Maiden Bradley Weightwatchers Hanson’s consultation submission

**1. What comments do you have on our plans to re-open Westdown Quarry?**

Maiden Bradley Weightwatchers is a civil society group in Maiden Bradley, formed to represent the interests and concerns of our village regarding the adverse and cumulative social and environmental impacts of HGV traffic on our village. The B3092 is routinely used by Hansons and other business partners in the quarry and construction industry as a ‘short-cut’. Convoys of HGVs are a blight on the well-being of our community. Our goal is to enforce the Weight Limit agreed in 2011 for the B3092 and for HGV traffic to use the designated strategic freight routes in Wiltshire or Somerset.

On 1 July 2020, we wrote to Hansons as well as other firms in the quarry and construction industry explaining the cumulative, negative impacts of HGV traffic on our community well-being. We asked these businesses to use the designated strategic routes only. Hansons has yet to reply to the concerns we set out in our letter.

We are extremely concerned about the impact of Westdown Quarry on the numbers of HGV journeys on the B3092. Our key requests in response to the consultation are as follows:

1. Explain clearly how the additional stone extracted from Westdown will be distributed without requiring additional vehicle movements. Give clear data on tonnage distribution by road and rail, the number of HGV journeys anticipated and the regional routes they will use and any increase. Provide this information in a Transport assessment and Travel Plan as part of the planning process.
2. Look beyond the local communities and assess the cumulative social and environmental impacts of the quarry industry and construction industry on affected communities living along transport routes across Somerset and Wiltshire.
3. Commit to using the strategic highways to distribute stone. Avoid using the B3092 for HGV journeys sending stone from Hansons quarries to other supply chain partners, such as Hopkins in Wincanton, and/ or using this route to supply other buyers or partners.
4. Invest as an industry (together with other partners) in the strategic highways of Somerset and Wiltshire to ensure that stone can be distributed using strategic highways rather than inappropriate B-roads.

**2. Do you have any comments on how we should manage the effects of our proposals on the environment and your community?**

We refer you to our other comments.

We recommend that Hansons and supply chain partners and buyers develop a long-term plan with Wiltshire Council to invest in strategic highways to enable the distribution of stone without causing adverse impacts on affected communities.

**3. Do you have any comments on the proposed restoration plan?**

No comment

**4. Do you consider that there are sufficient public access opportunities within the restoration plan?**

**No comment**

**5. Do you have any comments on any of the information or documents provided as part of this consultation?**

Based on the information provided in the consultation documents we understand the following:

A maximum of 4 million tonnes will be distributed by road per annum:

* Hansons states that it will extract 2 million tonnes of limestone aggregate a year from Westdown quarry between 2022 and 2042.
* Hansons also states that it will move no more than 4 million tonnes per annum by road from both Whatley and Westdown quarries combined.

Please confirm, exactly how much extra tonnage will be distributed by road?

Despite extracting an extra 2 million tonnes of limestone from Westdown, Hansons anticipates no additional HGV movements:

* Hansons notes that stone from Whatley quarry will continue to use the Mendip rail line to deliver product to national markets (currently estimated at around two-thirds of production)
* No information is given regarding the current tonnage and vehicle movements by road from Whatley to enable consultees to establish the increase of distribution by road
* No information is given to explain what proportion of the additional tonnage will be distributed by rail and whether Mendip rail has the capacity to distribute more tonnage.
* No information is given about the anticipated number of HGV journeys associated with distributing 4 million tonnes of stone per annum (e.g. 1 million tonnes delivered in 25 tonne trucks would be 40,000 lorry loads per year)

Please confirm exactly how the additional tonnage will be distributed by road without requiring extra vehicle movements?

There is no current planning restriction on HGV movements at Westdown and therefore the commitment to restrict distribution by road to 4 million tonnes per annum is not binding, and is a voluntary commitment by Hansons, based on existing restrictions at Whatley. The EIA Scoping report states:

“The existing planning permissions for Westdown Quarry provide no indication of any restrictions on the volume HGV movements or any restrictions on the quantity of material leaving the site. Notwithstanding this, the existing July 1995 planning permission on the neighbouring Whatley Quarry (reference 109/22/002) states at condition (30) that no more than 4 million tonnes of the total output from the site in any one calendar year shall be transported by road.”

“As the resumption of working at Westdown Quarry would be to complement existing operations at Whatley Quarry, and allow the latter to focus on the despatch of aggregates by the on-site rail head facility (see Chapter 2 of this Scoping Report), it can be confirmed that it is Hanson’s intention that moving forwards, Whatley and Westdown combined would operate within the limits of the existing condition (3) i.e. no more than 4 million tonnes per annum would be transported from the sites via road.”

Please confirm whether the Whatley restriction will be mandatory also for Westdown or remain a voluntary commitment?

Hansons has designated routes for HGVs to reach the A361 and makes a commitment to highway improvements. No information is given about onward routes for HGVs after leaving the A361, and when delivering to national buyers or supply chain partners.

Please confirm whether Hansons and partners commit to using only strategic routes for distribution.

Hansons predicts that hours of operation, including haulage, will be Monday to Friday, 06.00 – 20.00; and Saturday and Sunday, from 06.00 – 12.00. No specific commitment is given to ensure that haulage occurs during social hours and without use of convoys.

Plase confirm whether Hansons and partners commit to haulage only in social hours and not in convoy.

The Consultation documents and the EIA Scoping document focus on “local communities” who live near the quarry sites. Neither document considers the potential impact of HGV movements on “affected communities” who live along Hanson’s selected distribution networks and who are subject to cumulate HGV impacts from Hansons, their supply chain partners and other actors in the quarry and construction industry.

Please confirm whether Hansons will broaden its EIA to include a cumulative impacts assessment on affected communities along distribution routes.

The consultation documents do not include a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. Such a plan is required by the Somerset Minerals Plan, where significant transport movements are anticipated. According to this plan, adopted in 2015, proposed mineral developments must demonstrate the road network is of a suitable standard to sustain the volume and nature of traffic without having adverse impacts on the landscape, countryside and settlements, including for example, disruption to communities, highway safety, proximity to buildings and air quality.

Please confirm that Hansons intends to conduct a traffic assessment that includes, as noted above, the cumulative industry impacts on affected communities on distribution routes.