

## JOINT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE (CAMBRIDGE FRINGE SITES)

Report by: Head of Planning Services

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015

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<b>Application Number</b>	S/0467/13/CM	<b>Agenda Item</b>	
<b>Date Received</b>	04/11/2013	<b>Officer</b>	Georg Urban
<b>Target Date</b>	04/02/2014		
<b>Parishes/Wards</b>	Parishes Council: Milton Ward: Milton		
<b>Site</b>	Tarmac Lafarge Aggregate Rail Terminal and Coated Roadstone Plant, Chesterton Rail Freight Sidings, Chesterton Junction, Cowley Road, Cambridge, CB4 0DL		
<b>Proposal</b>	Reconfiguration and consolidation of the existing minerals processing and transfer operation including the installation of covered mineral storage bays, alterations and extensions to existing feeder unit, new office, welfare and workshop buildings, reconfiguration of site circulation and parking area, new boundary fencing and other works associated with relocating rail sidings to serve the mineral processing site.		
<b>Applicant</b>	Brookgate Land Limited on behalf of Lafarge Tarmac UK		
<b>Application Type:</b>	<b>Ancillary Minerals Development</b>	<b>Departure:</b>	Not Applicable

The above application is reported to the Joint Development Control Committee for the Cambridge Fringes Committee for determination by members in accordance with the Scheme of delegation for the Joint Development Control Committee for the Cambridge Fringes.

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Brookgate Land Limited is applying for planning permission on behalf of Lafarge Tarmac UK for the reconfiguration of an existing aggregates depot at Chesterton Sidings in Cambridge. The main issue is the impact of noise generated by trains delivering material to the site.

**Recommendation** It is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to:

1. the draft planning conditions set out in Appendix B
2. the completion of a legal agreement to satisfactorily secure the provision of an off-site fixed noise barrier (draft heads of terms are contained in Appendix C)

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This planning application seeks approval for the reconfiguration of the aggregate delivery operation, plant feed hoppers and aggregate storage facilities at the existing rail terminal and coated roadstone plant situated on land at Chesterton Sidings, Cambridge. Changes are also proposed to staff car parking and vehicle circulation and include a new means of enclosure around the facility. The existing production capacity and road access to the site would remain unchanged.
- 1.2 Approval of this application would enable existing rail sidings to be re-positioned, thus releasing a significant tract of derelict former railway sidings land to be re-developed for new land uses.

## **2.0 AREA CONTEXT / SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site is located in the northern fringes of Cambridge. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of uses. The Cowley Road industrial estate and a business park are located to the west. Cambridge sewage treatment works and the A14 Trunk Road beyond it lie to the north of the site. To the south, the site abuts the area known as Chesterton sidings, part of which will be the site of a new transport interchange. Immediately to the east are the northernmost part of a currently derelict railway sidings area (referred to as the “Freightliner Sidings”) and the Ely to London main railway line (running in roughly north to south direction). The nearest residential development lies 180m to the south east, beyond the main railway line, and is accessed off Fen Road, Chesterton. In January 2014, South Cambridgeshire District Council granted a planning permission for the change of use of land to form seven additional caravan plots immediately to the north of the existing residential properties, about 170 metres southeast of the application site boundary.
- 2.2 Whilst the application site is wholly located within the district of South Cambridgeshire, the boundary between South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Council runs along the northern and western site boundaries. The land to the east of the main railway line lies within the Cambridge Green Belt.
- 2.3 The application site measures 1.38 hectares and is currently occupied by the mineral rail terminal and coated roadstone plant operated by Lafarge Tarmac UK Limited. Equipment on the site includes the asphalt plant rotary drier, mixer and associated bag houses, bitumen tanks, fuel tanks, a cold feed canopy including a bank of eight hoppers, and a chimney stack. The hoppers and other elements are connected to the asphalt plant by means of ducting, pipework and conveyor belts. The existing site layout site encompasses a row of aggregate storage bays located to the north of the feed hoppers, a reclaimed asphalt addition facility, a number of offices, a workshop and stores, a weighbridge, staff car park and a shed which provides secure parking for the loading shovel when not in use.

- 2.4 The northern and eastern site boundaries are defined by a chain link fence. Along the western boundary, a series of 3m high precast concrete panels form a push wall parallel to the aggregate delivery railway siding. The southern boundary of the site is not defined.
- 2.5 Vehicular access is from the west via a dedicated access road off Cowley Road. The access road runs parallel to the railway siding and the western site boundary to a gate in the north west corner. On arrival at the site, lorries pass over a weighbridge and follow an internal one-way system around the site. Following loading, they again pass over the weighbridge and exit the site via the north western gate.
- 2.6 Dry stone for use in the asphalt plant is brought to the site from Mountsorrel Quarry in Leicestershire by means of an aggregates train which currently uses the sidings to the west of the application site. Each train delivery consists of approximately 1300 tonnes of material. Once the train has been manoeuvred into the sidings, aggregate is unloaded by means of an on-train inclined conveyor which swings out sideways over the concrete push wall. This allows materials to be discharged from the train directly into the application site. The aggregate is then transferred by loading shovel to the storage bays north of the feed hoppers.
- 2.7 Other raw materials used in the coated roadstone production process, such as bitumen and filler, arrive by road. The main products produced at the site are asphalt (road macadam) and dry aggregates for use in a wide range of general construction applications. The materials produced at the site are exported by road.

### **3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 Planning permission for a coated roadstone plant was first granted in 1988 under reference S/00644/88/CM. This included the provision of a rotary dryer, loading hoppers, bag filter, exhaust stack, open stock piling areas for aggregates and ancillary development such as an office and weighbridge. Aggregates to be used in the manufacture of asphalt (road surfacing materials) were delivered to the site by rail. Other materials such as bitumen and filler arrived by road along the haul road access from Cowley Road, Cambridge. The same route is used for the distribution of the finished product.
- 3.2 In July 2005, an application for the installation of hot storage bins at the coated roadstone plant site was approved (reference S/00828/05/CM) and implemented.
- 3.3 Temporary planning permission for the use of a mobile concrete batching plant in the northern part of Chesterton Sidings, adjacent to the current application site, was granted in October 2005 under reference S/00876/05/CM. The erection of the mobile plant was proposed

in anticipation of major roadworks on the nearby A14 Trunk Road. The planning permission for this plant was never implemented and therefore lapsed in October 2010.

#### Other relevant permissions

- 3.4 On 29 January 2014 South Cambridgeshire District Council granted a planning permission (reference S/2150/11) for the permanent residential use of an area of land originally used as a coal yard and most recently as a waste transfer station on land off Fen Road, Chesterton, north of the existing residential properties. Once implemented, this decision would bring residential development closer to the Tarmac Lafarge rail terminal and coated roadstone plant than hitherto was the case.

### **4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The proposed development involves the reconfiguration and consolidation of the existing aggregates rail terminal and coated roadstone plant at the site.
- 4.2 It is proposed to use the railway sidings located to the east of the site for future aggregate deliveries. This would require the refurbishment of the existing track infrastructure which has not been used for some time and has fallen into disrepair. The related works would be classed as permitted development by a railway operator and therefore do not form part of the application. However, in order to facilitate this change, the general arrangement of the application site is to be reconfigured to suit the new aggregates delivery arrangements, as well as moving the existing staff car park to allow access to an adjacent area of largely derelict railway sidings land.
- 4.3 The material storage bays would be moved from their current location (north of the feed hoppers) to the southern site boundary, and their number would be increased. In addition, the existing storage bays would be moved from the western to the eastern side of the site. This is required due to the proposed relocation of the rail sidings from the west side to the east side of the site.
- 4.4 The reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP) addition facility would be moved to the south of the site. The cold feed canopy covering the hoppers would be dismantled and reassembled so that it allows the hoppers to be fed from the south side, rather than from the north as under the existing arrangement. The existing asphalt plant, chimney and hot storage facility would remain unaffected by the proposals and would remain in its current location and orientation.
- 4.5 It is also proposed to install a 180 metre long free standing “environmental screen” along the southern site boundary, which is intended to act a visual screen as well as mitigating noise from the site. The proposed screen would be 8m high to the eaves and would be of a similar design, construction and colour (light green) as the cold feed canopy.

- 4.6 The existing site offices would be replaced by a bespoke unit including offices and welfare facilities, located at the northern site boundary near the existing weighbridge, which would be retained. The staff car park would be relocated within the new boundary fence.

#### Site access arrangements

- 4.7 Vehicles would access and leave the site via the existing access road, which runs along the western site boundary to a point south east of the site, where it joins the public highway network at the eastern end of Cowley Road. It is proposed to extend the access road from the north-western corner along the northern site boundary to the north-eastern corner, where a new access to the Freightliner Sidings to the east of the application site would be created. The access to the application site itself would be relocated from the north western corner to the northern boundary. The existing access/egress point at the north western corner would remain in its current location but in the future would only be used by vehicles exiting the site.

#### Landscaping / Site boundaries

- 4.8 Due to the operational requirements and the size of the site there is limited scope for landscaping. The eastern site boundary would be used for the transfer of materials from the trains to the site. The relocated material storage bays would take up the majority of the southern site boundary and would be offset from the proposed environmental screen described above by 1 metre.
- 4.9 The existing pre-cast concrete panels along the western site boundary would be removed and a 3 metre high palisade fence would be installed along the northern and western site boundaries. Along the northern site boundary, the fence would separate the access track leading to the new access to the Freightliner siding from the main part of the coating plant.

#### Appearance/colour of plant and structures on the site

- 4.10 The existing coated roadstone plant would remain unchanged as a result of the proposed rearrangement of other elements on the site. The coating plant and the adjacent feed hopper building are currently covered in a light green (Moorland Green) metal cladding. It is not proposed to change their appearance as part of the proposed development.

#### Hours of operation

- 4.11 Under the current planning permissions, road deliveries of raw and finished materials and the operation of the concrete batching plant is permitted during the hours of 0630 to 1700 Mondays to Fridays and 0630 to 1300 on Saturdays, with the exception of routine maintenance. No operations are currently permitted on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

4.12 The proposed hours of operation are:

- For aggregate deliveries by train to the site: 0700-1230 and 1630-2230 during weekdays; and
- For the export of minerals by road: 0600 to 1600 Monday to Friday and 0600 to 1100 on Saturdays.

#### Vehicle Movements

4.13 Existing deliveries of material from the site are made using HGVs with a payload of 20t or less. The applicant advises that at maximum capacity, the site can load up to 2000t per day of dry material and 700t per day of coated material. This results in a total of 270 vehicle movements per day (135 in plus 135 out). In addition, external customers collecting material from the site generate an additional 120 lorry movements (60 plus 60 out) per day. The total number of heavy commercial vehicle movements to and from the site is therefore 390 (195 in plus 195 out). In addition to this, the 9-11 staff permanently working at the site generate two personal vehicle movements each per day.

4.14 It is not proposed to intensify the operation, therefore the number of vehicle movements is anticipated to remain unchanged.

### **5.0 PUBLICITY**

5.1 Advertisement: YES  
Adjoining occupiers: YES  
Individual letters to a total of 170 private residences and businesses on the Cowley Road Industrial Estate. No representations were received within the prescribed period  
Site notice: YES

### **6.0 PLANNING POLICY**

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF confirms the statutory status of the Development Plan, however, it is a material consideration in decisions on planning applications.

6.2 Section 13 of the NPPF relates to the sustainable use of minerals. Mineral Planning Authorities (MPAs) are required to plan to ensure there is a sufficient supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. In respect of existing aggregate railheads the MPA are required to safeguard these facilities to help meet the needs

of the future. Minerals plans are required to set out policies to ensure that permitted operations do not have unacceptable adverse effects on the environment and human health.

#### Local Development Plan Policies

6.3 The Development Plan in this instance comprises the adopted Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan (Core Strategy and Site Specific Proposals Plan) and the South Cambridgeshire District Site Specific Policies DPD together with the adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP3) Policies and Strategy 2011-2026.

6.4 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan – Core Strategy DPD (July 2011)

**CS23** – *Sustainable Transport of Minerals and Waste* encourages the sustainable transport of minerals and waste by rail, water, conveyor and pipelines and the development of railheads.

**CS24** – *Design of sustainable minerals and waste management facilities* states that proposals for minerals and waste management development will be required to achieve a high standard in their design and mitigation of environmental impacts including climate change.

**CS32** – *Traffic and Highways* requires proposals for minerals and waste development to demonstrate that opportunities for the use of alternative methods of transport have been evaluated and the most appropriate pursued where practicable; that the site access and the highway network serving the site are suitable or could be made suitable and able to accommodate any increase in traffic and/or the nature of the traffic associated with the development; that any associated increase in traffic or highway improvements would not cause unacceptable harm to the environment, road safety or residential amenity; and that binding agreements covering lorry backloading, routeing arrangements and HCV signage for mineral and waste traffic may be sought. In Cambridgeshire this will be informed by the Cambridgeshire Advisory Freight Map.

**CS34** – *Protecting surrounding uses* requires minerals and waste development to demonstrate that there would be no significant harm to the environment, human health or safety, existing or proposed neighbouring land uses, visual intrusion or loss to residential or other amenities. In appropriate circumstances, mitigation measures will be required.

6.5 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan – Site Specific Proposals DPD (February 2012)

**Policy SSP T 1** of the Site Specific Proposals DPD designates land at the northern end of Chesterton Sidings as a Transport Zone, reflecting the presence of the existing rail terminal.

## Emerging Planning Policy

- 6.6 Both Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have progressed their respective Local Plans to formal submission stage. The Cambridge Local Plan Review Proposed Submission document and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2011-2031 were submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2014. Further post-submission hearings are scheduled to take place in February and March 2015.
- 6.7 Both local planning authorities have included in their draft plans an intention to produce an Area Action Plan (AAP) to guide re-development of land within the Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area within which the proposed development is situated. Both emerging plans advocate mixed use employment-led new land uses on the derelict railway sidings. The issues and options report sets out the main issues for the Cambridge Northern Fringe East area and the potential options to address them. A consultation period on AAP issues and options report took place from December 2014 to January 2015. This Plan will ultimately establish the quantum and distribution of development, site capacity, viability, time scales and phasing of development. Once adopted, it will form part of the respective local plans.

## **7.0 CONSULTATIONS**

### Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (combined response)

- 7.1 Both Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council recognise the importance of this facility for the region's growth agenda. However, the Environmental Health Officers are concerned that the relocation of the sidings would bring a noisy use closer to existing residential properties in Fen Road and additional residential units recently granted planning permission. They have concerns over the methodology used in the noise assessment, in particular the applicability to the National Planning Policy Framework standard and that relates to a more temporary mineral extraction use than the existing aggregates yard, which is therefore considered inappropriate in this instance. These concerns were raised during a meeting with the Mineral Planning Authority and the applicants' agents and it was agreed that technical officers would continue discussions with the County Council's noise consultant and the applicants.
- 7.2 The Drainage Officer (SCDC) notes that the proposals indicate an increase in the impermeable surface area and suggest that any areas which will no longer be used by Lafarge should be returned to permeable finishes in order to avoid run-off to the award drain during higher order flood events. The FRA proposes infiltration as a means of disposing surface water. However, the high ground water conditions during the wetter seasons are likely to prevent successful infiltration. A strategy to address these concerns is requested.



- 7.3 The Drainage Officer (City Council) adds that currently there is no formal drainage arrangement for the site; instead, water just soaks into the ground. The consequence of this is that surface water, as it soaks into the ground, carries different pollutants with it, which can enter the ground water. The FRA submitted with the application does not propose to alter this situation, despite the proposal to increase impermeable surfacing across the site. This is a concern and it is suggested that the whole of the surface water drainage strategy is reassessed to demonstrate ways to reduce the risk of surface water flooding and more importantly to reduce the risk of polluting the environment especially groundwater.
- 7.4 The Landscape and Design Officer notes that the proposed development may actually be quite visible and, as it will join with the proposed station landscape, has the following points to make:
- 1) The re-positioning of the storage bays and particularly the provision of the 180m long, 8m tall 'environmental screen' would increase the apparent bulk and area of the development, and visually move it towards the new station. These structures could also possibly be seen from riverside areas within the greenbelt.
  - 2) These structures could have a visual impact on any developments to the south, so their design and positioning surface treatments, colour etc. should take account of this. It is recommended that a condition is imposed for material samples to be provided and agreed prior to commencement on site.
  - 3) The proposed 3m palisade fence to the south of the site should receive the same landscape treatment – including planting – as that proposed for the new station trackside fence, as they will be seen together and join at point F on drawing 1000. It is considered that this could help minimise the impact of the screen further.
  - 4) Is the Palisade fence from point E on drawing 1000 required? It will serve no security purpose and will prevent Freightliner access to Lafarge Siding 2, if they intend to share this line.

South Cambridgeshire District Council Environmental Health Officer  
(specific comments regarding noise)

- 7.5 The EHO points out that PPG24 *Planning and Noise* (which was replaced by the NPPF in March 2012) stated under "Noise from Railways" that "*local noise from station activities, freight distribution depots, and marshalling yards should be treated in the same way as noise from industrial and commercial sources*". He considers the situation at the Lafarge aggregates railhead to be similar. In terms of closest noise sensitive residential properties that should be considered as part of any impact assessment (in addition to Sandy Park and West View caravan parks, currently the closest residential premises with full planning permissions), the EHO refers to a planning permission granted in February 2014 for the change of use to 7 caravan plots for travellers at Fen Road, Milton. Any noise impact assessment would have to consider the fact that this residential permission is likely to be implemented, which would mean that there are residents living closer to the railhead than at present.

- 7.6 The EHO does not have any objections in principle to the internal re-organisation of the Lafarge roadstone coating plant. However, he voices concerns regarding the relocation of the delivery of minerals to the site. Moving this activity nearer to the residential caravan sites [on Fen Road] may have adverse effects on the occupiers by the noise produced from deliveries and subsequent transfer of material to the storage bays. The noise report submitted with the application is based upon the NPPF Technical Guidance. This guidance is not appropriate for this site and an assessment of levels based on the effects at the nearest noise sensitive receptors should be used, as set out in British Standard BS4142.

Highway Authority (CCC)

- 7.7 Has no comments to make as highway arrangements will not change.

Transport and Infrastructure Policy and Funding (CCC)

- 7.8 No comments received.

Environment Agency

- 7.9 The Environment Agency comments that potentially contaminative sources have been identified to be activities associated with the [adjacent] railway sidings, the presence of made ground/fill material of unknown nature and thickness, storage tanks currently stored on site and the sewage treatment works to the north of the site. Perched water is expected to be present within the made ground material on the site and the possibility of it being hydraulically connected to the surrounding sands and gravels should not be excluded. Therefore, there are suspected pollutant linkages on site and further investigation is required to remove uncertainties of potential pollution occurring on site. However, the Environment Agency considers that planning permission could be granted subject to conditions covering
- the submission (and approval) of a remediation strategy to deal with risks associated with ground contamination;
  - in the event that previously unidentified contamination is being detected, the submission of a remediation strategy for such contamination,
  - the submission of a scheme for foul and surface water disposal; and
  - any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals to be provided with secondary containment that is impermeable to oils, fuels, chemicals and water, for example a bund, details of which shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval.
- 7.10 The Environment Agency considers that without these conditions, the proposed development on this site would pose an unacceptable risk to the environment and would object to the proposal.

Anglian Water Services (operators of Cambridge sewage works adjacent to the application site)

- 7.11 No comment received.

Network Rail

- 7.12 Advises that any development of rail sidings or connection to the main rail network will require detailed plans to be submitted and agreed by Network Rail, therefore, this aspect of the development will be covered by Network Rail's infrastructure development team. There is no mineral extraction proposed as part of the application, therefore, at this point Network Rail's Principal Mining Engineer has no comment on the proposal.

- 7.13 10dB Acoustics (noise adviser to CCC)

The County Council's noise adviser expresses concern about the applicability of the methodology used by the applicant to predict noise emissions and consequential impacts. The noise assessment had used guidance relating to mineral extraction but another methodology should have been used instead for these industrial operations. The appropriate standard to apply to the assessment of noise from this operation is that of BS4142:1997. There is also concern about whether all relevant noise sources had been considered, and whether the assessment had correctly identified the location of the nearest sensitive receptors off Fen Road.

Milton Parish Council

- 7.14 Milton Parish Council supports the idea of a road bridge over the railway to access Chesterton Fen instead of the current level crossing. Furthermore, the Parish Council would like to be represented on the local liaison forum for this site.

Frimstone Limited (occupier/lessee of adjacent land and user of railway sidings)

- 7.15 No comments received.

## **8.0 ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL**

Principle of Development

- 8.1 This planning application relates to a proposed reconfiguration of an existing coated roadstone plant and aggregates rail terminal to facilitate a re-location of the rail delivery sidings from the western side to the plant to the east, being closer to the mainline railway. Following implementation the existing rail access delivery siding can then be removed, which would release a substantial tract of former sidings land for re-development.

- 8.2 The land to which this application relates has the status of a safeguarded rail terminal within the adopted Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Site-specific Proposals plan. The rail terminal is seen as essential infrastructure for importing high performance specification aggregates which do not geologically exist within the county. These types of aggregate have a variety of uses in the construction industry, including other products such as tarmac for road building. Steady supply of these materials is essential to the delivery of the wider growth agenda in the area. Consequently the use of the application area is viewed as strategic infrastructure and one which is also likely to play a significant future role in the delivery of critical infrastructure such as the improvements to the A14 Trunk Road.
- 8.3 The application site is an established coated roadstone plant and aggregates depot. Such installations generally serve a local market, and therefore the finished product would be exported by road. However, the aggregate being used in the production of roadstone are delivered by rail, in accordance with Policy CS23 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Core Strategy.
- 8.4 Policy CS24 (Design of sustainable minerals and waste management facilities) requires proposals for minerals and waste management development to achieve a high standard in their design and mitigation of environmental impacts. Policy CS34 requires that proposals for minerals and waste development have to demonstrate that there would be no significant harm to the environment, human health or safety, existing or proposed neighbouring land uses, visual intrusion or loss to residential or other amenities. The proposed realignment of some of the elements on the application site would result in improvements to on-site operations. The proposed noise barrier along the eastern side of the rail siding would enable noise emissions from the unloading of the train to be controlled so as not to cause a significant adverse noise impact on local residents. It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Policies CS24 and CS34.
- 8.5 The re-configuration and retention of the site largely on its current footprint is thus consistent with the adopted minerals plan for the area, a fact which should be accorded significant weight in the determination of the application.

#### Environmental Impacts including noise

- 8.6 In considering proposals for minerals-related development it is important that the environmental impact of such operations should not have unacceptable adverse impacts on sensitive receptors. To assess the impact of the proposed changes to rail delivery and the layout of the stocking facilities associated with the coated roadstone plant, the applicant has carried out a number of noise emission surveys. These take account of a variety of noise generating sources associated with the proposed development and the proximity of sensitive receptors, i.e. the existing and proposed residential development off Fen Road, Chesterton.

- 8.7 Whilst noise emissions from the actual mixing process to produce coated roadstone plant would not change, the proposed re-configuration of the site would see changes to the locations of materials stocking areas, vehicle circulation and coated roadstone plant feed hoppers. The area and bunkers used for stone discharged from the delivery train would move to the eastern side of the site, where two refurbished rail tracks would form the new delivery sidings.
- 8.8 The applicant's noise assessments have also considered the variety of noise sources associated with the aggregate delivery train in use. The aggregate is delivered from the individual wagons via a conveyor belt to a 13m long conveyor arm which can swing outwards, allowing materials to be discharged directly into the storage bays adjacent to the sidings.
- 8.9 The train is unloaded in two halves. The locomotive stays with the train during the shunting and unloading process. The various individual noise sources on the train include the locomotive, the individual motors on each wagon which drive the conveyor, the conveyor arm, and the noise associated with the discharging of the aggregate into the bays. All noise sources (including the locomotive) have formed part of the noise assessment carried out by the applicant.
- 8.10 The nearest residential properties to the site which would be affected from noise of the development are located at Fen Road on the eastern side of the main railway line, at a distance of currently about 180 metres. The applicant's noise consultants have calculated the Rating Level at eight locations within the residential development at Fen Road. Two calculations of the anticipated noise emissions were made: one without any mitigation, and a second calculation which includes mitigation in the form of a 2m high noise barrier along part of the sidings. With mitigation the Rating Level is predicted to exceed the background noise level by between 3dB and 5dB. BS4142: 2014 indicates that this would comprise an adverse impact, but not a *significant* adverse impact.
- 8.11 In the section on conserving and enhancing the natural environment, the NPPF (at paragraph 123) states that planning policies and decisions should aim to
- *avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development;*
  - *mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including through the use of conditions;*
  - *recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established<sup>1</sup>; and*

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and other relevant law.

- *identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.*

- 8.12 The noise impacts predicted by the applicant's noise consultants are considered to be below the level of a *significant* adverse impact but may constitute an adverse impact, despite the proposed mitigation. However, this adverse impact must be viewed in the context of the area already being subject to high noise levels. Adding the predicted noise levels to pre-existing ambient noise levels indicates that the largest increase in ambient levels as a result of the proposed development would be 0.9dB, which is an increase of low magnitude.
- 8.13 The impact of noise emissions could be controlled by restricting the hours during which trains may enter the sidings and discharge their load, and requiring the construction of a suitable noise barrier along the rail sidings, so as not to cause a significant adverse noise impact on local residents.
- 8.14 In March 2014, the applicant submitted an Addendum to the noise assessment. This contains an assessment in accordance with British Standard BS4142: 1997 "Rating industrial noise affecting mixed residential and industrial areas" and also considers the delivery of raw asphalt material to the site.
- 8.15 The March 2014 addendum report suggested the use of localised temporary screening, but this is not considered to be practicable or effective, as any such screen would have to be of significant length to prevent diffraction around the sides. It would also have to be high enough to reduce noise levels sufficiently, which is likely to be extremely difficult in the case of the locomotive, where the primary noise source is the exhaust, which is at high level. The County Council's noise adviser therefore suggests the construction of a trackside barrier similar to that installed at the National Track Materials Recycling Centre in March.
- 8.16 The land on which the noise barrier would be constructed is not under the control of the company which operates the aggregates depot. For this reason, the construction of the noise barrier would require the completion of a legal agreement between the site operator, the landowner of the railway land where the barrier would be located, and the County Council. Draft heads of terms of such an agreement are contained in Appendix C to this report. The final wording of the legal agreement is subject to discussion between the relevant parties.
- 8.24 In response to consultees' comments, the applicant has carried out additional noise modelling in accordance with BS4142: 2014. This new version of the BS4142 standard superseded the previous version in October 2014. The results of the additional modelling were submitted in December 2014 in a further addendum to the noise assessment.

- 8.25 Having considered the new BS4142: 2014, the South Cambridgeshire District Council Environmental Health Officer is of the opinion that the planning authority can ask for this standard to be used in the assessment of noise from the development, as it specifically covers loading and unloading operations. From the measurements taken it appears there would be an impact at the nearest noise sensitive premises, but not one that is significant, and the EHO considers a 2m high barrier to be sufficient to moderate the impact.
- 8.26 The Cambridge City Council's Environmental Health Officer confirms that he agrees with the methodology used in the December 2014 addendum. The Addendum report assumes deliveries and unloading [of material delivered by train] will take place during daytime hours (07:30 and 16:30). The EHO recommends restricting the times for delivery and unloading activities in order to prevent the potential for sleep disturbance at the nearby residential premises.
- 8.27 Having examined the noise addendum report the noise adviser to the County Council is satisfied that, provided appropriate conditions are attached to any planning consent, noise emissions from the site are capable of being controlled so as not to cause a significant adverse noise impact on local residents.

#### Drainage

- 8.28 The City Council's Drainage Officer has expressed concerns over existing drainage arrangements at the site, which may allow pollutants to enter the ground water.
- 8.29 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states (at paragraph 109) that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels water pollution.
- 8.30 In order to address these concerns, any planning permission would be subject to a condition requiring the submission for approval of a revised surface water and foul water drainage strategy and pollution control measures before the proposed development commences.

#### Urban design implications

- 8.31 The City Council's Landscape and Design Officer comments on the visibility of the development and suggests the provision of landscaping to mitigate the visual impact of elements of the proposal. The proposed environmental screen on the southern site boundary is intended to act as an acoustic barrier to reduce the potential noise impact of the site. The height of the environmental screen has to be seen in the context of both the existing coated roadstone plant and associated development on the site. The tallest

element is the chimney (27.5m at its highest point), the remainder of the coated roadstone plant measures 16m and the bag houses are 11m tall.

- 8.33 Furthermore, the location of the application site has to be considered in the wider context of the area. Especially when seen from the river (i.e. from the east or southeast), the site is seen in the context of other built development in the vicinity, such as the operational railway land to the south and the Cowley Road industrial estate to the west, which contains several industrial buildings of similar height.

#### Landscaping

- 8.34 The City Council's Landscape and Design Officer suggests that the landscape treatment for the trackside fence of the new railway station should be extended northwards to the boundary fence of the application site, as the two would be seen together. However, it has to be borne in mind that due to space constraints there is little scope for planting on the application site itself. Furthermore, the application site is part of an area which is generally industrial in nature. The adjacent rail sidings (as well as the application site itself) are operational railway areas where health and safety requirements may make it difficult to establish (and maintain) landscaping.
- 8.35 The Landscape and Design Officer also queried the need for the proposed palisade fencing to extend along the Freightliner rail siding on the eastern side of the application site. This fence forms part of the site boundary of the application site and therefore prevents unauthorised access. Furthermore, the applicant's agent advises that both Lafarge Tarmac (the operator of the coated roadstone plant) and Freightliner wish for this part of the fence to remain in place.

#### Suggested road bridge over the railway

- 8.36 The consultation response by Milton Parish Council refers to a road bridge over the railway to access Chesterton Fen which should replace the current level crossing. It has to be noted that this does not form part of the proposal and would be outside the scope of this permission.

### **9.0 CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The proposed reconfiguration of the existing aggregates transfer facility and coated roadstone plant would improve the operation of the site. Switching the delivery of aggregates by train from using the siding on the western side of the site to that on the eastern side would free up an area of disused railway land to the south of the application site for redevelopment.
- 9.2 The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and with the National Planning Policy Framework, which supports sustainable development.



9.3 Whilst the proposed arrangements for aggregate deliveries by train would move noise sources closer to some residential properties to the southeast of the site, resulting in an increase in noise from the site, such an increase is anticipated to be of low magnitude and has to be assessed in the context of an area where background noise levels are already high.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

10.1 Having reviewed the application plans and documents and supplementary information it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the draft planning conditions set out in Appendix B to this report following the completion of a legal agreement in respect of the provision of an off-site fixed noise barrier.

### **Contact details**

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### Appendices

#### Appendix A

- Site location plans
- Existing site layout
- Proposed site layout

#### Appendix B

- Draft planning conditions

#### Appendix C

- Draft legal agreement to secure the provision of a noise attenuation barrier