

**From:**Grigor, Paul  
**Sent:**4 Oct 2022 17:29:37 +0100  
**To:**Dods, Ranald  
**Subject:**FW: Planning Application Ref: 22/00933/FUL

Ranald,

Further to the additional information submitted in relation to vehicular movements, I would comment as follows.

The numbers quoted for HGV movements appear to be one way movements, so in reality these numbers will be doubled. The proposal will significantly change the way this road operates due to the number of HGV movements, which are unlikely to be spread over the full year, so there will be periods of time where the frequency of movements will be greater. In addition there will be staff movements which may occur during peak hours depending on hours of operation.

Given the above I believe there will be some form of mitigation measures required to minimise the impact of the development. The most obvious form would be passing places at agreed locations.

At present, my response is neither in favour or against the proposal but further discussion will be required on mitigation measures required to gain a favourable response.

Kind regards

Paul Grigor

Roads Planning Officer

Planning, Housing & Related Services

Scottish Borders Council

Telephone: 01835 826663

Email address: [pgrigor@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:pgrigor@scotborders.gov.uk)

[Web](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Flickr](#) | [YouTube](#)

How are you playing [#yourpart](#) to help us keep the Borders thriving?



**\*\* Please note that I no longer work a Monday. Please email [placeroadsplanning@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:placeroadsplanning@scotborders.gov.uk) should you need any assistance in my absence \*\***

**From:** John Handley <[john.handley@johnhandley.co.uk](mailto:john.handley@johnhandley.co.uk)>  
**Sent:** 19 September 2022 19:37  
**To:** Grigor, Paul <[pgrigor@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:pgrigor@scotborders.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** Dods, Ranald <[Ranald.Dods@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:Ranald.Dods@scotborders.gov.uk)>; [richard@pentlandbiomass.com](mailto:richard@pentlandbiomass.com)  
**Subject:** Planning Application Ref: 22/00933/FUL

CAUTION: External Email

Paul,

**Planning Application Ref: 22/00933/FUL**

**Erection of timber storage and processing facility with new access junction, yard area, landscaping, tree planting, SUDs and associated works and planning permission in principle for associated**

**dwellinghouse with office for the timber processing facility on Land South West Of West Loch Farmhouse Peebles Scottish Borders**

We refer to your consultation response dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 in connection with the above planning application.

We are the applicant's agents and have reviewed your consultation response can provide the following additional information to address the queries raised.

**Proposed Development**

As set out in the Supporting Planning Statement submitted with the planning application, the primary purpose of the proposed development is to allow the applicants, Pentland Biomass, to relocate their existing timber storage yard from Pentland Mains Farm, Loanhead, Midlothian to this new location in the Scottish Borders.

The primary use of the new development will be for the long term, open storage of timber to allow the stacked timber to dry out. The drying process takes around 18 to 24 months. Despite some of the comments set out in the objection letters, the intention is not to create a busy industrial facility which generates a significant volume of traffic on a daily basis. This is not the case.

In addition to the primary purpose of the site as a timber storage yard, there will also be some ancillary processing of the air-dried timber to produce woodchip, logs and kindling. It should be noted that these will not be large scale industrial facilities and the total amount of floorspace being proposed on the site is 480 sqm (gross external). This is not a large scale industrial development.

There will also be no drying facility on this site as this will be undertaken at the company's existing drying shed at Loanhead, which adjoins the Pentland Garden Centre. Similarly, there will be no retail sale of timber products from this location and therefore no visiting members of the public to this new facility.

If it would be helpful, Pentland Biomass would be happy to arrange a visit of their existing facility at Pentland Mains Farm so you can see the extent and scale of the existing business operation.

### **Choice of site location**

As set out in the Supporting Planning Statement, the Westloch application site has been selected following a lengthy site search process. One of the primary considerations was the availability of a suitable site access, which avoided taking access through built-up areas and residential areas. The site's location within the existing Westloch Forest Estate, which had recently been planted as a large scale commercial conifer forest, was considered to be a significant advantage in this respect.

As you will be aware, a new forest access route was also recently approved and constructed immediately to the west of the application site which further confirmed the suitability of this specific location for the proposed timber storage use.

As you have noted in your response, this location also benefits from its direct access to the A703 which is an Approved Route for Timber Transportation. From the A703, the application site is accessed via the unnamed minor public road which, whilst classified as a Consultation Route for timber transport, is not a restricted route and has no limits in terms of the type, weight or class of vehicles that can use this road.

In this respect, Pentland Biomass has been using this minor public road to access and transport existing timber stocks throughout this area for a number of years and have encountered no issues, constraints or difficulties with this route for their HGVs.

For all of these reasons, the access to the site was considered to be appropriate and suitable for the proposed timber storage yard. The site benefits from existing, direct access to approved timber transport routes. It is also located in an area noted for its major timber processing facilities. These are all significant benefits of the Westloch location.

Our clients have also worked out roughly what felling is expected to take place over the next 35 years in this location, and the volume of trucks expected to use this unnamed public road assuming they all head south which they do at present. This includes accessing the planted timber stocks at Portmore

Estate; Gladhouse; Rosbery/Huntly Cot, in addition to the Westloch Estate. In total across these areas there is at least 300,000 tonnes of timber that will require to be transported from this wider location. These areas will all utilise this same route.

The point being that this road is both an existing and established timber transport route; and one that will be used for transporting timber over the next 35 years. It is therefore considered to be an appropriate choice of location from an access perspective.

### **Sustainability Benefits**

As noted in the Supporting Planning Statement, there also significant sustainability benefits in selecting this location for the replacement facility as the majority of the company's sources of timber are located within the Scottish Borders area and an accessible location close to existing timber stocks was an important consideration from a sustainability perspective and to reduce haulage costs.

The majority of the staff employed by the Biomass company also live in the local area and the selection of this site offered further advantages in terms of a reduction in staff commuting distances and travel costs.

### **Estimated Vehicle Trips**

In terms of vehicle trips to the new facility, it is anticipated that this would match the current trips experienced at the company's current Loanhead facility which has a maximum of 20 car trips per day (10 into/out of the site) and an average of 4-6 lorry trips per week into/out of site.

As confirmed above, and in the Supporting Planning Statement, there will be no sales to the public from the site and therefore very few, if any, visitor trips are expected.

In response to your queries about how the business will operate, including details of the type, size and frequency of traffic movements, and in particular the increase in HGV movements, our clients have calculated that the new facility could hold, at its peak, up to 4,000 tonnes of stored timber. However,

and in reality and in practical terms, it is expected that the site will store at most around 2,500 tonnes of timber at any time, which would primarily be sourced from the Borders area.

Based on the maximum figure of 4,000 tonnes of stored timber on the site, the number of HGV trips would equate to 160 truck loads into the site and 120 truck loads out as processed dry chips on an annual basis.

On this basis, the maximum HGV trips would be 300 trucks on the road per year, which is an average of 6 HGVs per week.

On the basis that the site holds a total of 2,500 tonnes of stored timber, which is more realistic, that would equate to 100 truck loads in and 75 truck loads out, which is a total of 175 trucks on the road per year, or an average of under 4 HGVs per week.

As noted above, these are not large numbers of HGV trips accessing the site.

If it would be of further assistance to your consideration of this proposal, our clients would be happy to arrange a visit of their existing facility at Pentland Mains Farm so you can see the extent and scale of the existing business operation and the type and size of vehicles being used.

### **Mitigation Measures**

In view of the limited number of anticipated vehicle trips, and the fact that the existing public road has no existing restrictions and is currently used as a timber access route, no mitigation measures are considered to be necessary.

This is on the basis that the impact of the expected additional traffic movements on this road is not considered to be excessive or significant.

However, and should it be considered necessary to provide mitigation measures, we can confirm that our clients would be happy to discuss these with you and consider and provide any reasonable measures which are directly related to the proposed new use of this site.

**Summary**

*We trust the above additional information will be of further assistance to your consideration of this planning application and provides the details you have requested.*

*We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these points with you once you have had a chance to review this information, and have also copied this email to Ranald Dods for his information.*

*Kind regards*

*John*

John Handley

BSc (Hons), MRTPI

Director

John Handley Associates Ltd

Chartered Town Planning Consultants

E: [john.handley@johnhandley.co.uk](mailto:john.handley@johnhandley.co.uk)

M: 07826 870806