



Dear Members

APPLICATION NUMBER: CM/0068/18 Park Hill Farm Recontouring of Agricultural Land

This Statement is submitted to you in connection with the recommendation that invites the Committee to refuse the above referenced application for 6 reasons.

To be clear, this is not an application for landfill or land raise. This is an application for the recontouring of agricultural land, an engineering operation, using soils. The purpose is to improve productivity of the land and to ensure that the land can be farmed safely, without the risk of farm machinery overturning. The land sits at a high point of 148m AOD (eastern part) and falls sharply to its low point of 130m AOD (to the west). As a result of the steepness, the land does not have agricultural benefit and is of limited value to the farmer. The application is supported by an Assessment of Limitations to Agricultural land Quality, prepared by Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd. The Assessment confirms that there is a clear agricultural benefit to reducing the gradient across the upper parts of the field to eliminate the safety hazard of operating machinery on the slopes, and to offer the opportunity to farm the land in a wider range of crops than is possible at present.

The soils that would be imported to the site would be from local construction projects, minimising the need for travel.

Additional information was supplied in support of the application, including information relating to landscape and visual impact, contrary to the Committee Report. There will be no permanent impact on landscape character as a result of the proposed development as the landform proposed (with reference to the plan excerpt in the Committee Report) will not be incongruous and will largely appear unchanged when restoration is complete.

The proposed reasons for refusal are neither robust nor justified:

Reason1: The site will be restored to a high quality. This is explained in the application and is supported by the above referenced Assessment, the proposed stripping and storage of sub and topsoils for use in restoration and plans showing an appropriately graded landform. Paragraph 7 (NPPW relates to landfill – this is not a landfill operation).

Reason 2: This is not a landfill operation.

Reasons 3 & 4: This is a small-scale engineering operation with a defined purpose and will utilise just over 40,000 tonnes of soils.

Reason 5: The proposed contours ensure that there will be no adverse or permanent change in the landscape character.

Reason 6: The Applicant has its own fleet of transport and can and will put in place the necessary arrangements for lorry routeing which would overcome the highways objection.

We respectfully request that the Committee rejects the recommendation and allows the landowner to put the land back into agricultural production.

Maureen Darrie, GP Planning Ltd, iCon Centre, Daventry NN11 0QB 26th June 2019