

Appendix 1 to Item C2

Request for approval of details pursuant to conditions 4, 7, 8, 12, 17 and 27 of planning permission TM/88/1002 at Blaise Farm Quarry, Blaise Quarry Road, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4PN – TM/88/1002/RVARA (KCC/TM/0121/2020)

Appendix 1:

- **Appendix 1:** Report and minutes of the KCC Regulation Committee Member Panel on 7 January 2004.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

REGULATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Regulation Committee Member Panel held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on 7 January 2004.

PRESENT: Mr J Beynon (Chairman), Mr P J Morgan, Mrs P M Stevens and Mr W R Whelan.

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs V J Dagger

OFFICERS: The Principal Planning Officer, Mr J Wooldridge, and the Committee Officer, Mr A Tait.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Consideration of complaints relating to blasting at Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham (Hanson Aggregates)
(Item 3 – Report by County Environmental Officer)

- (1) Members of the public, including the Clerk to Offham Parish Council, were permitted to ask questions in relation to the Head of Planning Application Units' report.
- (2) The Principal Planning Officer tabled the Blast Monitoring Scheme that was referred to in paragraph 10 of the report as being included at Appendix 1, and the letter of 27 November 2003 from Offham Parish Council referred to in paragraph 16 of the report.
- (3) Mr P J Morgan moved, seconded by Mrs P M Stevens that the word "will" in paragraph 29 (3)(a) of the report be amended to "may".

Carried Unanimously

(4) RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the following be agreed, and that

(a) the Head of Planning Applications Unit inform Offham Parish Council that:

- (i) KCC is unable to give it the assurances or guarantees that it is seeking about potential damage to properties;
- (ii) given that the terms of planning permission TM/88/1002 are being complied with and that there does not appear to be any published information to support the view that structural damage may be caused, KCC cannot require Hanson to cease blasting;
- (iii) it is for Hanson to decide whether it is prepared to continue blasting and face potential legal claims from residents or others if it is subsequently established that blasting has caused any damage;
- (iv) following a recommendation from the Environment Agency that the issue of potential effects of vibration on the integrity of the landfill liner at Offham Landfill Site be investigated, KCC has written to both Hanson

- and Waste Recycling Group (WRG) to ask that they investigate the matter;
- (v) issues relating to (iv) above, are for WRG to address as part of its ongoing responsibilities under its waste management licence. The waste management licence requires ongoing monitoring of landfill gas which would identify any changes to the current situation. The waste management licence also requires adequate controls to be maintained at the site in order to prevent gas migration, and that these could be altered if necessary; and
 - (vi) issues relating to blasting at Blaise Farm Quarry should be addressed through the Blaise Farm Quarry Liaison Committee;
- (b) the Head of Planning Applications Unit inform West Malling Parish Council, Kings Hill Parish Council and Mereworth Parish Council of his response to Offham Parish Council;
 - (c) the Head of Planning Applications take a report to the Regulation Committee setting out:-
 - (i) a formal procedure for dealing with complaints relating to blasting (to include those circumstances in which KCC may arrange independent monitoring and the extent of such monitoring); and
 - (ii) appropriate information on blasting-related issues that can be provided to the local community (possibly a leaflet explaining the issues);
 - (d) the Head of Planning Applications:
 - (i) encourage Hanson to fully investigate the ongoing complaint relating to the office building at Comp Lane, Offham;
 - (ii) encourage Hanson to investigate further complaints of alleged damage to property where these could reasonably be related to blasting;
 - (iii) encourage Hanson to be more proactive in communicating with the local community on blasting and related issues; and
 - (iv) require Hanson to review the current Blast Monitoring Scheme in consultation with KCC and submit a revised scheme for approval; and
 - (e) the Head of Planning Applications investigate the use of specific limits on air overpressure (e.g. an appropriate dB limit at specified locations) for possible inclusion as part of any future permissions or approvals for blasting.

Mr J Beynon, Mrs P M Stevens,
Mr W R Whelan, Mr P J Morgan
c/o Members' Desk
Sessions House
County Hall

Direct Dial/Ext: (01622) 694342
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Ask for: Andrew Tait
Your Ref:
Our Ref: PAC
Date: 23 December 2003

Dear Member

**REGULATION COMMITTEE MEMBER PANEL - CONSIDERATION OF
COMPLAINTS RELATING TO BLASTING AT BLAISE FARM QUARRY, OFFHAM**

I enclose the agenda papers for the Regulation Committee Member Panel to consider the above complaint.

The meeting will be held in the Darent Room, Sessions House at **10.30am on Wednesday, 7 January 2004.**

Yours sincerely,

Committee Officer

Cc: Mrs V J Dagger
Mrs T Dean
Mrs S V Hohler
Bill Murphy: Strategic Planning
Jim Wooldridge: Strategic Planning
Phil Scrivener



AGENDA

REGULATION COMMITTEE MEMBER PANEL

Wednesday, 7 January 2004 at 10.30 am
Darent Room, Sessions House,
County Hall, Maidstone

Ask for: Andrew Tait
Telephone: (01622) 694342
Ref: RCMP

(Refreshments will be available before the meeting)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1. Membership: Mr J Beynon (Chairman), Mr P J Morgan, Mrs P M Stevens and Mr W R Whelan
2. Substitutes
3. Consideration of complaints relating to blasting at Blaise Farm Quarry, Offham (Hanson Aggregates)
4. Other Items which the Chairman decides are Urgent

Stuart Ballard
Committee and Member Services Manager
Council Secretariat
Ext 4002
29 December 2003

(Please note that the background documents referred to in the accompanying papers may be inspected by arrangement with the officers responsible for preparing the reports)

REGULATION COMMITTEE MEMBER PANEL
10.30AM, WEDNESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2004

CONSIDERATION OF COMPLAINTS RELATING TO BLASTING AT BLAISE FARM QUARRY, OFFHAM (HANSON AGGREGATES)

Background: Planning Permissions at Blaise Farm Quarry

1. Blaise Farm Quarry (some 116 hectares) is located to the south of the village of Offham and to the west of the A228 and the residential area of Kings Hill. The quarry site is bounded to the east, south and west by woodland. The site is served by a purpose built surfaced access road onto the A228 West Malling roundabout located near Kings Hill. The site offices, weighbridge and parking facilities, etc, relating to the quarry, are located approximately 600 metres from the roundabout and are surrounded by woodland.
2. The main mineral extraction planning permission (TM/88/1002) was granted in January 1994 for the winning and working of some 57 million tonnes of ragstone from four phases over a 62 year period.¹ Of this total, 34 million tonnes would be marketable and the rest (40%) quarry waste. Anticipated production was estimated to be 550,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) generating an average of some 230 HGV movements per day. The permitted hours of operation were 0700 to 1800 on Mondays to Fridays and 0700 to 1300 on Saturdays. Upon completion of ragstone extraction within each phase restoration would be back to agriculture at a lower level using only 'in-situ' materials. The permission provides for blasting. Quarrying commenced in the north east part of the Quarry (phase 1) in 2000 and, with the exception of areas in the south east which are used for storage of topsoil, subsoil, hassock and overburden, and the soil blending area in the centre of the site (see paragraph 3 below), the rest of the site is still in agricultural use.
3. Planning permission TM/01/3039 was granted for the siting of a facility to manufacture and store soils utilising imported compost and in-situ overburden near the centre of the site on 17 January 2002. The duration of the permission is 25 years. This was varied by permission TM/02/1374 on 25 July 2002 which altered the controls on permitted HGV movements for all activities associated with the site as well as specifically for the soil blending operation.
4. The County Council approved a temporary variation to condition 15 of planning permission TM/88/1002 in June 2002 to enable quarrying operations to take place within the phase 1 working area between 0600 and 2100 hours Monday to Friday and 0600 and 1600 hours Saturdays until 31 December 2004 to facilitate a prospective CTRL contract. This contract was subsequently awarded to Hanson Aggregates and operations may currently take place during the extended hours.
5. A planning application (TM/03/1155) has been submitted by Waste Recycling Group plc (WRG) for a 50,000tpa composting facility at the site. It is anticipated that this will be reported to the Planning Applications Committee in early 2004.

¹ KCC had resolved to grant planning permission for the development at its Planning Sub-Committee on 19 September 1989. The delay in issuing the permission appears to have related to (at least in part) the need to satisfactorily conclude a legal agreement relating to (amongst other things) the revocation of an extraction permission at Offham Quarry, restrictions on Hanson's activities at Furfield Quarry and the proposed access at Blaise Farm Quarry.

6. The Blaise Farm Quarry Liaison Group meets on a regular basis (currently every 6 months) to discuss issues relating to operations at the site. These meetings are held at 1800 hours at Hanson's offices at Whiteladies (Offham) or at the site. The next liaison meeting is scheduled to occur on 22 January 2004.

Blasting

7. Blasting was permitted as part of the proposals and controls imposed under conditions 17 and 18 of permission TM/88/1002. Condition 17 required the prior approval of a Schedule of Blasting to minimise nuisance/danger from ground vibration, air overpressure, noise, fly rock and dust and for this to be implemented as approved. Condition 18 restricted hours of blasting to between 0900 and 0930 Monday to Saturday, 1200 and 1400 Monday to Friday and 1200 and 1300 on Saturday. It also restricted the maximum instantaneous charge (MIC) to 10kg and precluded secondary blasting.
8. Hanson submitted a scheme under the terms of condition 17 on 28 March 2002. This provided a scheme designed to meet the requirements of condition 17 (generally) and specifically to enable a test blast to be carried out. On 30 May 2002 KCC agreed to a test blast to enable the results to be monitored and evaluated in accordance with the scheme. This took place on 27 June 2002. A report containing the results of the test blast and predictions for vibration levels at various sensitive locations around the site, together with a blast monitoring scheme, were submitted on 16 August 2002. Information was provided by Hanson clarifying a number of issues on 19 September 2002. Consultation with TMBC, Offham PC, West Malling PC, Kings Hill PC, Mereworth PC, the Health & Safety Executive and Babbie (noise and vibration) took place at each stage of this process. The Airfield Residents Association and Tonbridge & Malling Housing Association were also notified.
9. KCC approved the Scheme of Blasting on 23 October 2002. This incorporated the above details. The approval sets out the following controls:-
 - (1) All blasting at Blaise Farm Quarry shall take place in accordance with the approved details.
 - (2) Ground vibration as a result of blasting operations within the Phase 1 Operations extraction area shall not exceed:-
 - (a) a peak particle velocity of 6mms^{-1} in 95% of all blasts when measured over any period of one month as measured at any vibration sensitive location;
 - (b) a peak particle velocity of 12mms^{-1} as measured at any vibration sensitive location; and
 - (c) a peak particle velocity of 15mms^{-1} at the remains of the Chapel of St. Blaise.
 - (3) No blasting shall take place outside the Phase 1 Operations extraction area without the prior approval in writing of the Mineral Planning Authority.
 - (4) In addition to notifying those official bodies identified in Appendix 1 "Shotfiring Rules and Procedures" of the Vibrock Report dated 28 March 2002, the Operator shall also notify the Mineral Planning Authority of its intention to blast.

and the following informatives:-

1. You are reminded that the approved scheme must be implemented as approved and that you should comply with the requirements of condition 18 at all times unless otherwise approved beforehand in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority.
 2. You are advised that for the purposes of condition 4 above, you should telephone the offices of the Planning Applications Unit on 01622 221062 (or such other contact as shall be provided by the Mineral Planning Authority) on the day of the proposed blasting to advise of the intended time of blasting.
10. In particular, it should be noted that KCC only approved the Scheme of Blasting for use within the Phase 1 Operations extraction area. At current extraction rates, it is anticipated that Phase 1 will be worked for approximately a further 2 years. A copy of the Blast Monitoring Scheme is included for information at Appendix 1. This sets out the methodology to be adopted, instrumentation, locations and frequency of monitoring and a complaints procedure. Amongst other things, the Blast Monitoring Scheme requires Hanson to undertake vibration monitoring on land in its ownership close to nearest adjacent sensitive locations (e.g. Kentfield House, Ashtree Farm, The Crest and 25 Mosquito Close) for every blast. It must predict vibration for all designated locations and monitor vibration at the residential monitoring location with the highest prediction. The Scheme also provides for the monitoring results to be provided to KCC within 10 days of each month end relating to a one month period. It also provides for 12 monthly reviews of the monitoring procedures if requested by either Hanson or KCC.
11. The first production blast took place on 18 November 2002. A total of 20 blasts have since occurred. With one exception, these have all been undertaken within the above limitations. The only exception was a further test blast on 11 June 2003 which used a MIC of greater than 10kg. This was agreed beforehand by KCC following the receipt of revised predictions from Hanson and consideration of these for KCC by Babbie (noise and vibration). Hanson have indicated that they will seek a formal variation of condition 18 of permission TM/88/1002 to increase the 10kg MIC on the basis that this would lead to more efficient blasting and less vibration. The results of the test blast have been provided by Hanson but no formal application has yet been submitted. The blasts are therefore still limited to the 10kg MIC.

Complaints

12. The first complaint relating to the environmental effects of blasting (vibration) at Blaise Farm Quarry was received on 15 May 2003 from Kent Scientific Services (KSS) at Kings Hill. The complaint was that the KSS building (approximately 700m from the Quarry) was experiencing ground shocks which were believed to be coincidental with blasting and that cracks had appeared inside the building. Vibration monitoring at KSS was undertaken by Hanson on 28 May 2003 which recorded vibration with a ppv of 0.381mm/s (vector sum). Monitoring undertaken by Babbie at the same time in a slightly different location recorded a ppv of 0.30mm/s (vertical). Both measurements were far less than the permitted vibration levels. Babbie prepared a report for KCC that concluded:

"A ppv of 0.30mm/s at 38Hz was recorded in the vertical plane. This figure is less than 1% of the cosmetic damage limit prescribed in BS 7385. This provides a strong indication that vibration from the blasting in Blaise Farm poses no significant threat to

the structure. Cracks in the breezeblock internal walls will not have been caused by vibration from blasting."

KSS has subsequently informed Planning Applications Unit that an examination of the building was carried out by Mouchel. Mouchel advised that the building is essentially safe although the cracks are unsightly and some remedial work should be undertaken. It was unable to say whether the cracks were due to or exacerbated by blasting and suggested that some of the cracks were probably due to the absence of the necessary expansion joints in some of the walls. KSS has advised that the insurance will not pay for the cracks as these were not due to subsidence. It is worth noting that the insurance would not pay for repairs to the KSS car park because it was due to subsidence.

13. The second complaint was received via Offham Parish Council (E-mail) on 11 July 2003. This largely related to the specific concerns of a resident of Comp Lane, Offham (approximately 900m from the Quarry), but also reflected general concerns from other residents. The resident reported that the office building (in his garden) had developed a number of large cracks through one plane in two walls and the ceiling. Vibration monitoring at the property was undertaken by Hanson on 31 July 2003 which recorded a ppv of 0.8mm/s. Further complaints resulted in Babbie monitoring a blast on 3 November 2003. This recorded a ppv of 0.67mm/s (vertical). These measurements were well within the permitted limits. Babbie prepared a report that concluded:

"A ppv of 0.67mm/s at 41Hz was recorded in the vertical plane. This figure is less than 2% of the cosmetic damage limit prescribed in BS 7385. This provides a strong indication that vibration from the blasting in Blaise Farm poses no significant threat to the structure. During the blast, vibration was clearly perceptible and exceeded the level of adverse comment, as defined in BS 6472. It is common in such circumstances for those experiencing this magnitude of vibration to associate it with cracks in buildings even though the damage criterion in BS 7385, is not exceeded. Cracks in the walls are a sign of differential movement in the building. Section 3 above indicates that there are many factors that can cause cracking."

In fact, Section 2 of the report contains this information. It quotes BS 7385 which states:

"...Heat, moisture, settlement, occupational loads, prestressing forces, material creep and chemical changes all cause movement in buildings. In an optimised design the build up of stress concentrations in the structural elements should be minimised. If the design does not permit adequate relaxation of these stress concentrations, then cracks will develop....Thus cracks normally exist to varying degrees in buildings not subject to vibration and are not, in themselves, an indication of vibration-induced damage...."

As a result of a request by KCC that the matter be investigated, Hanson are in the process of undertaking survey work on the property to try to establish whether or not the damage has been caused or exacerbated by blasting. The results of this are not yet available. Hanson had initially agreed to prepare a scheme to monitor the cracks, ppv and air overpressure to be installed for a period of time from early 2004 but subsequently rejected this option as the starting point for their investigations.

14. Complaints have also been received from another resident of Comp Lane, Offham (on 14 October 2003 and 26 November 2003) and a resident from St Leonards Street, West Malling, approximately 1.2km from the Quarry (14 October 2003). The Comp Lane resident alleged that a small portion of loose ragstone terrace retaining wall collapsed on 14 October 2003 and that a window was caused to shut (as its stay bar came off the latch) on 26 November 2003. The St Leonards Street resident alleged that the windows shook and the beams vibrated in his part timbered house on 14 October 2003. He also suggested that wider publicity be given about the blasting to local residents. Another Offham resident complained on 16 December 2003.
15. A small number of other residents have also made inquiries about vibration or similar effects associated with blasting at Blaise Farm Quarry but requested no further action on being advised of what the vibration may have related to, the limitations imposed on the planning permission and the monitoring information available (these were not recorded as complaints). These residents included those living between 1.1km (Peppingstraw Close, Offham) and 1.5km (Offham Road, West Malling) from the Quarry.
16. Offham Parish Council has written to KCC (27 November 2003) expressing its very serious concerns about the possible damage to property from the blasting vibrations emanating from Blaise Farm Quarry. As well as local residential properties, it is also concerned about the liner to the landfill at Offham Landfill Site and the potential consequences for the village should this be damaged. The Parish Council states that it has not received adequate assurances from KCC that the blasting vibrations are not causing damage. It has further requested written guarantees that the blasting has and will not structurally affect any property within the village or landfill. The Parish Council does not accept that because the monitored vibrations are well within Government Guidelines means that blasting is completely safe on the basis that the Guidelines may not adequately take local conditions into account. *It has also asked that KCC stop Hanson carrying out any further blasting until it has been fully reassured and written guarantees produced.* It is expecting to receive this at the next Blaise Farm Quarry Liaison Meeting on 22 January 2004.
17. KCC has informed the Environment Agency of Offham Parish Council's concerns about the potential effects of vibration on the integrity of the landfill liner at Offham Landfill Site. The Environment Agency has recommended that the matter be investigated further. KCC has written to both Hanson and WRG and asked that they investigate the matter.
18. The Environment Agency's initial view is that blasting at Blaise Farm Quarry is unlikely to have any impact on the landfill liner used in the Phase 3 area at Offham Landfill Site as its components are relatively flexible. It has, however, suggested that investigations be undertaken to assess potential effects on the older unlined landfill phases (Phases 1 and 2) to establish whether there may be any potential effects on these. It has advised that both the Phase 3 area and the Sheepfield area (which was backfilled with quarry waste) lie between the point of blasting and Phases 1 and 2 and would serve to dampen any vibration effects. The possibility that blasting could adversely affect the landfill site and exacerbate landfill gas migration is capable of being monitored as part of the ongoing waste management licence responsibilities. This requires the ongoing monitoring of landfill gas which would identify any changes to the current situation. It also requires adequate controls to be maintained to prevent gas migration. ~~If the monitoring were to indicate problems, Hanson may need to alter its blasting regime.~~

19. The issue of potential impact of blasting on landfill lining systems was explored several years ago at a Public Inquiry in South Wales. In that case the Inquiry was for a proposed new landfill site incorporating an artificial side wall liner in a deep limestone quarry. The landfill was proposed to follow on closely behind the active quarry face at which blasting was ongoing. The distance between the closest part of the lined landfill and the quarry was much less than that between Offham Landfill Site and Blaise Farm Quarry. It is understood that the Secretary of State was satisfied that, given the technical evidence, blasting would not prejudice the integrity of the landfill liner.
20. West Malling Parish Council has also expressed concerns about the effects of blasting (E-mail dated 8 December 2003) and has advised that it has received numerous complaints from residents. It has sought advice as to what KCC is doing about the matter and how it can best influence the position.
21. KCC is unable to give Offham Parish Council the assurances or guarantees that it is seeking. Given that the terms of the planning permission are being complied with and there does not appear to be any published information to support the view that structural damage may be caused, KCC cannot require Hanson to cease blasting (without creating a liability for significant compensation). Having made Hanson aware of the above concerns, it must decide whether it is prepared to continue blasting and face potential legal claims from residents or others if it is subsequently established that blasting has caused any damage.

Experiences of blasting at other Quarries in Kent

22. Blasting has been used in the past at several other quarries in Kent, but is now only undertaken at Hermitage Quarry, Barming, by Gallaghers. This is the only other operational ragstone quarry in Kent. Blasting was previously used at the former ragstone quarries at Offham Quarry and Allington Quarry and to break up an ironstone layer in the sand quarry at Aylesford.
23. Complaints about the effects of blasting at Hermitage Quarry have been received from Parish Councils, local residents and others. As at Blaise Farm Quarry, monitoring at Hermitage Quarry has consistently demonstrated that the vibration limits on the relevant planning permissions are being met. This has not stopped complaints nor satisfied all residents that blasting is not adversely affecting properties. It is worth noting that recent planning applications at Hermitage Quarry (including an extension) have given rise to significant concerns being expressed by local residents and demands for additional and more comprehensive monitoring. Although KCC has commissioned Babtie to undertake occasional independent monitoring in the vicinity of Hermitage Quarry, it has resisted recent calls for multiple and ongoing measurements at local properties. This approach has been adopted on the basis that it is unnecessary and since available measurements clearly indicate that the vibration limits are being met. The commissioning of independent monitoring can also have significant resource implications for KCC / Planning Applications Unit.

Experiences of other Mineral Planning Authorities (MPAs)

24. In addition to employing Babtie to undertake vibration monitoring at the KSS building and the office building at Comp Lane, Offham, and act as a check on the monitoring undertaken by Hanson, KCC Planning Applications Unit has also obtained information from a number of MPAs that are required to address blasting at mineral sites.² The

² 8 of the 15 consulted responded.

main findings were:-

- KCC has a very similar approach to planning controls over blasting as other MPAs (i.e. a vibration limit of 6mm/s ppv for 95% of the time is imposed with a maximum of 12mm/s and related effects such as air overpressure being minimised through an appropriate scheme of blasting). This accords with Government Guidance in MPG14. Some MPAs use slightly different limits.
- A number of MPAs impose specific additional limits on air overpressure. Where used, these are expressed as a 120dB limit at noise sensitive properties (e.g. housing).
- No other MPAs still impose limits on MIC. MIC is left to the operator as part of the blast design process and is effectively controlled by the ppv limit.
- All operators are required to undertake blast monitoring and provide the results to the MPA. Generally, these are accepted as being accurate by MPAs although they cannot be regarded as independent and are not always accepted by the local community.
- All MPAs receive complaints about blasting and these are not always related to the highest recorded ppv.
- Most MPAs undertake (or commission) independent monitoring following complaints until it is established that permitted limits are being met. Some MPAs are able to rely on Environmental Health Units, some undertake the monitoring themselves and others employ consultants.
- If, following appropriate monitoring by the operator and the MPA, it is established that vibration limits are being met, this needs to be communicated to the complainant and local community (at which point this becomes a civil matter between the operator and complainant).
- Effective communication between MPA, operator and the local community is essential.
- Few MPAs have a formal procedure for dealing with blasting complaints (although this would ensure a consistent approach to dealing with complaints).
- Other MPAs did not believe that it was possible for vibration associated with blasting at Blaise Farm Quarry to be causing damage to the KSS building or any property in Offham (due to the vibration measured and distance between the blast and receptors).

25. The findings suggest a number of actions for KCC:-

- The development of a formal procedure (or Code) for dealing with complaints relating to blasting.
- Agreement on those circumstances in which KCC will arrange independent monitoring (and the extent of such monitoring).
- Better communication with the local community on blasting related issues (possibly including the production of an appropriate leaflet explaining the issues).
- Encourage Hanson to be more proactive in communicating with the local community.
- Require Hanson to review the current Blast Monitoring Scheme in consultation with KCC.
- Investigate the use of specific limits on air overpressure (e.g. an appropriate dB limit at specified locations).

Discussions between KCC and Hanson

26. KCC and Hanson have been involved in discussions about blasting and its associated effects throughout the period during which blasting has taken place at Blaise Farm Quarry. The above complaints and findings have provided an additional focus for these discussions. A number of the actions arising from these discussions are also referred to above (e.g. survey at the office building at Comp Lane, Offham).
27. A number of other actions are underway. Hanson is in the process of reviewing the blast monitoring arrangements at the request of KCC in accordance with the approved Blast Monitoring Scheme. This is likely to result in more than one monitoring location being used for each blast. This would be more consistent with the approved scheme at Hermitage Quarry (Gallaghers) and would enable the vibration effects to be assessed in more than one direction at any one time. Any alterations to the existing scheme would need to be approved by KCC. Hanson has also agreed to find appropriate literature on blasting effects that could be shared with the local community to explain its impacts and possible implications.
28. Hanson has also indicated that it will apply to vary condition 18 of planning permission TM/88/1002 to remove the current 10kg MIC. This would be consistent with Hermitage Quarry and operations in other MPA areas. As part of that application, Hanson may also seek to vary the current hours of blasting. It is anticipated that Hanson may seek to extend the Monday to Friday period during which blasting can take place by 1 hour (i.e. from 1200 to 1500 hours) and have no blasting at any other times (i.e. none in the early morning or on Saturdays).

Recommendation

29. That Members note the contents of this report and agree the following:-

(1) The Head of Planning Applications inform Offham Parish Council that:

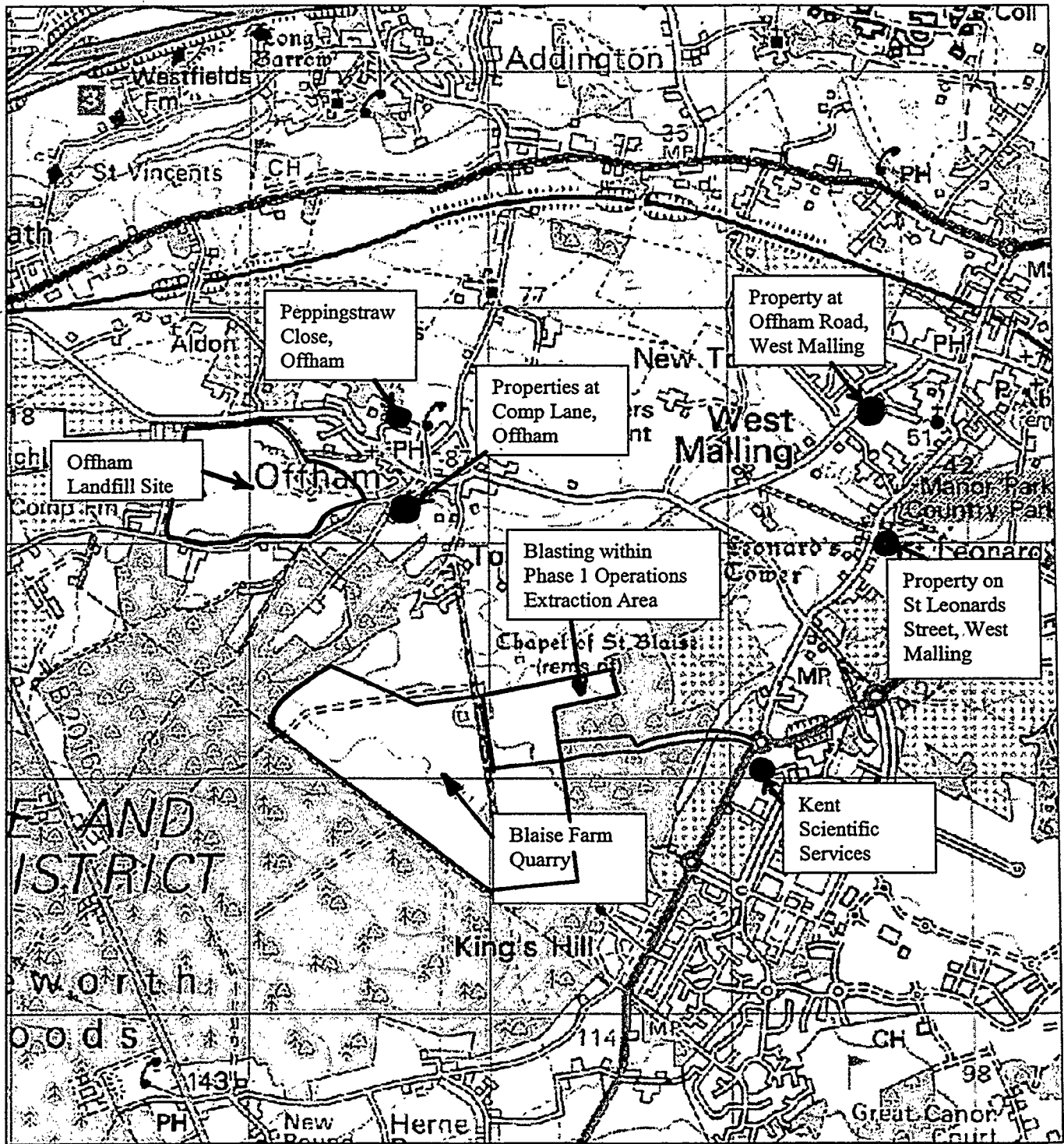
- (a) KCC is unable to give it the assurances or guarantees that it is seeking about potential damage to properties;
- (b) Given that the terms of planning permission TM/88/1002 are being complied with and there does not appear to be any published information to support the view that structural damage may be caused, KCC cannot require Hanson to cease blasting;
- (c) It is for Hanson to decide whether it is prepared to continue blasting and face potential legal claims from residents or others if it is subsequently established that blasting has caused any damage;
- (d) Following a recommendation from the Environment Agency that the issue of potential effects of vibration on the integrity of the landfill liner at Offham Landfill Site be investigated, KCC has written to both Hanson and WRG and asked that they investigate the matter;
- (e) Issues relating to (d) above, are for WRG to address as part of its ongoing responsibilities under its waste management licence. The waste management licence requires ongoing monitoring of landfill gas which would identify any changes to the current situation. The waste management licence also requires adequate controls be maintained at the site to prevent gas migration and these could be altered if necessary; and
- (f) Issues relating to blasting at Blaise Farm Quarry should be addressed through the Blaise Farm Quarry Liaison Committee.

- (2) The Head of Planning Applications inform West Malling Parish Council, Kings Hill Parish Council and Mereworth Parish Council of his response to Offham Parish Council.
- (3) The Head of Planning Applications take a report to the Regulation Committee setting out:-
 - (a) a formal procedure for dealing with complaints relating to blasting (to include those circumstances in which KCC will arrange independent monitoring and the extent of such monitoring); and
 - (b) appropriate information on blasting related issues that can be provided to the local community (possibly a leaflet explaining the issues).
- (4) The Head of Planning Applications:
 - (a) encourage Hanson to fully investigate the ongoing complaint relating to the office building at Comp Lane, Offham;
 - (b) encourage Hanson to investigate further complaints of alleged damage to property where these could reasonably be related to blasting;
 - (c) encourage Hanson to be more proactive in communicating with the local community on blasting and related issues; and
 - (d) require Hanson to review the current Blast Monitoring Scheme in consultation with KCC and submit a revised scheme for approval.
- (5) The Head of Planning Applications investigate the use of specific limits on air overpressure (e.g. an appropriate dB limit at specified locations) for possible inclusion as part of any future permissions or approvals for blasting.

Case Officer: Jim Wooldridge

Tel. no. 01622 221060

Location of blasting within Blaise Farm Quarry and properties from which complaints received



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