

Dear Councillor,

Ref:

Updating the Minerals and Waste Local Plan
Environment and Scrutiny Committee Agenda 5
28th May 2024

I trust that my email finds you well and thank you for your time in reading my email.

As you may or may not be aware, your committee will be debating and considering the proposals to update the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, put forward to you by your Minerals and Waste team, at next Tuesday's meeting under agenda item 5.

Your minerals and waste team have selected site SG17 (land south of the A1775, West Deeping) as one of their four proposed preferred new sites and the only one in South Lincolnshire. We have very grave concerns over this inclusion and selection of this site as it directly contravenes your LCC selection policies. Further you are being asked to consider the proposed sites with no supporting documentation or evidence from your minerals and waste team, essentially judging the new sites blind. Their comments in the report suggest that the 'Site Assessment Report' will only be published alongside the preferred approach consultation in July. May we respectfully suggest that you should be in possession of all of the facts before making such a monumental decision which will permanently affect our village and have direct mining implications on us for the next 40 years. Perhaps you might ask your minerals and waste team and Neil McBride for this supporting information in advance of next Tuesday's meeting?

In the absence of this information, the West Deeping Parish Council on behalf of the residents of West Deeping would like to draw to your attention to the direct and undeniable contraventions in Lincolnshire County Council site selection policy that taking this site forward for allocation would cause –

Situated immediately adjacent to the Grade II* Listed heritage asset Molecey Mill & The Granary, the proposed 30-40 year open cast mine fails LCC's level 1 constraints in site selection and should have been discounted at the first stage of the selection process.

Due to the very close proximity of the site to the village and its conservation area, the Level 2 constraints on the site are also extensive and should prohibit this site from selection.

LCC's site selection process for updating the plan (<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/6744/proposed-site-selection-methodology>) clearly states in section 3

3. Methodology for site selection

3.1 The following methodology provides a relatively objective approach for assessing sites for allocation in the updated LMWLP. Sites will be assessed in five stages as detailed in Appendix 2 (Assessment form for mineral sites). This process is described below:

Stage 1 (exclusionary criteria)

2. Stage 1 is an initial filtering stage which will assess each site **against five "exclusionary" criteria. These constraints are considered to be so significant that any site caught by any of the criteria will normally be discounted and not progress to Stage 2.**

3. The criteria are:

1. Sites that could have a significant effect on a "European Site" as defined in the national Planning Practice Guidance (i.e. SACs, SPAs, proposed SACs, potential SPAs and Ramsar Sites).
2. Sites that include or are adjacent to Ancient Woodland.
3. Sites that include or are adjacent to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
4. Sites that include or are adjacent to the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
5. **Site that include or are adjacent to a site or building** with a nationally recognised designation (Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, **Listed Buildings**, Registered Historic Battlefields and Registered Parks and Gardens).

4. Where a site falls into one or more of the exclusionary criteria, the proponent may be invited to amend the site boundaries to overcome the conflicts if the council considers it to be practicable and desirable to do so.

5. **Sites that conflict with the exclusionary criteria 2 to 5 will only be exempted and taken forward to Stage 2 if the proponent provides evidence upfront that working the site would be unlikely to have a detrimental effect upon the protected feature.**

This should include details of any mitigation measures required. In the case of the first criterion, no sites would be carried forward that conflict with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

SG17 lies immediately adjacent to the Grade II* listed Molecey Mill & the Granary, and immediately adjacent, along its entire southern boundary to the Mill Stream which provides the water to this historic watermill and hence the raison d’etre for its listing.

None of the other 6 proposed sites in the South Lincolnshire Production area in the consultation document (*Updating of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan* <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eiN6OolXTmn7sQ7Yl2BdOjTo4aVAFnGE/view?fbclid=IwAR2NMt7>) are immediately adjacent to or contain a listed building. (the only other one that does is SG11 – the proposed further Southern extension of this proposed site and also lies immediately adjacent to Molecey Mill & The Granary).

Why therefore are the LCC Minerals and Waste Team proposing to allocate the SG17 site? This is contrary to LCC’s and the minerals and waste team’s own selection criteria and policies. By far the least attractive and most constrained of the 7 proposed sites in South Lincolnshire, and with the greatest and most damaging impact on residents, our landscape and our heritage assets, this makes this choice even more inexplicable and calls into question the transparency and integrity of the decision making of the minerals and waste team.

We have seen no evidence from the proponent (Breedon) *“that working the site would be unlikely to have a detrimental effect upon the protected feature”*, indeed we are in possession of a heritage impact report and photographs indicating that working the site would cause permanent and significant harm to the protected Grade II* listed heritage asset – Molecey Mill & The Granary. Indeed, if anyone were to visit the site they would see the huge harm this 40 year open cast mine would cause.

The site selection document then goes on to the Level 2 Constraints – of which SG17 has many, as it is in such close proximity to the village of West Deeping, its conservation area and the River Welland. Again when you assess this SG17 site against the others – there is no fathomable way that it can come out as the number one choice in South Lincolnshire. Why is it therefore being proposed for allocation?

If you or your fellow councillors would like further reading may I suggest –

1. The West Deeping Parish Council response to the scoping request for the same site earlier this year (attached). Long but comprehensive.
2. The site selection process for updating the plan (<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/6744/proposed-site-selection-methodology>)
3. Updating of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eiN6OolXTmn7sQ7Yl2BdOjTo4aVAFnGE/view?fbclid=IwAR2NMt7>

Mining this site would further go against LCC planning policies including but not limited to;

- DM3 Quality of Life and Amenity – the site is located in direct view and only 250 m from over half the houses in the village
- DM4 Historic Environment – the site is immediately adjacent to the Grade II* Molecey Mill & the Granary and its Mill Stream. It also lies very close to the West Deeping Conservation area.
- DM6 Impact on Townscapes and Landscapes – the rural location of West Deeping would be forever changed.
- DM16 Water resources – the proposed site lies immediately adjacent to the River Welland Mill Stream and the dewatering required of the site would be devastating
- DM17 Cumulative impact – the residents of West Deeping have had mining in close proximity for over 70 years now

Please let us be under no illusion that the allocation of this site and its associated industrial development, so close to the village and to the listed heritage assets, in direct contravention of LCC policy would give the residents of West Deeping ample cause for a judicial review which is being prepared to lodge should this site be allocated - we hereby give you notice of this.

Yours sincerely,

Glenn Fuller
Chairman
West Deepnig Parish Council
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