

QUARRY – 2.30-3pm

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today.

Good Afternoon Everyone, I am Cllr Lisa Jones District Councillor for Wyre Forest Rural Ward, a Member of the Quarry Action Group, a Trustee for Wolverley Allotments, a Member of Wolverley Parish Church Congregation, a past Parish Councillor for both Wolverley and Cookley Parish Councils, a Resident of Cookley and a Mother of Three Children.

It is not possible to overstate the level of concern that has been expressed to me by the people of Cookley, Caunsall and Wolverley through my work as local councillor, this also includes the residents from Broadwaters, Hurcott and the other nearby surrounding villages.

As a previous member of Wyre Forest District Council's Planning Committee I am well accustomed to hearing complaints from residents who feel in some way concerned regarding development proposals.

However, the concerns that the quarry proposal has generated are very different. They are heartfelt, and born out of a genuine concern that people have for their families and children, themselves and other people that WILL be affected by the proposed quarrying activities.

The planning policies that have been much discussed are in place to both enable development but also to protect the environment and people from inappropriate development. It seems to me that the policies seek to put in black and white a set of sensible parameters by which to control Planning Proposals.

In this case it seems entirely sensible not to allow quarrying activities in close proximity to densely populated residential areas, including Four Nursery schools, Four Primary Schools and Two Secondary schools. One nursery, at Heathfield School is located just over the main Wolverley Road adjacent to the site, there are babies from three months old that are housed in the North Lodge building five days a week from 8am till 6pm. These babies are less than 40m away from the proposed site. This is a well-established business and school that has been on this site for many decades.

If the proposed quarry is granted permission the villages of Cookley, Caunsall and Wolverley will have a generation of children that will grow up breathing in silica dust, be subjected to the constant noise from the drilling machines, breathing in the pollution from the lorries and losing a whole area of greenbelt and footpaths to enjoy and learn from.

We have extreme concerns regarding the safety of our children whilst machinery is on site but also the hole left after the works have ceased.

I would whole heartily agree with the carefully considered objection to the quarry application as submitted by Officers from Wyre Forest District Council's planning team on 26 February 2021.

In this objection concerns regarding the adverse impact on the natural and historic environment and human health are carefully set out in relation to the appropriate NPPF paragraphs, this includes paragraph 205B which requires that Mineral Planning Authorities should ensure that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment, human health or aviation safety.

This proposal will have adverse impact on the natural environment, the proposed works will have a significant negative impact on the landscape and vista to the approach to the town of Kidderminster and will constitute sprawl.

The proposal will create unacceptable adverse impacts on human health.

There are residents properties in close proximity to the application site. These will be directly adversely affected by the vibrations and dust that will be generated by the proposal.

There are densely populated areas surrounding the site that will also be affected by the proposal.

In summary, the proposed quarry should be refused for the following reasons:-

It constitutes inappropriate development in the greenbelt.

The initial phase along with phases 4 and 5 will interrupt the greenbelt and cause significant harm to the character of the landscape, even after the proposed restoration, there will be a lasting adverse impact on the quality and appearance of the visual setting.

The development will dramatically undermine the District Council's strategic housing allocation at Lea Castle Village, this site has been especially chosen to provide a sustainable community providing additional education, healthcare along with key community facilities.

Myself and my ward colleagues have worked alongside the developers of the Lea Castle development from the beginning to create a wonderful environment for the new community.

The proposal will directly adversely impact on existing and future residential dwellings, both in close proximity and further from the site, impacting on the amenity, through adverse noise, dust and vibrations. It will also impact on the wider community reducing the ability to enjoy footpaths and outdoor greenbelt spaces.

The proposal will result in significant vehicular movements and although the impact of which has been assessed, it has not taken into account the growth of the Lea Castle Village development. The quantity and type of the proposed vehicular traffic will have an adverse impact highway safety on the surrounding communities.

The development will result in the loss of mature trees, including a significant important veteran tree. These trees will inevitably come under immense pressure to be felled, to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area, the character of the landscape and the ecology.

I hope the inspector will also see that common sense must prevail here and this development should not be allowed to go ahead.