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DCC comes up trumps!

A petition was presented to Dorset County Council (DCC) earlier this year after their position on their 2011 Soundness response changed for technical reasons which they later explained.

It is therefore welcome news that the DCC approach has been very different for the current public consultation. We will never know, however, whether or not that's due to the direct action taken by FoRF supporters.

Cllr Spencer Flower (DCC Cabinet Member & a District Councillor for Verwood & Three Legged Cross) tells us:

"DCC supports the suggestion by the Friends of Ringwood Forest as set out in their document that the calculation of the 10 year average of production of land-won soft sand should be revised downwards to take into account the removal of the silica sand landbank from the supply side. Otherwise the projection of demand will be inflated which of course, could increase pressure for extraction at Purple Haze"

It is noted that Hampshire County Council are proposing a modification which changes their approach to establishing buffer zones around operational mineral extraction and inert waste recycling sites. Dorset County Council is of the opinion that the previous approach, a standard 100m for such buffer zones, is preferable. The proposed modifications regarding reviewing and determining buffer zones on a case-by-case basis are not supported."

We believe that the landbank calculations are a significant oversight by Hampshire as they contribute to underpinning the reasons they have given for including Purple Haze in their draft Plan.

The above response to Hampshire from DCC, who are themselves a Minerals & Waste Planning Authority, adds considerable weight to the evidence we have submitted to the Planning Inspector. We therefore welcome DCC's response.

EDDC response to Hampshire confirmed

Cllr Flower also tells us that East Dorset District Council (EDDC) has indeed responded, as expected, to Hampshire's worrying proposal to change the rules on Buffer Zones which almost slipped in under the radar:

Hampshire's proposed wording: *"... It is standard practice in Hampshire for operational mineral extraction and inert waste recycling sites to have a minimum buffer zone of 100 metres from the nearest sensitive receptors, such as homes and schools **though this distance will be reviewed on a case-by case basis.**"*

EDDC's response is along these lines: *"The District Council is concerned that the proposed wording change implies that a buffer could be less than 100m as the wording "distance will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis" adds confusion to the previous wording.*

EDDC would like an assurance in the plan that sufficient protection will be given to the community and environment. HCC are asked to reconsider the Council's previous request that a minimum distance of 100m should be set at the northern end of the site at Purple Haze. This figure should be revisited to allow for a wider distance should circumstances require it once more is known about the site and the impacts and methods of extraction. This requirement should also apply to the site adjacent to the B3081 and the other side of the site adjacent to Moors Valley County Park, as any less than 100 metres could well have a serious impact on the amenity of the community."

EDDC's response aligns with Verwood Town Council's submission to Hampshire. The campaign team has therefore successfully lobbied elected representatives at Town, District & County Council levels to submit responses which reflect the FoRF submission.

We are delighted with the outcome of our lobbying and appreciate the practical support which has been demonstrated by our elected representatives.

It is unlikely this would have been achieved, however, without FoRF supporters making their views clear when contacting Councillors over the past few months – thank you to everyone who got involved.

More overleaf...



EDDC's Challenge to Natural England (NE): Update

We told you previously about EDDC's hard challenge to NE (Hampshire) regarding their approach to the proposed Purple Haze site allocation – see the Leader's Blog at <http://spencerflower.wordpress.com/>

We understand that in their reply NE has tried, not unexpectedly, to justify their position and have also responded with "a load of waffle". The outcome is that Cllr Spencer Flower (EDDC Leader) is arranging for EDDC to meet with NE to discuss the case further. We await the outcome of that meeting with great interest.

Electricity Substation: B3081/Moors Valley Country Park

We are very grateful to one of our supporters who contacted SSE about the above substation which appeared recently. As a result we have learnt:

"... the Substation on the B 3081 (Moors Valley Country Park - known as "Purple Haze" side) was requested by Somerley Estates as Landowner with agreement from Forestry Commission as Leaseholder. In fact it seems the parcel of land on which the substation stands may no longer, by agreement, be leased to Forestry Commission (FC).

The purpose of the substation is to provide mains electricity to Duncombe Lodge, (owned by Somerley Estates) a property on the ALDERHOLT Road which has run only on a generator since built, probably in the late 1800s. Somerley have paid SSE to install the Substation and cables across B3081 and then FC to dig a trench across the forest (Blue Haze) to Duncombe Lodge at an estimated cost of £30/40k.

Planning Permission is not required as the substation is a "permitted development" and SSE confirmed that the substation (with permissions granted) is suitable to power "a conveyor belt system similar to that on the Tarmac sites in the same area" from Purple Haze. (FoRF Note: a conveyor belt has not been proposed for Purple Haze. A successful Planning Application would be required before work could start on extraction at the proposed Purple Haze site.)

So it seems that after 120 years of providing generated

electricity to Duncombe Lodge, Somerley Estates have spent a substantial amount to provide electricity to one house for a substation which, if my memory serves me right, will be close to the new entrance of any agreed quarry and dump site at Purple Haze."

Only time will tell whether Somerley are simply improving their estate . . .

Finally –

The Campaign Team will be taking a break from the end of this week until later in January 2013. We will be monitoring all campaign related emails sent to us at info@forf.org.uk but we might not reply immediately unless the matter is urgent.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Here's to a great year in 2013!

Your feedback, comments and/or questions will be welcomed by the Campaign Team – please email us at info@forf.org.uk