

Review Representation (Web Planning Comment)

Module PAPlanning

Reference 19/000053/CM Proposal Proposed sand and gravel quarry with progressive restoration using site derived

Main Location Land at Lea Castle Farm, Wolverley Road, Broadwaters, Kidderminster, Worcestershire

New Respondant

Role Interested Party

Name Kay Hughes

Company Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust

Address Geological Records Centre, University of Worcester, Henwick Grove, Worcester, WR2 6AJ

E-Mail eht@worc.ac.uk

Telephone FAX

Mobile

Reply Details

Reply Type Comments Response 2020-03-12

This application involves extraction of sand and gravel from the internationally important Severn valley river terraces, which occur around the Severn and its major tributaries such as the Stour. Although the sites of the terraces along the river are well documented, detailed information only becomes available when they are excavated. Firstly, the deposits can contain fossils, e.g. of large mammals as well as insects, pollen etc. especially in dark, organic-rich layers which often occur at the base of the deposits. Secondly, formations present in the gravel can indicate the river flows at the time of deposition. Thirdly, effective methods of dating these deposits have only recently been developed: these methods could be applied to small quantities of material removed under controlled conditions, enhancing our understanding of exactly when and how the deposits were formed.

The site would also be ideal for showcasing the landforms of the river valley to the public, since the adjacent sports ground is located on a lower river terrace, while the hill on the eastern side of the site is capped with glaciofluvial deposits, left by the last ice age. Existing rights of way and plans for additional public space and pocket parks provide an ideal opportunity for information boards that explain the geomorphology of the area in addition to any specific details discovered during the extraction process.

Local authority planning policy places an obligation on developers to "protect, conserve and enhance geodiversity" and "where loss is unavoidable, record and advance understanding of the significance of any geodiversity feature(s) to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact of the loss, and make evidence and any archive generated publicly accessible."

On this basis, H&WEHT request that the developer be required to provide access to the site for geologists, to support the investigation and recording of the geological features associated with the river terrace deposits before they are destroyed and to be vigilant for features of interest such as large mammalian remains or organic rich layers that may bear fossils. Visits by geologists would have to coincide with periods when the terrace deposits are exposed and can be accessed safely. This may also involve removing a small quantity of the sand and gravel under controlled conditions for dating purposes. An element of liaison, planning and cooperation between developer and geological teams will be needed to achieve a mutually acceptable solution.

We recommend further, that as part of the restoration of the site, an information board explaining the geology should be included in the plan, located at a point where the locations of river terraces can readily be appreciated. The plan should allow for geologists with relevant knowledge to advise on location of the board and help develop the content.