



23 May 2013

Agenda Item: 8

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR POLICY, PLANNING AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

REQUEST FOR SITE INSPECTIONS BY PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval, in line with the Code of Best Practice, for Committee to attend formal inspections at three sites subject to current planning applications prior to them being reported for determination by Committee later this year.

The Sites

2. It is anticipated that reports will be shortly be presented to Committee in respect of the following key planning applications currently before the County Council:

A) Combined Heat and Power Plant at R. Plevin & Sons Ltd, Crookford Hill, Elkesley, Retford

3. This application seeks planning permission for the construction and operation of a biomass fuelled combined heat and power plant at the above site. A plan showing the location of the application site is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

4. The application has generated significant local opposition including the formation of an action group. Committee has previously agreed that the application merits the special presentation procedures, as set out within the Code of Best Practice, whereby qualifying parties wishing to speak for or against the proposals can enjoy extended public speaking rights above the standard Committee public speaking arrangements. Full details of the procedures for special presentations are set out in Part B of Appendix E of the Code of Best Practice.

5. Given the exceptionally high level of public interest in this application it is considered prudent for Committee to attend a site inspection to witness at first hand the application site, its surroundings and gain an appreciation of any potential impacts the proposals may give rise to.

B) Opencast coal extraction at the 'Shortwood' Site, Land off Cossall Road between the villages of Cossall and Trowell

6. This application seeks planning permission for the extraction of coal and fireclay by opencasting and restoration of the site. The application is submitted by UK Coal Ltd and, similarly, has generated significant public interest. A location plan is attached at Appendix 2.
7. In order for Members to fully appreciate how a modern opencast coal site operates, and indeed the standard of subsequent restoration, the applicant has offered Committee the opportunity to also inspect an existing opencast coal site currently being operated by them. The nearest such site is at Lodge House, near Smalley, Derbyshire. It is recommended that Committee take up this opportunity prior to moving on to inspect the proposed opencast coal 'Shortwood' site.

C) Hucknall Town Centre Improvement Scheme

8. This application, submitted by the County Council, seeks planning permission for an improvement scheme to Hucknall town centre which includes the development of an inner relief road. Although not included as part of the planning application, the proposed environmental improvements to the town centre would facilitate the pedestrianisation of the High Street with the new inner relief road accommodating diverted traffic. A location plan of the scheme is attached at Appendix 3.
9. Again, given the significance of this scheme, which involves the demolition and alteration of some existing buildings, road realignment and other highway improvement works, it is suggested that Committee should also inspect the site and its surroundings prior to receiving a report.

Future steps

10. Should Committee be agreeable to attend these site inspections it is normal practice to arrange them in the run-up to the targeted Committee meeting. Members will note from the Committee Work Programme attached elsewhere on this agenda that it is anticipated to report the Plevins and Shortwood applications to the July Committee meeting whilst the Hucknall Town Centre Improvement Scheme could potentially be ready to report to the June Committee meeting, although this is not guaranteed at this stage.
11. It is anticipated that the inspections would need to be spread over two separate dates given both the extent of the application site areas and their geographical spread. Accordingly it is suggested that one day covers the Lodge House and Shortwood sites whilst a separate date is allocated for the Hucknall and Plevins sites.
12. Should Committee be minded to attend these inspections, it is proposed to liaise with Chairman and Vice-Chairman with a view to circulating suggested dates. Fuller details of the proposals and the details of any necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (such as safety boots and high visibility jackets etc) will be circulated nearer the time and where necessary such PPE can be loaned to Members. It is also anticipated that arrangements be put in place to minimise the need for travel by separate vehicles where possible and such matters can be determined once attendees have confirmed. Finally, the opportunity is taken to

remind Members of the format and conduct expected during such inspections as set out in Appendix G of the Code of Best Practice.

Other Options Considered

13. The alternative course of action would be for Committee to not inspect such sites and instead rely on the information set out within the respective planning submissions, the committee reports and the accompanying PowerPoint presentations. However, given the scale and significance of these particular schemes and the level of public interest they have generated, it is recommended that Members observe the site locations at first hand to assist in their subsequent decision making.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment, and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. It is RECOMMENDED that Committee agree to attend formal inspections of the sites at:
 - a) Lodge House Opencast Coal Site, Nr Smalley, Derbys;
 - b) Shortwood Opencast Coal Site, Nr Trowell
 - c) Hucknall Town Centre Improvement Scheme; and
 - d) Plevins, Crookford Hill, Elkesley

on dates to be arranged prior to these applications being reported to Committee for determination.

JAYNE FRANCIS-WARD

Corporate Director for Policy, Planning and Corporate Services

Constitutional Comments

"Committee have power to decide the Recommendation" [SHB.13.05.13].

Comments of the Service Director - Finance

“There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report” [SEM 13.05.13].

Background Papers Available for Inspection

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Tuxford	Councillor John Ogle
Kimberley & Trowell	Councillor Ken Rigby
Nuthall	Councillor Philip Owen
Hucknall	Councillor Alice Grice
	Councillor John Wilkinson
	Councillor John Wilmott

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For any enquiries about this report, please contact the report author.

PPCS.JS/PAB – COMMITTEE REPORT FOLDER REFERENCE
10 May 2013 – Date Report Completed by WP Operators

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