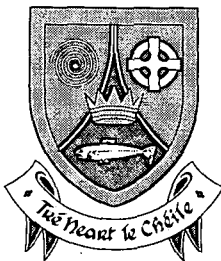


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Ann Kehoe
Environmental Licencing Programme,
Environmental Protection Agency,
Johnstown Castle Estate,
Co. Wexford



2nd October 2015

Subject: Kiernan Sand & Gravel: W0262-01

I refer to your correspondence of 10th October 2014 and specifically the Notification under Section 42(1)(e)(i) of the Waste Management Act 1996 as amended, which pertains to an application for a licence by Kiernan Sand & Gravel of Foxtown, Summerhill, Co.Meath. Meath County Council notes the Environmental Impact Statement submitted by the applicant and further that the Environmental Protection Agency is the Authority in this instance that will undertake the Environmental Impact Assessment.

The comments of Meath County Council in respect of the EIS are contained hereunder although in this first instance it is deemed appropriate to provide a planning history of the site by way of context:

Planning History:

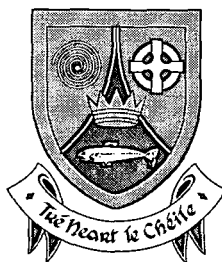
QY48: The quarry on site did register under Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. It is noted from inspection of same that it was indicated that quarrying commenced on site in the early 1950s and that the annual extraction rate was 30,000-60,000 tonnes per year. It was estimated that 50 truck movements occurred per week. Conditions were imposed on the operation of the quarry under the S261 process and these were subsequently modified by An Bord Pleanála.

TA/60086: Permission was refused for a recovery and recycling of construction and demolition waste within an existing sand and gravel pit. The development was to consist of recovery and recycling of inert construction and demolition waste. Pre-sorted materials were to be transported to the application site for recycling. Thereafter it was to be stockpiled prior to being crushed, processed and stockpiled once more, prior to sale and dispatch to markets. A wheel wash, portacabin office and chemical toilet (portaloo) was also to be provided

Under P/93/813 permission was granted by MCC and ABP on site for the retention of use of a gravel washing plant and readymix concrete plant.

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UD/10/358: Enforcement File closed. Matters related to access to the site.

QY48: Under the Section 261A process the Planning Authority determined that No Further Action was required pursuant to Section 261A of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011 in respect of the quarry.

Comments on EIS:

Alternatives Considered

The Planning Authority would concur with the applicant that the examination of alternative sites is not particularly meritorious in this particular case. It is the existence of this requirement for reinstatement using inert materials, and the environmental gain derived therefrom, that constitutes the principal qualification of the application site.

Human Beings

There are sixteen established individual residences within a 500m radius of the site. It is expected that the potential negative impacts on human beings and amenity of the area arising from the WRF, above those already arising from the quarry, relate mainly to nuisance from noise, dust and traffic. The impact of the restoration works to date has had a positive impact on the environment in returning these lands to beneficial use.

Flora & Fauna

The site is a former esker which runs parallel to a minor road in Foxtown. Parts of the former esker survive along the roadside and are either dry, calcareous grassland or scrubby oak, ash, hazel woodland. The overall site is relatively barren with a lot of exposed material, both brought in and original. Its flora and fauna are also reduced though there are traces of most dry communities that develop in such sites. There are no species of interest in the fauna. The quarry site at Foxtown, which includes the application site, is not included in any area with an ecological designation (NHA, cSAC or SPA). In this case the River Boyne and River Blackwater (Sac Code 2299), a river and valley system of European interest, is the only one within 15km of the proposed project.

Soils & Geology

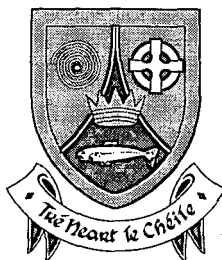
The quarry resource has been extensively worked, and the quarry void is in the process of being backfilled with imported soil and stone, capped with topsoil, as per the phased restoration scheme. Most of the original topsoil has already been utilised together with imported topsoil to restore previous sections of the site. The Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal will have no direct impact on the local or regional geology.

Water

The GSI Vulnerability Map indicates that groundwater in the bedrock aquifer beneath the entire application site has been assigned a vulnerability rating of High (H). The proposed continuation of the WRF operations will result in the restoration of the quarry lands to a topographic ridge similar to the pre-existing esker. Backfilling with inert C&D waste, mostly soil and stone, will result in the build-up of relatively impermeable material within the quarry void. The backfill will reinstate protection for the bedrock aquifer, and reduce the actual groundwater vulnerability to possible contamination by limiting infiltration to lower levels.

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Climate

The quarry development, including a co-located WRF handling only inert soil and stone, is not of sufficient scale to have any direct or indirect impacts on the regional or local climatic conditions.

Air Quality

A number of measures have been adopted to minimise dust emissions to the atmosphere from general site activity, internal haulage, processing and tipping operations. The Planning Authority has no objection to the proposal from an air quality perspective subject to the appropriate implementation of the mitigation measures as outlined in the EIS.

Noise

Noise monitoring to date has shown that site activity at the existing facility are within accepted thresholds for this type of development. The Planning Authority notes the mitigation measures intended and believes the implementation of same would be beneficial. In any instance it is accepted that the control of noise falls within the remit of the EPA.

Landscape

The landscape of the Foxtown area is identified as ICA 6: Central Lowlands, which consists flat-lying lowlands, predominantly as rolling pastureland, with thick wooded hedgerows, some conifer plantations, and shelterbelts of ash and larch, separating medium to large fields. Deep roadside drainage ditches and banked hedgerows are common, and create enclosed rural road corridors with limited views. . The land use in the area is classed as dominantly pasture with subordinate non-irrigated arable land. Views of the site are largely screened by the intervening bank and mature hedgerow. The partially open views of the quarry at the two site entrances along the unnamed local road are largely passing views. There are no protected views and prospects near the site, or oriented toward the area of the site. The Planning Authority considers that the proposal will have a slight positive impact on the landscape by virtue of its reinstatement of previously disturbed quarrying lands.

Cultural Heritage

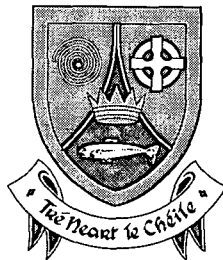
There are no Recorded Monuments, Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, NIAH structures or NIAH historic gardens or designed landscapes within the proposed development area. As a result there will be no direct or indirect construction impact on the archaeological, architectural or cultural heritage resource.

Traffic

The volume of traffic generated by the existing Quarry and WRF will comfortably be absorbed by the local roads. The most significant effect on traffic will be at the R154/Kiltale-Quarry Road junction. This junction is located within a 50 kph speed zone. It is predicted that the existing Quarry and WRF traffic will be 90% northeastwards towards the M3 and 10% towards Trim. It is considered that given the scale of the proposed development and the nature and condition of the road serving the site, and the proposed mitigation measures that the development will not lead to a greater risk to public safety by reason of traffic hazard.

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Conclusion:

The Planning Authority respectfully requests that the comments contained herein be taken into consideration in the assessment of the application.

Yours sincerely,

David Caffrey
Executive Planner

Wendy Bagnall
Senior Executive Planner

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