

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**RPC SUB-GROUP – STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS**

Date: 18 March 2008

Subject: Planning application consultation ref A/08/020

Site Address:	Sevenoaks Quarry, Bat & Ball Road, Sevenoaks, Kent
Proposal:	Extension of extraction area and continued operation of existing processing and associated manufacturing plant and buildings and other operational areas.
Local Planning Authority:	Kent County Council
Applicant:	Tarmac Limited
Date consultation issued:	6 March 2008

Report of: **Regional Planner**

**Recommendation:**

The South East England Regional Assembly makes the following observations:

- On the basis of the information provided it is considered that the proposed development would not materially conflict with or prejudice the implementation of the regional spatial strategy (RPG9 and alterations) and the draft South East Plan.

If the county council is minded to grant planning permission, it should address the following through appropriately worded conditions and/or legal agreements to secure:

- Appropriate mitigation measures concerning air quality and noise to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, to accord with the objectives of Policy E7 of RPG9 and Policies NRM7 and NRM 8 of the draft South East Plan.
- Appropriate measures concerning sustainable transport of minerals to accord with the objectives of the Regional Minerals Strategy.
- Ensure an appropriate package of protection and mitigation measures to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the site and surrounding area in accordance with Policy E2 of RPG9 and Policy NRM4 of the draft South East Plan.
- Ensure that the revised restoration plans are sufficient to deliver regional biodiversity targets and will ensure the achievement of high quality environmental standards and improved landscape quality in line with Policy C2 of the draft South East Plan and Policies E1 and W14 of RPG9.

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To assess the proposed development against the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 plus Alterations) and the draft South East Plan, and set out the recommended consultation response for consideration and agreement.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The site is located approximately 2.5 km to the north of the centre of the town of Sevenoaks and approximately 1.0 km south of the M26. The site (including the existing operation and the extension area) extends to approximately 95.2 hectares (ha). The extension area extends to approximately 35 ha of which sand will be extracted from approximately 14 ha.
- 2.2 Immediately to the south of the existing workings and processing plant area, beyond a belt of mature woodland, are residential and other properties that form part of the northern outskirts of Sevenoaks. To the north, beyond the proposed extent of working, is a railway line and agricultural land.
- 2.3 To the west of the extension area and north of the existing plant site is a landfill operated by Cory Environmental Ltd (Cory). Beyond this is a second railway line (which forms the western boundary of the plant site and ancillary activity area) and a large commercial park. Access to the site for all operations is (and will remain) along Bat and Ball Road. This access is also shared with Cory.
- 2.4 No part of the site is included within a national landscape designation. However, the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) encircles the site and is 170m away at its closest to the east of the site. A survey in 2005 found a small population of Great Crested Newt breeding within the site. A follow on survey will be carried out in 2008 and the results submitted to the planning authority.
- 2.5 A site location plan is attached at Appendix I to this report.

## **3. Details of the Proposal and Background**

- 3.1 There have been mineral operations at Sevenoaks Quarry since 1928. The current sand extraction and ancillary activity is the subject of a number of consents granted at various times since the 1940s. The main planning permission (SE/87/1468) is currently the subject of a Review of Mineral Permission (ROMP). The applicant states that should permission be granted, the outstanding ROMP in respect of the existing consents will be superseded by the new consent.

- 3.2 The quarry currently works partially cemented sand deposits. The workings involve the Easterly development of sand faces located on the Easterly slopes of the large Eastern Lake both above and below water table. The water table has historically been maintained at its current level by pumping.
- 3.3 Tarmac Limited (the applicant) is applying for planning permission to:
- i. Extract minerals from an area to the north and east of the existing extraction area. The proposed extension involves a minor extension to the east with the main extraction advancing north of the existing working area.
  - ii. Continue to process, stockpile and distribute sands from the existing plant site.
  - iii. Maintain the existing offices and ancillary plant and machinery for the life of the extraction and processing operations (including site restoration).
  - iv. Restore the extraction area progressively to a combination of water, wetland and other nature conservation based areas and agriculture.
- 3.4 The extension is for the period up to 2030 (subject to output levels) with restoration to be completed in 2032. The proposal will result in the extraction of up to 6.6 million tonnes (mt) of sand and gravel over the extended period at a maximum annual throughput of 300,000 tonnes.

#### **4. Relevant Policy Considerations**

##### *RPG9*

- 4.1 The relevant issues and policies within the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9) and Adopted Alterations on Waste and Minerals are considered to be:
- i. M3 – primary aggregates
  - ii. W14 – restoration
  - iii. E1 – landscape value
  - iv. E2 – biodiversity
  - v. E7 – air quality

##### *The South East Plan*

- 4.2 Having been submitted to the Government on 31 March 2006, the draft South East Plan is a material consideration in the determination of major planning applications. The relevant issues and policies are considered to be:
- i. NRM4 – biodiversity
  - ii. NRM 7 – air quality
  - iii. NRM8 – noise
  - iv. C2 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 4.3 The above policies on waste and minerals in 4.1 have been carried forward into the draft South East Plan. Reference in this report to policies in RPG9 (adopted alterations), also apply to the draft South East Plan unless explicitly stated.
- 4.4 Other material considerations are identified as the:
- i. Kent and Medway Structure Plan (July 2006)
  - ii. Kent Minerals Local Plan; Construction Aggregates saved policies (September 2007)

## 5. Policy Assessment

### Policy M3 – primary aggregates

- 5.1 Policy M3 of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan states that the regional apportionment of construction aggregates to be met by Kent/Medway is 2.53 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). The proposed extraction rate is 300,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) up to 2030, forming about 8% of the required annual apportionment for Kent/Medway over the period.
- 5.2 In terms of mineral extraction throughput, this proposal will broadly contribute towards meeting local needs for construction aggregate and the overall apportionment set out for Kent in Policy M3 of RPG9. Additionally, the proposal will contribute to Kent achieving its minimum landbank reserve of 7 years for sand and gravel extraction. In this respect, the proposal appears to be consistent with the objectives of the Policy M3 of RPG9.

### Other Matters

- 5.3 The applicant states that the proposals will not change current extraction rates. Aside the extraction throughput being maintained at current levels, it is also important to ensure that continued extraction over an extended time period does not have an adverse effect on the site's immediate environs over and above that already being experienced.
- 5.4 In view of this, there are a number of priorities arising out of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan relating to the sustainable extraction and processing of minerals which can be dealt with by way of condition or legal agreement. These relate to the following policy areas:
- Air quality and noise
  - Transport
  - Biodiversity
  - Restoration
  - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 Provided that the county council is satisfied that the matters raised in paragraph 5.4 can be addressed, it is considered that the proposal would accord with the general principles established in RPG9 (adopted alterations) and the draft South East Plan.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 Members are requested to agree the following recommendation to the local authority:

- 7.2 The South East England Regional Assembly makes the following observation:

- On the basis of the information provided it is considered that the proposed development would not materially conflict with or prejudice the implementation of the regional spatial strategy (RPG9 and alterations) and the draft South East Plan.

If the county council is minded to grant planning permission, it should address the following through appropriately worded conditions and/or legal agreements to secure:

- Appropriate mitigation measures concerning air quality and noise to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, to accord with the objectives of Policy E7 of RPG9 and Policies NRM7 and NRM 8 of the draft South East Plan.
- Appropriate measures concerning sustainable transport of minerals to accord with the objectives of the Regional Minerals Strategy.
- Ensure an appropriate package of protection and mitigation measures to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the site and surrounding area in accordance with Policy E2 of RPG9 and Policy NRM4 of the draft South East Plan.
- Ensure that the revised restoration plans are sufficient to deliver regional biodiversity targets and will ensure the achievement of high quality environmental standards and improved landscape quality in line with Policy C2 of the draft South East Plan and Policies E1 and W14 of RPG9.

David Nkrumah-Boateng  
Regional Planner  
18 March 2008

Contact: Sue Janota, Regional Planner  
T: +44 (0) 1483 555238 E: [suejanota@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:suejanota@southeast-ra.gov.uk)