

Ms Stenhouse explained that minerals were used extensively for every-day purposes such as house building and road construction. Central Government and Regional policy required 100,000 new homes to be built in Essex by 2021. 35 new extraction sites were being considered for inclusion in the Framework, mostly in the north of Essex. Apart from the geological evidence, the final choice of sites would take account of access to main highway and rail networks and environmental acceptability, including restoration.

Four policy alternatives to achieve the required mineral supply were put forward in the Framework for public comment. These were to extend the sites already being worked; to disperse new sites across the county; to concentrate new sites in central areas based on Colchester, Braintree and Chelmsford, near to major road and rail networks; or to use a combination of these three approaches.

Ms Stenhouse ended by setting out the proposed timetable for the Minerals & Waste Planning Framework following the conclusion of the present consultation on 12th March:

- Targeted consultation on the additional sites – August/September 2009
- Preferred Approach consultation – February/March 2010
- Draft Submission consultation – November/December 2010
- Submission – March 2011
- Examination in Public – June 2011
- Adoption of Minerals & Waste Development Framework – February 2012

The Chairman thanked Mr Leavitt and Ms Stenhouse for their presentation.

161 Presentation by Aggregate Industries UK Ltd

Mr Rob Westell introduced himself and Mr John Richards representing Aggregate Industries. He was pleased to see so many people attending the meeting. Aggregate Industries was a major surfacing contractor employing 6000 people nationwide. The company operated 82 quarries extracting 45 million tonnes of aggregate per annum, as well as 94 asphalt plants producing 6.5 million tonnes per annum.

As a leading company, Aggregate Industries held policies on the environment, conservation, health and safety, and social responsibility. Most of the aggregate produced in Essex was used within Essex for building roads, schools and hospitals.

The site at Tyndales Farm had been investigated with the authority of the landowner. A geological survey, involving the digging of boreholes, had been carried out and suggested deposits of around 3 million tonnes of sand and gravel. If the site was included in the adopted Minerals & Waste Development Framework, a detailed analysis would be carried out which would include hydrological and ecological surveys. This process would take up to a year and would be followed by an application for planning permission. The intention was to restore the land to agricultural use by back-filling with inert material when extraction was completed.

Mr Westell concluded his presentation by providing contact details for members of the public who wished for further information, and was thanked by the Chairman for speaking to the meeting.

162 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mrs J Wells.

163 Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they must declare any personal or prejudicial interests they had in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. They were reminded that they would need to repeat their declaration at the appropriate point in the meeting and leave the room if the interest was a prejudicial one. Unforeseen interests must similarly be declared at the appropriate time.

Cllr H Clacy and Cllr J Thompson both declared a prejudicial interest in the ECC Further Issues and Options Paper by virtue of living close to the planned extraction site at Tyndales Farm. These members took no part in Public Question Time.

164 Public Question Time

The Chairman opened the meeting to public questions and statements from residents of Danbury. He explained that he was imposing this restriction in view of the large numbers of people present and the time constraints.

164.1 Dr Caroline Dollery of the Danbury Medical Centre and a resident of the village had serious concerns about the effects on health of a quarry at Tyndales Farm. She made the following points:

- Essex County Council's own Sustainability Report on air quality (September 2008) highlighted the adverse effects on health of dust particles from quarries and from vehicles transporting aggregates. The particles could spread up to 1 kilometre from the quarry;
- The dust particles had been shown to cause asthma, and smaller particles could bypass the body's defence mechanisms leading to more serious problems including emphysema, hardening of the arteries, renal disease, lung cancer and auto-immune diseases;
- The Danbury area already had the highest incidence of asthma and allergies in Mid Essex. Existing heart and lung problems were likely to be exacerbated and the demands on local health services would increase;
- The high concentration of lorries passing through the village – perhaps one every five minutes – would cause additional congestion and traffic delays. The A414 was a primary route for ambulances and other emergency services.

164.2 A representative of the residents' action group, Campaign Against Mineral Extraction and Landfill (CAMEL), made the following points:

- A quarry on the site of Tyndales Farm would adversely affect the quality of life and safety of all village residents and especially those living close to the site who would experience the worst effects of the dust and noise;
- The visual and environmental impact on the area would be devastating;
- Congestion on the A414 would be increased;
- On their route to and from the A12, lorries from the quarry would pass three primary schools and traverse the main shopping areas of the village. Dust from the lorries would cause health problems as outlined by Dr Dollery.

164.3 Cllr Bob Shepherd of Chelmsford Borough Council said that the Borough Council was opposed to the proposal. The response to be sent to Essex County Council would state that the Borough Council objected to the inclusion of the Tyndales Farm site in the Minerals document. The site was wholly unsuitable because it was adjacent to residential properties; it was distant from major road networks; there were environmental constraints relating to noise, traffic and pollution; and Danbury did not have the infrastructure to support the development.

164.4 Cllr Peter Martin of Essex County Council said that he agreed with all objections raised so far and was appalled by the proposal. His role was to represent the village to the County Council and he would ensure that residents' views were heard.

164.5 A number of members of the public made statements and asked questions. The following points were made:

- Details were requested of the depth of the topsoil at the site and the depth of the aggregates. Aggregate Industries did not yet have this information;
- Was this meeting necessary since the majority of residents were opposed to the proposal? The Chairman responded that information was being brought out at the meeting which would not be otherwise be generally known;
- What was meant by 'inert material' in relation to infilling after extraction, and how many additional lorry movements would be required during infilling? Aggregate Industries responded that the inert material would be concrete and other construction materials. It would take 3 years to create the void before extraction began, and 3 years to carry out infilling when extraction was complete. No clear answer was available regarding the number of lorry movements;
- Would large crushing machines be used on site for recycling? Aggregate Industries said that the site would not be used for recycling. Extracted materials would be processed but no materials would be brought onto the site;
- Where would entrances and exits from the site be located? Aggregate Industries replied that this required detailed assessment by traffic experts and would be included in any planning application;
- Concern was expressed that Essex County Council's own sustainability report, funded by the tax-payer, had been ignored in relation to health risks;
- Attention was drawn to the calm state of the A414 while maintenance work was carried out in the recent past and this was contrasted with the current return of traffic and stress levels. The speaker regretted that there was no plan for a by-pass for the village;
- Why had Tyndales Farm been included in the consultation document without research being carried out into the suitability of the site? Officers of Essex County Council explained that studies could not be carried out without the public becoming aware, and it was felt more appropriate to place all suggested sites in the public domain as soon as possible;
- Could the timescale for the Framework be shortened to reduce the blight affecting properties adjacent to the proposed site? It was explained that the County

Council must follow the statutory consultation procedures. It could not simply remove Tyndales Farm from the list of sites. The due process must be completed and there needed to be a balance in the sites finally chosen. No community wanted to have a quarry in its neighbourhood. Planning applications would subsequently have to be submitted by developers for each extraction site.

- Which Government department or organisation should be lobbied regarding the timescale? Mr Leavitt said that the matter came under the Department of Communities & Local Government and also GO-East, the Government Office for the East of England;
- Why had no hydrology report had been done, bearing in mind that subsidence was already a problem in Danbury? Aggregate Industries explained that boreholes had to be sunk over a period of 12 months for a hydrology report.
- Was the geological data from the preliminary survey available to the public? Mr Westell agreed to send a summary of the geological findings to the Parish Council and to the County Council for display on their websites;
- A speaker was encouraged by Cllr Peter Martin's opposition to the plan and asked how residents could help persuade other County Councillors to oppose it. Cllr Martin reiterated that he would ensure the village's views were known and he urged everyone to respond to the consultation and to copy their letters to him;
- The likely total number of lorry movements was not clear, though it could be around 200 per day. Another 100 movements per day might be associated with infilling. There were around 240 lorry movements per day from St Clere's quarry;
- Concern was expressed about damage and disruption to wildlife in the environs of the village;
- The additional development might eventually lead to Danbury becoming an extension of Chelmsford instead;
- Was there a chance that the site would become a land-fill site after mineral extraction was concluded? It was explained that the intention was for a return to agriculture;
- How many other proposed sites were within 250 metres of residential properties? County Council officers were unable to say but felt that this did apply to some of the sites;
- Noise pollution was a significant issue as the sound of heavy machinery at St Clere's Quarry could currently be heard at Eves Corner in certain conditions;
- How soon Tyndales Farm could be removed from the list of sites in view of the large number of objections? It was again stressed that the County Council must follow the due process.

The Chairman drew public question time to an end and suspended the meeting for a short break. Some members of the public left the meeting at this point.

The meeting reconvened after about 10 minutes.

165 Response of the Parish Council to the Minerals Development Document: Further Issues and Option Paper

Councillors Clacy and Thompson, who had declared a prejudicial interest, left the building while this matter was debated.

The Council received a paper referred by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 2nd February 2009 recommending that the Council formally oppose the proposal for mineral extraction at Tyndales Farm for a number of reasons which were listed.

The Chairman called on each member in turn to give his views, and the following points were made:

- The proposal for a quarry at Tyndales Farm should be opposed on grounds of noise, traffic, and the effects on neighbouring houses. The development would be bad for Danbury and the strength of public opposition should be made clear;
- The County Council and Go East should be lobbied to exclude Tyndales Farm permanently from consideration so that it could not be put forward again;
- Some of the original 40 proposed sites had been dropped from the plan. It was possible that they had been withdrawn by the landowners, but ECC should be asked for an explanation of why some sites had been removed;
- The proposal flew in the face of a number of strong considerations, including noise and dust pollution, visual and environmental impacts, and health concerns. There was a lack of appropriate road infrastructure. The Council should oppose the proposal as strongly as possible;
- The extra traffic on the A414 could have the effect of dividing the village in two along and east/west axis;
- Subsidence from former gravel workings was already a problem in Danbury;
- The views put forward by the Planning Committee were endorsed and all members were opposed to the proposal;
- If the site was not removed from the plan it might be necessary to appoint a Planning Consultant to assist with fighting the proposal.

At the conclusion of discussion, the Chairman made a proposal that the Parish Council, on behalf of the residents of Danbury, should strongly oppose the proposal for mineral extraction at Tyndales Farm, and that the Clerk be authorised to draw up a response to the ECC consultation on the basis of the points discussed. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Langley and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- a) that Danbury Parish Council was unanimously opposed to any mineral extraction at Tyndales Farm;
- b) that the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk Planning draw up and submit a response to the ECC Further Issues and Options paper objecting strongly to the inclusion of Tyndales Farm on the grounds identified at the meeting and including the points made by the Planning Committee;
- c) that the response be circulated as an Appendix to the minutes of this meeting (see attached);

d) that, if the site was not withdrawn from the Minerals & Waste Development Framework, funding to employ a qualified Planning Consultant be considered in setting the budget for the 2010/11 financial year, and that it be accepted that this would impact on Council Tax payments.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for attending the meeting. The Parish Council valued all input received from members of the public.

Business having been concluded, the Chairman drew the meeting to a close at 10.50pm.

Signed: Cllr S Berlyn, Chairman

Date:

Danbury Parish Council

Response of the Parish Council to

ECC Minerals Development Document: Further Issues and Options Paper

Chapter 14: Site Allocations

Section 14.10: New suggested sites for consultation

A35: Tyndales Farm, Danbury:

Danbury Parish Council opposes and objects in the strongest possible terms to the inclusion of land at Tyndales Farm, Danbury, as a possible site for mineral extraction.

The Council believes that this site is unsuitable for mineral extraction and that the development would be devastating in its effects on the village and community of Danbury. Our reasons are given below:

1. The site is surrounded by residential properties. Mineral extraction here would seriously affect the amenity of the residents of these properties for a period of many years in terms of disruption, noise, and dust pollution;
2. The open agricultural land at Tyndales Farm makes a significant contribution to the rural aspect of Danbury on the eastern side of the village. Siting a quarry there would destroy the special character of the area;
3. Apart from the visual impact, there would be considerable environmental and ecological damage to what is recognised as an important and sensitive rural area, with consequent harmful effects for the surrounding farm-land, woodland and wildlife;
4. The development is likely to be detrimental to the wellbeing of two ancient lanes, Hyde Lane and Cherry Garden Lane, which run close to the proposed extraction site. The policy of the Parish Council, resulting from the Danbury Parish Plan and the Danbury Planning Framework (for which approval is being sought from CBC as a Supplementary Planning Document) is to liaise with the Borough Council to expand the network of protected and 'Quiet Status' lanes in Danbury. Hyde Lane and Cherry Garden Lane are specifically mentioned as lanes the Parish Council wishes to see protected;
5. The Council has heard persuasive arguments from members of the medical profession about the effects on health of dust particles in the atmosphere, both from the quarry itself and from lorries carrying aggregates through the village. These particles have been shown to exacerbate existing illnesses, including breathing disorders and heart disease, and to increase the incidence of these diseases.
6. The addition of perhaps hundreds of movements of large lorries along the A414 through the centre of the village is unacceptable for several reasons:
 - The road is already heavily congested with traffic;

- The lorries would bring disruption, noise and dust, as well as leaving potentially dangerous debris on the roads. This is already a problem on the A414 near St Clere's Pit to the west of the village, as ECC is aware;
 - When travelling through the village the lorries would pass several schools and, in the future, a busy medical centre, giving rise to road safety concerns for both cars and pedestrians;
7. Tyndales Farm is several miles from the nearest major road and rail infrastructure. Other proposed minerals sites are much better placed for access to these facilities;
 8. Subsidence is already a problem for homes in Danbury as a result of previous quarrying activity. The new site would add to this burden on Danbury's householders;
 9. We have concerns about how the infilling of the site after use will be achieved and whether this will be completed in a timely fashion. We note the on-going delays in resolving the situation at Sandon Quarry;
 10. We understand that Chelmsford Borough Council has raised strong objections to the use of Tyndales Farm for mineral extraction, regarding it as unsuitable. The Parish Council shares this view and endorses the Borough Council's objections.

Danbury Parish Council

10th March 2009