

Swanworth Quarry Extension – Planning Application 6/2020/0321-1

1. This note reviews the Planning Application submitted by agents on behalf of Suttles and is for consideration as our response to Dorset Council to the application.
2. This is still part of the original application (6/2020/0321) dated June 2020, which was for “*the lateral extension of Swanworth quarry and extension of the end date for quarrying and restoration*”. This has now been changed in the latest submission to “*winning and working of limestone through the lateral extension to Swanworth Quarry, retention of processing plant and existing infrastructure, importation of inert waste material for restoration purposes, and continued production and sale of recycled aggregates.*” The application has been submitted by Quarryplan (GB) Ltd on behalf of Suttles, the operators of the quarry.
3. After the original application had been submitted Dorset Council asked for more information to be provided about a number of areas. This was provided as a regulation 25 request from DC in November 2020 and January 2021. There are eleven specific areas which have been under consideration as follows.
 - Swanworth Quarry Extension Carbon Savings
 - Response to the EA’s (Environment Agency) concerns.
 - Hydrogeological Risk Assessment
 - Revised Landscape and Visual Assessment
 - Addendum to the Landscape and Visual Assessment
 - A revised LVIA (Landscape and Visual impact Assessment)
 - Environmental Enhancement Fund
 - Revised Noise Report
 - Integrity of designated ecological sites review
 - Minimising air over-pressure by good blasting techniques
 - Ecological Impact Assessment Addendum
4. The submitted response consists of over 500 pages of additional information much of it highly technical and all provided by qualified consultancy businesses and specialists, which of course know far more about it all than we do.
5. It seems to the working group that all the questions asked for have been adequately answered by the consultants and it is not up to us to challenge any of the detail. There are however several issues, which still need to be considered.
6. We commented on the planning application previously at our September 2020 meeting. We said that we were minded to submit no objection, subject to mitigation offered by Suttles. These mitigations were:
 - 1-There should be an s106 agreement to provide funding for road maintenance from the quarry to Norden to make good wear caused by the lorry traffic.
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 - 2-Suttles give thought to:
 - b. Assistance with environmental projects to compensate for any damage caused by their operations.
 - c. Investment in community facilities for Kingston and Corfe
 - 3-The limit on lorry movements should be kept at the current level required for extraction of 120,000 tons of aggregate rather than the 75 movements per day quoted in the application.
 - 4-There should be no increase in lorry weights or changes in lorry configuration e.g. no articulated lorries
 - 5-The quarry should be asked to publish regularly the tachograph reading of lorry speeds in the parish to ensure that limits are kept to.

- 6-The exceptional loads required for the initial construction should be in the evening (6-9pm) to reduce congestion
 - 7- A financial instrument be applied to provide funds to ensure that restoration is completed in the event that the company ceases trading or is taken over in the future.
7. We note that 39 residents in Kingston are against the project and have written letters of objection to DC. On the other hand we need to consider the stated government need for this project and for the aggregate, which is required for the current national housebuilding programme, We also note the fact that the Swanworth extension is fully covered in the Dorset minerals plan which was approved after public consultation in 2018. We also understand the firm contributes substantially to the local economy and provides around 70 direct jobs and many other indirect jobs. These would be likely to be lost if the quarry was not expanded.
 8. The impact on the environment of Corfe Castle should not be underestimated. The only access to the quarry is via the A351 through Corfe Castle and the narrow street by the Bankes Arms. The conservation area is often referred to as being of exceptional national quality. Residents are concerned at the vibration and noise of the 32 ton lorries used at the quarry. Swanworth is the largest single source of heavy lorries from the peninsula and of the heaviest vehicles. More recently Dorset Council relaid East Street with a high quality low noise surface but this is now breaking up and being patched. It is essential that the road surface is kept in good condition to reduce noise and vibration. The suggested levy on tonnage could contribute finance.
 9. We see that there is an offer of an Environmental Enhancement Fund in the regulation 25 submission. This provides £10,000 a year over the 25 years of the project, a total of £250,000. We feel this is inadequate. Swanworth will be the monopoly local supplier and as its transport costs will be lower than alternatives it will have a market advantage and hence larger margins. A formula should be devised on an amount per ton, which would increase if prices of material increased. This would provide a degree of inflation proofing. We believe this fund should be managed by an elected body (a joint DC/PC committee?) rather than the unelected AONB to give parishioners proper transparency and control.
 10. We would wish to see some early compensatory projects such as additional foot paths in the Parish, possibly improvements to the Corfe Castle sports field and contributions to the repair of the A351 (East Street) through Corfe and the B3069 up Kingston Hill as discussed above. The provision of a traffic control measures for East Street would alleviate concerns about speeding.

Possible footpath projects:

- A footpath to bypass the need to walk or cycle on the road on Kingston Hill - B3069. The Corfe to Kingston route has become popular with cyclists and we need an off-road alternative to this very steep hill road.
 - A decent footpath from Purbeck Park and from Castle View to the Dorset Water Park.
 - A new footpath to bypass the need to walk or cycle on the A351 hill from Castle view to the Norden roundabout – this is already under consideration by DC but is not making any progress.
 - A footpath from Woody Hyde to the Corfe Common. This is already being worked on but will need funding for some civil engineering works.
11. We also recommend that we should have an undertaking that there will be no further extensions beyond 2048.
 12. Recommendation - No objection provided there is substantial mitigation for the Parish.