

PROPOSED THEWLIS LANE QUARRY, CROSLAND MOOR HUDDERSFIELD



NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Prepared by

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On behalf of



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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A planning application is being submitted to Kirklees Council on behalf of Johnsons Wellfield Quarries Ltd for the extraction of 200,600 tonnes of sandstone block on land adjacent to Thewlis Lane, Crosland Moor, Huddersfield.
- 1.2 It is proposed that the mineral will be excavated over a period of 8 years in a phased manner and restored progressively to minimise the impact of the proposals.
- 1.3 The application site extends to 4.3 Hectares in total, of which all is currently in agricultural/pasture use. The site is located to the east of Thewlis Lane, Crosland Moor which is approximately 3km to the west of Huddersfield town centre as shown on the location plan, Ref 10093/450. Grid Reference SE120 144.
- 1.4 This Non-Technical Summary is based on the content and findings of the Environmental Statement (ES) and accompanies a planning application for the extraction of sandstone at the Thewlis Lane site.
- 1.5 The proposed development falls within Schedule 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999, SI 1999 No. 293 and therefore requires the preparation of an Environmental Statement to provide the information required in Schedule 4. An EIA is mandatory for new mineral extraction sites, therefore no screening opinion was requested for this application.
- 1.6 A Scoping Opinion was requested of Kirklees Metropolitan Council on the 15th February 2011 and a response was received on the 30th March 2011.
- 1.7 Key issues were highlighted under the following headings:
- Noise and Dust
 - Ecology
 - Improved habitat Provision
 - Highways
 - Loss of Agricultural Land
- 1.8 The Environmental Statement covers the following matters:
- A description of the site and its surroundings
 - A description of the physical characteristics of the proposed development
 - An assessment of the environmental effects under the following headings:
 - i) Ecology
 - ii) Landscape and Visual Impact
 - iii) Noise

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- iv) Dust and Air Quality
 - v) Traffic
 - vi) Soils
 - vii) Hydrology and Hydrogeology
 - viii) Archaeology

1.9 Issues regarding Economic Effects and Cumulative Impact have also been considered as part of this planning application.

2.0 Existing Site Description

2.1 The site is surrounded by residential properties to the north, east and south and to the former Wellfield Quarry to the west which serves the operational hub of the quarry complex and includes infrastructure such as saw sheds, plant workshops and associated buildings.

2.2 The site is open agricultural land subdivided into 6 rectangular fields by dilapidated drystone walls and interspersed by the occasional tree along the field boundaries. At the centre of the site lie the derelict remains of the Thewlis Lane Farm buildings, the farmhouse of which is designated a Grade II Listed Building. An application has been submitted to English Heritage to remove the Grade II listing of this building and this application is currently pending.

2.3 Land of sub-grades 3a and 3b agricultural quality is present on the application site, with a small area of non-agricultural land.

3.0 Description of Proposed Development

3.1 The Site is to be used for the extraction of some 200,600 tonnes of block stone (sandstone) which will be processed at the adjacent stone processing works to produce dimension stone and quarry product for paving and walling stone.

3.2 The surface mining process will follow a sequence of operations starting with the removal of topsoil and subsoils which will be stripped and placed in a 3m high screening mound along the western boundary adjacent to Thewlis Lane. An additional 4m high screening mound which will surround the excavation area has been designed with a 1 in 5 outer slope to enable it to blend in gently with the existing landform. These mounds will be grass seeded at the earliest opportunity.

3.3 The strata which overlies the sandstone block comprises weathered sandstones, mudstone and siltstones and is commonly known as overburden. This material is excavated until the sandstone is exposed. The overburden material from the extraction area will need to be stored in a 10m high mound adjacent to the operational Crosland Moor Quarry (otherwise known as Airfield Quarry) for the duration of the development.

3.4 Other than soil stripping and removal of overburden, operations within each phase of working will take place below surface level. It is proposed to work the mineral using excavators, dump trucks and associated mechanized equipment. No blasting will be necessary at this site.

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- 3.5 Stone block from the proposed Thewlis Lane Site will be stored for seasoning within the existing Wellfield site. Dependant on the quality of the block, the sandstone will be processed into dimension stone, flagstone or walling stone products.
- 3.6 A new Heavy Plant Crossing is proposed in Thewlis Lane to accommodate the traffic movements between the existing operations and the proposal site. The crossing would provide access for operational traffic only.
- 3.7 The proposed road crossing would incorporate appropriate strengthening of the existing highway pavement.
- 3.8 The proposed working hours for the quarry are:
- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Monday to Friday | 0730 – 1800 |
| Saturday | 0730 – 1300 |
- 3.9 No operations shall take place on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

4.0 Restoration

- 4.1 The Thewlis Lane site will be restored back to a profile similar to what exists currently with field boundary reinstatement comprising of new fences and species rich hedgerows to replace the dilapidated existing drystone wall boundaries.
- 4.2 Upon completion of the operations at the site, the final outstanding aspects of the restoration scheme will be implemented. Upon cessation of all extraction and restoration operations, an aftercare programme will be enacted for a period of up to 5 years.

5.0 Geology

- 5.1 The stone found in the proposed site is of a very high quality and is highly sought after. There are very few quarries in the country who supply dimension stone products of such high quality and it is of local and national significance that a continued supply of this mineral is available in terms of employment and the continued availability of a high quality resource.

6.0 Planning Policy

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced previous Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), Planning Policy Statement's (PPS), Mineral Planning Guidance (MPG) and Mineral Planning Statement's (MPS).
- 6.2 Section 13, paragraph 142 of the NPPF states,
- “Minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life. It is therefore important that there is a sufficient supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. However, since minerals are a finite natural resource, and

can only be worked where they are found, it is important to make best use of them to secure their long-term conservation”

6.3 Further section 13, paragraph 144 commences with,

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should;

- *Give great weight to the benefits of the mineral extraction, including to the economy.”*

6.4 In Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states:

In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should:

- *identify and include policies for extraction of mineral resource of local and national importance in their area*

6.8 Paragraph 144 states:

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

- *give great weight to the benefits of the mineral extraction, including to the economy*

7. Environmental Effects

7.1 Ecology

7.1.1 An assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development upon the ecology of the site and surrounding area has been undertaken by specialist ecological consultants.

7.1.2 The reports concluded that the site contains little of ecological value. There are no statutory designated sites of European, National or Local importance within or in close proximity to the site.

7.1.3 The site in the majority contains areas of improved grassland, scattered shrubs, and a small number of early oak and willow.

7.1.4 No evidence of protected species were found on or adjacent to the site that would be affected by the proposals.

7.2 Landscape and Visual Impact

7.2.1 It is accepted that any development of the scale proposed would result in some visual impact on the surrounding landscape and properties. However, the total number of properties that could experience high or adverse impact are the ones which are in close proximity to the site as previously discussed and the mitigation measures in the form of the perimeter screening bunds will be effective in screening the workings from the sensitive properties. The negative aspect of the proposal would be a loss of an open view from these close proximity views for a temporary period of 8 years

- 7.2.2 The landscape character assessment concludes that the landscape of the proposed development area is of low sensitivity to change mainly due to the detracting effect of the previous and existing quarries and associated infrastructure in the area.
- 7.2.3 The assessment of the visual effects of the proposal demonstrates that views of the Thewlis Lane development would be obtained from a number of locations surrounding the site but because of the existing topography, the residential properties, areas of woodland and the JWQ works adjacent to the site, the proposed works at Thewlis Lane will not be visible from any middle or long distance viewpoints.
- 7.2.4 The visual appraisal of the proposed Thewlis Lane Quarry demonstrates that the general site will be visible from surrounding properties but not on a ground floor level as the screening mound will act as an effective visual barrier to block views into the workings. The phased operation of the site and progressive restoration has been devised to help minimise land-take for quarrying/infilling activity.
- 7.2.5 The significance of the visual effects of the proposed Thewlis Lane site can be assessed as moderate for the residents in close proximity to the site as it will have an impact over the open view of the fields which are currently available but there will be no view of the workings itself and the temporary loss of this view over an 8 year period has also been considered in the assessment.
- 7.2.6 The overburden storage mound will be visible from a number of near middle and long distance views due to the openness of the landscape to the south of the site. Viewpoints are possible of the current extraction area at Airfield Quarry from road users and users of the Public Right Of Way network.
- 7.2.7 Because there are already existing views of the quarry workings we could argue that the visual detraction already exists. The proposed overburden mound will in effect screen the existing workings and once it has been grass seeded to minimise the visual impact and blend in with the surroundings this will have a neutral impact on what is visible at present.
- 7.2.8 In conclusion, the overall impact of the proposed Thewlis Lane Quarry on the landscape and visual amenity is considered to be not significant, principally because of the temporary nature of 8 years duration of the extraction operations, the incorporated mitigation measures and the well designed restoration proposals.

7.3 Traffic and Access

- 7.3.1 The new quarry workings would compliment the existing operations at Wellfield Quarry such that there would be no increase in the rate of output (i.e. the stone extraction from the new workings would balance the natural reduction in output from the existing workings which would continue to diminish as existing mineral deposits become exhausted). Furthermore, the operating hours at the quarry and levels of staffing would remain as at present. Therefore, there would be no increase in the level of traffic movements to/from the local highway network.

7.3.2 In conclusion, the proposed mineral extraction operations are acceptable in traffic impact terms and there are no highway safety or capacity reasons why planning consent for the proposed development should not be granted.

7.4 Noise

7.4.1 The noise impact assessment takes into account the cumulative noise impact of the site activities when operating simultaneously. The predictions are therefore worst case scenarios that will be of relatively short duration.

7.4.2 Considering all the mitigation measures proposed for the development related specifically to the impact of noise, the proposed development will be conducted within the noise criteria considered by the NPPF to be normally justified for mineral extraction operations.

7.4.3 Without exception the predicted worst case noise levels do not exceed the 55dB L_{Aeq} 1hr criterion apart from the temporary construction periods involved in the construction of soil screening mounds and therefore do not exceed the criterion considered a normally justifiable limit for temporary operations at surface mineral extraction sites in the NPPF.

7.4.4 In overall conclusion, the noise assessment finds that noise generated by the proposed development at Thewlis Lane Quarry satisfied the planning guidance noise limit criteria as specified in the NPPF Technical Guidance at all potential noise sensitive properties for the duration of the proposed development. In most circumstances the development met the “*no more than 10dB above background*” criteria during typical quarry activity, and would not result in a significant increase of noise levels above the existing noise climate.

7.5 Dust and Air Quality

7.5.1 A dust assessment has been carried out with reference to current regulatory and best practice guidance and was prepared following a site inspection and a programme of PM10 and dust monitoring near the existing and proposed quarry operations.

7.5.2 The proposed Thewlis Lane Quarry would involve a continuation of the current operational procedures at Johnsons Wellfield Quarries where high quality dimension stone is extracted by hydraulic excavator following mechanical splitting and breaking out. No blasting would be involved and all rock cutting would take place at the existing processing facilities.

7.5.3 There are residential dwellings no closer than 100 m to the north, east and south of the proposed quarry and there are sensitive receptors within 1 km of the proposed quarry extension. However, the risk that potentially adverse PM10, directional or deposited dust impacts would occur at off-site receptors would be very low or negligible.

7.5.4 In conclusion, provided that the current high standards of site management currently in place elsewhere at Johnsons Wellfield Quarries are maintained, and appropriate attention paid to avoiding dust propagation during dry,

windy weather, dust emissions from the proposed quarry extension into Thewlis Lane Quarry are considered to be unlikely to cause a breach of current AQO levels for PM10 or to be at levels with a significant risk of annoyance to neighboring receptors.

7.6 Water Resources

7.6.1 Available evidence suggests that surface water and groundwater draining into the excavation will drain freely through the quarry floor to underground strata with no significant impact on local groundwater levels or groundwater flow. There will be no requirement for removal of groundwater or surface water from the site.

7.6.2 Removal of unsaturated sandstone may increase the vulnerability of deeper groundwater systems to contamination from site operations. However, due to the expected presence of a considerable thickness of strata between the base of the quarry and the regional groundwater elevation it is concluded that, subject to the implementation of appropriate pollution control measures, the risk to groundwater quality is likely to be negligible.

7.6.3 It is concluded that the proposed development does not represent a significant risk to groundwater resources and that, subject to the implementation of appropriate pollution control measures, no other mitigation measures are required or proposed.

8.0 Cumulative Impact

8.1 If planning permission were to be granted for the Thewlis Lane proposal, the two quarries would not be worked simultaneously for mineral extraction due to limitations on personnel and plant. Therefore when mineral extraction was taking place at Thewlis, no mineral extraction would be undertaken at Airfield Quarry therefore there would be no cumulative impact from these operations.

8.2 For this proposal, no significant impacts have been identified for any of the environmental topics considered as part of the EIA. Thus, no receptors are likely to experience any significant accumulated impacts from two or more sources.

9.0 Economic Impact

9.1 The NPPF encourages authorities to look positively at development that provides sustainable economic growth. The Thewlis Lane proposal would continue to have a positive impact upon the local and regional economy therefore meeting the Government's national policy objectives for economic growth.

9.2 Although the proposed development is temporary in nature, it would bring about local and regional economic benefits, and the retention of 100 full time employees for the duration of the scheme.

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- 9.3 In overall terms, mineral extraction is a significant source of employment, particularly when all of the ancillary suppliers of materials and services are taken into account.
- 9.4 JWQ's existing operational quarries and stone processing works and infrastructure are already a major feature in the landscape, and an important local employer, having been operated and extended over many years
- 9.5 There are 100 full time staff employed at JWQ. In addition there are indirect local employment prospects sustained by money spent in connection with the project which could be a further 25 people such as subcontractors, plant suppliers, construction materials suppliers, fuel suppliers etc. Should planning approval not be obtained then it will have implications for JWQ and the Myers Group as a whole.
- 9.6 Employment costs in the 2011 – 12 financial year for JWQ were £2.5million, the Myers Group costs were £8.5 million. Expenditure in the same financial year at JWQ were £5.4 million (including wages), the Myers Group expenditure was £34 million.
- 9.7 The proposal will reinforce a locally, regionally, and nationally important facility. Although very few additional jobs will be created, because the scheme is essentially a way of replacing a resource which will soon be worked out, existing jobs will be protected.
- 9.8 In addition to the direct and indirect benefits of the proposal, it will also induce benefits to the local and national economy through a multiplier effect.

10.0 Conclusions

- 10.1 The remaining reserves at JWQ's current operational quarries are becoming close to exhaustion. It is, therefore, essential that further sites are found to provide a consistent and steady supply of block stone for the future of the operations, quarry staff and economic viability.
- 10.2 The availability of the raw material is the most important aspect of JWQ's business. The company presently has planning approval to work just one quarry. Remaining reserves here will last for between just two and three years.
- 10.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the importance of safeguarding and maintaining the supply of building stone for the conservation of built heritage and the restoration of historic buildings, particularly where stone is scarce in terms of its technical properties or aesthetic characteristics, or has characteristics which match those required for repair and preservation purposes of culturally important buildings.
- 10.4 In assessing the economic impact of this proposed scheme, this financial background must be considered, both in terms of the economic climate that existed, but also emphasizing the importance of economic investment

during a difficult period. These material considerations all add considerable weight in favour of consent of this planning application.

- 10.5 The proposals have been designed to minimise, where ever possible the adverse environmental and community impacts which exist over the short term life of the project
- 10.6 Further copies of this Non- Technical Summary can be obtained free of charge, on request to:

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