

Planning Policy Comments

Application No: 69956

Location: Pilsworth Quarry, Pilsworth Road, Bury, BL9 8QZ

Proposal: Erection and operation of a Material Recycling Facility and associated works

This application is for the development of the Material Recycling Facility at Pilsworth Landfill.

The application site falls within the Green Belt (UDP Policy OL1) and Special Landscape Area (UDP Policy EN9/1). The site also falls within an Area of Search for Minerals (UDP Policy MW1/1). However, the site has already been quarried and is being used for landfill.

Green Belt

National Planning Policy encourages recycling and the re-use of waste to reduce reliance on land filling and requires waste to be managed at the highest level possible within the waste hierarchy.

In relation to proposals that affect the Green Belt, Paragraph 147 of the NPPF makes it clear that inappropriate development is harmful to the green belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances.

Paragraph 149 specifies that Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate development in the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The NPPF states that "When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the green belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the green belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Although the application involves inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it includes a satisfactory case for 'very special' circumstances to justify the development. The proposals seek to undertake an activity which is directly linked to the existing landfill and can therefore be considered to be ancillary to the current activities on site. The proposed development is also temporary in nature and does not prevent the restoration of the site in the future. The building and machinery will be removed prior to the cessation of landfilling.

Furthermore, planning permission for a virtually identical scheme has previously been approved (Application 47617).

Given the above, in the context of national planning policy, the proposed development will not impact on the permanence of the Green Belt and 'very special' circumstances exist to justify the development, in principle therefore, the proposal is not considered to be an inappropriate use in the Greenbelt.

Special Landscape Area

UDP policy EN9/1 states that in those areas identified on the Proposals Map as Special Landscape Areas, any development which is permitted will be strictly controlled and

required to be sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of its visual impact. High standards of design, siting and landscaping will be expected. Unduly obtrusive development will not be permitted in such areas. Any development on the site should be subject to strict control to protect or enhance the character of these areas.

UDP policy EN1/1 regarding Visual Amenity also states that development will not be permitted where proposals would have a detrimental effect on the visual amenity both within, or viewed from, areas of environmental interest such as the Green Belt, Special Landscape Areas or the river valleys. The site is designated as all three of these areas.

The Landscape and Visual Assessment submitted with the application concludes that the visual effects of the proposals are minimal and that there are no adverse significant effects.

As the proposal is temporary in nature and the buildings and machinery would be removed following cessation of the landfill any impact on the Special Landscape Area is reversible and the character of the landscape will be improved once restoration of the site has taken place. It is therefore considered that the proposal is not in conflict with UDP Policy EN9/1.

Places for Everyone (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (PfE) is a joint plan covering nine of the ten Greater Manchester districts, including Bury, and is intended to provide the overarching framework to strategically manage growth across the boroughs. PfE was published in August 2021 and subsequently submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2022. Inspectors have been appointed to carry out an independent examination of the Plan with the hearing sessions commencing in November 2022 and were concluding in July 2023. The examination of the plan is on-going.

Whilst PfE cannot be given full weight until it is adopted, its advanced stage of preparation means that it is now considered reasonable that the Plan (as proposed to be modified) should be given weight in the decision-making process in line with paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Consequently, the principle of this application has been considered against the Plan (as proposed to be modified). However, the principle of this proposal does not give rise to any conflict with PfE policies.

Officer: NB

Date: 04th December 2023