Hewlett Construction Ltd

Construction of a Borrow Pit for the Extraction of Aggregate Minerals to Facilitate the Construction of Residential, Commercial and Educational Development and Associated Infrastructure.

Priors Hall, Corby, Northamptonshire.

Request for Scoping Opinion.

April 2014
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## Drawings

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1 Introduction

1.1 This scoping request is submitted by Hewlett Construction Ltd (Hewlett) in support of a proposal to develop a 'Borrow Pit' for the extraction of limestone and sand to facilitate the construction of housing and associated infrastructure.

1.2 Outline planning permission (ref 04/00240/OUT) for the Priors Hall development was granted in July 2004, for a mixed use urban extension to Corby, including residential (5,100 dwellings), employment (up to 14ha), one District Centre, 2 neighbourhood centres, schools (1 secondary and 3 primary), hotel, formal and informal space.

1.3 The Priors Hall development is well underway with in the order of 300 homes now completed, and the Corby Business Academy now open accommodating up to 1,000 students. Development platforms for the south western corner of the site are largely completed with infrastructure to accommodate this well underway. However, there remains in the order of 60% of the site still to be developed and a significant amount of engineering works will be required to facilitate the development. This will require in the order of 2.5 million tonnes of aggregate to provide the development platforms and infrastructure. The development will also require an equivalent volume of clays and overburden to be managed.

1.4 Operating from a network of strategic regional offices throughout the UK and an office in Oman, Hewlett is a market leading, privately owned construction company. Hewlett are the appointed contractors to provide the development platforms and associated infrastructure, for example roads and drainage.

2 Priors Hall, Corby – Site Location and Setting

2.1 The Priors Hall development is a major urban extension located just over 5km to the east of Corby Town Centre, providing a new mixed community within a large parkland setting.

2.2 The proposed borrow pit is to be located to the north eastern corner of the Priors Hall development on land that has outline planning permission for residential dwellings and a primary school. The site falls within the East Northamptonshire Council authority area.

2.3 The site is bordered to the north by a tree shelter belt, with a mature hedgerow running along Kirby Lane. Further to the north west (c.700m) lies Kirby Hall (an Elizabethan Country House). The village of Deene lies 900m to the east. Deene Park lies to the east of the site and Priors Hall Golf Course lies to the south. A
footpath runs along the southern boundary of the proposed site and a footpath crosses the line of the proposed haul route.

2.4 The site itself is currently grassland a tree shelter belt provides it northern boundary, and further area of woodland screens the proposals on its eastern boundary and a hedgerow is present on its western boundary. The site is open to the south although woodland again protects views from the golf course to the south.

3 The Proposal (The purpose of the development)

3.1 The aim of this proposal is to provide sufficient volumes of aggregate materials to facilitate the construction of development platforms and infrastructure for the remainder of the Priors Hall urban extension.

3.2 It has been calculated that the Priors Hall development will require in the order of 2.5 million tonnes of aggregate over the next five years. In addition there will be a similar volume of overburden and clays requiring appropriate management either through the restoration of quarries or for bulk fill. The proposed borrow pit offers a sustainable solution for providing an internal source of aggregate materials whilst also providing a suitable receptor for the overburden coming from the site.

3.3 It is calculated that the borrow pit can provide in the order of 2.5 million tonnes of limestone with some sandy material also available for use.

3.4 The borrow pit including top soil and sub soil bunds will require an area of approximately 25 hectares. It is proposed that top soil and sub soil bunds will be created along the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the site. The borrow pit will be worked in a easterly to westerly direction with phased restoration back to required levels to facilitate the longer term residential and educational uses. Mineral and overburden will be transported to and from the borrow pit along a designated haul route to the required development area. All mineral will be crushed and screened at source through the use of mobile plant. There is no blasting proposed with limestone being extracted through the use of hydraulic excavator.

4 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

4.1 Formal Environmental Assessment requirements were introduced in the UK under the 1985 EC Directive on environmental assessment (85/337/EEC). This requires that, for certain types of development, the developer must provide information to
the relevant competent authority about significant effects. This information is known as the Environmental Statement (ES).

4.2 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 provide the most recent set of regulations for EIA within England.

4.3 This report seeks Northamptonshire County Council’s Scoping Opinion for a proposed borrow pit on land forming part of the Priors Hall development scheme.

4.4 The table to Schedule 2 of the ‘Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011’ sets out the descriptions and applicable thresholds and criteria for the purpose of classifying development as Schedule 2 development. The proposed use for minerals extraction is listed within Schedule 2 under Extractive Industry.

4.5 Annex A of Circular 02/99, ‘Environmental Impact Assessment’ at paragraph A7 provides some guidance of suitable thresholds for when EIA is more likely to be required for surface and underground mineral working. Para A7 recommends that EIA is more likely to be required for sand and gravel workings if they would cover more than 15 hectares or involve the extraction of more than 30,000 tonnes of mineral per year.

4.6 The proposed site measures approximately 25 hectares in total and will involve the extraction of around 500,000 tonnes per year over a five year period. The planning application for the borrow pit will be the subject of an EIA and will be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

4.7 As part of gaining outline planning permission for the urban extension development a significant amount of technical assessment and environmental assessment work has been undertaken. It is our intention to use this information where relevant and update it where required. The planning application for the borrow pit will be accompanied by the following assessment work:

- Land Assessment and soils;
- Ecological Assessment;
- Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment;
- Landscape Assessment;
- Hydrological and Hydrogeological Assessment; and
- Noise and Air Quality Assessments.
5 Possible Environmental Effects

Land Assessment and Soils

5.1 The area is currently grassland used by the tenant farmer for production of hay. As part of the outline planning permission the principle of losing the agricultural land has been accepted. As part of these proposals we will ensure that a methodology is put in place to ensure the proper handling and storage of soils so that they are capable of longer term use within the wider development.

Ecological Assessment

5.2 A significant amount of ecological assessment work has already been undertaken on this site. The assessment work will be reviewed and updated where necessary.

Hydrological and Hydrogeological Assessment

5.3 The known hydrogeology of the site does not present any significant constraints with the site and surrounding area being classified as being located on a Non Aquifer.

5.4 The Environment Agency website indicated that the site does not lie within a defined groundwater Source Protection Zone.

5.5 The site is not located within a flood zone.

Noise and Air Quality

The nearest sensitive receptors to the proposed extension will be in Deene Village, circa 900m to the east of the site and visitor to Kirby Hall circa 700m to the north west. A review will be undertaken of existing background noise and air quality levels and whether the proposed borrow pit will have undue impact upon local residents.

Landscape and Visual Impact.

5.6 The location of the site means that it is very remote from sensitive residential properties or other users. The nature and character of the area is rural but has outline planning permission for the development of houses and a primary school.

5.7 The proposed borrow pit can be screened by the top soil and sub soil and designed in a manner to ensure there are no landscape or visual impacts arising.

5.8 The site is well screened by established woodland to the nearest sensitive receptors, there will be views from public rights of way that cross the site, although these will require diversion as part of the longer term development.
5.9 An update of the landscape and visual impact assessment for the wider development will inform this application.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

5.10 Archaeology and cultural heritage has been assessed as part of the redevelopment of the site including trial trenching. We will include the previous assessment work and will also evaluate what potential impact the extraction of mineral may have on nearby Kirby Hall.

6 Proposed Submission

6.1 The assembly of the scheme and the carrying out of EIA will be an iterative process. The intention of this process is to design and then submit a planning application for an environmentally and technically acceptable development, which will constitute sustainable development.

6.2 The planning application will be accompanied by an Environmental Statement. This document will take into account the content of this Scoping Report and the subsequent Scoping Opinion.

6.3 The Environmental Statement will present the findings of the EIA in a manner that will ensure that all the potential impacts are addressed to the required detail and in so doing, clearly indicate the likely levels of impact – both positive and negative – and thus facilitate the reaching of a balanced and informed decision on the planning application.

7 Summary

7.1 In summary this submission is made on behalf of Hewlett Construction and is seeking a scoping opinion from Northamptonshire County Council with regards to the proposed development.

7.2 The proposed development relates to a borrow pit to facilitate the wider development of the Priors Hall regeneration scheme to the east of Corby.

7.3 As the borrow pit is to be located on land with outline planning permission for housing and a primary school and has already been the subject of a separate EIA it is our intention to revisit the previous assessment work and update and re-assess where necessary to reflect the proposed borrow pit operations.

7.4 Accordingly we should be grateful if you could please provide Hewlett Construction with a scoping opinion on the proposed development.
DRAWINGS
Proposed Borrow Pit,
Land at Priors Hall, Corby, Northamptonshire

001 - Site Location Plan
Not to scale for EIA Scoping Opinion purposes