

Quarry Appeal Statement

On behalf of the Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council.

Delivered by Councillor Simon Sherrey

on 28th February 2023

Good afternoon and thank you for allowing time to hear from us.

My name is Simon Sherrey and I am a Parish Councillor from the Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council.

I have been nominated to speak on behalf of the Parish Council in this regard.

The Parish Council has listened for several years to the many objections voiced by local residents against this quarry application.

The Parish Council has, therefore, been entirely consistent in its objection to the imposition of a quarry, literally alongside and in between the housing of the two Wolverley & Cookley villages.

The Parish council has submitted three written objections, namely:

1st Response made in March 2020, that recommended refusal, on the grounds of inappropriate location, further loss of the green belt, increased traffic pollution affecting the residence, noise, dust/ silica pollution and its adverse impact on the local schools and children walking to school.

2nd Response submitted in September 2021, in light of the additional information submissions – recommended refusal on the grounds stated in the original response, that still stand and remain sound and valid.

This response further emphasised how inappropriate this proposed quarry development is, being situated within the green belt and literally adjoining the two villages, together with the huge

detrimental effect on the health of residents of both villages, businesses, and local schools.

3rd Response submitted in December 2022. Again, the Parish Council were unanimous and recommended refusal of the Appeal, and identified further concerns regarding the impact a quarry would have on the residents of our Parish, in four key areas:

NRS Aggregates page 3;

6.42 Unacceptable impact on openness of the Green Belt.

6.43 Unacceptable impact on residential amenity and local schools.

6.44 Unacceptable impact on the local economy.

6.47 Unacceptable impact on highways.

6.42 Unacceptable impact on openness of the Green Belt.

Consideration should be given to the fact that Wolverley & Cookley Parish has already lost 59.2ha in phase 2 of the Lea Castle Development, which is in the Green Belt, released under the Wyre Forest District Local Plan. This phase will see a further 800 homes in addition to the 600 homes in phase 1. Phase 2 will have mixed (E/G) users, a two-form entry primary school/education use (F1), retail floor space (E), community use (F1/F2), public open space including play provision, outdoor sport/recreation. Ref 22/0404 WFDC. The development will significantly reduce our Green Belt access. The Quarry site is the one vital piece of Green Belt that is used to connect our villages together. The proposed quarry is sited slap bang in the middle of the green belt and would mean the further loss of some

105 acres. We feel that to lose this access for an initial period of 10 years of extraction activity, which now has been arbitrarily extended to 11 years, makes the development totally inappropriate. Given the experience of other quarry sites, the operators like to extend the licence well beyond the original timeline and usually based on increased market demands. Should this be case here, then we will be inflicting increased air and traffic pollution for a whole generation!

6.43 Unacceptable impact on residential amenity and local schools.

The proposed quarry location is bordered by Cookley Village to the north, Wolverley Village to the west and now Sion Hill to the south.

The application from NRS aggregates fails to acknowledge the growth within the Wolverley and Cookley parish and a large-scale housing development on Lea Castle, with 1400 properties when completed. Already occupied, is the recently built Weavers Chase with 90 properties and Sion Hill with 50 properties. All of this is in addition to the existing population of over 4500 residents, (as per the electoral register + those under 18 years), living in the two villages and in nearly 2000 homes. We also have 5 schools located in both villages (including 3 primary, nursery, middle and senior schools), all well within a mile radius from the centre of the quarry site. We have real concerns for the safety of our children walking to school from these new developments, the route to Wolverley CE Secondary

School and Wolverley Sebright Primary Academy, takes children along Wolverley Rd B4189, using the only available but very narrow pavement, directly alongside the perimeter wall of the Quarry and across the busy access road. Whilst NRS Aggregates state, “there would be no adverse air pollution, noise, dust, vibration, odour, or lighting impacts” The Dust Impact Assessment, conducted by NRS Aggregates “considers that the greatest potential for air quality impact is from changes in traffic flows”. Traffic flow has dramatically increased from the 2016 survey and will continue to increase with the previously mentioned developments in our parish. Historically, the wall bordering the proposed quarry site and pavement along the B4189 Wolverley Road, is severely damaged in several areas. The wall bows outwards towards the pavement and there are several areas where the wall has collapsed. This is mentioned in the Planning Application Photo sheet 13 but only states it is ‘in need of repair’, but noticeably fails to identify the real danger / risk to those pedestrians using the pavement from quarrying activities e.g., vibration.

We would point out that the school children are encouraged to use this pavement along the B4189, as it links up to the county approved ‘safe walk to school’ route, stretching from the traffic light junction on A449, alongside the wall and through to the village schools. Even the WCC are now concerned that this pavement and I quote is ‘an unsafe route’, due to it being so narrow.

6.44 Unacceptable impact on the local economy: -

The Parish Council is very aware of the concerns from several neighbouring businesses, where the impact of quarry operations will badly affect their business. e.g., Pubs, Camp Site, Mini Golf, 3 x Cafes and riding stables. The PC is also aware that a more detailed submission is being provided by others that will detail these concerns, however, the PC would like to highlight one educational business (historically important to the village), that is literally sited opposite the quarry, a matter of a few yards away.

This School is located directly opposite the proposed Quarry on the Wolverley Road B4189 (approximately 50 yards away). The Nursery and Preschool building is the nearest to the proposed Quarry site and is therefore very vulnerable to being adversely impacted. I understand that Heathfield nursery cares for children as young as 3 months old. This is an independent school that (may well) will be adversely affected with increased road and air pollution. The effects of having such excavation operations literally just over the road, would have a devastating impact on the school operation and the pupils.

Although, I have spoken about Heathfield school in particular, the same concerns will apply to all of the other local village schools.

We simply cannot allow increased pollution to blight children growing up in the local area, especially those in their formative years.

6.47 Unacceptable impact on highways.

The traffic surveys undertaken by NRS/Hurlstone Partnership in 2016, simply measured data at the time, with no forecasting of the impact that these new housing developments would have. The highways infrastructure cannot sustain these increases, let alone a further increase of 154 HGV's a day and 22 employee's movements from NRS Aggregates. In addition to the above, the harmful effect of traffic and air pollution on children, is now subject to increased scrutiny, following the tragic death of Ella in London, where pollution was recorded as the major cause of death. The Clean Air Bill (known as Ella's Law) will place greater responsibility on Councils to eliminate these pollution risks and to children in particular. The strap line to the bill is, 'Clean Air is a basic human right'. Further scientific investigation by Kings College London, has shown that prolonged exposure to air pollution, is linked to high blood pressure in teenagers.

No individual, organisation or institution would wish to be seen agreeing to a development, that could endanger the health of the local children and residents.

Dust Impact Assessment, for the Proposed Sand and Gravel Quarry and Restoration Scheme, for land at Lea Castle farm for NRS Aggregates Ltd R19.10059/3/AG 18th September 2019;

The Non-Technical Summary is full of ambiguity and thus the statements in this report, are open to more than one interpretation.

NRS Aggregates statements from this report listed below, demonstrates that our concerns for dust and air quality are justified.

No1 "The likelihood of problems caused by such pollutants will be largely influenced by the effectiveness of on-site environmental control" – **who monitors this, is this self-monitoring?**

No 4 "the site could be susceptible to fugitive dust events" "such occasions are relatively few" - **In other words accidents will happen!**

No 5 "Air Quality Objectives are not expected to be exceeded"- **so air pollution will exist and could be in greater quantity.**

These three statements alone from NRS Aggregates, suggest there will be dust and air quality issues on this site, should it be successful in this appeal.

Summary

In summary, the Parish Council has very grave concerns, in regard to the proposed location and its closeness to the residents, children, businesses, tourism and our schools.

Much has changed in the local area over the past 2 years, with increased housing, associated traffic pollution and increased risk to children, all of which place much greater pressure on keeping the villages protected from any further harmful developments, such as the quarry. Legislation is on its way to curb such developments and the production of harmful pollutants (Ella's Law, Clean Air Bill and the Quarries (Planning) Bill, currently going through Parliament (2nd reading stage). The Quarries (Planning) Bill, seeks to provide a buffer zone between settlements and new quarry sites, designed precisely to avoid an application such as this, coming forward in the first place.

This Parish Council has been resolute throughout this process, that this application /appeal must be refused. It is simply the wrong type of development, and it is entirely in the wrong place. Furthermore, this Parish Council has no wish to condone the advent of a quarry,

where there is a very real risk to the health and wellbeing of its residence.

Thank You.