

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION

Subject: Minerals and Waste Development Framework - Supplementary Minerals and Waste Sites Options.

Taken by: Cllr. Jill Davison

Date of decision:

15 December 2011

Details of Decision: The comments made in the District Councils response in the attached report should be forwarded to Kent County Council as the formal response to the consultation

Documents considered: Minerals and Waste Development Framework - Supplementary Minerals and Waste Sites Options.

Reasons for Decision:

Responding to the consultation is considered to be key to protect and enhance the quality of the countryside throughout the district and to protect residential amenities.

Local Member(s), other Portfolio Holders and/or Directors/Heads of Service consulted.
Local District Members

Signed by Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Mrs. Davison

Record made by: V Etheridge

Date: 15 December 2011

Minerals and Waste Development Framework - Supplementary Minerals and Waste Sites Options.

KCC, as part of the LDF, produced and consulted on the following documents. The Core Strategy : Strategy and Directions, Minerals - Site Options and Waste - Site Options. As a result of this consultation, which ended in July 2011, KCC is now consulting on an additional 9 sites and re-consulting on 5 sites. The consultation period for this is 24th October - 19th December 2011. Only 1 additional site has been identified in the District.

Land between the Orpington Bypass and the M25 Site No 104.

Use as a biomass facility which would use waste wood to generate electricity. The material would arise from a range of sources including Commercial & Industrial and Municipal Solid Waste, 60% of which would be sourced from Kent.

KCC Sustainability Appraisal The site is proposed for an energy from waste facility which would use waste wood to generate electricity. Wood would be sourced from within a 30 mile radius of the site and be transported by road with approximately 24 lorry movements per day. The site has potential access to the road network particularly the M25 and A224. The site is located within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a County Wildlife Site and part is Ancient Woodland and consideration would need to be given to the impact of the proposal on the surrounding area. Open storage of wood waste in such a sensitive environment could adversely impact on the designated areas. There are no residential properties within close proximity of the site and the proposal has the opportunity to provide local employment opportunities.

District Council Response

The sustainability appraisal highlights the need to protect the landscape, the Ancient Woodland and the biodiversity of the whole site and its surroundings. The site has no planning history.

Although no details have been given, it would appear that as the proposal is for generating electricity it will be a large scale facility. The scale of the facility and associated buildings may be considered incompatible with its location in the Green Belt.

The Kent Downs AONB unit has produced a Companion Report to "Climate Change Mitigation: Renewable Energy Technologies and Protected Landscapes" This says that in the case of larger electricity generating plants (ie a biomass facility) *" a medium sized industrial building of two-storey height will be required, with a slender chimney of 25 or more metres in height. A barn scale building may be required for on-site storage of fuel, and additional buildings for offices and workshops may be required. An extensive area for lorry manoeuvring will be needed. The external flue usually terminates above the ridge-line of the building and in certain weather conditions a plume may be evident from the chimney and/or drying equipment depending on the design of the equipment. Typically, a 1.5MW plant producing electricity using gasification technology will require a site area of some 0.5 hectares and a 40MW plant may require 5 hectares.*

A biomass energy plant of this scale would either need to be developed on land designated for industrial development or as part of a significant farm complex, avoiding visually prominent locations, well connected by road, and not adversely affecting existing settlement structure."

Local Members and Shoreham and Halstead Parish Council were consulted. A response was received from Shoreham P.C. supporting the Kent Downs AONB units comments (see below) and expressing concern that any buildings on the land could decrease future broadband speeds. In addition Badgers Mount Residents Association have submitted their own detailed response strongly objecting to the proposal.

The Kent Downs AONB Unit has commented as follows: -

"The impact of this development on the AONB and the Ancient woodland and local amenities is high. It further degrades the AONB in challenging the requirement to conserve and enhance the

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AONB. Conservation and enhancement of this environment is necessary in this area which is already under urban pressures eroding the boundary of the AONB.

There is no justification, or justifiable need for this provision to be in the AONB. Other alternative sites in this area are available. For these reasons it should not be allocated in the M&W CS.

The AONB supports use of renewable fuel for energy production but only in locations which do not challenge the conservation and enhancement of the AONB”.

Conclusion The Core Strategy supports Sustainable Development and the provision of low carbon and carbon neutral facilities, as well as protecting areas such as the Green Belt and AONB. In this case the proposed development is a cause for significant concern.

In light of the harm this proposal could cause to the openness of the Green Belt, the AONB landscape, character, and biodiversity of the area, as well as the potential impact on traffic movement and air quality, and furthermore, in the absence of any detailed information regarding these issues, it is recommended that the District Council should strongly object to the principle of this site being allocated.

The following supplementary sites in close proximity to the Districts boundaries in adjoining authorities have been identified –

Pinden Quarry North West Extension, Darenth, Dartford Site 63 - an extension of an existing quarry which would utilise the existing plant and access to provide a continued supply of chalk.

Ightham Sand Pit (Western Extension) Site 9/50 - an extension to an existing quarry for sand extraction and inert fill.

Borough Green Sandpit, Site 105 – an extension to the existing site for the extraction of sand.

It is considered that none of the above will have a significant impact on the District

5 Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

Responding to the consultation is considered to be key to protect and enhance the quality of the countryside throughout the District and to protect residential amenities while making necessary provision for minerals and waste facilities. The alternative option is not to comment. The consequences of this would be to fail to protect the landscape and residents from harmful development .

6 Key Implications

Financial

None.

Legal, Human Rights etc.

N/A.

Equality Impacts

There are no direct impacts.

Sustainability Checklist

This is not applicable.

7 Conclusions

The comments made above in the District Councils response should be forwarded to Kent County Council as the formal response to the consultation.

Risk Assessment Statement

THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION WOULD BE A FAILURE TO

TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE ACTIONS TO PROTECT THE LANDSCAPE AND RESIDENTS FROM
HARMFUL DEVELOPMENT

