

## Item C2

### **Request for prior approval to import silica (industrial) sand pursuant to condition 21 of planning permission TM/87/346 at Ightham Works & Quarry, Sevenoaks Road, Ightham, Kent TN15 9HZ - TM/87/346/R21 (KCC/TM/0414/2018)**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 10 October 2018

Application by H + H UK Ltd requesting prior approval to import silica (industrial) sand pursuant to condition 21 of planning permission TM/87/346 at Ightham Works & Quarry, Sevenoaks Road, Ightham, Kent TN15 9HZ - TM/87/346/R21 (KCC/TM/0414/2018)

Recommendation: Prior Approval BE GRANTED

Local Member: Mr Harry Rayner

Classification: Unrestricted

#### **Site and surroundings**

1. Ightham Works is located to the east of Borough Green village within the parishes of Ightham and Borough Green. The site lies to the north of the A25 and the Maidstone East to London railway line. A roundabout on the A25 provides direct access (crossing under the railway line) in to the factory site. The A227 runs south from this roundabout to Ightham and Tonbridge. The M26 motorway runs west to east to the north of the site beyond the restored Ightham Sandpits, and beyond this is the North Downs escarpment. The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
2. The works site is comprised of the large blockworks production building (including offices) and adjacent plant, including autoclaves, silos, workshops etc., the yard area, used for the storage and loading of the finished blocks and a large office/admin building with associated car parking.
3. To the east of this area (and outside of the AONB) is the small existing (and only remaining) sand quarry.
4. The nearest residential properties (one a nursing home) lie to the north east of the blockworks, at a higher level, given the factory itself was developed on the site of a former mineral working. Cricketts Farm to the north, originally a farmstead has been developed for light industrial units although the farmhouse (grade II listed) itself remains in residential use. To the south east of the factory site and between the railway line embankment and the A25 are further residential properties.
5. Further to the west of the access road lies Ightham Court (grade II\* listed) along with its grade II registered gardens, and a number of houses along Fen Pond Road.

#### **Background**

6. The site has a long history of sand workings and brick and block manufacturing, with sand extraction in the adjoining quarry being granted in 1951. This small silica sand quarry has limited reserves left. A further series of planning permissions for sand

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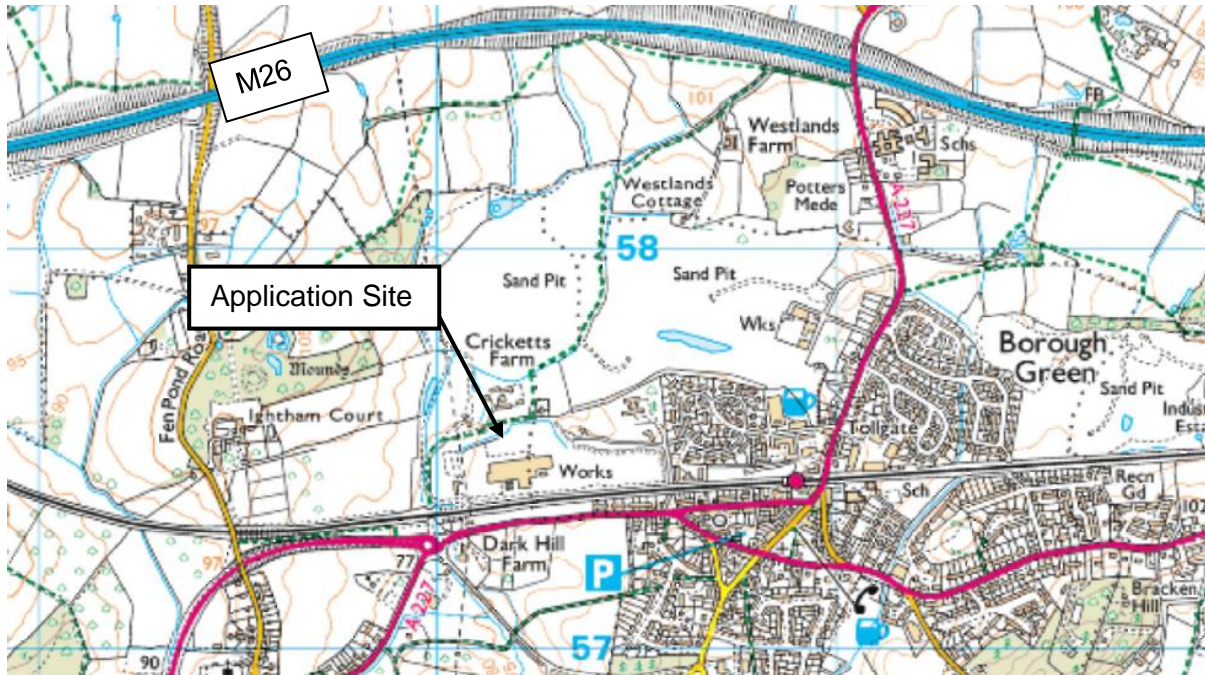
reserves to the north of the factory site were granted in the mid to late 1980's and have been worked and now restored. The existing blockworks was permitted in outline in 1988 (TM/87/346) with the reserved matters being approved two years later (TM/88/1186). The justification given at the time for locating the blockworks at the site included utilising on-site sand supplies to produce the blocks and explains why the County Council as Mineral Planning Authority (MPA) dealt with the applications.

7. Sand extraction under those original planning permissions were not tied to any specific end user and exports to the general market took place. This continued after the factory was granted permission. The production of the blocks has always required a mix of raw materials in the manufacturing process and has always included an element of imported Pulverised Fuel Ash (PFA) as well as quantities of sand. An upper limit on HGV movements was arrived at taking account of existing traffic movements at the time and those likely to be generated by the new blockworks. A limit of 340 movements per day and a restriction on the import of any sand was agreed (conditions 13 and 21 of TM/87/346 respectively).
8. In January 1995 a request (pursuant to condition 21) to import sand was submitted. It was stated that a quantity of fine sand as a direct replacement for the same quantity of PFA, brought to site by HGV from Kingsnorth Power Station (Isle of Grain), was needed. The imported sands were considered particularly fine and clean and helped ensure that a consistent quality product was produced. There would be no increase in HGV movements as the replacement of PFA with sand would be on a like for like basis in terms the number of lorries required and would still be within the cap of 340 movements set by condition 13. Temporary consent was granted until 31 December 1996. Two further extensions to the temporary import of sand were granted in May 1997 (until 31 December 1998) and November 2000 (until 31 December 2001).
9. This submission seeks prior approval again (under condition 21) to import sand to the site.

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General Location Plan



Aerial view of location



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Application Boundary

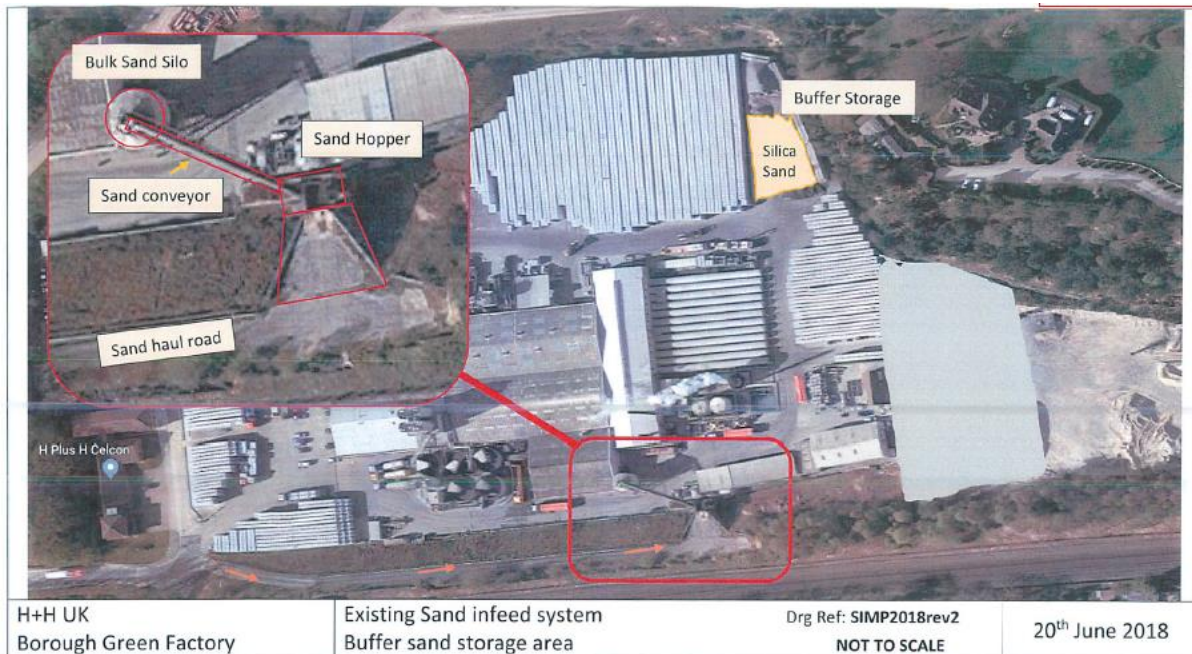


Aerial view of site



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**Site Layout**



**Proposal**

10. This submission seeks prior approval to import silica (industrial) sand pursuant to condition 21 of planning permission TM/87/346.
11. Condition 21 of the factory permission reads:
 

*No sand shall be imported for use in the industrial buildings hereby permitted without the prior approval of the County Planning Authority;*

*Reason: To avoid development not directly related with the permitted excavations on and adjoining the site.*
12. It is proposed to import up to 50,000 tonnes of sand in the first year, increasing over the following 3 years up to 200,000 tonnes per annum, which would be the constant raw material run rate thereafter. The imported sand would be brought to site by HGV, which then travel up the sand haul road and tip directly into the sand hopper. The sand is then transferred by conveyor into the 350-tonne bulk sand storage silo. These sand import facilities already exist on site (see above) and there is no requirement for any additional sand handling infrastructure.
13. In addition, and to ensure continued production the applicant proposes an emergency buffer storage of sand to the north-east of the factory in the corner of the yard covering an area of approximately 300 square metres.

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**Planning Policy**

14. **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2018)** sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Framework does not vary the status of the development plan (included below), which remains the starting point for decision making.
15. The NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which includes economic, social and environmental dimensions that should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. In terms of delivering sustainable development in relation to this development proposal, Chapter 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy, including supporting a prosperous rural economy), 9 (Promoting sustainable transport), 13 (Protecting Green Belt land), 14 (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change), 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment), 17 (Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals) are of particular relevance.
16. The NPPF seeks local planning authorities to look for solutions rather than problems and to approve sustainable development that accords with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or out-of-date, the Framework seeks that permission be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against NPPF policies.
17. **National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) (March 2014 (as updated))** supports the NPPF including guidance on planning for air quality, climate change, flood risk and coastal change, light pollution, natural environment, noise, transport and minerals (amongst other matters). The minerals section of NPPG recognises the essential contribution minerals make to the country's prosperity and quality of life.
18. **Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (July 2016)** – As set out in the NPPF the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF requires that policies in local plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The KMWLP is therefore founded on this principle. Whilst this proposal is not specifically related to the supply of minerals Policy CSM1 gives support where, when considering mineral development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out and supported by National Policy.
19. Policy DM1 seeks proposals to achieve sustainable design, whilst Policies DM4 (Green Belt), DM11 (health and amenity), and DM13 (Transportation of Minerals and Waste) may also be relevant.
20. **Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council Core Strategy September 2007-** Policies CP1 (Sustainable Development), CP3 (Green Belt) , CP7 (AONB) apply and specifically Policy CP21 safeguards the works site for employment use.

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21. **Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council Development Land Allocations DPD April 2008** – Policy E2 safeguards the site for continued employment use and Policy M1 recognises it as a Major Development Site in the Green Belt where infilling or redevelopment may be appropriate subject to further potential impact considerations.
22. **Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council Managing Development and the Environment DPD April 2010** – seeks to manage development so that environmental quality is maintained whilst preserving a sense of place and sets policy direction to deliver these aims as well as achieving the best balance between the built and natural environment.

**Consultations**

23. **Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council** – No objection.

**Ightham Parish Council** – Concerned, with particular regard to:

- The agents letter states that an application will be forthcoming for a dedicated sand quarry. I believe that this application should assume that this quarry is not viable and that this statement is removed from the application letter as it presumes a successful future application
- There is little evidence that PFA supply is declining and it is a more environmentally friendly substance than Silica Sand. I would ask that KCC request H&H to supply evidence of the decline of in supply of PFA (old coal fired stations have large stock piles of PFA)
- H&H are suggesting stockpiling a large quantity of silica sand in the open. Silica sand is believed to be a cause of cancer. Any storage or movement of silica sand (such as conveyor belts) should be covered.
- The application suggests that importation of the silica sand will be 'subject to the existing environmental controls.' The existing controls cover PFA which is an inert substance whereas silica sand is carcinogenic and should be covered by different and more stringent controls.
- Sand is denser than PFA and so this is an opportunity to reduce the lorry movements using the site access below 340 lorries whilst maintain the factory output.

**Borough Green Parish Council** – ask for the following comments to be taken into account when determining the application:

We are aware that H+H have made significant investment recently to allow the percentage of sand used to be increased and are grateful that this will protect employment. We do not believe the PFA situation is as dire as H+H would have us believe, and that there are more than ample supplies into the far future. H+H also lose some of their Green Justification by switching from PFA which otherwise use valuable landfill space and intend to use a virgin raw material with a limited supply. Clearly the reason for the shift has less to do with the availability of PFA and more towards enabling H+H to access their own local sand supply, whatever the serious constraints against the use of the land. Whilst we support the spirit of the application

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as part of this shift to sand, we are extremely concerned about the several mentions about their “new dedicated silica sand quarry” coming on line. Whilst this application is not about Ightham Court meadow, it is important that we register our continuing objections to the possibility of this scheme, with its impact on MGB, AONB and the setting of the two listed buildings, Ightham Court and Cricketts Farm. We also share concerns about the extra external handling of Silica Sand and the possibility of increased release of harmful particulate materials and demand some form of industrial particulate monitoring with reporting to T&MBC EHO as a condition of any approval. There should also be an enforcing of the sheeting of bulk tippers in and out of the site.

**Wrotham Parish Council** – Support H+H being able to use a proportion of sand as well as a majority of stockpiled PFA in their Ightham Works. We have been informed that a percentage of silica sand mixed with stockpiled PFA is advantageous in producing consistent quality autoclaved lightweight concrete blocks. However, we wish to consider the availability of PFA following the letter from Celcon’s agent which is full of references to the imminent demise of the PFA with the loss of 120 jobs. While it is true that the supply of fresh PFA in dry form is declining, there is evidence from the UK Quality Ash Association that their estimates are that there could be in excess of 50 million tonnes of stockpiled PFA around the country. This is a massive resource for the future.

Some block manufacturing uses dry PFA as it’s cheaper to transport but now having problems as the fresh (dry) PFA runs out. H+H have traditionally used wet PFA usually with a proportion of silica sand. This was confirmed by UK marketing manager in 2016 as follows:

*“The reduction in fresh PFA has caused challenges across the entire concrete industry. In Europe, H+H produces its aircrete using sand as the main constituent and while this is an option for us here in the UK if required, we will continue to use PFA in the short term. Rather than seeking an alternative material, which could undermine the performance and environmental benefits enjoyed by aircrete in its current form, we have been developing our manufacturing processes to enable the use of stockpiled PFA. There is a considerable quantity of such material, built up over the previous century when the UK relied primarily on coal fired power generation, easily sufficient to supply of needs for many years to come. Stockpiled PFA does not have the same performance characteristics as fresh material which has meant certain changes to our production process have been required to utilise it, to enable us to provide the same high-quality end product. With the shortage issue now resolved, and a continued strong demand, it is business as usual for H+H and its great to see that our production volumes have significantly increased during 2016.” (Jenny Smith-Andrews - H+H)*

It is interesting to converse with Nigel Cooke who is a Director of the UK Quality Ash Association, his recent email includes the following comments:

*“I am the Director for the UKQAA and one of my main aims is to ensure that existing stockpiles of landfilled fly ash located at coal fires power stations around the country (it has been estimated that there could be in excess of 50 million tonnes of these landfilled stockpiles) are recognised as a ‘National Asset’ that should be adopted within the Minerals Plan.” (Nigel Cooke UKQAA 10/07/18)*



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We are informed there are significant stockpiles of PFA available in Kent. WPC is concerned that the agent's letter indicates a ramping up of Silica Sand use by the factory when this cannot be justified by the available stockpiles of PFA locally. WPC is of the opinion that the MPA should be concerned about the sustainable use of raw materials and a historic waste by-product of energy generation as it affects the reserves of a national important mineral.

In conclusion WPC supports H+H being able to use a proportion of silica sand because it is advantageous to mix with stockpiled PFA that is available in very significant quantities around the country next to coal fired power stations. Clearly anything that diminishes the need to dig fresh sand and utilise by-product of historic energy production should be supported. It is understandable that the applicant seeks to imply that stockpiled PFA is unusable in a period when its advisers are working on an application to begin a new sand quarry in the AONB, following on from requesting a scoping opinion to that effect from the MPA. The MPA should, in WPC's view, take special advice regarding the tonnages of silica sand that H+H are seeking to import as a percentage of stockpiled PFA imports, as it is far more sustainable from an environmental view point to use the stockpiled PFA as the significant component, whilst preserving a nationally important mineral. Storage and handling of silica sand should comply with relevant national safety guidance.

**Environment Agency (Kent Area)** – No objection

**Kent County Council Highways and Transportation** – Whilst there are no detailed HGV figures associated with this application it is accepted that there is a condition on the extant permission which limits the traffic movements at the site. As traffic movements will not change because of these proposals I do not wish to raise an objection on behalf of the local highway authority.

**Kent County Council Noise Consultant (Amey)** – In the context of the existing and relatively extensive operational activities on site, and given the existing site control measures as conditioned, it is considered unlikely that the replacement of the importation of PFA by silica sand will generate any significant additional noise which would be of cause for concern to the potentially noise sensitive receptors to the south-east and east of the facility. Consequently we are satisfied that the proposals will create no significant adverse noise impact and would offer no objection to the proposals.

**Kent County Council Air Quality & Odour Consultant (Amey)** – The change in raw material being imported will not increase the maximum number of HGV's accessing the site beyond the original planning application limit of 340 HGV movements per day. The Borough Green Air Quality Management Area was declared in 2013. As such, it is correct to assume that the traffic data used to carry out the assessment included existing HGV movements to/from the facility and that no further detailed assessment would be required at this time. A brief review of traffic data from the Department of Transport traffic statistics site supports this assumption. Should the site operator exceed the agreed 340 HGV movements it may be necessary to complete a detailed assessment of the impact of additional HGV movements on local air quality.

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Sand would be transported along the internal sand haulage road to a sand hopper where it will immediately be tipped onto a feed conveyor and into the bulk sand silo. It is unclear whether the conveyor is enclosed. If the conveyor is open, it is recommended that it be enclosed, otherwise we are satisfied with how the sand is transported around the site. The buffer storage area is enclosed on three sides, therefore we are satisfied that the storage of sand will not cause significant dust emissions and subject to application of best practice for the management of dust emissions.

**Local Member**

24. The local County Member for Malling West, Mr Harry Rayner was notified of the application on 5 July 2018. He comments that there appear to be some inaccuracies in the documentation and information at odds with public comments from the management of the applicant company regarding the supply of raw materials. He also advises that the plans included with the application have identified land within their ownership which is actually part of a garden belonging to a local resident. *(N.B. This error has been brought to the attention of the Applicant who has confirmed with a revised boundary drawing showing the correct extent of their land ownership).*

**Publicity**

25. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice and an advertisement in a local newspaper.

**Representations**

26. In response to the publicity, one objector has made the following points:
- The supply of PFA is not declining there are large stockpiles available (and used by other block producers).
  - The UK Quality Ash Association states there are significant amounts of surplus fly ash produced year on year, with around 50 million tonnes available in landfills.
  - PFA is a more environmentally friendly substance than silica sand.
  - The proposed stockpile is not covered, it amounts to a month's supply and will probably be used as the primary 'dumping ground' for all sand arriving by road and all the dust that entails. How can you control this air born risk given silica sand is believed to be a cause of cancer?
  - Additional environmental controls are required for silica sand. The existing controls cover PFA which is an inert substance whereas silica sand is carcinogenic and should be covered by different and more stringent controls.
  - Silica sand is seen as a hazardous material by the Health and Safety Executive (reference to HSE guidance is given) and given the proximity of the site to Borough Green and Ightham H+H should adhere to standards.
  - Main HSE recommendations should be required in any approvals:
    - use of segregation and water suppression to control the airborne contaminants
    - use equipment which is designed to resist the abrasive effects of silica

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- containing materials,
  - segregate the operator in a ventilated control cab,
  - consult the manufacturer or a qualified ventilation engineer to ensure that the design will cope with anticipated dust levels.
- H+H should cover a number of health and safety points in relation to the cab of the vehicle used to move the sand around the following points.
- Specifically, H+H should follow these practises, in dry weather, fit rippers with a mist boom mounted on the ripper shank mechanism, keep roadways damp to help dust suppression and wash down metal roadways regularly and limit vehicle speed.

**Discussion**

27. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraphs 14-22 above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, the proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. The condition is worded to allow the Applicant to seek prior approval for use of imported sand in to the site and so the matters for consideration are limited to those relating to the change in some of the HGV's bringing in sand instead of PFA, all other conditions on the planning permission remain in place.
28. As set out in the background section of my report the applicant has been operating the block manufacturing facility in the Green Belt and AONB, since the early 1990s. The principle of the factory, its production operations and export of its finished product to market in this sensitive location is well established and will not change as a result of this proposal.

**Raw Materials Supply**

29. The planning permission granted for the factory did not place any restriction on the relative quantities of raw materials as this is a commercial decision for the company to make depending upon supply and production requirements. The infrastructure on site can take both sand and PFA and the production process had always relied upon a mix of raw materials to make and secure a consistent quality product. Importation of sand from elsewhere has been considered acceptable in the past on the basis that there would be no increase in HGV movements and activities would remain within the cap of 340 movements. To date the applicant has been able to access the required quantities of suitable PFA for use in the factory but now needs to increase the mix of sand. It is stated that initially it is intended to import up to 50,000 tonnes of silica sand in the first year, increasing over the following years up to 200,000 tonnes per annum. This is a direct replacement for PFA by volume and thus as in the past, the same number of vehicles would bring the sand to site so there is no change in HGV movements.

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30. The local community has queried whether there is a scarcity of supply of PFA. Whilst the decision on choice of raw material is a commercial matter for the Applicant, some additional information has been provided.
31. I understand that fresh PFA (produced by fresh burning of coal) is now scarce and will not be available at all within a few years. It is acknowledged that there are stockpiles of landfilled (buried) PFA however its use resulted in poor pass rates of finished product (as low as around 40 % last year) and led to an increase in waste blocks. The variability in quality of product has been managed since then by utilising sand reserves from their own sand quarry to the east of the factory which produces a consistent grade of sand for the production process. However, the limited remaining reserves are dwindling rapidly, and it is now necessary for the Applicant to bring in sand from elsewhere. It is stated that the ultimate aim is to get a mix of material that aids first time pass rates and minimise waste and cost.
32. The Applicant comments specifically as follows:

*“The Company have used a mix of raw materials to produce aircrete products at Ightham over the many years of its existence. That mix has comprised variable proportions of silica sand and PFA depending on the economics of the time and the quality of raw material aggregates available. At times PFA has been in the greatest proportion at others silica sand has been the primary raw material. At this time there is considerable volatility in raw material supply given the declining availability of suitable PFA as a raw material for Ightham.*

*In January 2018 the Government set out its strategy to “Implementing the end of unabated coal by 2025”. The level of coal generation in the electricity system has continued to decline and for the first time ever this year the national electricity output was provided without any coal generation. There are no coal fired electricity stations in Kent and only 7 remain in the country. When these close there will be no supply of ‘fresh’ PFA. There has been no supply of fresh PFA in Kent for a number of years and H+H have been forced to source it from further afield but recently such supplies have been ended and are no longer available to Ightham. The less efficient ‘buried’ PFA has been substituted but the vagaries of the material are such that consistent firing cannot be achieved in the factory without the addition of silica sand. The poorer the PFA, the greater the need for silica sand in the mix.*

*Some 18 months ago the raw material mix was in the order of 80% fresh PFA with 20% silica sand. Now the mix proportion is much more variable given the unknown nature of buried PFA that the Company can obtain. Additional silica sand is needed as a consequence of the upgrade of the Ightham factory which has increased production capacity.*

*Mention has been made of press releases by H+H some 18 months ago as to the ongoing availability of PFA which presented no problems as to raw material sourcing. Unfortunately, that information is now dated with respect to Ightham given the volatility of the raw material market, particularly as two leading national suppliers of PFA have ceased to operate. It remains that whilst there may be tonnages of buried PFA they*

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*may neither be suitable or available to supply Ightham Works. For example, there are no supplies available in Kent and none are being marketed. It is noted that the Kent Minerals & Waste Local Plan does not address PFA sources at all and only refers to PFA in the context of Ightham Works future needs."*

33. The Applicant has also commented that some of their competitors do use PFA and some use just sand and in their view, it is no coincidence that the sand-based competitors are consistently producing. Moreover, the current high demand for the Borough Green product is heavily influenced by the shutdown of one of their key competitors who are citing PFA supply and quality as their issue.
34. Given the rapidly dwindling supplies of sand on site and the arguments put forward regarding availability of suitable PFA supplies there is a demonstrated need to import sand to the site as a raw material in the production of the aircrete blocks.

**Sand Storage**

35. Most of the sand to be imported to the site would arrive and be dispatched immediately to the sand storage silo, via the covered conveyor and would therefore be contained. However, it is proposed that a quantity of sand be stored in a buffer stockpile in the north east corner of the yard area as an emergency supply should imports be interrupted for any reason, such as poor weather. This area is surrounded by high bay walls and has in the recent past been used for the crushed reject blocks that were awaiting recycling back through the process. The very recent investment in the new plant and the increased usage of sand from the adjacent quarry has meant that there has been less of this waste and this area would be available to contain the emergency sand stockpile.
36. The original factory permission was subject to a scheme of dust attenuation measures which included daily sweeping of the yard, sheeting of vehicles and cleaning of the raw material delivery vehicles. This would apply equally to the movement of sand on the limited occasions when it was not possible for the sand to be supplied from the silos.
37. In addition, the Applicant comments that they operate within and fully comply with health and safety legislation as applied to the Ightham Factory. They comment that this is a different legislative regime to that of planning and normally the different regulatory roles are respected and accepted. The Applicant goes on to say that there is a difference with health and safety advice between silica sand in a factory environment and silica extraction at a quarry, and that it appears that some of the objections are based on the latter and not the former. It is stated that the HSE have issued advice for the use of silica sand in brick and tile making, pursuant to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) and the advice sets out good practice for controlling exposure to silica. H+H state that they fully comply with the COSHH regulations and operate best practice at the works.
38. In summary, the delivery of sand would continue to utilise the existing sand importation/storage infrastructure and the buffer stockpile would be managed utilising existing dust management and best practice measures. The Borough Council has no

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objection to the proposals and furthermore there are additional requirements under health and safety legislation regarding dust control. I am advised on that basis this proposal will not cause significant dust emissions.

**Economy**

39. It is recognised that the Ightham Aircrete factory is a production unit of national importance, one of only a limited number in the country positioned to supply the national housing market. Delivery of new homes is a key aim of central Government economic and social policy and the new National Planning Policy Framework published in July this year has sought to remove any unnecessary barriers to housebuilding. An inability to source the necessary raw materials could prejudice production at the works and the contribution it makes to supplying the house building market. Furthermore, the factory employs 120 people locally and the contribution it makes to the local employment sector should also be given appropriate weight.

**Other Issues**

40. Some comment has been made regarding the future supply of silica sand from a site adjacent to Ightham Court within the Applicant's ownership. A scoping opinion request was submitted by the Applicant in November 2016 and an opinion issued by KCC in January 2017 as to the suggested content of any future Environmental Statement. However, to date there is no planning application for sand extraction on this area of land and should one be forthcoming it would be dealt with entirely on its own merits at that time.

**Conclusion**

41. The factory has been operational in the Green Belt and AONB since the early 1990s. and in simple terms this application seeks prior approval to replace a quantity of PFA imports with silica sand imports. The HGVs would already be visiting the site and the sand would be fed into the sand storage silo and be used directly in the process, as is the PFA currently. There is no restriction on the routes that these vehicles must take. The emergency buffer stockpile of sand would be stored in the corner of the yard area and only be used in the event of an interruption to the supply of imported sand into the site. The environmental controls in place on the factory permission would remain in place as would all other conditions covering operations on site. Furthermore, the Company are required to operate within health and safety regulatory legislation.
42. The continued production of aircrete blocks is important to the Kent and wider UK economy both in terms of local employment but also in supplying the house building market. With the paucity of supply of appropriate PFA the Applicant has a need to import silica sand as a direct replacement for quantities of PFA. I am advised there is a pressing need to be able to import sand as on-site supplies are being worked out rapidly and are therefore in very short supply going forward. Without some security of supply of appropriate raw material, the ability to produce blocks to meet market demand would be in jeopardy, and on this basis the need to import silica sand should be weighed favourably.

**Request for prior approval to import silica (industrial) sand pursuant to condition 21 of planning permission TM/87/346 at Ightham Works & Quarry, Sevenoaks Road, Ightham, Kent TN15 9HZ - TM/87/346/R21 (KCC/TM/0414/2018)**

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43. As such, I am satisfied the proposal complies in all relevant aspects with the NPPF to which the presumption in favour of sustainable development therefore applies. The policies of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Core Strategy also presume in favour of sustainable development. Furthermore, the import of sand would facilitate continued production of blocks on a site that is safeguarded for employment use in the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Development Land Allocations DPD 2008.
44. I recommend that prior approval should be granted for this proposal.

**Recommendation**

45. I RECOMMEND that PRIOR APPROVAL BE GRANTED.

Case Officer: Mrs Andrea Hopkins
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Tel. no: 03000 413394
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Background Documents: see section heading
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