Re Objection to 18/01863/CM

Wed 21/11/2018 11:27

Re: 18/01863/CM Elm Farm Quarry, Bicester Road, Stratton Audley

Planning Officer James Kirkham

Cherwell District Council.

I wish to register my objection to this application for the following reasons:

The quarry site permission was given in 1997 when restoration was expected to be fulfilled by 31 December 2008. In the intervening years many different species of plants and animals will have colonised this limestone quarry and this is confirmed by the reports of the Cherwell Council ecologist and the OCC ecologist. Some of the species may be European Protected Species and accepting this application to carry on with infilling may therefore run counter to the law.

The OCC report refers to 762 species listed by the Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre because of the quarry’s wide range of habitats. Policies at both local (ESD 10 and 11) and national level (NPPF) provide protection for biodiversity so it should be ensured that further work as per this application does not cause damage to the ecology of the site, otherwise accepting this application may run counter to policy and legislation.

There is no evidence provided with the application that any future work to restore the land will give net biodiversity gain not biodiversity loss, as demanded by the NPPF. In order to determine whether the proposed works will cause a net gain, baseline measurements of the current ecological state of the quarry should be made first. An Environmental Impact Assessment or Ecological Impact Assessment should also be made to determine whether this application is still the most appropriate and policy compliant end use for the site.

It should not be assumed that adherence to the original scheme for restoration is now the best way forward.

The variation of Condition 20 of the original permission (97/01501/CM) should not be agreed without assessing whether the original restoration scheme is beneficial. The need to avoid biodiversity loss should come foremost before looking at whether the outstanding restoration scheme should be completed.

The Cherwell Ecology Officer has called for a site-wide masterplan for the Bicester Airfield LWS, as piecemeal development of firstly a large hotel (App 18/01253/F), then possibly 8 technical buildings (18/01333/F) and probable other plans for the airfield will fragment the LWS and cause biodiversity loss. Before work on this adjacent quarry LWS is allowed, the impact on biodiversity and the existing ecology of development on either one or the other or both LWSs, should be measured.

Yours Faithfully,

Pamela Roberts

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