

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Regulatory Committee Meeting 15 September 2021

Update Report from Head of Strategic Planning

Item No:

Processing and storage of wood waste and gypsum at Four Dells Farm, Poles Lane, Otterbourne SO21 2DY (Application No. 20/01546/HCS20/01546/HCS Site Ref. WR215)

1) Amendments to the report for clarification:

With reference to paragraph 28 of the report, the following clarification is provided:

The proposal is for the importation of 10,000 tonnes of wood/green waste and 1,000 tonnes of plasterboard from the existing waste recycling facility adjacent to the application site. The existing site already has permission to import up to 32,000 tonnes of wood, plasterboard and green waste, of which no more than 10,000 tonnes shall be plasterboard.

Add the following to the end of paragraph 38:

The material for the use on the farm will be taken from the totals imported to the existing site and will not lead to an overall increase in the quantities of wood/green waste and plasterboard imported to the combined sites. Consequently, there is almost no change to the number of lorry movements, with just 1 extra movement per week.

2) Representations:

With reference to paragraph 49 of the report, additional concerns have been raised by Cllr Warwick who also sought clarification on several aspects of the proposal.

These were as follows:

1. The CO2 impact of shredding plasterboard using a diesel powered shredder machine designed for processing wood;
2. The WRAP pilot study of gypsum used a recycled POWDER product (not shredded board) -is the use of board accepted and approved farming practice?
3. The quantities of plasterboard are far more than will be required by a farm of this size suggesting a commercial venture requiring additional HGV movements -can the quantities of gypsum discussed in this application please be verified; and
4. Powder gypsum cannot be stored long term, must be kept dry and covered - how is this proposed to be managed within this application?

In reference to paragraph 71 of the report:

It is acknowledged that the use of machinery to undertake the processing of the plasterboard will lead to some emissions, however, these emissions would be produced wherever the material is processed, and by doing it immediately adjacent to its source, the processing on site reduces the HGV movements needed to remove the plasterboard off site and so reducing the overall emissions by a greater amount. It should also be noted that if the material is not processed then it is taken to landfill for disposal, and Government and Local policy is that landfill should be an absolute last resort.

In response to the other matters raised by Councillor Warwick, officers have the following to add:

The WRAP protocol requires gypsum to be spread as a powder, and that is the intention of the proposal. The plasterboard is to be shredded and then screened to separate the gypsum powder. This is then to be stockpiled for use on the farm. The process does require an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency, and this will have strict conditions over the form and quantity of material that can be spread on the land.

The application is for the importation of 1,000 tonnes of plasterboard, which is to be processed to produce powdered gypsum. It is understood that the quantity of gypsum that is required for agricultural use does vary according to soil conditions and the crop being planted. This will be used on the farm in accordance with best agricultural practice and the requirements of the Environmental Permit.

The officer's report already acknowledges that the extension of the Industrial Estate is not in conformity with policy and, as such, this proposal is purely for the benefit of the farm. Therefore should permission be granted, a condition will be imposed restricting the planning permission for farm use only and preventing material being removed off site for sale or use elsewhere. This is already set out in **Appendix A**.

Should permission be granted, a condition will also be imposed that prior to the importation or processing of any plasterboard, a Plasterboard Containment Scheme for the control of gypsum production at the site shall be submitted to the Waste Planning Authority and approved in writing. The Scheme shall include details of the construction of the containment of the plasterboard shredding process, including dimensions, materials and finishes, how the plasterboard is to be loaded and unloaded and measures to control dust from the process. This will include the storage of powdered gypsum after processing. This condition is already set out in **Appendix A**.

In reference to paragraph 65, a further representation has been received since the publication of the report raising concerns about two aspects of the proposal

- 1) the quantity of gypsum to be spread on the land; and the
- 2) ecological impact, especially dormice.

The issues identified in paragraph 65 issues need to be updated to reflect these issues.

Officers have the following to add in relation to this representation:

The representation refers to an Environment Agency statement on the spreading of powdered gypsum on agricultural land. This statement acknowledges that recycled gypsum from waste plasterboard can be spread on agricultural land as a substitute fertiliser without the need for a permit as long as no more than 1 tonne per hectare in any 12 month period is spread. However, the statement goes on to state that “This Low Risk Position is intended for the low volume use of waste gypsum as a substitute agricultural fertiliser, and not for the typically higher volume use as a conditioner to improve soil structure. This higher volume use can still be undertaken under Standard Rules Permit SR2010 No. 4 (Mobile plant for landspreading)”. As mentioned in paragraph 104 of the Committee Report, the introduction of the gypsum to the farm is also as a conditioner to improve soil structure, particularly in clayey areas. The Environment Agency were consulted on the proposal and had no objection, and that an Environmental Permit will be required for the development as set out in paragraph 55.

In reference to the ecological concerns raised, the proposal is subject to an Ecological Impact Assessment, which has been fully considered by the County Ecologist. The County Ecologist has concluded that the report is robust and provides useful mitigation proposals which, if undertaken, will manage the potential impacts of the development. The proposal is considered a positive step for the environment, and the Ecologist is pleased that the ecology report can shape the implementation of the proposals to deliver net gain in biodiversity. The Ecologist agrees with the suggestions to achieve net gain within the proposal, so a condition for the provision of a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan will be required. Subject to the inclusion of such a condition the Ecologist raises no objection to the proposal. This is documented in paragraphs 60 and 109- 114 of the report.

3) Complaints about site operations

A complaint has been raised about activities on site in relation to noise since committee site visit (10 September 2021). This is currently under investigation and officers visited the site.

Officers have also looked to address some of the issues raised as part of the consultation process for the planning application in relation to height of stockpiles, noise from reversing beepers, lighting and working out of hours. These have been addressed by Monitoring Officers. There has been progress in terms of reducing stockpile height and the visual impact. Investigations to date show that some areas raised do not relate to the current waste operations. It is important to note that there are many light industrial activities taking place within the Industrial Estate, which are not covered by permissions from the County Council, and which may be contributing to the concerns on reversing beepers, weekend working and lighting. Further monitoring of the County sites will continue and liaison with Winchester City Council on the other operations.

END

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