

White Cross Farm, Reading Road, Cholsey,
Wallingford, Oxfordshire

**Proposed Extraction and processing
of sand and gravel including the
construction of new site access
roads, landscaping and screening
bunds, minerals washing plant and
other associated infrastructure with
restoration to agriculture and nature
conservation areas, using inert fill.**

APP/U3100/W/25/3361505

Summary Proof of Evidence

**Oxfordshire County Council
July 2025**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Personal Details and Qualifications

1.1.1. My name is David Periam. I am a member of the RTPi.

2.0 CONSIDERATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT WITH REGARD TO THE REASON FOR REFUSAL

2.1 Adverse Landscape and Visual Impact

- 2.1.1 The details of the development and its location are summarised in the agreed Statement of Common Ground. The application was refused by the council's Planning and Regulation Committee on 3rd September 2024.
- 2.1.2 My evidence considers the appeal development in relation to relevant development plan, national planning and other material considerations with regard to the reason for refusal and the evidence provided in the proof of evidence of Graham Woodward, the council's expert witness on landscape and visual impact and in the appellant's Statement of Case.
- 2.1.3 Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act places on local authorities a duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) (National Landscapes).
- 2.1.4 The development is contrary to development plan policies C8 of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 1 Core Strategy 2017 (OMWCS) (CD12.01) and ENV1 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP) (CD12.03).
- 2.1.5 These policies reflect paragraph 189 of the Framework.
- 2.1.6 The development is also contrary to draft policies NH4, NH6 and NH7 of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council Joint Local Plan Pre-submission publication version (Regulation 19) October 2024 (JLP 2024) (CD13.01).
- 2.1.7 Some weight should also be attached as material considerations to the Chilterns AONB Management Plan (CMP) policy DP4 (CD12.05) and the Chilterns Conservation Board – Position Statement Development Affecting the Chilterns AONB (CD12.06).
- 2.1.8 The appeal development would have a large significant adverse landscape and visual effect whilst operational and so would impact on users of the River Thames, the Thames Path National Trail and its users and on the setting of the Chilterns National

Landscape. There is therefore significant harm arising from the appeal proposal contrary to the development plan and other material considerations.

2.1.9 This cannot be mitigated by the measures proposed by the appellant. The proposed mitigation measures would contribute to the significant harm arising from the appeal proposal. The proposed planting whilst beneficial in the longer term, would not mature sufficiently during the operational period of the development to effectively screen the quarry whilst operational.

2.1.10 The appeal development would replace the existing agricultural meadows, which lie in the setting of the CNL, with an active quarry for several years. The development is inherently disruptive. As well as the identified significant large adverse landscape and visual effect and so impact on the River Thames and its users, the Thames Path National Trail and its users and the setting of the CNL, this would not work to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the CNL.

2.1.11 There is no inherent environmental issue with the site as it exists and so there is no overriding landscape, biodiversity or other environmental benefit arising from this development would outweigh the identified harm or further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL.

3.0 THE PLANNING BALANCE

3.1.1 The significant benefit which has to be weighed in the planning balance which could outweigh the identified harm is the great weight to be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy, in line with paragraph 224 of the Framework.

3.1.2 It is not disputed that there are economic developments at both the local and national scale associated with the proposed development. This would be true of any such proposal.

3.1.3 There is development identified which requires aggregate mineral to be provided for its construction and a further local source of sand and gravel would have potential sustainability benefits.

- 3.1.4 It is not disputed that the council has a duty to deliver sufficient planning permissions to maintain the landbank for sand and gravel over the OMWCS period and beyond.
- 3.1.5 As of the end of 2023, Oxfordshire held an estimated 7.693 million tonnes (mt) of sand and gravel reserves, equating to a landbank of approximately 7.8 years based on the 2023 Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA) Annual Provision Rate (APR) of 0.986mt per year. The next formal update, expected in late 2025, will reflect 2024 sales and reserve data. National policy requires a minimum seven-year landbank, which, based on the 2023 LAA, equates to 6.902 mt. While the updated figures are pending, a provisional assessment—factoring in end-2023 reserves, new permissions since then, and applying the 2023 APR as a proxy for 2024 and early 2025 sales—suggests current reserves could be around 6.296 mt. This falls short of the required threshold of 6.902mt, indicating Oxfordshire may not be currently meeting its minimum landbank requirement. This calculation is set out below.
- 3.1.6 It is not disputed that the consented mineral reserves do not provide the seven years landbank for sand and gravel. There is a need for further permissions to be granted.
- 3.1.7 There are outstanding planning applications before the council which, if consented, would increase the landbank but no assumptions can be made with regard to their approval. The identified significant large adverse landscape and visual impact would constitute a significant harm at this sensitive location. This is not considered to be outweighed by the benefits arising from the grant of planning permission to the development. The relatively limited additional mineral reserves that would be contributed through the grant of planning permission would not outweigh the significant harms.
- 3.1.8 The appellant has argued that the council's Landscape Advisor had no regard to the fact that the OMWCS had already assessed and weighed merits of locations, including proximity to the CNL and the Thames Path National Trail.
- 3.1.9 The appeal site lies in an identified Strategic Resource Area (SRA) in the OMWCS (CD12.01). OMWCS policy M3 is clear that the principal locations for aggregate minerals extraction will be in the SRAs but goes on to state that specific sites for

working aggregate minerals within the SRAs will be allocated in the Minerals & Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations Document, in accordance with policy M4. OMWCS policy M5 states that prior to the adoption of the Minerals & Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations Document, permission will be granted for the working of aggregate minerals where this would contribute towards meeting the requirement for provision in policy M2 and provided that the proposal is in accordance with the locational strategy in policy M3 and that the requirements of policies C1 – C12 are met. OMWCS policy C4 states that proposals for minerals and waste development should ensure that the River Thames and other watercourses and canals of significant landscape, nature conservation, or amenity value are adequately protected from unacceptable adverse impacts. OMWCS policy C8 seeks to protect the landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs. OMWCS policy C11 states that the integrity and amenity value of the rights of way network shall be maintained.

3.1.10 It is not the case that the OMWCS has identified the appeal site as suitable for mineral extraction, rather that it sits within an SRA and any proposal is then subject to the assessment against the criteria set out in the OMWCS. This the council did in its determination of the application concluding that the proposed development is not acceptable.

3.1.11 In conclusion, it can be seen that the proposals are contrary to the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations. The benefits are not considered to outweigh the significant harm arising from the appeal proposal.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 There is an identified need for further planning permissions to be granted for the extraction of sand and gravel in Oxfordshire. This need and any benefit arising has to be weighed against the harm arising. The significant harm caused by the large adverse landscape and visual effect and so impact on the River Thames and its users, the Thames Path National Trail and its users and the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape, is not outweighed by the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy. The need for additional mineral reserves to increase the county's sand and gravel landbank should instead be met at suitable sites where such

development would not to cause significant harm or conflict with other relevant policies.

4.2 The appeal proposal would cause significant harm in conflict with the development plan and other material considerations and adequate justification for this has not been put forward in support of the appeal proposal. The application must be determined in accordance with the development plan and other material considerations and the refusal of the planning application was consistent with this.