

Planning application 01/20/0009 – Slurry lagoon at West Northcott Farm, Ashbrittle

As ward councillor, I object to this application.

The application does not explain why such a large slurry lagoon is required on this farm or how slurry will be collected and fed into it. This detail is needed and impacts assessed.

The agent says the slurry from the lagoon is to be applied to land at the farm. Some of this liquid and its nutrient content will flow into local watercourses and the nearby River Tone causing pollution.

The site is within the water catchment area of the Somerset Levels and Moors, which includes protected Ramsar sites. The application will have an adverse impact on these sites by contributing further to already high levels of phosphates.

For these reasons, the application is contrary to the following Council planning policies:

Policy CP 8 - ENVIRONMENT

CP8 states: “Proposals that will have an adverse impact on Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites and/or features which provide ecological support for their conservation objectives will not be supported.”

CP8 requires development “to mitigate and where necessary, compensate for adverse impacts on landscape, protected or important species, important habitats and natural networks, river and ground water quality and quantity so that there are no residual effects”.

CP8 also requires development to protect, conserve or enhance the interests of natural and historic assets; and not exacerbate, and where possible improve the quality, quantity and availability of the water resource, and protect habitats and species, including those listed in UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans, and conserve and expand the biodiversity of the Plan Area; and provide for any necessary mitigation measures.

Policy DM 1 - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

DM1 requires:

- c. The proposal will not lead to harm to protected wildlife species or their habitats;
- e. Potential air pollution, water pollution and other forms of pollution or nuisance which could arise as a result of the development will not unacceptably harm public health or safety, the amenity of individual dwellings or other elements of the local or wider environment.

Policy DM 5 - USE OF RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

DM5 requires development to:

h. Minimise the emission of pollutants, including water pollution into the wider environment.

The application also fails to meet the following requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Paragraph 170 states planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality.

Paragraph 175 states local planning authorities should apply the following principles when determining planning applications:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Paragraph 180 states that policies and decisions should “ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.”

I believe this application should be refused. If it were to be approved, conditions need to be applied to ensure no harm can result from the proposed use of the lagoon or uses of it that could arise in future.

Cllr Dave Mansell

Wiveliscombe and District Ward - Somerset West and Taunton Council

4th December 2020