

MINUTES of the meeting of the **PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE** held at 10.30 am on 26 February 2025 at Council Chamber, Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8EF.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting.

Members

*= present

Ernest Mallett MBE*
 Victor Lewanski*
 Scott Lewis*
 Catherine Powell*
 Jeremy Webster*
 Edward Hawkins (Chairman)*
 Richard Tear (Vice-Chairman)*
 Jeffrey Gray
 John Robini
 Jonathan Hulley
 Chris Farr

10/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Jonathan Hulley, Scott Lewis, Chris Farr and John Robini.

11/25 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING [Item 2]

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

12/25 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME [Item 4]

Five public questions were submitted. The questions and responses were published within a supplementary agenda on 25 February 2025.

1. Deborah Elliott asked the following supplementary question:

In response to my question, you implied that the original planning application at Horse Hill had been returned to Surrey County Council to reevaluate and give a new decision. As the Supreme Court ruled the planning permission granted was illegal, what amendments have UK Oil and Gas (UKOG) made, or Surrey County Council asked for, to make the application comply with the Supreme Court ruling?

In response, the Planning Development Manager explained that the Supreme Court's quashing of the application meant the decision was invalid, and the application had been returned for reconsideration. A Regulation 25 letter had been sent to the applicant outlining the necessary revisions to the environmental statement, in light of the Supreme Court's decision and updated guidance. The authority had not yet received a formal response from the applicant, and confirmation had been sought from the applicant's agent regarding the submission timeline.

2. Jacqueline Phillips asked the following supplementary question

The public questioner stated that they had looked for the application on the website but could not find it. They asked where the application could be found and where the letter, which had been mentioned earlier, could be located.

In response, the Planning Development Manager confirmed that the information could be located within the online planning register on the Surrey County Council website. Further to this, the Planning Development Manager confirmed that the Regulation 25 letter was sent on 18 December 2024.

3. Jackie Macey asked the following supplementary question:

I'm pleased to hear your assurance that drilling has finally ceased at Horse Hill. In your reply, you state that you've asked for UKOG's programme to complete the removal of equipment from the site. Has this now been shared with the Council? Also, has it been possible to ascertain how much oil production is typically involved when minimum maintenance flow is required? As I understand it, 1/3 of the usual monthly production was produced in 15 days on the site, which doesn't appear to be very minimal.

In response, the Planning Development Manager stated that, in relation to the 'minimum maintenance load', the issue had been examined during the period of the relevant flow. However, further exploration would be required to fully address the question as the situation had resolved itself once the period ended. The matter would be revisited to determine if a more detailed response could be provided. Regarding the final programme of works from UKOG, the Planning Development Manager confirmed that no final programme had been received at that time. Discussions were ongoing, and efforts were being made to understand the timeframes UKOG was working to. Once these were clarified, they would inform the next steps.

4. Aet Annist did not ask a supplementary question.

5. Sarah Freeman asked the following supplementary question

In response to my public question about monitoring visits to the Horse Hill site, we were reassured that there had been a recent visit on 4 February 2025. I would like to know if any of those inspecting the site were told when the site would be fully cleared of the unlawful development. Is there a final date that UKOG have agreed to fully vacate the site?

In response, the Planning Development Manager stated that no final date had been agreed for the removal of equipment from the site. Discussions had taken place during the site visit, but the applicant had not provided a definitive timeline. Monitoring officers had made it clear that there was still an expectation for the equipment to be cleared.

13/25 PETITIONS [Item 3]

There were none.

14/25 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 5]

There were none.

15/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS [Item 6]

There were none.

16/25 MINERALS AND WASTE APPLICATION SP22/01006/SCRVC - LAND AT MANOR FARM, ASHFORD ROAD AND WORPLE ROAD, LALEHAM AND LAND AT QUEEN MARY QUARRY, WEST OF QUEEN MARY RESERVOIR, ASHFORD ROAD, LALEHAM, STAINES, SURREY [Item 7]

Officers:

David Maxwell, Senior Planning Policy Officer

Officer Introduction:

The Senior Planning Policy Officer introduced the report and provided a brief summary. It was noted that the application was for the extraction of sand and gravel and restoration to landscaped lakes for nature conservation after-use at Manor Farm, Laleham and provision of a dedicated area on land at Manor Farm adjacent to Buckland School for nature conservation study; processing of the sand and gravel in the existing Queen Mary Quarry (QMQ) processing plant and retention of the processing plant for the duration of operations; erection of a concrete batching plant and an aggregate bagging plant within the existing QMQ aggregate processing and stockpiling areas; installation of a field conveyor for the transportation of mineral and use for the transportation of mineral from Manor Farm to the QMQ processing plant; and construction of a tunnel beneath the Ashford Road to accommodate a conveyor link between Manor Farm and QMQ for the transportation of mineral without compliance with Conditions 2, 11, 13, 25, 26, 27, 29, 33, 44 and 48 of planning permission ref: SP/2012/01132 dated 23 October 2015 so as to allow the site to be restored in accordance with a revised restoration plan.

Following the introduction, the Chairman agreed to review the application in conjunction with SP23/00160/SCC. The officer then presented an overview of application SP23/00160/SCC, with details provided within Minute 17/25 of these minutes. It was noted that speakers addressing both items would have their allocated time combined.

Speakers:

Simon Treacy made the following comments on behalf of the application:

1. Stated that sand and gravel extraction at Queen Mary Quarry had taken place since 1968.
2. The site currently produced about 200,000 to 300,000 tonnes of high-quality aggregates annually, used in local construction and building sectors.
3. Recent projects supplied by the site included Riverside apartments in Staines, Shepperton Film Studios expansion, and the M3 and M4 smart motorway schemes. Demand for construction materials was expected to rise.
4. The first proposed development aimed to continue pumping silt from the site processing plant at Queen Mary Quarry but to divert it into the extraction phases of the Manor Farm Development once extraction has been completed in each of the first two phases.

5. Noted that the Manor Farm Development was a reserve of sand and gravel that was granted planning permission in 2015 whereby the mineral was to be transferred by conveyor to Queen Mary for processing.
6. The second application was a modification to the route of part of the conveyor itself.
7. The alternative conveyor route was proposed to avoid sensitive ecological areas within Queen Mary Quarry.
8. The existing silting lagoons at Queen Mary Quarry were nearing completion, necessitating the new silting arrangements to continue operations.
9. The environmental impact assessment confirmed no unacceptable impacts on noise, air quality, or flood risk.
10. Noted that the reason the proposals were noted as inappropriate development in the Green Belt in the report was due to the nature of the application being considered.
11. The restoration scheme at Manor Farm had been designed with input from Surrey County Council to create a high-quality ecology-focused scheme. This included creating shallower wetland habitats that offer greater opportunities for wildlife, including birds, amphibians, bats, and invertebrates.
12. The applicant requested approval of the applications to allow continued production of sand and gravel and to enhance biodiversity at Manor Farm.

Points of clarification:

1. A Member asked if sufficient monitoring was place to address any changes in groundwater associated with the proposal. The speaker confirmed that the environmental impact assessment included a full flood risk assessment that considers the proposals and confirms there will not be any added risk in terms of flood risk or groundwater change.
2. A Member asked if the speaker was content with an informative to remove Japanese knotweed and make adequate representation regarding the impact on trees and rare species. The speaker confirmed that they have obligations to deal with knotweed and are content with the informative.
3. A Member asked the speaker about the detailed plan for how the tunnel under the road would be backfilled and if there is a strategy already in place. The speaker explained that the culvert would be filled with foamed concrete and would not require the closure of the road to facilitate the filling.

The Local Member, Denise Turner-Stewart, made the following comments:

1. The Local Member highlighted the reservations of the Community Liaison Group regarding the cumulative impact of the proposed

adjustments on the local community. She mentioned the complex nature of the applications and conditions, which have caused confusion among residents.

2. The Member expressed concerns about the impact on the timetable, noting that the restoration of phase one at Manor Farm will be delayed until the completion of phase four due to the return of silt from Queen Mary Quarry.
3. The Member discussed the issue of silt capacity at Queen Mary Quarry and the need to return silt to Manor Farm, resulting in a shallower water body depth. She highlighted the change from the original 12.2 meters depth to a shallower depth, which raised concerns about the stability of the silt base.
4. The Member referenced a statement by Richard Ford, the General Manager, about the potential need for an additional length of conveyor within Manor Farm, which was not mentioned in the current application.
5. The Member raised concerns about the intensification and industrialisation of the Greenbelt site due to the return of silt.
6. The Member emphasised the need for inspections and tighter control over the activities at the site, given the retrospective nature of some of the applications and the evidence of unauthorized installations. She mentioned that the conveyor and silt pipe had already been installed without prior permission, highlighting the need for better oversight.

Before moving to points of clarification by Members of the Committee, the Chairman asked the case officer to respond to some of the points made by the Local Member. The Case Officer acknowledged the proximity of Manor Farm to residential areas and noted that the buffer zones were generous compared to other mineral applications in Surrey. He explained that the mineral extraction at Manor Farm did not include a processing plant on site, as the mineral was transported by conveyor to the existing processing plant at Queen Mary Quarry, reducing the impact of lorries. Furthermore, the Case Officer clarified that the conveyor in Manor Farm already had planning permission and that the section within Queen Mary Quarry was the only part being considered in the current application. He mentioned that the conveyor would need to be extended to phases two and three, which was already permitted under the permission.

Points of clarification:

1. A Member asked if there has been any discussion about community involvement in the ongoing maintenance of the site. The Local Member responded that she was not aware of any arrangements or agreements around access and maintenance involving the community.
2. A Member asked if the ponds that will be left will be fenced off and if there would be no public access to those areas. The Local Member confirmed that there is no official public access,

but she raised concerns about the site's history of antisocial behaviour and the potential risk. She mentioned that the site has had issues with motorbikes, cars being set on fire, and other antisocial activities, emphasising the need to address those issues..

3. A Member asked if the concerns expressed by the liaison group could be satisfied by conditions. The Local Member responded that conditions would be acceptable to provide assurance to the community.
4. The Chairman asked the Local Member to give an indication of the nature of the conditions that the liaison group might like the committee to consider. The Local Member suggested that the conditions should address the health and safety risks posed by the shallow silt base.

The Chairman asked the Case Officer to respond to the points raised. The Case officer explained that the silt would be contained by buns around the site and capped by subsoils and topsoils to stabilise it. Further to this, the Case Officer highlighted the security measures in place, including stockproof fencing and additional planting to prevent public access to the site.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A Member suggested adding an informative to both applications to address soil stability and health and safety concerns, recognising the difference between the current application and the original. The Member proposed that the informative should include discussions with the Community Liaison Group regarding security measures and planting schemes. The Committee agreed to add an informative to both applications, ensuring that the final wording would be agreed upon by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Local Member.
2. A Member emphasised that the committee should focus on planning issues and not on public health concerns, which were outside their technical capability. He mentioned that there were other organisations, such as the Environmental Agency, that are responsible for addressing health and safety regulations. Further to this, the Member stated that the application was sensible and within normal situations, supporting the economy and providing necessary materials.
3. The Chairman moved the recommendation which received unanimous support.

Actions / Further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed that subject to the prior completion of a variation to the 14 October 2015 Section 106 Legal Agreement between the County Council, the applicant and Thames Water Utilities Ltd, to secure the long term aftercare management (including bird management) of the land at Manor Farm and limit the number of HGV movements in combination with planning permission refs SP07/1273, SP07/1275 and SP07/1269 to no more than 300 HGV movements (150 two-way HGV movements) on any working day so that it applies to the new planning permission and ensures that the HGV movement limit incorporates HGV movements associated with planning permission ref: SP07/1269, to PERMIT subject to conditions and informatives as set out in the report and update sheet, as well as the additional informative to be agreed outside the meeting with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Local Member related to discussions with the Community Liaison Group on security measures and planting schemes.

17/25 MINERALS AND WASTE APPLICATION SP23/00160/SCC - LAND AT QUEEN MARY QUARRY, ASHFORD ROAD, LALEHAM, SURREY, TW18 1QF [Item 8]

Officers:

David Maxwell, Senior Planning Policy Officer

Officer Introduction:

The Senior Planning Policy Officer introduced the report and provided a brief summary. It was noted that the application was for the siting and use of a conveyor to transport mineral extracted from Manor Farm (Laleham) to the mineral processing plant at Queen Mary Quarry as an alternative to the conveyor proposed in planning permission ref: SP12/01132 dated 23 October 2015 (retrospective).

Speakers:

On behalf of the applicant, Simon Treacy, addressed the committee, and his comments are recorded in minute 16/25 of these minutes.

The Local Member, Denise Turner-Stewart, addressed the committee, and her comments are recorded in minute 16/25 of these minutes.

Key points raised during the discussion:

The Chairman moved the recommendation which received unanimous support.

Actions / Further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed to PERMIT planning application SP23/00160/SCC subject to the following conditions outlined in the report and update sheet, as well as the additional informative to be agreed outside the meeting with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Local Member

related to discussions with the Community Liaison Group on security measures and planting schemes.

18/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 9]

The date of the next meeting was noted as 26 March 2025.

Meeting closed at 12.05 pm

Chairman