The application number is 13/000027/CM and the consultation ends on 15th July 2016.

The Green Belt principles are based on the presumption against inappropriate development and specify that applicants proposing development within the Green Belt should justify with very special circumstances as to why development should be granted permission. This is detailed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2014. NPPF on green belt is the overriding policy on acceptable land use, compatible land use and necessary land use. Green Belt policy in the NPPF continues to protect it from inappropriate development which is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved ‘except in very special circumstances’. This is the fundamental test against which planning applications will be judged. The NPPF states ‘very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations’.

Importance of Green Belt Land Sandy Lane
The NPPF makes clear that the Government attaches great importance to protecting Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

- To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  
  Wildmoor is a key part of the green belt that separates the large conurbation of Birmingham and the West Midlands from the historic town of Bromsgrove and Worcestershire. History shows boundary drift over the past 100 years has moved Worcestershire’s border by six miles. The Sandy Lane stretch of Green Belt is a corridor just one mile from the Birmingham border.

- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment:
  
  The building proposed to house the processing facility would be a new construction and as such is inappropriate development in the green belt.
  Business units operating on the Wildmoor Quarry site have not been granted planning permission.

  Access to open countryside for the urban population and opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation;

  The North Worcestershire Hills are described in the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy as being of high quality natural environment areas. It recognises the value of the hill line to the North of Worcestershire as being widely appreciated by communities. Records show in 2005, at least 12% of all visitors to Worcestershire came for walking and hiking within the Lickey and Clent Hills attracting visitors from the Birmingham and Black Country conurbation. You may each have personal memories??

  To retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity

  The hill lines surrounding Sandy Lane are Clent, Waseley and Lickey, and have been a visitor destinations used by City dwellers and walkers for recreation, holidays and nature observation for the past 100 years. Again memories and photographs??

  The introduction of a bottom ash recovery facility will not improve recreational activity. Extending the footpaths for walkers is insufficient improvement to aid or extend access or retain and enhance the visual amenity.

  Is this the right location for the waste facility and if inappropriate, is harm clearly outweighed by other considerations?.

Similar associated development and compatible land use
The applicant justifies ‘very special circumstances’ because of the similarities IBA has to mineral extraction: - The applicant also claims it is a temporary permission like mineral extraction and will be producing an aggregate that will reduce the need for the extraction of primary minerals.
Planning permission for the extraction of aggregates in the green belt plan is considered to be a temporary permission given on the condition a restoration plan is observed. The potential for a subsequent planning permission to be obtained is based upon the land being found to contain further valuable aggregates or minerals worthy of extraction.

Associated Development
The applicant justifies very special circumstance because the processing of IBA is a temporary use like mineral extraction and the resulting aggregate will reduce the need for mineral extraction. Minerals are primary aggregates that exist in the location they are found. The transportation of
aggregates, in this case a secondary aggregate, into the green belt cannot be considered to be similar to those that exist there naturally. IBA processing is not an associated development.

### Compatible Land use

Minerals have to be mined where they are found and are considered a temporary use of land. IBA is not found it is relocated. Compatibility is not proven. Landfill is no longer considered as a suitable restoration solution for worked quarries. Bottom Ash is not a necessary material to aid to the completion of the landfill. The adjacent landfill has no operational relationship with IBA processing.

### Aggravated by-products

The IBA contains leachates that will adversely complicate the management of existing leachates from the landfill and extend contamination risk. The water from the IBA is not permitted to wash through into the drainage system because of the present leachate issues and past problems. The last leachate spill from the landfill site was in 2015, Veolia removed around 40 tonnes of leachate containing soil from this area and needed to excavate to a depth of 3 metres. Samples were taken to confirm all of the contamination had been removed and the excavated area was backfilled with clean soils.

NPPF. The National Policy Planning Framework asks planning authorities to consider the cumulative effects of previous waste disposal facilities on the **well being of the community** as a test of suitability. Our Worcestershire County Waste Core Strategy (WCS13) states waste management facilities will be permitted in areas designated as Green Belt where the proposal do not constitute inappropriate development, or where very special circumstances exist. When considering development that have particular locational need the council will have regard for **cumulative effect of developments**.

PPG2 Consider as a test of suitability, the cumulative effect of previous waste disposal facilities on the **well being of Local communities**, Waste Planning Authorities should not assume that because a particular area has hosted, or hosts, waste disposal facilities it is appropriate to add to these or extend their life.

### Cumulative impact

National policy states that the planning authority should put in place policies to ensure worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity. There are 4 quarry voids in the Sandy Lane vicinity and only one, at Chadwich, has a partial restoration. This was part of the 56 conditions listed for the site after a planning appeal. Sandy Lane has a restoration plan for the site. The area has had mineral extraction for 90 years in 4 quarries, some of the owners have operated poor management practices resulting in prosecutions, the last was in 2015 at the Wildmoor site. One SSSI was destroyed at the first landfill site. Leachate from the second landfill site has caused problems with local drainage and sewer systems. The risk of land contamination is of high concern as the area is a water protection zone, has an aquifer and the water from the Wildmoor borehole feeds 20,000 Bromsgrove residents their water supply. This is listed as a concern in the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy “**significant shortfall of water supply is predicted for the period between 2014 and 2035 and aquifers are under pressure in many areas of the county, including Kidderminster and Bromsgrove, due to greater demand for water as a result of increased development and population growth.**” And “**Many blue infrastructure issues, such as water supply or water quality flooding, will become more prevalent as a result of extreme weather events linked to climate change.**”

### Affect on the well being of local communities

This is where your local evidence should be produced. Evidence your statements and do not use emotion or make it up. The topics listed under this heading are:
- noise associated with the operation
- dust;
- air quality;
- lighting;
- visual impact on the local and wider landscape;
- landscape character;
- **archaeological and heritage features** (further guidance can be found under the Minerals Historic Environment Forum’s Practice Guide on mineral extraction and archaeology);
• traffic;
• risk of contamination to land;
• soil resources;
• geological structure;
• impact on best and most versatile agricultural land;
• blast vibration;
• flood risk;
• land stability/subsidence;
• internationally, nationally or locally designated wildlife sites, protected habitats and species, ecological networks;
• impacts on nationally protected landscapes (National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty);
• nationally protected geological and geo-morphological sites and features;
• site restoration and aftercare;
• surface and, in some cases, ground water issues; water abstraction.

The NPPF policy states that local authorities should put in place policies to ensure worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity and that high quality restoration and aftercare of mineral sites takes place, including for agriculture geodiversity, biodiversity, native woodland, the historic environment and recreation.

The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy states that Associated Development including waste management facilities should be removed once the original justification (the relationship with the active mineral working or landfill site) no longer applies.

Where waste management proposals are operationally related to, or located on a mineral working, landfill site or other waste management facility of a temporary nature, permission will only be granted when:

The approval of a processing plant would prevent restoration of the site for a minimum of 28 years.

This adverse impact to restoration plans for the site is referred to in our Waste Core Strategy. The Green Infrastructure Strategy refers to principles to consider when integrating green infrastructure into mineral extraction and restoration. “By taking an integrated green infrastructure approach it can be possible to deliver multiple benefits, for example biodiversity gains can be incorporated into agricultural or recreational restoration schemes.” Spatial priorities for green infrastructure in Worcestershire are applied according to the unique character they have. For the North of Worcestershire this is their value to local communities and urban visitors.

The 2013 Screening Opinion for this application raised the concerns for water protection. The location is considered to be sensitive and of environmental significance. The applicant refers to the Environment Agency permit as evidence of Sandy Lane as an approved location.

The permit was granted to show statutory requirements for waste management can be met, this includes that the installation and operation of the waste facility complies with relevant legal requirements and that a high level of protection will be delivered for the environment and human health. It is not granted to say the location of the facility is appropriate. This is the responsibility of the County Council and includes the views of the local District Council.

Wildmoor is located on a major aquifer and ground water source protection zone ii. The nearby borehole is a water source for 19,500 Bromsgrove residents. Drainage in the area is inadequate and local sewers overflow on a regular basis in Fairfield and Bournheath. The applicant’s water protection measures are insufficient to manage worst-case scenarios of fire or extreme weather, which has been evident in greater frequency. In the years 2007, 2009 and 2012. This is a very sensitive and precious location.

The Sandy Lane site is unique in terms of planning permission for a bottom ash waste facility. No other IBA waste processing facility is located on a Water Protection Zone and an Aquifer. There are no wider benefits to the community than protecting the water supply. The risk of using this as a test site is of great concern.

Your own experiences of flooding over the past decade should be used and particularly if they have not been recorded by the Environment Agency. Evidence your statements.
National Planning Policy Waste. (NPPW) 2014
A second important national document is the National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) 2014. The NPPW indicates that Planning Authorities are still required to take into consideration the locational requirements of some types of waste management facilities in preparing their Waste Local Plans. The applicant states that Worcestershire County Council Waste Plan predates this requirement and has therefore not considered it. The updated policy strengthens local waste policies and the need for a geographic hierarchy therefore the policy and the waste hierarchy are still applicable. The NPPW states “Green Belts have special protection in respect to development. In preparing Local Plans, waste-planning authorities, including by working collaboratively with other planning authorities, should first look for suitable sites and areas outside the Green Belt for waste management facilities that, if located in the Green Belt, would be inappropriate development. Local planning authorities should recognize the particular locational needs of some types of waste management facilities when preparing their Local Plan”.

Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy Geographic Hierarchy is relevant to the alternative site assessment. The applicant has refused to consider the hierarchy when deciding on a suitable location for the IBA facility.

Alternative Site Assessment

The applicant states that Worcestershire County Council Waste Plan predates this requirement and has therefore not considered it. The updated policy strengthens local waste policies and the need for a geographic hierarchy therefore the 2012 policy and the waste hierarchy are still applicable.

In developing its Waste Core Strategy Worcestershire County Council supported the protection of locally and nationally important features to ensure the character of Worcestershire was central to the selection of recommended sites for future waste facilities. Planning applications for waste management facilities will not be permitted whilst there is lesser constrained land available for such development unless the specialist nature of the facility constitutes a material consideration sufficient to override the constraint. The lesser constrained land is listed in The Waste Core Strategy Geographic Hierarchy. Locations were selected and ranked in a geographic hierarchy 1 – 5 with 1 being the most suitable and excluded those with temporary permissions in the Green Belt. Sandy Lane is placed in level 5, the lowest level of the hierarchy, a place most unsuited to locate waste facilities. “

In locational terms the Alternative Site Assessment should compare sites that have the same characteristics as WCC Waste Core Geographic Hierarchy. The applicant has constructed a set of criteria for their Alternative Site Assessment that is inconsistent with Worcestershire County Council’s Waste Core Strategy and ‘Spatial Portrait.’ The ‘Geographic Hierarchy’ was created with a view to the ‘Spatial Portrait’ of Worcestershire to ensure future development plans preserved the distinctiveness of the area.

The components and weightings and subsequent conclusions in the applicant’s Alternative Site Assessment are not reflective of WCC Spatial Portrait and Waste Core Strategy. The Sandy Lane Site is in level 5 of the ‘Geographic Hierarchy’ the least suitable place to locate a waste facility. This facility is not proven to be uniquely necessary within this location and environment.

Impact on Landscape and Visual Amenity Use your own local knowledge to make landscape and amenity real to planners.
The history of North Bromsgrove goes back to 1232 with notable landowners being St. Wulfstan and William Viscount Dudley. The local topography is strongly influenced by early settlements, natural ground water supplies existed and the plateau of sloping ground of the Clent and Lickey Hills, rising to over 300 metres. Between these north-west and north-east plateau bands, north Worcestershire is framed by an arc of undulating land, formed by the sandstones and harder course-grained pebble beds of Permian and Triassic rocks. The Romans constructed a road over the Lickeys very near to the present Rose Hill gap, before it swung north through Rednal and followed the route of the present day Bristol Road South. The road would have been used to transport salt and other goods between the Roman encampments at Worcester and Metchley near where Birmingham’s Queen Elizabeth Hospital now stands. It would have also been used as a military marching route by Roman soldiers.

The applicant has not proven other circumstances that clearly outweigh Very Special Circumstances for the protection of the Green Belt

Sheila Blagg
23 May 2016