PLANNING APPLICATION

FOR

RESTORATION OF IRONSTONE GULLET WITH INERT WASTE

AT

LAND TO THE NORTH OF PRINCEWOOD ROAD
CORBY
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

FOR

WELDON PLANT LIMITED

SUPPORTING STATEMENT INCLUDING FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

August 2008
1. Introduction

1.1 This proposal is to restore of the old ironstone gullet that lies to the north of properties on Princewood Road, Corby. The submission includes the following documents:

- The Site Location Plan is GPP/WP/PR/07/01;
- The Site Plan is GPP/WP/PR/08/02
- The existing site contours and cross sections are shown on site plan GPP/WP/PR/08/04;
- Proposed restoration contours are shown on D18/2207/08/1A;
- The Working Plan for the recycling area is GPP/WP/PR/08/03;
- The access is shown on the site plan GPP/WP/PR/08/02
- Report on surface and groundwater impacts is included in Appendix 1;
- Detailed reports on the ecological interest at the site are included in Appendix 2;
- Proposed ecological management and compensation measures are included in Appendix 2;
- A detailed Flood Risk Assessment is included in Appendix 3.
- A Dust Management Plan is included in Appendix 4.

1.2 Ironstone was extracted in the locality to provide raw material to the steel works in the town; most of the land to the south and west was restored to a levelled surface to facilitate its return to agricultural use but where working finished, a long gullet remained. Landfill operations have taken place in the old gullet in the past; in particular a large area was filled by Northamptonshire County Council as Waste Disposal Authority to dispose of Corby’s household collected waste. Operations at this site ceased over 10 years ago and the site is now classified by the Environment Agency as ‘closed’. In 1994 planning permission was granted for the use of inert waste from the preparation of a development site on Princewood Road, for Solway Foods, to be deposited near the western end of the remaining unrestored gullet.

1.3 The site and its setting are shown on the aerial photograph below. A detailed description of the site is included in the reports on the hydrology and ecology of the site. The gullet is situated to the north of the industrial estate known as Earlstrees, with access off Princewood Road.
2. Proposals

2.1 The proposed landfill is 3.7 hectares in area, and to achieve the proposed contours will need the importation of a total of 289,634m$^3$ of inert waste. It is expected that the operations will be carried out at the rate of 50,000m$^3$ each year, thus the site is likely to be operational for about 6 years. In addition, the applicant intends to establish an area for the receipt of inert materials suitable for processing to produce recycled aggregates; it is anticipated that the site would handle 10,000 tonnes per annum.

2.2 The old ironstone gullet was not restored when mineral extraction ceased, and the slopes created on both sides have naturally re-colonised. The unsuitability of the slopes for agriculture, even low-intensity grazing, has allowed the establishment of large areas of scrub. The landowner, the Rockingham Estate wishes to replace the poor conditions with better soils to facilitate more productive agricultural land and to return most of the area to levels that will support grazing.

2.3 The proposed contours and drainage arrangements have been designed to provide adequate slopes and drainage channels, for both woodland establishment and agricultural restoration and to provide the opportunity for the re-establishment of important calcareous grassland habitat on the south facing slopes. The landform reflects the profile of the household waste landfill site to the west, operated by Northamptonshire County Council. The justification for this latter proposal is described in detail in section 5 and in the accompanying report on ecology attached at Appendix 2.

2.4 Working will proceed in an easterly direction, with the placement of fill over an advancing face. It is intended to restore the site progressively, in phases. Restoration work will generally take place in the autumn each year, with the placing of soils and the planting of trees and shrubs. Following the completion of the importation of fill, a further 6-12 months will be needed to complete the restoration work. Thus the operations are likely to last for about 7 years altogether.

2.5 The hours of operation are proposed as follows:

- 07.00 – 18.00 Monday to Friday
- 07.00 – 13.00 Saturday

No operations will take place on Sunday or Bank Holidays, except in emergencies

2.6 The imported material will comprise only clean, inert waste, to meet the standards set by the Landfill Directive for inert waste. The scale of the landfill operation will require an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency, which will impose conditions.
controlling the type of waste to be brought to the site; requiring the installation of a 
geological barrier on the base and sides of the gullet to minimise the risks of contamination of 
groundwater and requiring regular monitoring of surface and groundwater quality and 
landfill gas.

3. Planning policy

3.1 The Government’s “Waste Strategy 2007” sets out the policy for sustainable waste 
management. The Government’s key objectives are to:

- decouple waste growth (in all sectors) from economic growth and put more emphasis on 
waste prevention and re-use;
- meet and exceed the Landfill Directive diversion targets for biodegradable 
municipal waste in 2010, 2013 and 2020;
- increase diversion from landfill of non-municipal waste and secure better integration 
of treatment for municipal and non-municipal waste;
- secure the investment in infrastructure needed to divert waste from landfill and for 
the management of hazardous waste; and
- get the most environmental benefit from that investment, through increased recycling of 
resources and recovery of energy from residual waste using a mix of technologies.

3.2 Planning Policy Statement 10 – Planning for Sustainable Waste Management states that 
“Waste planning authorities should adhere to the following principles in determining 
planning applications:

– controls under the planning and pollution control regimes should complement rather 
than duplicate each other and conflicting conditions should be avoided;
– in considering planning applications for waste management facilities before development 
plans can be reviewed to reflect this PPS, have regard to the policies in this PPS as material 
considerations which may supersede the policies in their development plan. Any refusal of 
planning permission on grounds of prematurity will not be justified unless it accords with 
the policy in The Planning System: General Principles 7.

Planning applications for sites that have not been identified, or are not located in an area 
identified, in a development plan document as suitable for new or enhanced waste 
management facilities should be considered favourably when consistent with Paragraph 21 
which states that in deciding which sites and areas to identify for waste management 
facilities, waste planning authorities should:

(i) assess their suitability for development against each of the following criteria:
– the extent to which they support the policies in this PPS;
– the physical and environmental constraints on development, including existing and 
proposed neighbouring land uses;
– the cumulative effect of previous waste disposal facilities on the well-being of the local community, including any significant adverse impacts on environmental quality, social cohesion and inclusion or economic potential;
– the capacity of existing and potential transport infrastructure to support the sustainable movement of waste, and products arising from resource recovery, seeking when practicable and beneficial to use modes other than road transport.
(ii) give priority to the re-use of previously-developed land, and redundant agricultural and forestry buildings and their curtilages.

3.4 The **Regional Planning Guidance** for the East Midlands is set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy, March 2005. It sets out the principles and priorities for waste management:

- To work towards zero growth in waste at the Regional level by 2016
- To reduce the amount of waste landfilled in accordance with the EU Landfill Directive
- To exceed Government targets for recycling and composting
- To take a flexible approach to other forms of waste recovery

3.5 In this context it should be noted that the Landfill Directive targets for waste diversion from landfill do not apply to inert waste, therefore the landfill of inert waste is not addressed in RPG.

3.6 The Strategy acknowledges that Northamptonshire’s growth agenda will create significant amounts of construction and demolition waste, for which sites will be necessary to dispose of material that is unsuitable for re-use or recycling.

3.7 The Adopted **Northamptonshire Waste Local Plan** provides the current development plan policies. In particular, **Policy 22** relates to Landfill/Landraising; it states that **Proposals for new landfill or landraise sites or extensions to existing landfill sites will be permitted only in the following circumstances:**

(a) where landfill or landraise is shown to be the Best Practicable Environmental Option for the waste stream(s) concerned; and
(b) where use of the proposed site for disposal of the waste concerned is consistent with the proximity principle; and
(c) where use of the proposed site for disposal of the waste concerned is consistent with regional self-sufficiency; and
(d) where no existing landfill or landraise site is available for disposal of the waste concerned.

3.9 Most of the policies in Section 5 of the Plan, relating to the Environment are relevant to this proposal. The environmental impacts and any necessary mitigation measures are described in section 5.
3.10 Since the adoption of the Waste Local Plan, the Government has accepted that the concept of Best Practicable Environmental Option is not relevant to individual proposals, therefore it no longer forms part of national policy.

3.11 The County's Minerals and Waste Development Framework Preferred Options: Core Strategy, Locations for Minerals Development and Locations for Waste Development has not included any new sites for the landfilling of inert waste, as reliance is placed on the capacity of active mineral sites to dispose of all of the inert waste that cannot be recycled. It is contended that this is an unsustainable approach to the management of inert waste arising from the development of Corby, where new development is too far from the active mineral sites in the county, especially the Nene Valley. The Core Strategy includes the encouragement of the consumption of recycled aggregates as the Preferred Approach to the issue of recycled aggregates; consumption can only increase if supply is increased.

Compliance with policy and the need for the development.

3.12 The restoration of the old ironstone gullet using imported inert waste will bring the site into a use that has both economic and ecological benefits. It will enable the replacement of unrestored and derelict land with useful agricultural land. The habitat that would be lost as a result of the development will be compensated for on adjoining land and within the ecological mitigation plan and detailed restoration and aftercare schemes detailed within Appendices 3 and 4. Following completion of the restoration, all of the restored site and the associated mitigation land will be under the Estate’s control. This will benefit both the general amenity of the locality and the ecology of the area. The development will ensure that the site has a long-term, sustainable use.

3.12 The site is close to Corby, where the growth agenda requires the provision of significant numbers of new houses and related industrial/commercial development over the next 15 years. Development on either brownfield or greenfield sites will mean the generation of significant volumes of inert waste from site clearance work. It is accepted within the inert waste industry that it is uneconomic to transport such material more than about 10 miles from its source of arising. The likely development areas in and around the town are close to the proposed site.

3.13 Research carried out amongst companies responsible for preparing greenfield sites for development has shown that a useful guide is that an average of 1m of material has to be removed off-site. From this figure, it is possible to estimate the scale of the likely arisings until 2011, from the sites allocated in the Local Plan for Corby.
In a report on the urban capacity for new housing for Corby, produced in June 2005 by Roger Tym and Associates, it is likely that housing will be built within the urban area and on allocated and already permitted sites, at a rate of 632 dwellings per annum. The average density is likely to be 35 units per hectare, giving an annual rate of 18 hectares. At 1m depth, this would produce 18,000 cubic metres of material per annum from site clearance work alone.

In addition, there will be continued development of sites for industrial and commercial development. For example, although the land at Stanion Plantation has been cleared in preparation for development, once work starts on individual plots, there will be arisings from the digging out of foundations, service trenches etc.

Inert waste will be generated by other developments, both in and beyond the urban area. In addition, there will be the unrecyclable fraction of construction and demolition waste that will need to be landfilled, despite the increasing trend for the recycling of this waste stream. However, it is impossible to quantify the likely arisings.

There will also continue to be development in the rural hinterland of Corby, which will generate inert materials for disposal to landfill.

Although there are three large non-hazardous landfill sites within the general locality of Corby and Kettering, at Weldon, Cranford and Rushton, which all have a need for small volumes of inert material to provide daily cover and larger volumes for final restoration these sites are not adequate to meet the needs of the development industry. To preserve the value of the expensively engineered void space, these sites will not accept large quantities of inert waste on a day to day basis. Even if inert waste landfill is allowed to continue for a further 7-8 years on the Boughton Estate south of Corby, there will be a need for additional voidspace to serve the town during this period.

Increasing the capacity to produce recycled aggregates within Corby will assist in achieving an increase in consumption of such aggregates, thus reducing the demand for new aggregates.

4. **Environmental Impacts**

Access and highway safety

The site access is from Princwood Road, which is a purpose-designed industrial estate road, which connects to the strategic highway network in and around Corby. Princwood Road has a 30 mph speed restriction, therefore the visibility from the site, which is illustrated on the
following photographs, is more than adequate in both directions. The access track to the site has been used for deliveries of waste in the past, when the County Council’s landfill site to the west was operational and when the Civic Amenity site was in use. As a consequence, there are passing bays along the length, to facilitate the use of the access by heavy goods vehicles.

View west from site access

View east from site access

4.2 The number of daily lorry movements would be in the order of 20 loads per day on average, containing 10m³ or approximately 20 tonnes per load; however when the applicant is carrying out site clearance jobs, the number of loads is likely to be about 60 per day.

4.3 It is proposed to install a wheel wash facility to ensure that mud is not tracked out on to the highway.

Surface and groundwater

4.4 A report has been prepared by Hafren Water to accompany this planning application. A copy of this report is attached at Appendix 1. The report concludes that the strict waste acceptance criteria imposed at the site, the creation of an artificial geological barrier and the implementation of a site water management system will help to ensure that the landfill does not have a significant impact on the surrounding water environment.
Landscape and Visual impact

4.5 The site is very well screened by surrounding development and woodland and it is located over 1km from the nearest residential properties and at the rear of the adjacent industrial properties. The industrial properties all face away from the site and towards Princewood Road to the south and along sections of the boundary of the industrial estate there are established trees and hedges. There is no public right of way in the vicinity that would be affected by the proposals. Therefore, there are no sensitive receptors that could be adversely affected by the proposals, so a detailed assessment has not been carried out.

Nature and archaeological conservation

4.6 The mineral extraction of the site removed any evidence of previous occupation of the area.

4.7 The site is situated close to a number of sites of County Wildlife importance and correspondence with the County Wildlife Trust revealed that at least part of the gullet might contain habitat of a quality that would be appropriate for designation as a CWS. Therefore, detailed ecological surveys have been carried out; the reports are included in Appendix 2. The findings have shown that there are areas of calcareous grassland, that is one of the County's BAP habitats and thus should be safeguarded. In addition there is evidence that the area is used by Great Crested Newts for foraging and over-wintering. The site is also likely to provide suitable habitats for reptile species. There is also evidence of use of the gullet by badgers. These findings mean that any development of the area will require the provision of compensation habitat and it will have to be carried out in compliance with licences issued by Natural England for the protected species.

4.8 An area of land to the north of the gullet has been identified as suitable for the provision of habitat in compensation for areas to be lost as a result of the proposed development. This land is shown in the report in Appendix 2 and the package of measures involved in the management of this area and the gullet is set out in the Ecological Mitigation Plan by Lockhart-Garratt, included in Appendix 2.

Flood Risk Assessment

4.9 An assessment that satisfies the requirements of PPS25 has been carried out by Abington Consulting Engineers and is included in Appendix 3.

Amenities of neighbouring properties (detailed controls will be included in the Landfill Permit that will be required to operate the site, as issued by the Environment Agency)
Dust and Noise

4.10 This site lies more than 1km away from the nearest residential properties, therefore dust and noise will not affect residential amenities. The operations will be carried out on land adjacent to the industrial units on Princewood Road. Some of the occupiers of adjacent properties carry out noisy operations, therefore are unlikely to be adversely affected by noise from the landfill and recycling operations, provided that they are limited to the working hours set out in section 2.5. Crushing and screening of material to produce recycled aggregates will take place only intermittently, when there is a sufficient stockpile to justify bringing the mobile plant to site. In a year, processing 10,000 tonnes is likely to take about 10 working days, which is a rate of 1,000 tonnes per day. This is likely to be take place for 2 days at a time, therefore on about 5 occasions during the year.

4.11 It will be necessary for the operations at this site to be carried out strictly in compliance with a dust management plan, to avoid the risk of adverse impacts on the neighbouring properties; such a plan is included in Appendix 4.

Odours, vermin, litter and birds

4.12 Inert waste landfilling does not generate these problems.

Public Rights of Way

4.13 There is no public right of way in the vicinity of this site.

Soil quality

4.14 There is little or no topsoil within the area of the site, which is why the site has no agricultural value but does have some ecological value. Details in relation to the proposed treatment of restoration soils will be provided within a Restoration and Aftercare scheme to be submitted in the event that planning permission is granted for this development.

5. Community benefit and involvement

5.1 Meetings and discussions have been held with the following representatives of the following organisations:
   • County Wildlife Trust
   • Planning Officer of Northamptonshire County Council

5.2 The principle community benefit will be provided by the Rockingham Estate in its commitment to manage the site and adjoining land for its ecological value. The arrangement to enforce this commitment will be discussed and agreed with the Waste Planning Authority in the event that planning permission is granted for the development.
6. **Conclusions**

6.1 The proposal accords with national, regional and local planning policies for dealing with inert waste and will have no adverse impact on the local environment.

6.2 There is a need for additional voidspace for inert waste disposal, to serve the continuing growth of Corby.

6.3 The proposal provides the opportunity to establish useful agricultural land, while at the same time providing for the management of protected species; the provision of an area of compensation grassland and the enhancement of the setting and buffering of the adjacent ancient semi-natural woodland.
APPENDIX 1

Surface and Groundwater

Report by Hafren Water
APPENDIX 2

Ecology reports and proposed habitat compensation

By Lockhart Garratt
APPENDIX 3

Flood Risk Assessment

Report by Abington Consulting Engineers
APPENDIX 4

Dust Management Scheme

The site will be managed to ensure that fugitive dust does not escape beyond the site boundaries, in particular to the south. The following measures will be taken:

(a) the speed of vehicles operating on the site during dry conditions will be limited to 10 mph.

(b) water bowser, water sprays and road sweepers will be employed to lay dust or clean roadways. A water bowser will be kept on site and will be deployed during dry weather to keep tracks and working areas damp. A water spray will be used to keep moist any stockpiles of materials awaiting spreading or stored in the recycling area. During wet weather a road sweeper will be employed to keep the access track and the highway clear of mud.

(c) mobile plant to be used for crushing and screening material to produce recycled aggregates will be fitted with dust suppression units.

(d) operations will be monitored for dust during particularly dry and windy weather conditions that could carry the dust to the properties along Princewood Road i.e. when the wind is from the northwest, north and northeast; in the event that the dust control measures are proving to be ineffective then the operations will cease. Such restrictions will only apply rarely, as the wind is only from these directions for a limited time during the year – see the wind rose below.