

Objection to Policy MP2 of the Norfolk County Council: Minerals and Waste Local Plan on behalf of Breedon Trading Ltd.

The Company wishes to object to the exclusion of the Mansom Plantation site from the Publication version of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The Company has been advised that the primary reason for its exclusion is because "...because it is considered that the high-water table would render the proposed restoration (to a holiday lodge development surrounded by heathland and retained woodland) unfeasible."

The Company acknowledges that much of the site is the subject of an implemented planning permission for a holiday lodge development. It is felt that whilst the currently approved lodge layout may not be compatible with the winning and working of sand and gravel for the reason given this does not take into account that the layout could be revised, subject to a further grant of planning permission, so both developments could co-exist. The body of water likely to result from the winning and working of sand and gravel could easily be restored in such a manner as to compliment holiday development rather than preclude it.

Further however, discussions have been held with the landowner who has confirmed to the Company that it would prefer the land to be developed for the winning and working of sand and gravel even if this means the current holiday lodge planning permission can no longer be legally implemented. The landowner has also confirmed to the Company that it is content for the site to be restored post winning and working of sand and gravel to a biodiverse/nature conservation afteruse and not to a holiday lodge afteruse. In this light and in the Company's view the primary reason for not identifying the site as a site specific allocation for the winning and working of sand and gravel is no longer relevant.

The site is currently a conifer tree plantation whose timber crop is due for harvesting. This provides an ideal opportunity to review the future landuse of the site, which is what the landowner and Company have undertaken. The phased felling of the timber crop is entirely compatible with the phased winning and working of sand and gravel, with the land's progressive restoration. To that end the Company has commissioned a concept restoration scheme (submitted as part of its objection) whose overarching objective is to improve the biodiversity of the site as it stands by at least 10% whilst drawing inspiration from ecological and landscape features in the wider locale. This scheme has the support of the landowner.

The report that accompanies the concept restoration drawing concludes: -

"It is not anticipated that the proposed development would give rise to any unacceptable or significant adverse effects on the landscape character of the locality or on the visual amenity of nearby receptors. The proposed restoration concept for the creation of a new 'valley fen' with heath and mire habitats set amongst a framework of mixed native woodland is likely to result in long-term beneficial effects."

The Mansom Plantation site lies within 5 miles of the north Norwich Parishes of Sprowston, Old Catton and Drayton which Policy MP2 specifically identify as part of the Norwich urban area. It has a direct trunk road connection via the A140 to

Norwich city centre, and via the A1270 to itself eastern and southern suburbs. Norwich is arguably the largest market for aggregate products in East Anglia. It is closer to these markets than any other existing or allocated site apart from Spixworth Quarry which currently has no permitted direct access to the classified road network without vehicles passing through either Spixworth itself or Horsham St. Faith. It is also reasonable in the Company's view to anticipate that the proposed link between the A1270 and A47 will be completed within the Plan period, and given the need to bridge the Wensum and possibly the Tudd valleys that significant volumes of concreting aggregate/concrete will be required. The Mansom Plantation site would be the closest potential quarry able to supply these materials to this project via the classified road network. The Company's Attlebridge site, although closer, would be unlikely to be able to provide materials of a suitable specification for this project due to a lack of water for processing.

In summary the Company requests that the Mansom Plantation site be identified as a site specific allocation for the winning and working of sand and gravel as it was in iterations of the Plan. With the consent of the owners it can be restored in a manner that would be compatible with a reconfigured holiday lodge development or to a biodiverse/nature conservation afteruse that reflects nature conservation and landscape features in the wider locality. It is less than 5 miles from Norwich, the largest market for aggregates products in East Anglia, and has direct classified road access to said market. It is also the most sustainably located site to supply aggregates and concrete to the proposed A1270 – A47 link road, whose construction is proposed within the Plan period. No other issues have been identified which could not be overcome at the planning application stage.