

Statement to Panel Regarding Application 2024/VOCM/0144/LCC – British Gypsum, Barrow Works

Chair, Members of the Panel,

I would like to draw your attention to a number of concerns raised by local residents and by former County Councillor Richard Shepherd in relation to this application to vary Condition 7 to allow the back-hauling of low-grade gypsum.

Residents have consistently raised issues around HGV speeds on Paudy Lane. Although British Gypsum introduced a voluntary 40mph speed limit, residents report that it is routinely ignored, creating significant anxiety around road safety.

In 2023, British Gypsum offered to install vehicle speed signage as part of its response to concerns raised during a previous application. However, no signage has been implemented to date. Efforts to pursue this with Seagrave and Walton on the Wolds Parish Councils have not resulted in a resolution, and residents report feeling let down by the absence of meaningful support at the local level. Many believe this lack of progress contributes to an ongoing erosion of trust.

A further point raised relates to the definition of "back-hauling". Residents have argued that the proposal does not reflect genuine back-hauling and instead results in increased overall road mileage and emissions, as lorries are rerouted to a new site for delivery and are not returning to their original site.

There is also concern from local residents about what is perceived as a pattern of incremental changes to the original planning permissions. Residents note that, at the time of the original application, there was a clear understanding that gypsum would be transported by rail, not HGV. However, rail was never used as a means of transportation, with HGV's being suggested as a stopgap, and then the default and only option. Over time this has led to a significant increase in lorry traffic and associated impacts, which many feel were not transparently conveyed or adequately mitigated.

In light of these concerns, I ask that the panel gives due considerations to the points raised by local residents, who are directly impacted by the cumulative effects of these proposals. It is imperative that their voices are not only heard, but meaningfully reflected in the decision making process. A transparent and accountable approach is critical to maintaining public confidence and ensuring that planning decisions serve the long-term interests of the community.

Thank you.

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