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REPORT BY COUNTY PLANNING OFFICER

COUNTY MATTER - ROTHER DISTRICT

RR/77/1274(CM) - Exploration for minerals (Gypsum), Brightling Park for British Gypsum

History:

1. On 21 September 1977 the Sub-Committee granted planning permission for the exploration of minerals, including the drilling of boreholes in Brightling Park, of which two conditions limited the permission to 30 September 1978 and the drilling operations to between the hours of 08.00 and 17.30 daily.

Proposal:

2. The Company has requested that hours of drilling should be extended to 22.00 hours. In explanation the Company has only recently been able to complete negotiations with the landowner and drilling will not begin until the end of this month. If gypsum is proved, it will be necessary to analyse the borehole information and to have a planning application for extraction determined before March 1979, the date by which the legal formalities with the landowner must be completed. Test boring must therefore be finished by August and this can only be done if the drilling hours are extended and the rig is manned on a shift basis.

Consultation:

3. Rother District Council were consulted on 5 January 1978 and their observations and those of the Parish Councils are awaited.

Consideration:

4. The main source of disturbance is the engine driving the drill bit, but this is the same unit that powers farm tractors and is therefore not an unaccustomed sound in the rural scene. Only two of the probable sites of the five proposed boreholes are relatively close to private dwellings (160 metres). It is understood that drilling at similar distances from dwellings at Cackle Street did not give rise to complaint when this was done a few years ago; as the rig is not likely to be on any one site for more than five weeks, it is recommended that Condition (3) be so amended.

5. Planning Permission was agreed on 4 October 1977. The County Secretary advises that the Permission cannot be varied once it has been issued and a further formal application will, therefore, be needed if permission is to be given on the varied terms.

RECOMMENDATION:

6. (a) Subject to no adverse observations from Rother District Council and Dallington and Brightling Parish Councils to authorise the County Planning Officer to grant permission for the development, substituting for Condition (3) of the Permission, issued on 4 October 1977, the condition set out below on receipt of a formal planning application:-

"Drilling operations shall be carried out between the hours of 08.00 and 22.00 only".

- (b) To request the County Planning Officer to refer the application back to this Sub-Committee if any objections are received from Rother District Council or the Parish Councils.

A. THORBURN
County Planning Officer
15 January 1978
RM/ejn