

Agenda Item 7

Development Control Committee

Meeting to be held on 20 October 2021

Electoral Division affected: South Ribble East

South Ribble Borough: application number LCC/2021/0012

Extraction of sand and gravel including construction of new access road and new junction with A59 Preston New Road, creation of plant site, weighbridge and stockpiling area, silt ponds, landscaping including screen mounding, with progressive restoration to wetland and passive flood management facility, woodland and agriculture. Lower Hall Farm, Samlesbury nr Preston

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Executive Summary

Application - Extraction of sand and gravel including construction of new access road and new junction with A59 Preston New Road, creation of plant site, weighbridge and stockpiling area, silt ponds, landscaping including screen mounding, with progressive restoration to wetland and passive flood management facility, woodland and agriculture. Lower Hall Farm, Samlesbury nr Preston.

Recommendation – Summary

That the Committee visit the site before considering the proposal.

Applicant's Proposal

The application is for the extraction of sand and gravel from an area of farmland adjacent to the River Ribble near Salmesbury, Preston. The site extends to around 90 hectares.

The application proposes the extraction of around 3 million tonnes of sand and gravel which would be worked over a period of around 20 years at an annual output of around 150,000 tonnes per annum. This would generate approximately 25 heavy goods vehicle (HGV) loads (50 movements) per day.

The proposal comprises the following key elements:

- Construction of a new priority junction with the A59 together with a new access road crossing farmland and Potters Lane to gain access to the proposed mineral extraction site.

- A site for the location of a processing plant, stockpile area, office and weighbridge facility would then be established at the southern end of the extraction area. This area would be surfaced in concrete. Soils stripped from this area would be used to create a screening mound to provide visual and acoustic screening.
- A lagoon would then be developed for the storage of clean water to feed the processing plant for mineral washing purposes and to allow settlement of silt from the used washing water.
- The extraction area would then be worked in a clockwise direction. The top and subsoils and any overburden would be stripped from each phase and temporarily stored. A spine haul road would be constructed along the centre line of the site which would be used to access most of the phases. The mineral would be worked using a tracked excavator to feed dump trucks to transport the mineral to the processing plant. The mineral below the water table would be worked in wet conditions without the requirement to dewater the site.
- Soils and overburden from subsequent phases of the site would be used to restore the previous phase. The restoration works would create a series of water bodies with reed beds, gravel banks and new areas of woodland. It is not intended that there will be public access to the restored site, the intention being to provide an area of undisturbed new wildlife habitat.
- Following completion of mineral extraction the plant site would be restored to agricultural land. The access road would be removed and the junction with the A59 would be stopped up and the area reinstated to match the adjacent agricultural fields.

A full description of the proposed development will be provided when the application is presented for determination.

Description and Location of Site

The site comprises around 90 hectares of agricultural land located near Samlesbury, 6km east of Preston city centre. The access would be taken from the A59 Preston – Clitheroe road which at the access point is a dual carriageway.

The access would then follow a generally north westerly direction across agricultural fields to cross Potters Lane which is a minor road serving a number of residential properties in the area.

The proposed mineral extraction site itself is bound on its western, northern and eastern sides by the River Ribble and is a spur of land formed by a meander in the river. It is formed of eight fields used for agricultural grazing which are divided by low hedgerows. The field at the northern end of the site is partly covered by low scrub and wet areas arising from historic mineral extraction operations in this area.

To the west of the proposed extraction area on the opposite side of the River Ribble is the Brockholes nature reserve, itself a former sand and gravel quarry. Following the river upstream from Brockholes directly north of the application site, the land rises steeply from the river and is densely wooded - Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods which are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The River Ribble and Brockholes Nature Reserve are designated as biological heritage sites. There is also a ruin of a 12th century manor house located at Lower Hall close to the north eastern boundary of the site which is a Grade II listed building.

The nearest residential properties to the application are located off Potters Lane near to the processing plant site and to the proposed access road. There are also two farm complexes at Lower Hall and Seed House Farm which are located close to the site.

The whole site including access road is located within the Green Belt.

A full description of the site and surrounding area will be provided when the application is reported to committee for determination.

Advice

This is a major application for sand and gravel extraction from a green field site. The application raises a number of issues including the requirement for new sand and gravel reserves and the local environmental impacts including ecology, landscape, heritage issues, highway safety and impacts on local amenity.

The application was originally submitted in March 2021 but the initial consultation process that has been undertaken identified a number of issues in the information contained within the Environmental Statement that was submitted to support the planning application. The applicant is therefore currently preparing further supplementary information to support the original Environmental Statement. This will be advertised and subject to further consultation in due course.

Due to the scale of the proposal and likely impacts and the difficulty in visualising the proposed development 'on paper', it is considered that it would be beneficial for members of the Committee to view the site and surrounding area before considering this planning application.

Recommendation

That the Committee visits the site before considering the proposal.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
LCC/2021/0012	26/02/2021	Jonathan Haine, Planning and Environment 01772 534130

Reason for Inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A