

REGULATORY COMMITTEE

5th FEBRUARY 2003

ASHTON KEYNES: THREE BRIDGES QUARRY -
SUBMISSION OF REVISED RESTORATION DETAILS PURSUANT
TO CONDITION NO. 12 OF PLANNING PERMISSION N.90.2924 BY
ALLIANCE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ON BEHALF OF
MORETON C. CULLIMORE (GRAVELS) LIMITED
(Application N.02.0507)

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the submission and to recommend that the revised restoration scheme be approved.

Background

2. Three Bridges Quarry lies to the west of the B4696, approximately 1 km south-west of the centre of Ashton Keynes village and is situated immediately adjacent to the Pike Corner Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
3. A site plan is attached at **Appendix 1**.
4. Three Bridges Quarry was granted planning permission in July 1992 (N.90.2924) for the extraction of 330,000 tonnes of sand and gravel.
5. Further planning permission was granted in July 1995 (N.95.0639) for the construction of a weighbridge, office, workshop, toilet, fuel storage and bailey bridge to serve the permitted mineral extraction operation.
6. Condition No. 12 of Planning Permission N.90.2924 required the submission of a detailed scheme of site restoration within twelve months of the commencement of that development.
7. Although such a scheme was prepared by the Wetlands Advisory Service and submitted by the then owners, Roger Constant and Company Limited, in December 1992, it was never formally approved by the Mineral Planning Authority.
8. Following changes in site ownership (Roger Constant and Company Limited to Hills Minerals and Waste Limited to Moreton C. Cullimore (Gravels) Limited), the original restoration scheme was formally withdrawn by the current owners, Moreton C. Cullimore (Gravels) Limited.
9. The submitted revised restoration scheme has been designed to accommodate the inclusion of an extension to the currently permitted quarry area, which itself is the subject of a separate report to this Committee (Application No. N.02.0506).

10. The revised restoration scheme, if approved, seeks to establish a series of shallow lakes and reed bed plantations following the phased extraction of minerals from the site.

Consultations

11. **North Wiltshire District Council** - no comments.
12. **Cotswold District Council** - no comments.
13. **Cotswold Water Park Joint Committee** - no objections. However, concerned about the lack of information regarding the intended future use of the site.
14. **Ashton Keynes Parish Council** - "accepts in principle the terms of the restoration scheme but would request that the following conditions are attached if permission is given:-
- (i) New site excavation not to commence until other sites/phases within the Applicant's control are completed and restoration commenced.
 - (ii) Completion of programme, extraction and restoration to be within six years of commencement."
15. **Cotswold Water Park Society, English Nature, Environment Agency** - letters submitted expressing concerns/objections including:-
- the suitability of the proposed scheme in the light of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets
 - ecological impacts
 - hydrological impacts
 - the potential effect on the Pike Corner SSSI
- However, following a site visit and the submission of further information by the Applicant, the majority of these fundamental concerns have now been addressed.
16. **Thames Water** - no comments.
17. **Southern Electric** - no comments.
18. **Rights of Way** - no comments.
19. **Countryside Officer (Landscape)** - expressed concerns over matters relating to ecological, hydrological and operational considerations (eg phasing and restoration arrangements).
20. **Highways** - no comments.

Publicity

21. The proposal was advertised in the local press and on site by way of notices. No representations have been received to date.

Main Considerations for the Council

22. When originally submitted, the proposed revised restoration details raised serious objections from English Nature, the Environment Agency and the Cotswold Water Park Society. As outlined in brief above, these objections basically centred on a lack of fundamental information in respect of the ecological and hydrological impacts, the suitability of the proposed scheme in the light of BAP targets and locational sensitivity (proximity to the Pike Corner SSSI).
23. Further information was requested from the Applicant following a site visit with representatives of English Nature, the Environment Agency, the Cotswold Water Park Society, the County Council and the Applicant's Agents. This information was then considered by the relevant parties who attended the meeting and subsequently resulted in the majority of objections being resolved.
24. The only remaining areas of concern relate, in principle, to the eventual implementation of the proposed scheme. English Nature, the Environment Agency and the Cotswold Water Park Society welcomed the amendments made to the original scheme but have requested that more information be provided to reflect BAP targets and matters such as final bank gradients and mean Winter/Summer water tables. With regard to these concerns, the Applicant has recently provided information which it is considered appropriately deals with all outstanding matters.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

25. As set out above.

Risk Assessment

26. A Risk Assessment is not relevant to the consideration of this report.

Financial Implications

27. There are no financial implications.

Options Considered

28. As detailed above, the requirements of Condition No. 12 of Planning Permission N.90.2924 remain to be discharged. As an active mineral working site, it is imperative that the development is completed in accordance with a scheme for restoration which is achievable and designed to secure a beneficial after-use.

29. The proposed revised restoration scheme has been amended and largely improved as a result of the consultation process. Consequently, the conceptual landform proposed in Figure CU150/4 Rev C is considered to be achievable in the context of the Three Bridges operation. However, should approval be granted, the Applicant will still be required to provide further information in due course detailing how the scheme will seek to deliver BAP targets, and also how the complex designs for lake profiles and arrangements suggested by the Environment Agency, English Nature and the Cotswold Water Park Society can best be met.

Reasons for Recommendation

30. It is Government policy to ensure that land taken for mineral extraction should not become derelict and should be reclaimed to a standard suitable for beneficial after-use as soon as is practicable. The submitted proposals support this objective and, if approved, will now go some way towards improving the nature conservation value of the area and the Cotswold Water Park in general.

Recommendation

31. That, in pursuance of Condition No. 14 of Planning Permission N.90.2924, the submitted restoration scheme (as conveyed in correspondence dated 8th August 2002 and 6th November 2002 and detailed on Figure CU150/4 Rev C) be approved.

RICHARD J. LANDER

Director of Environmental Services

Report Author

GEOFF WINSLOW

Principal Planner, Local Plans and Development Control

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Consultation replies