alderholt residents. This plan will affect the whole of Alderholt and along with the planned building projects which are in the pipeline Alderholt will become a dangerous place to travel in and out of and will be heavily impacted by traffic, pollution, loss of habitat and health risks. Why are Dorset Council not supporting our case, we all pay our taxes and would expect Dorset Council to fight our case.

These are just a few of the points which have been raised by Alderholt Parish Council and we are all very concerned where this is heading and feeling that we are not supported by Dorset Council. The smaller plan of June 1995 was rejected for strong reasons and here we are in 2023 and suppositely in a position where we care more for the planet, nature and the people on it and here we are with a this plan in a bigger scale sitting on the table.

## **5. Question from Julie-Ann Hawkins**

1. How does Dorset County Council make an informed comment at this consultation stage of Hampshire County Council Mineral and Waste Plan, when there is very little detail and supporting reports with regard to many aspects which will impact residents in Alderholt

and

2. Are Dorset County Council going to support the residents of Alderholt in terms of maintaining and protecting our environment and family's health and well being?

## **6. Question from Kathryn Green**

How can DCC evaluate the impact of the excavation sites Midgham Farm and Cobley Wood - together with the hazardous infill at Bleak Hill with the well-being of residents in Alderholt?

Under the HCC Mineral and Waste Plan Partial Update is advised under Policy 11: Protecting public health, safety, amenity, and well-being that "Minerals and waste development should not cause adverse public health and safety impacts, and unacceptable adverse amenity impacts on well-being. Minerals and waste development should not: release emissions to the atmosphere, land or water (above appropriate standards); have an unacceptable impact on human health or well-being; cause unacceptable noise, dust, lighting, vibration or odour; have an unacceptable impact on air quality; have an unacceptable visual impact; Yet all of these are within the sites of Midgham Farm, Cobley Wood and Bleak Hill? How can you mitigate DCC sleepwalking into this environmental disaster for residents?

Here are several photos taken over this past weekend, of flooding at Drove End, surface water flooding at our property from the Midgham Farm site, and finally our beautiful view from the main windows of our house over the proposed consultation site of Midgham Farm.



#### 7. Question/Statement from Martin Smith

How can DCC evaluate the impact of the excavation sites Midgham Farm and Copley Wood together with the hazardous infill at Bleak Hill with the well-being of residents in Alderholt? Under the HCC Mineral and Waste Plan Partial Update is advised under Policy 11: Protecting public health, safety, amenity, and well-being that **“Minerals and waste development should not cause adverse public health and safety impacts, and unacceptable adverse amenity impacts on well-being. Minerals and waste development should not:**

- **release emissions to the atmosphere, land or water (above appropriate standards);**
- **have an unacceptable impact on human health or well-being;**
- **cause unacceptable noise, dust, lighting, vibration or odour;**
- **have an unacceptable impact on air quality;**
- **have an unacceptable visual impact;**
- Yet all of these are within the sites of Midgham Farm, Copley Wood and Bleak Hill? How can you mitigate DCC sleepwalking into this environmental disaster for residents?

#### 8. Question from Georgina Harvey

It is noted in the Officers Recommendation Report for this meeting that observations on the impacts of the extraction site at Midgham Farm should be noted however, that how would DCC enforce the requirement for traffic servicing this site (apart from specific local deliveries) should come from and return to the south, and avoid travelling through or alongside Alderholt?

#### 9. Question from Chris Green

What reassurances would DCC foresee being implemented and in what manner enforced regarding the comment “Dorset Council would want to be reassured that should Midgham Farm be allocated, the existing allocated extension at Hamer Warren will be completed before Midgham Farm is developed and there would be no simultaneous working of the Bleak Hill extension and the proposed Midgham Farm or Cobley Wood sites”?

**10. Question from Jon Lucas**

I live at Spring Cottage, Hillbury Road, Alderholt. SP6 3BH.

My home is adjacent to the site and I will be very badly affected. I am retired and enjoy my garden and relative tranquility. Noise, dust, pollution and knowledge that nature is being destroyed will have an impact on my wellbeing and my enjoyment of local amenities. I am partially sighted and have to walk to Ibsley to catch the bus. The huge lorries will deter me from this and effectively trap me in my home.

**My question**

I believe a huge, noisy polluting machine is heading towards us and will destroy countryside, footpaths, habitats, tranquility and the very essence of our village. It will affect the wellbeing of most of the villagers. I understand that hundreds have objected to HCC. Will DCC apply the 'handbrake' and Object, at least for now, until it has gathered the views of the residents who need the DCC to protect them and act in the best interests of the village.

**11. Question/Statement from Ian Kynaston**

My statement is:

My name is Ian Kynaston, a resident of Alderholt for over 30 years. I would implore the Council to oppose the proposed Midgham Farm gravel pit development. The reasons for rejecting it are clearer now than they were in 1995 - damage to the environment, including the risk of polluting the river Avon; noise and dust pollution affecting Alderholt residents; and the risk to users of Hillbury Road (where the site entrance will be) of 100 plus daily HGV journeys - a road wholly unsuited to heavy HGV usage and prone to flooding.

My question is:

Given the unquestionable negative impact on Alderholt (environmental damage, noise and air pollution, road safety) of the proposed Midgham Farm gravel pit, why is Dorset Council unwilling to follow the principled example of its predecessor East Dorset District Council in 1995 by opposing Hampshire Council's proposal?

1. Catriona Smith

**Statement to Cabinet - Objection to Hampshire County Council's Mineral and Waste Plan**

I object to Hampshire's proposal to extract minerals at Midgham Farm and Cobley Farm, adjacent to Alderholt, and to the proposal for asbestos disposal at Hamer Warren.

Our road infrastructure, especially the Somerley Road, is totally unsuitable and inadequate for the addition of 200 or more HGV movements a day. Hillbury Road and Harbridge Drove form the key route between Alderholt and Ringwood and are already in very poor condition, narrow and unsuitable for the existing level of HGV movements to and from Hamer Warren. The roads are unlikely to be upgraded. Hants CC claim that the road is capable of handling the additional HGVs, yet they recently refused a similar application on a similar route near Kingsworthy - on the grounds of road safety.

There would be at least a doubling of greenhouse gas emissions from the extra HGV movements. Dorset Council has declared a climate emergency and must surely object to this, because of its impact on global heating, residents' health and the detriment to environmentally sensitive, protected sites. There are already too many development proposals and sites in build around Fordingbridge and Alderholt. Cumulatively, these will have a serious impact on the River Avon, which is a protected landscape, i.e. SSSI and SAC. Meadow land would be lost with a negative impact on wildlife. Landscapes could be lost open water. Plans to backfill with inert waste might change in the future to landfill or hazardous waste.

Dust from the site would have a serious adverse impact on the quality of life and health of residents at Alderholt, Harbridge, Bicton and Fordingbridge. The plans state the quarry sites are not even in an air monitoring zone so silica dust is a real risk.

The increase in noise above background noise levels would be significant and detrimental to health and wellbeing. Some properties are very close indeed to the site. The existing Hamer Warren quarry is already too noisy.

I do not believe that adequate consideration has been given to extracting gravel in areas that would not affect residents and the natural environment so badly. This site as well as Cobley Wood should be deleted from the plan and more suitable locations identified.

The proposal for asbestos waste disposal at Hamer Warren should also be strongly opposed. If this waste were safe, it could and would be disposed of near the source, probably building demolition in areas of high population such as Southampton and Basingstoke. Asbestos can give rise to a virtually untreatable cancer, mesothelioma with a very poor survival rate. Instead, Hants CC want to truck it to Hamer Warren, which is unsustainable, and expose Verwood and Alderholt residents to the health hazards.



Please object to these proposals, which have no support and indeed are strongly opposed by residents whom you represent.

2. William Roberts

I am both shocked and disgusted to learn that Dorset Council are planning to vote 'no objection' to the gravel landfill at Midgham Farm.

I am a resident of Alderholt and I strongly urge you to reconsider and object to the proposed gravel pit based on the following negative impacts:

Noise and air pollution as a direct result of extraction, processing and transportation.

Alderholt road leading to the B3081 is already in huge disrepair, potholes everywhere; extra HGV traffic from the pit will make the road far worse.

Damage to environment and ecology - there are sensitive water meadows close to the proposed site which must be protected.

We have terrible water logging issues, with standing water remaining for long periods after heavy rainfall and the proposed pit will make this worse.

Severe negative effect on residents' well-being by taking away the footpath and cycle path.

Loss of agricultural land which could be needed in the future.

Ugly blot on our beautiful landscape.

3. Kathleen Henderson

I strongly object to the proposed gravel pit at Midgham Farm.

Please submit the following statement at the Dorset Council Cabinet meeting on Monday 23rd January at 10am:

I object based on the following negative impacts:

Noise and air pollution as a direct result of extraction, processing and transportation.

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4. Walt Henderson

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5. Karen Roberts

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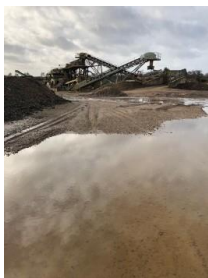
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6. Venetia Rowland



**The Need**

HCC consistently overestimate the need for soft sand and gravel (SSG). Resulting repeated extension of planning permissions.

Since 2001 there has been a reduction of 26% in the use of recycled and secondary aggregate production

**Midgham Farm** was withdrawn due to the Officers report in June 1995 which recommended refusal. These reasons were:

- No need for the extraction could be justified for the proposed development and it did not outweigh the adverse environmental impact that it would have had on the local area.
- Extreme sound impact in excess of 10 dB(A) above the existing background level throughout the life of the site, severely impacting on the amenity of residents.
- The cumulative impact of the proposal on the Harbridge Area being worked at the same time as Bleak Hill would be unacceptable.
- Unacceptable implications on traffic movements.

**Cobley Wood Farm** withdrawn by the applicant in 1992 due to the Officers report which recommended refusal.

The NFDC Planning Officer commented “***New Forest District Council raises the strongest possible objection to this application and backs the concerns expressed by local residents and amenity societies.***”

#### **Transport Assessment:**

110 two-way HGV movements per day, and additional 20 car journeys per day from Monday

– Friday: 7am – 6pm and Saturday – 7am – 1pm. This doesn't align with “***For transport this means enabling, supporting and delivery a reduction in transport related carbon emissions to net zero (neutrality) by 2050***”

#### **Ecological impact**

The Catchment Map from Natural England Technical Information Note. TIN208. clearly shows that both Midgham Farm and Cobley Wood are within the Nutrient Neutrality SSSI Catchment.

#### **Landscape Impact**

The character of large parts of the Avon valley has been changed by the extraction of sands and gravel and the sites being restored to open water bodies rather than meadow land. The landscape value of the remaining parts of the valley that are still intact is becoming a more important and this is a highly sensitive area. Both sites are visible from the western escarpment of the New Forest National Park.

**Restoration of land to agricultural use:** there is evidence that this is not achievable due to gravel extraction and clay base.

### **Hydrogeology**

At this time there are no hydrogeological reports within the Partial Update which can show mitigation of the adverse impact to the area.



Disturbance of Water flow through the land – springs into the ditch systems to Avon River. **The EA has identified that Midgham Farm has secondary A aquifers, permeable layers that can support local water supplies, and form an important source of base flow to rivers.**

### **Footpaths**

Footpaths 24 and 26 at Cobley Wood and Footpaths 2,3,7,8a & 8b would be impacted at Midgham Farm. The PROW network in this area is being seriously eroded.

**Proximity to Airport/aerodrome (safeguarding)** both sites are within the Bournemouth airport safeguarding zone.

### **Cumulative Impact**

Within the HMWP Partial Update: SA/SEA Interim Report August 2022 it is noted that due to the considerable extraction which has been concentrated. However, consideration cannot be at the planning application stage, as these sites would be taken in isolation as the timing would be significantly different in each coming forward

### **Need for Inclusion/Exclusion?**

Additionally within the HMWP Partial Update: SA/SEA Interim Report August 2022 on Midgham Farm and Cobley Wood Farm considerations have been identified which are closely aligned to **Hyde Farm, Bickton** which has been now excluded from the proposed extraction sites in this “partial update”.

**I urge you to object to Midgham Farm, Cobley Wood Farm’s inclusion and the implications of hazardous waste infill at Bleak Hill 2. *These sites should not go forward to the next stage of the HCC Mineral and Waste Plan.***

## **7. Stephen Godsall**

"Please consider the evidence that Midgham Farm is not a suitable site for mineral extraction and is not required to meet demand over the next 20 years. An application for extraction here was refused in 1995 because there was "no need for the mineral

currently or in the foreseeable future" and because of the environmental impact. These reasons apply even more strongly today.

It was not known in 1995 that the nearby Hamer Warren workings would continue to expand for over 30 years, and that the operators would fail to restore the land to agricultural use - they are now applying for permission to dump hazardous waste there. Nor was it known that the biodiversity crisis and climate emergency would become so acute, and the need for productive farmland in the UK become such a priority.

Your report suggests that more sites are needed for gravel extraction to meet demand. The attached evidence shows this is not really the case, particularly if care is taken to make use of recycled materials. Over 30 years we have seen a clear pattern of HCC overestimating the need for soft sand and gravel. This has resulted in the existing extraction sites having their operations extended time and time again, well beyond the original timescales.

Midgham Farm is an essential wildlife corridor between the housing of Alderholt and Fordingbridge and the degraded landscape caused by gravel workings at Hamer Warren. It is located where the Dorset and New Forest heathlands are closest together - only 2km apart across the Avon Valley. All three habitats are protected by European legislation which the UK government has promised to strengthen. The landscape of raised alluvial terraces allied with woodland, water meadows and productive farmland is far more valuable than the aggregate deposits beneath it.

On top of these factors is the disruption and heavy goods traffic which is already a nuisance to Alderholt people and would multiply if these sites operate together. Your report suggests that Hampshire should mitigate the cumulative impact of traffic from the sites but once they are in the Minerals Plan they would be unable to resist planning applications or enforce mitigation. Midgham Farm must be left out of the plan, at least until other sites are completed and restored."

## **Response to questions and statements for item 9 from the Portfolio Holder for Planning**

The Hampshire Authorities' *Minerals And Waste Plan: Partial Update – Draft Plan* proposes a number of site allocations in close proximity to the Hampshire/Dorset border. These include Purple Haze near Verwood, and Midgham Farm, Cobley Wood and Bleak Hill/Hamer Warren further north, near Alderholt. With the exception of Bleak Hill/Hamer Warren, proposed as a hazardous waste landfill, all are proposed sand and gravel quarry sites.

Minerals must be worked where they are found. Hampshire County Council as a Mineral Planning Authority is legally required to provide for a set amount of sand and gravel to be extracted every year (subject to receiving planning permission). Sand and gravel is needed for construction - of houses, other buildings, all the necessary supporting infrastructure, and maintenance of all these. House building is a priority of Government. Quarries in

Hampshire, and Dorset, and elsewhere, meet a local, regional and sometimes national need for essential building supplies.

Midgham Farm and Cobley Wood were considered for quarrying, but rejected, in the 1990s. These sites were, and remain, environmentally sensitive but many other factors have changed since then. Other sites in Hampshire have been quarried, or are being quarried, but the demand for aggregate does not go away (although it does reduce as construction methods improve and use of recycled aggregate increases). Hampshire County Council are looking at the next round of potential sites for future quarries, as they are required to do, and this includes looking again at sites that may have been previously rejected but are being considered again. It does not automatically mean they will be included in the Plan.

Quarrying can lead to impacts on amenity and the environment. The issues identified regarding these proposed allocations are relevant, including: noise, dust, vibration, loss of agricultural land and open space, traffic and transport impacts, impacts on biodiversity and on land with important ecological designations, hydrology/hydrogeology, flooding risks and landscape/visual impacts. Such impacts can in many cases be mitigated to an acceptable level. If they cannot be mitigated, the site would not be developed.

The Hampshire Draft Plan is at an early stage of preparation. Hampshire County Council will take all the comments made, and come to a decision regarding the next steps for each proposal. There will be further opportunities to comment, including another consultation and Examination before a Planning Inspector.

The sites proposed as potential allocations will go through further assessment and even if ultimately included in the Plan they would still have undergone the detailed assessment of a planning application.

Dorset Council has flagged up the issues of particular concern to us at this stage, such as cumulative traffic impacts. This does not mean that we are ignoring other issues, but are waiting to see what is included in the next stage of the Draft Plan and whether any more information will be provided. We may wish to make further objections at that stage.

We will continue to monitor the Draft Plan as it progresses and should an application be submitted to Hampshire County Council we would object to any aspects we were not satisfied with, as was the case with Purple Haze.