

# Great Chesterford Parish Council

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)  
Application No: ESS/20/22/UTT

Proposal: Change of use of land to allow the construction of a recycled aggregate production facility including storage bays and HGV parking.

Location: Boro Farm, Newmarket Road, Great Chesterford, Saffron Walden  
CB10 1FN

## Introduction

1. Great Chesterford Parish Council (“GCPC”) voted unanimously at its meeting held on 8th June 2022 to OBJECT VERY STRONGLY to these proposals.

## Preliminary

2. The Applicant, which apparently sought and obtained pre-application advice prior to submitting its Application in February 2022, has made no contact whatever with GCPC regarding this proposal. The first that GCPC knew about the matter was when, some months ago, two large signs were erected by the lay-by on the B1383 Newmarket Road by means of which access to the Application site is gained; further, as evidenced by clearly discernible noise and mud tracks on the road, production has for some time now evidently been taking place on the site. The Applicant’s failure to engage with GCPC regarding such a significant development for this rural part of the countryside, and its cavalier action in relation to its unauthorised use of the site, is strongly deprecated.

3. GCPC has already drawn the attention of Minerals and Waste Planning, Essex County Council, as well as to Uttlesford District Council and the Environment Agency to the fact that no change of use consent has yet been obtained by the Applicant for the site, nor consent obtained for the erection of the unauthorised advertising signs on the B1383; enforcement of all applicable statutory requirements in relation to such matters has therefore been requested.

4. The Applicant’s description of the proposal contained in the Application Form dated 23rd February, 2022 is both misleading and incorrect: the facility, contrary to the negative response provided on page 4, has, as noted above, already been in operation for several months, and it is clearly not the case that the site “is currently unoccupied”.

5. The Supporting Statement and accompanying documents submitted with the Application fail to provide a full and accurate description of the proposals such that its full implications can be properly assessed. Particular issues which have been 'glossed over', or which fail to describe fully the factual situation, include:

**(a) Inappropriate location of the site for markets to be served:**

The site concerned is located at the very edge of the Essex/Cambridgeshire border. The contention that the facilities proposed, if approved, will add to existing aggregate recycling facilities within Essex, and thereby serve key centres such as Harlow and Chelmsford (paragraph 5.5), or regarding the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (paragraph 5.10), is fanciful - all are on the far side of the County border or at least a very considerable distance from the site. Further, whilst repeated references are made to convenient access to the nearby M11 (paragraphs 5.5, 5.6, 5.9, 5.17 and 6.2), the Applicant fails to point out that there is no access north at Junction 9 so that provision of recycled aggregate products in the Cambridge area and surrounding countryside (paragraph 5.9) - which are far more likely to be served from the site - will inevitably require HGV vehicles to travel via inadequate secondary roads, often through local villages within the more immediate vicinity.

**(b) Unacceptable hours of work:** The Applicant claims that the facility will not "adversely impact the local area" (paragraph 3.13), and further asserts that an "assessments of the possible impact of the proposed development of [the] local amenity have been undertaken" (paragraph 4.4): yet the Applicant has failed to share any such assessments with GCPC and other local communities. The proposed extended working hours of 7.00 - 1700 hours on weekdays (8.00 - 13.00 hours on Saturdays), together with up to 50 HGV daily movements daily delivering/collecting, are likely to be particularly disturbing (noise generation, headlights etc) in a rural environment, and existing Planning Consent UTT/20/0775/FUL provides no justification for them. The working hours proposed are particularly unacceptable because of the noise caused by the working machinery (below).

**(c) Noise:** The Applicant claims that because of traffic noise from the M11 and adjacent railway line, local residents already experience some noise disturbance with the result that the addition of the aggregate recycling facility will not mean it will become 'significantly adverse" (paragraph 4.7). The bland assertion that the facility will not 'adversely impact the local area' (paragraph 3.13) is simply not borne out in reality: the Applicant's unauthorised operation of the plant has already enabled local residents in Great Chesterford to experience for themselves how much additional noise is being generated, and they report that within the Village they are readily

able to hear the plant in operation. This position is simply unacceptable, and the Applicant's claims about the lack of adverse noise levels are wrong.

(d) **Dust:** Once again, claims that adequate measures are or will be in place to minimise the risk of dust arising from the site can be significantly discounted; since the unauthorised operations were commenced earlier this year, the amount of dust and dirt on the B1383 between the lay-by and the roundabout has provided clear evidence that inadequate control/cleaning measures are in operation. In this connection, the comment of a planning officer in connection with the Planning Application submitted in 2010 (UTT/0997/10/CC) suggests that the Applicant has significantly underplayed the impact of dust from the site: "During the Officer's site visit it was noted that dust arising from the site was blowing across the M11 spur. Dust is also likely to be generated by the lorries travelling to and from the site carrying the material and agitating the dust across the access road. Therefore, there are concerns regarding the level of dust arising from the development." Exactly the same issues now arise. As matters stand, there is considerable concern that the Applicant is failing to control effectively dust emissions resulting from operation of the facilities.

(e) **Road safety:** Access to the site is gained via a lay-by adjacent to the B1383 where it joins a gently curving road as it travels towards the roundabout. Heavily laden HGV vehicles either have to cross the B1383 to enter the site or pull out into the main road on leaving, in either case necessitating caution in coping with relatively fast-moving highway traffic on the road. GCPC does not consider that the Applicant's claim that the site provides 'easy and safe access to the site, without disrupting the use of the B1383 by other users' (paragraph 5.6) is a fair or realistic description of the position. Further, because of the absence of access north on the M11/J9 and the inadequacies of many local roads, it is simply not correct that deliveries north etc 'will be safely accommodated by the strategic road network' (paragraph 5.17); many journeys will be via rat-runs through local villages. Local residents have also noted the presence of HGV vehicles parked overnight in the lay-by.

(f) **Rail safety;** The close proximity of the site to the adjacent railway means that dust could readily constitute a hazard to the safe passage of trains if the wind is blowing from the east.

(g) **Proximity to River Cam:** The River Cam flows very close to the site. There is a risk that the escape of any harmful pollutant, such as dust, leaking fuel oil or other toxic material, could reach the water and further undermine the health of this already stressed river.

## Conclusion

6. The information provided by the Applicant is inadequate and superficial. In this connection GCPC notes from the report of Jacobs on file that the Applicant was requested at the pre-Application stage to supply information relating to the plant to be used on site, calculations and assessments as to attributable noise, baseline measurements and PPG: Minerals, and that all this key material remains outstanding.

7. In these circumstances, GCPC requests that the Application for all consents requested is refused.

9th June, 2022