

Kirklees Local Plan Examination Hearing Statement

Our ref 50461/JG/JS

Date October 2017

Subject **Matter 11 Hearing Statement on behalf of S Berry of Johnsons Wellfield Limited - Minerals Allocations**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of Mr. S Berry of Johnsons Wellfield Limited and relates to questions set by the Inspector in relation to Matter 11.
- 1.2 This Statement should be read in conjunction with representations submitted during the Local Plan Consultation (2016) on behalf of Mr S Berry (representor ID 953144). Johnsons Wellfield owns and has control over the extant of land identified by allocation ME2568 (Land to south of Intake Road) and has promoted the site for minerals development. **No change to the Plan is sought.**
- 1.3 The ME2568 allocation is the subject of an extant planning application for *'Extraction of Mineral with Reclamation to Agriculture from Land at Moor End South, Crosland Moor, Huddersfield.'*
- 1.4 The proposal is for the phased extraction of high quality ashlar bearing sandstone block. The site will be restored to an agricultural after-use replicating the existing field boundaries. The working of the mineral will underpin the significant investment made by Johnsons Wellfield in natural stone product manufacturing technology, which takes the form of bespoke advanced robotic cutting and masonry software and hardware. Johnsons Wellfield is the market leader in natural 'Yorkstone' building products manufacture.
- 1.5 The planning application, supported by an Environmental Statement is programmed to be determined at the Kirklees Strategic Planning Committee of 2nd November 2017. Following a 6 months period of consultation, all technical matters and policy considerations have been satisfactorily addressed.
- 1.6 Within this Statement we acknowledge the sound approach adopted by Kirklees Council in allocating the site in that: there is a need for the mineral resource within allocation ME2568; the site is available; the allocation is deliverable and the working and restoration of the site can be undertaken without harm to the environment and neighbouring land and its occupiers.

2.0 Issue – Whether the provision in the Plan for allocated minerals sites is justified, effective and consistent with national policy and policies of the Plan

Question (a) – Is the allocation of the minerals sites in the plan justified, effective and consistent with national policy? Explain the general site selection process for minerals sites and the influence that the SA has had on the selection of sites.

- 2.1 The allocation of ME2568 is considered to be justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 142 confirms that *‘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’*. Further, the NPPF (paragraph 144) confirms: *‘when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should give great weight to the benefits of the mineral extraction, including to the economy’*.
- 2.2 National Guidance (Planning Practice Guidance 010 Reference ID: 27-010-20140306) also provides: *‘the suitability of each proposed site, whether an extension to an existing site or a new site, must be considered on its individual merits, taking into account issues such as: need for the specific mineral; economic considerations (such being able to continue to extract the resource, retaining jobs, being able to utilise existing plant and other infrastructure).’*
- 2.3 Johnsons Wellfield is a long established manufacturer of high quality ashlar sandstone products, utilising permitted reserves of locally outcropping Rough Rock sandstone. The company has operated from its Crosland Hill base for over 150 years. The business is highly regarded in the local economy and its products have a national reputation for quality and durability. Nationally, the Rough Rock ashlar won by Johnsons Wellfield from Crosland Moor is regularly specified for prestigious projects which have included:- paving at the National Cenotaph in Whitehall; conservation works at Westminster Hall, and paving at the Thames Embankment and the Victoria and Albert Museum gardens.
- 2.4 The business directly employs 100 local people and supports an extensive local supply chain putting in excess of £4million in wages and payments into the local economy. The company employs the latest manufacturing technology to supply bespoke orders from customers located around the UK. The allocation underpins the continued supply of resource direct to Johnsons Wellfield’s manufacturing operation at Crosland Hill and sustains its position as the market leader.
- 2.5 Johnsons Wellfield is the leading producer of blockstone within the west of Kirklees district. The submission draft Kirklees Local Plan (Paragraph 15.7) provides a local and national policy based context for this operation : *‘the blockstone produced in the western side of the district represents some of the highest quality building stone in the UK and is used for facing civic buildings and major private sector developments throughout the UK and therefore satisfies a national need...This stone is vital to the success of local building projects and to enable construction projects in conservation areas and on listed buildings to be completed’*.
- 2.6 The need for locally sourced natural building materials, which ensure new development is in keeping with existing buildings is reinforced by emerging policy PLP24 which requires good design by ensuring *‘extensions are subservient to the original buildings are in keeping with existing buildings in terms of .. materials.’* The Inspector will note the extensive use of locally won Johnsons Wellfield dimension sand stone in local built development old and new, including paving at St Georges Square at Huddersfield Railway Station; the new Huddersfield University

Oastler Building; and the adjacent Kings Gate Shopping Centre located off Southgate and Queensgate in Huddersfield. Stone won from Crosland Moor by Johnsons Wellfield has wide application throughout Kirklees and neighbouring areas for conservation and new build schemes.

- 2.7 The ME2568 allocation is located within the Green Belt as designated in the Unitary Development Plan. The NPPF at paragraph 90 considers minerals extraction to be an appropriate use in the Green Belt providing its openness is preserved and there is no conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Question (b) – Briefly, set out the reasoning for the allocation of each of the following sites: minerals extraction site ME2568 (Land south of Intake Road), ... and Preferred Areas ME1975 (Moor End) and ME3324 (Land south of Moor End Farm)

- 2.8 The sandstone resource within the ME2568 allocation has been tested and shown to be a proven, viable and available minerals deposit. The site is owned by Johnsons Wellfield, therefore there is certainty that this minerals deposit can be worked within the Plan period. The allocation is located to the south of the former Wellfield, Waterholes and Moorfield working areas (ME2240, ME2241 and ME2242), and presents a logical next stage in the working of sand stone of this quality, providing for continuity of extraction when the permitted Airfield Quarry, site ME2251 (South of Justin Way) is exhausted.
- 2.9 A further permitted and working area identified by allocation ME2258 (Thewlis Lane), located to the north and east of ME2568, produces an ashlar bearing sandstone block of exceptional quality and is therefore conserved for high quality end use applications. This site is worked in parallel with the permitted Airfield Quarry site allocation ME2251 and would be so worked in parallel with site allocation ME2568.
- 2.10 Customer orders, particularly those for prestigious end uses with a protracted development timeline rely on there being available a long term proven resource/ permitted reserve. This is so that at a future date there is assurance that stone with the same appearance and character is available for orders should repairs be required or new built development is to be carried out within a particular development setting.
- 2.11 The Airfield Quarry (ME2251) is likely to be exhausted in 2018/19, and the site allocation ME2568 presents Johnsons Wellfield with the only available source of supply, which has led to the planning application being made to Kirklees Council for its development.
- 2.12 Other prospects where the Rough Rock outcrops have been considered through the Local Plan process in the Crosland Moor area (ME1968) and near Honley (ME1970, ME1971 and ME1972), but in these instances, ownership considerations dictated that the availability of the minerals deposit (during the Plan period) could not be confirmed. Therefore opportunity to bring forward new sites as allocations within the Rough Rock outcrop have been limited to allocation ME2568.
- 2.13 For each allocation, the PDLP Allocations & Designations document prepared by Kirklees Council identifies potential site constraints. For allocation ME2568 these are: Air Quality issues; Potential for Noise Impact; Site close to Listed Buildings; Site close to a Conservation Area; Site close to Archaeological site. The document also identifies reporting which will be required to inform any application for planning permission as follows: *'Air Quality Impact Assessment; Noise Assessment; Heritage Impact Assessment; Predetermination archaeological assessment; Transport Assessment and potentially A full Environmental Impact Assessment may be required'*.

- 2.14 A planning application for *Extraction of Mineral with Reclamation to Agriculture* at allocated site ME2568, with an Environmental Statement to an agreed scope has been prepared and submitted to Kirklees Council in April 2017. The Proposal incorporates environmental controls and mitigation measures. Environmental Impact Assessment has addressed the following considerations: Transport; Landscape and Visual; Air Quality; Noise and Vibration; Ground and Hydrogeology; Water and Drainage; Ecology; Archaeology and Heritage considerations and has concluded that no unacceptable adverse impacts are anticipated during the operational phase or post restoration. Further, potential cumulative effects arising from the development when considered with other developments and operations in the surrounding area do not give rise to a need for additional mitigation measures to those previously identified.
- 2.15 With respect to Socio Economic considerations, the Environmental Statement concluded: *‘the development of the site would be of moderate beneficial impact from the creation of 8 new jobs and 198 direct, indirect and induced jobs created and safeguarded as a result of the Scheme. This reflects the importance of the Scheme to Johnsons Wellfield’s future growth, and the importance of retaining productive and high quality jobs in the local economy.’*
- 2.16 Through consultation, the Kirklees Conservation and Design team considered built heritage and the setting of Castle Hill and raised no objection to the proposal.
- 2.17 The Kirklees MC planning policy team state: *‘The site is currently designated as green belt in the UDP and proposed for minerals extraction (ME2568) in the emerging Local Plan. Due to the stage the Publication Draft Local Plan (PDLP) has reached significant weight can be afforded to it. There is no risk of prematurity in this instance as the site is not considered to be of a strategic nature.’*
- 2.18 Further, *‘Given the proposed allocated status of this site in the PDLP, the principle of minerals extraction has been established. Therefore, in determining the minerals application PDLP policies PLP 36 and PLP 37 applies’.*
- 2.19 There are no outstanding technical objections from Statutory Consultees to the application. At the time of writing this Statement, the planning application was programmed for determination at the Kirklees Strategic Planning Committee of 2nd November 2017.
- Preferred Areas ME1975 and ME3324
- 2.20 Preferred Area ME1975 is located to the south west of the Airfield Quarry allocation ME2251 (South of Justin Way) and in turn to the north of Preferred Area ME3324. The Preferred Areas in combination provide connection between the former Airfield Quarry and allocation ME2568. These areas have a high likelihood of containing workable block stone resource, as evidenced by the proven deposit to the north and south. The landowner has indicated that he does not wish to release the two parcels of land for minerals development at this stage.
- 2.21 It can be assumed that should a planning application be made for the development of these areas then a deliverable scheme (s) could be achieved in compliance with PDLP policies PLP36 and PLP37.
- Question (c) – What are the cumulative impacts of the proposed allocations with existing operations in particular, in the Crosland Moor area.**
- 2.22 The Environmental Statement which accompanies the planning application for the proposed allocation of ME2568 has considered cumulative impact with the existing minerals operations at Crosland Moor including the former Wellfield, Waterholes and Moorfield working areas

(ME2240, ME2241 and ME2242), and the existing Airfield Quarry (Land south of Justin Way) (ME2251) and Thewlis Lane Quarry (ME2258).

Landscape and Visual

- 2.23 The Environmental Statement states: *‘With respect to Landscape and Visual considerations, aside from Thewlis Lane and the Airfield Minerals working extraction being completed by 2025, it is understood that within two years all above ground overburden storage will be removed and restoration undertaken and on this basis’*, the Environmental Statement concluded there would be no cumulative effect.
- 2.24 The planning application however also makes provision for the completion of restoration within the Airfield Quarry site, before Stage 2 (of 3) of the development of the ME2568 allocation area takes place. Furthermore, with the exception of the installation of the site access arrangements, Johnsons Wellfield has committed not to undertake soils stripping within Stage 1 of ME2568 development, until a stockpile within the extant Airfield working area (presently visible from neighbouring land) has been removed and this part of the Airfield site is reclaimed and grass seeded.

Air Quality

- 2.25 The Environmental Statement states: *‘Following IAQM guidance a study area of 400m was considered to provide a conservative assessment. No cumulative development is identified within this area. Other dust sources in the vicinity of the Site include the Thewlis Lane, Airfield, Wellfield and Waterholes areas, located approximately 600m to 1500m north east of the Site. Existing mitigation measures at the working sites limit the potential for dust release from these sources and therefore these sites are not considered as contributing to cumulative effects.’*

Noise

- 2.26 The Environmental Statement states: *‘KC highlights no other developments that should be taken account of in considering cumulative noise. Whilst preparing the ES it was considered appropriate to consider the cumulative impact of existing quarry operations at Crosland Moor in respect of noise and air quality impacts. Residual Noise effects were assessed as not being significant.’*

Other Considerations

- 2.27 The remaining topic areas of the Environmental Statement (Transport; Ground and Hydrogeology; Water and Drainage; Ecology and Heritage) identified no cumulative effects.