Proposed Whitecross Quarry Development: on land at White Cross Farm, Nr Wallingford, Oxfordshire




PLANNING STATEMENT (Re-Submitted)

Re-submission of a Planning Application to allow the extraction and processing of sand & 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 Imported Inert Fill.

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LONDON ROCK SUPPLIES LTD

Greenfield enviro

Quality Assurance Review

Project Name: **Proposed Whitecross Quarry Development on land at White Cross Farm, Nr Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

Re-submission of Planning Proposals to allow the extraction and processing of sand & 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 imported inert fill. REF: MW.0033/18

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PLANNING APPLICATION KEY POINT SUMMARY

Introduction: This application is submitted on behalf of London Rock Supplies Ltd (LRS), the proposals are a joint venture between the landowners and LRS termed "The White Cross Project Partnership (WCPP)". The application area lies in the Parish of Cholsey within the County of Oxfordshire. The application area is located to the south of the A4130 Wallingford By-pass (Nosworthy Way) on the western bank of the River Thames. The site comprises low lying floodplain grassland area which is mainly arable and grazing land and a derelict barn

Development Proposals:

Planning Application area		19.0ha	
Potential Extraction Area:		15.5ha	
Estimated Soils & Overburden:		180,000m^3	
Estimated Saleable Reserves:		550,000 tonnes	
Overall Mean Grading:	Fines	Sand	Gravel
Sand and Gravel	4%	50%	46%
Estimated Imported Backfill :		290,000m^3	

Quarry Hours of Operation:

Monday to Friday	07.00 to 18.00
Saturday	07.00 to 13.00
Sunday & Bank Holidays	Closed

Duration of operations: The application site will provide approximately 4 to 5 years extraction at anticipated output levels of 140,000 tonnes per annum.
Total project timescales estimated to be 6 years to end of restoration phase.

Employment: 8 on site plus additional sub-contract personnel and hauliers.

Site Access: The quarry entrance will use a new junction off from Reading Road (A329) with an exit constructed on to the A4130, just to the east of the existing roundabout.
No HGV's will be permitted to drive through the town of Wallingford.

Environmental Impact & Mitigation: No significant noise, dust, archaeological or water impacts are predicted. Visual Impacts into the site will be minimised by locating the plant adjacent to the A329 and using the existing thick boundary hedgerow, in addition to the construction of screening bunds made with soils stripped from working areas. Additional planting and screening will also be created in the area near to the roundabout l that will reduce the visual impact of the development to the local traffic. Ecological impacts have been assessed and mitigation measures recommended are to ensure no impact on any protected or notable species or habitats. All boundary hedgerows, the central hedgerow and major trees will be retained as part of the proposals except where the upgraded site entrance will be constructed.

Restoration Proposals: The proposals include re-creation of low level floodplain land within the eastern extraction area for a range of diverse UK and Oxfordshire BAP habitats (such as reedbeds, marshland and floodplain grazing marsh). The larger western extraction area and plant site area will be restored to mainly agricultural land with hedgerows, using soils stored in landscaping bunds, following backfilling with imported inert materials to raise the levels of the land back to original levels.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 On behalf of London Rock Supplies Limited (LRS), a planning application is being re-submitted for the extraction and processing of approximately 0.55 million tonnes of sand and gravel over 4 to 5 years with an additional year for restoration on completion of mineral extraction on land at White Cross Farm, Cholsey, near Wallingford, Oxfordshire. The proposed quarry site is referenced as "Whitecross Quarry, Wallingford". The site location is shown on Plan PA21-1.

1.1.2 The previous planning application included mineral extraction and processing and a marina after-use (planning permission refused on 10th September 2020 by Oxfordshire County Council). This proposal comprised a five year construction phase involving the extraction and processing of Thames Terrace Sand and Gravel with the importation of inert fill to construct the marina basin that was originally submitted in 2018 (Planning Ref MW.0033/18). Following discussions between the applicant and OCC, together with significant increase in demand for construction materials in Oxfordshire and across the UK, it has been decided that the application be re-submitted for the minerals element of the original marina scheme but with restoration to original levels to a mix of agricultural land and mixed floodplain habitats that will enhance what is currently present on the site.

1.1.3 The re-submission is being made under Section 9 of The Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) Regulations 2012. This requires any re-submission to be made within 12 months of a planning decision is not liable for further fees provided various requirement are met including Part 2 (b) which states: "

that the application relates—

(i) in the case of an application for planning permission, to the same site as that to which the earlier application related, or to part of that site, and to no other land except land included solely for the purpose of providing a different means of access to the site;

Part 2 (c) that states:

in the case of an application for planning permission, that the local planning authority to whom the application is made are satisfied that it relates to development of the same character or description as the development to which the earlier application related (and to no other development)

1.1.4 This re-submission includes the same proposals for the construction of a new access road into the quarry site off the A329 (Reading Road) and an exit road onto the A4130 (Wallingford By-pass) that joins the A329 at a roundabout that forms the north-western boundary of the site. The proposals also include landscaping and screening bunds, mineral processing plant and other associated quarry infrastructure, together with a proposed restoration scheme for the site on completion of mineral extraction

1.1.5 The area of the planning application comprises some 19 hectares (see Plan PA21-2) comprising mainly arable and grazing land and a derelict barn that confirms that all of the land necessary for the proposed development is in the control of the applicant. This re-submitted planning application area is identical to the land area of the 2018 marina application.

1.1.6 The planning application is accompanied by a separate Environmental Statement (ES) that has been updated to address the impact of the re-submitted proposals and recommends mitigation measures where they are deemed necessary, to minimise any impact on the local and wider environment.

1.1.7 The development proposals have not been the subject to the usual array of public consultation due to the COVID-19 restrictions, but a number of key statutory organisations have been directly consulted and "virtual" meetings held. A detailed pre-application submission was also provided by OCC (dated 6th May 2021) as part of the on-going liaison with the planning authority which is included in Appendix 1.

1.2 The Applicant

1.2.1 The land at White Cross Farm has been family owned for many decades, but the land now forms part of a development company – "The White Cross Project Partnership (WCPP)" which is a joint venture between the landowners and London Rock Supplies Ltd (LRS). LRS is the applicant and WCPP will be the owner of the proposed quarry, with LRS the stated operator of site, who will also merchant all of the aggregate sales and co-ordinate the infilling operations.

1.2.2 LRS is a major aggregate merchanting, land remediation and development company that is based in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire. It has since extended its operating base from the London area into Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and recently the West Midlands. They operate a series of aggregate businesses, mineral merchanting and extraction operations, together with land remediation and development schemes such as agricultural reservoir development and other minerals construction development.

1.2.3 The company was established in 1999 and is owned and managed by experienced personnel who have over 25 years experience in the minerals, earthworks and land remediation industries. The operating companies presently employ over 50 full time staff, but further employment by way of subcontract work to the local transport, earthworks and service industries would also be created.

1.3 Company Experience

1.3.1 The LRS business has included the development of a major recycled soils company based in Kent and London, which was a major supplier to the Olympic Park in London. The company has also provided services and materials as part of major road and rail schemes such as the M25 widening and Crossrail.

1.3.2 Within the East Midlands, LRS developed a greenfield marina basin on the Grand Union Canal, Leicestershire (Pilings Lock), with a restoration bond agreed with the local authority for the construction phase. The sand and gravel was extracted over a three year period, which was washed and processed on-site, with the marina basin constructed using imported clay materials.

1.4 Previous Site Development and Recent Local Development

1.4.1 The proposed scheme to develop an offline River Thames marina with over 200 moorings and associated facilities on the White Cross Farm site was refused planning on 10th September 2020. This current proposed minerals scheme uses the geological and environmental information (updated and modified) as the basis for a re-submission of the scheme for extracting the proven sand and gravel deposits but with restoration back to original levels to a mix of agricultural land and a range of floodplain habitats.

1.4.2 Prior to the marina development application in 2018, the White Cross Farm site had been the subject of a number of planning applications in the 1970's for minor agricultural and river-based activities. However, the most significant major development in the area comprised the construction of the Wallingford by-pass in 1992/93.

1.4.3 This new road split the agricultural landownership of White Cross Farm in to two, that are not directly linked. Images of the current site and also the by-pass construction are given in Appendix 2.

1.4.4 In January 2015, South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for a 1.1MW photovoltaic solar farm to the west of Reading Road. The solar farm is located opposite the proposed quarry on the western side of the Reading Road (A329).

1.4.5 To the east of the application site, a planning permission has been granted to convert part of the extensive Carmel College site to residential properties. The complex is currently up for sale.

1.4.6 In November 2017, Oxfordshire County Council granted planning permission (subject to legal agreements) for sand and gravel extraction and processing with restoration to agriculture using imported inert materials at New Barn Farm, Cholsey.

2. THE SITE

2.1 Site Description

2.1.1 The application area is located to the south of the A4130 Wallingford By-pass (Nosworthy Way) on the western bank of the River Thames. The application area covers some 19 hectares of land within the Parish of Cholsey and the County of Oxfordshire. The site is centred at Grid Reference [SU 605 877] (as shown in Plan PA21-1) and is located approximately 1km south of the town centre of Wallingford, 1.8km north east of the village of Cholsey and about 8km to the east of Didcot. The site also lies about 3km south west of RAF Benson.

2.1.2 White Cross Farm is accessed via an agricultural entrance off Reading Road (A329), which connects the site to the A4130 (Nosworthy Way) at a roundabout on the north-western edge of the site. The A4130 is situated on an embankment that forms the northern boundary of the site, which crosses the River Thames on a Winterbrook Bridge and joins the A4074 (Oxford to Reading Road) about 1km to the east of the site. The A4130 also gives direct access to the town of Didcot and the A34, some 12km to the west.

2.1.3 The application area comprises mainly agricultural land that has been used for arable and livestock grazing purposes. Photographs of the site are given in Appendix 2. The application area is bound to the south by narrow strip of woodland and a residential property (Winward House), with the River Thames forming the eastern boundary of the site (Plan PA21-3).

2.1.4 The River Thames lies at level of about 42.4m AOD, with land adjacent to the river lying at about 43.5m AOD. The site rises in elevation towards the north-west to about 46.4m AOD, while the mapped limit of the Thames floodplain lies at about 45m AOD. The central and eastern parts of the application area is located within Flood Zone 2 and 3 of the River Thames, but the north-western area of the site is not situated on the floodplain, as shown in Plan PA21-4.

2.1.5 Published OS maps show two minor drainage ditches crossing the site. One drain trends north to south through the centre of the site that is partially vegetated with trees and scrub that has been truncated by the embankment of the A4130 Wallingford By-pass. A second drainage ditch is also present within the north eastern part of the site which flows from a culvert beneath the A4130 and issues into the River Thames.

2.1.6 To the west of the Reading Road (to the north of Elizabeth House), a solar farm has recently been constructed.

2.1.7 The nearest residential properties are located just to the south of the site on Reading Road (A329) named Winward House, and two located to the west named Coachmans Cottage and The Lodge, both of which lie to the west of a large property named Elizabeth House (Plan PA18-5). The Bright Horizons day nursery school is also situated at Elizabeth House. On the eastern bank of the River Thames, a complex termed Carmel College, Mongewell Park and a number of properties are present (Barrington Court).

2.1.8 The area surrounding White Cross Farm is generally agricultural land, with occasional pockets of woodland and a few minor watercourses. The topography is dominated by the southerly flowing River Thames, with grassland present on the banks of the river which forms the floodplain. The land rises steeply away from the River Thames towards the east to an elevation of about 90m AOD, just to the east of Mongewell Park, and rises more gently to the west towards Cholsey Hill at about 70m AOD.

2.1.9 There are no known underground of over ground services within the site.

2.2 Public Rights of Way

2.2.1 There is one public right of way present within the site boundary, which comprises the Thames Path National Trail, as shown in Plan PA21-1 and PA21-5. This footpath is located on the western bank of the River Thames and extends from north to south along the length of the river bank on the White Cross Farm site.

2.2.2 The Thames Trail footpath enters the site beneath the Winterbrook Bridge and crosses the ditch in the north-eastern part of the site over a concrete footbridge. There is extensive erosion of the footpath either side of the concrete footbridge where the distance between the path and river bank is less than 3m.

2.2.3 In the central part of the site, vegetation growth has varied the location of the path, it is considered that the current location of the footpath is approximately between 5m and 10m in from the river bank. The footpath then leaves the site to the south via a wooden stile. Photographs of the footpath are given in Appendix 2.

2.3 Statutory and Non-Statutory Sites with Protective Designations

2.3.1 There are no internationally designated statutory nature conservation sites such as Special Conservation Areas (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPA) present within a 2km radius of the centre of the application area.

2.3.2 The Application Site is not subject to any statutory nature conservation designation such as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

2.3.3 There are two statutory sites within 2km of the application area, both of which are Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown in Plan PA21-6:

- The Chilterns AONB
- North Wessex Downs AONB

2.3.4 The North Wessex Downs lies about 2km to the west of the site, but the River Thames forms the boundary of The Chilterns AONB. Due to the historical nature of the Crowmarsh Parish boundary that crosses the River Thames and falls within the site boundary for a distance of about 15m from the river with a length of about 35m. A very minor part of the site adjacent to the River Thames therefore lies just within the Chilterns AONB.

2.3.5 There are three non-statutory sites within 2km of the application site:

(i) The Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area (CTA);
(ii) Riverside Meadows; and,
(iii) Wallingford Castle Meadows.

2.3.6 The Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area (CTA) covers some 183 hectares of flat riverside land on the floodplain between Wallingford and Goring, as shown in Plan PA21-4. There is a section of CTA which falls within the eastern part of the application area, but the majority of the site does not fall within the CTA.

3. SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED MINERALS DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The Proposals

3.1.1 The proposed development on the land at White Cross Farm includes the excavation and processing of about 550,000 tonnes (340,000m^3) of River Terrace Sand and Gravel reserves and about the 180,000m^3 of soils and overburden alluvial clay within a proposed extraction area of 15.5 hectares. There is a requirement for the importation of about 280,000m^3 of imported inert backfill materials to raise levels to allow the soils to be re-spread for final site restoration.

3.1.2 Mineral processing will be carried out in a series of phases over a period of about four years, as shown Plan PA21-7. The level of output from the site is expected to average some 140,000 tonnes per annum which would comprise direct aggregate sales. However, an additional year or so will be required to complete final landscaping and restoration works, thus it is anticipated that the development will take a total of 5 to 6 years to complete the development.

3.1.3 The scheme also proposed the creation of several UK BAP priority habitats such as reed beds and floodplain grazing marsh as part of the development and to maintain the Thames Trail National Footpath in it's existing location adjacent to the river.

3.1.4 The proposed Restoration Strategy for the site following extraction and backfilling is given Appendix 3.

3.2 Statutory Designated Sites

3.2.1 The proposed development on the land at White Cross Farm does not have any direct impact on any of the identified statutory sites or either of the two AONB's. However, it is recognised that a very small part of the Chiltern AONB boundary crosses the River Thames on the western bank for a distance of about 30m parallel to the river and about 15m wide. Due to a 30 wide margin to the river from the extraction area, the AONB will not be disturbed.

3.2.2 It is recognised that the Thames Wallingford to Goring CTA does cross part of the floodplain area adjacent to the Thames (see Plan PA21-4) but this is not a statutory designated feature. The proposed 30m working margin to the River Thames from the limit of the extraction area will ensure that the majority of the CTA will be undisturbed. However, where mineral extraction does take place within a small part of the CTA, the restoration back to original levels with a mix of floodplain grassland, marsh areas and wet woodland will ensure that target habitats are created and enhanced compared with the existing mix of arable and grassing farmland.

4. GEOLOGY

4.1 Regional Geology

4.1.1 The published mineral assessment report (MAR 64 –Wallingford and Goring) shows that the oldest strata mapped in this area are the Lower Chalk of Upper Cretaceous age, which dip gently towards the south-east. These consist of mainly soft grey marly chalk with hard silty seams. The bedrock mapped in the Wallingford area is the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation that has a thickness of between 50-80m.

4.1.2 Extensive deposits of Fluvial Drift are also mapped in this area, comprising continuous deposits in the valleys of River Terrace Deposits and alluvium. The general stratigraphy of the area is shown in Appendix 6 with the detailed geological report given in the Environmental Statement.

4.2 Drift Geology

4.2.1 The published geological information includes a Mineral Assessment Report (MAR 64 –Wallingford and Goring) published by the British Geological Survey. This report together with published borehole information confirms generally First Terrace Deposits occurs as a narrow outcrop flanking the River Thames, locally overlain by alluvium.

4.2.2 The River Terrace Sand and Gravel mapped within the Wallingford area usually comprises mainly fine to coarse gravels with medium and coarse sands present. These deposits have a maximum proven thickness of 9m, but where proved generally range in thickness from 1.6m to 8m in thickness.

4.2.3 The gravel fraction is usually described as flint and quartz and limestone with minor amounts of chalk and ironstone in a matrix of quartzitic fine to medium sand which has a pinky brown to yellowish brown colour. Alluvium is mapped in the area overlying the sands and gravels comprising soft dark grey clay and seams of peat.

4.3 Borehole results

4.3.1 The borehole drilling has proved a deposit of River Terrace Sand and Gravel present across the site, which has a maximum thickness of 4.4m. However the mineral proved ranges from 1.2m - 4.4m in thickness. All of the boreholes drilled were terminated in the stiff grey clays of the Lower Chalk formation, of Cretaceous age.

4.3.2 Within the application area all of the boreholes drilled proved a thin overburden unit of clayey peaty top soil to depths of generally 400m, with clayey sub soil about 300mm thick. Boreholes in the eastern part of the site adjacent to the river proved a thicker

unit of overburden materials which comprised a yellow to grey soft silty clay of up to 2.5m in thickness.

4.3.3 All of the boreholes drilled across the site were also dipped to determine the groundwater levels across the site. During drilling groundwater was encountered in all of the boreholes drilled.

4.3.4 The groundwater monitoring boreholes have been dipped at regular intervals that indicates that the groundwater on the site generally lies at around approximately 43.3mAOD, while water in the River Thames lies at a level of 42.3m AOD. De-watering would be necessary to extract the proven sand and gravel reserves present on the site in a 'dry state'.

4.4 Mineral Quality

4.4.1 Laboratory testing of the sand and gravel confirms that it appears suitable for range of construction aggregate uses. Grading analyses and aggregate testing indicates that the sand and gravel deposits can be washed to produce both a fine and coarse concreting aggregate that can be used in ready mixed concrete production.

4.4.2 The proven silt content of the deposit is generally low (<5%), but the fines will be removed by washing to produce a saleable product, as shown in Appendix 5.

4.4.3 Aggregate strength testing of the gravel fraction confirms that the material will be suitable for use as high strength concrete and other construction aggregates.

4.5 Potential Site Reserves

4.5.1 To release the workable sand and gravel reserves proved, it is estimated that approximately 180,000m^3 of soils and overburden clay will have to be stripped from the proposed excavation area of about 15.5 hectares.

4.5.2 Within the extraction area identified, it is estimated that some 0.55 million tonnes of sand and gravel may be present. It is proposed that this material will be extracted to provide a range of washed aggregates to the local south Oxfordshire market, over a period of about 4 years, at an output of 140,000 tonnes per annum.

4.5.3 The volumes of soils and overburden, together with the saleable tonnes of mineral contained within each phase area are given below, with the soil volumes provided in Append 3 (Restoration Strategy).

Potential Mineral Resources – Proposed Whitecross Quarry

	Soils & Overburden (m3)	S&G (m3)	In-Situ S&G (tonnes)	Saleable S&G (tonnes)
Plant Site	28,000	87,000	152,000	136,800
Phase 1	55,000	67,000	117,000	105,300
Phase 2	29,000	32,000	56,000	50,400
Phase 3	49,000	101,000	177,000	159,300
Phase 4	20,000	72,000	126,000	113,400
TOTAL	**181,000**	**359,000**	**628,000**	**565,200**

5. PROPOSED PHASED EXTRACTION

5.1 Initial Development/ Enabling Works

5.1.1 On granting of Planning Permission for the proposals and after all necessary highways orders, licenses and consents have been obtained, it is anticipated that the initial development will comprise the construction of the highway access to enter and exit the site. The proposed access will be designed to the requirements of the Oxfordshire Highways Department using current standards and specifications for highways construction.

5.1.2 It is proposed that a new site entrance off the A329 and new site exit onto the A4130 will be constructed at the locations shown in Plan PA21-8. The proposed site entrance and exit roads will link the proposed plant area and administrative compound with the existing road network. This will allow HGV's to access the national highways network on A4130 (Nosworthy Way).

5.1.3 During the quarry operations it is proposed that all plant and machinery accessing the White Cross Farm site will enter using the A329 (Reading Road) turning left into the site, and would exit the site, turning left only onto the A4130 (Wallingford by-pass). However, to allow construction of the new access roads, the initial access into the site will be via the existing agricultural entrance off Reading Road. While this is being used for the enabling works, a banksman will ensure that all vehicles leaving the site on to the public highway do so safely in compliance with best practice.

5.1.4 The site access will be surfaced with asphalt for 30m, the road to the processing plant area will be constructed using a geotextile membrane laid on the underlying in-situ materials and hard surfaced to the plant area with imported hardcore material and road planings. At the site entrance on the A329 a notice board will be installed with the site name and contact details shown.

5.1.5 The quarry exit will be constructed onto the A1430 (Nosworthy Way) with a left turn only that will have a no entry sign to ensure traffic enters via the Reading Road. The A4130 has been constructed on an embankment 2-3m above the ground levels within the site. A ramp will be required to raise the level of the exit road toward the A4130. The exit ramp with be constructed using compacted granular fill at a gradient of 1v:10h and surfaced with road planings up to the last 30m. The last 30m onto the public highway will be level with the A4130 and surface with asphalt, as agreed with the Oxfordshire County Council highways department.

5.1.6 During the highways works, the soils from the initial Phase A of the development will also be stripped and the essential site infrastructure will be installed (eg electric and water supply).

5.1.7 The stripped soils will be used to create screening bunds, which will provide a suitable and useful storage solution for the soils and will ensure that the processing plant will be screened from the public highways and residential properties.

5.1.8 The top soils from the plant area will be stripped and placed in bunds no higher than 3m, with sub soils in bunds no greater in height than 5m. The sub soil storage areas will also be stripped of top soil prior to deposit of the sub soils. These bunds will have side slopes no greater than 26° and will be grass seeded for easy cutting and maintenance. The storage of these soils will ensure that they are available for use in the quarry restoration.

5.2 Processing Plant Area Construction: Phase A

5.2.1 The minerals within the proposed extraction area (15.5ha) will be processed within a defined plant area which will be located in the north western part of the site (see Plan PA21-7), which does not lie on the floodplain of the River Thames.

5.2.2 The mineral from Phase A will be excavated and the area backfilled and compacted with suitable imported engineering fill, before the site facilities and processing plant are constructed. This is to ensure the mineral is not sterilised, and to raise the ground levels to allow surface water drainage. It should be noted that this area is not on the floodplain. The sand and gravel excavated from Phase A will be placed in a dedicated temporary stockpile (up to 6m in height) off the floodplain on Phase 4 adjacent to the processing plant (as shown on Plan PA21-7).

5.2.3 When the Phase A extraction and backfilling works together with the proposed site entrances are completed, the site administration facilities, including “portakabin” type offices, wheel wash, car parks, HGV parking, weighbridge and internal access roads will be constructed. The internal haul roads and other areas around the plant area will be constructed using imported hardcore materials that will be compacted to provide a suitable surface for HGV’s and quarry vehicles.

5.2.4 The construction of the plant will require the placement of a reinforced concrete apron on which the plant will be situated. As the plant is constructed the excavation of wash water lagoons will commence at the locations shown in Plan PA21-7.

5.2.5 These lagoons will be constructed to ensure that they do not encourage any bird activity due to the safeguarding requirements of nearby airfields. It is proposed that it will be excavated within the sand and gravel to a depth of about 5m.

5.2.6 The sand and gravels forming the temporary stockpile will be fed through the plant, to produce a range of single sized aggregates and concreting sand. These will be loaded onto HGV's for distribution to local construction markets.

5.2.7 It is proposed that the detailed specifications of the site layout and elevations of all of the static plant, offices, wheel wash, weighbridge and other fixed structures will be provided to the Mineral Planning Authority prior to the commencement of site operations.

5.3 Method and sequence of excavation: Phase 1 to 4

5.3.1 The sand and gravel deposit is generally between 2m to 4m thick, it is proposed that this will be excavated in a single face using a tracked excavator that will load a series of dump trucks. These dump trucks will then haul the mineral to the processing plant and stocking area. The as-raised material will then be processed to produce a series of single sized gravel and washed sand products. Typical photos of the machinery and plant likely to be used in these operations are given in Appendix 6.

5.3.2 The presence of a water table within sand and gravel indicates that the deposit will require dewatering to be worked in a 'dry state'. Dewatering the excavation will also allow base of the site to be lined and then backfilled with suitable imported materials as part of the likely permitting for the restoration. The water will be pumped into a series of settlement lagoons before being discharged into the River Thames. The discharge will require a permit from the Environment Agency that will control suspended solids and other pollution issues.

5.3.3 The development proposals involve restoring the site to agricultural land, thus soils on the site will be stored in landscaped bunds around the margins of the site, located off the floodplain.

5.3.4 The mineral extraction within Phase 1 will progress southwards, maintaining a 30m margin of undisturbed land to the River Thames (Plan PA21-7). The undisturbed margin will be fenced to prevent access into the site. The excavation of sand and gravel with backfilling operations using overburden and imported materials will also progress behind the developing face.

5.3.5 To ensure that the amount of groundwater discharged is reduced to the lowest possible volume, a series of toe drains will be installed at the base of the sand and gravel face, which will assist with maintaining a dry working area for the backfilling and basin liner operations. There are no proposals to place bunds or stockpiles within the Flood Zones 2 or 3 of the River Thames

5.3.6 The mineral extraction within Phase 2 will continue to progress southwards, maintaining a 30m margin of undisturbed land to the River Thames, and also retaining the hedgerow that forms the western boundary of the extraction area. The undisturbed margin will again be fenced to prevent access into the site and the backfilling operations will continue to progress behind the developing face.

5.3.7 Phase 3 will comprise excavation of the sand and gravel in the western part of the proposed site (retaining the boundary trees and also the central hedgerow dividing Phase 2 and Phase 3. The backfilling operations will progress behind the northwards developing face.

5.3.8 Prior to main extraction works in Phase 3, (following soil stripping) a trench will be excavated along the southern boundary of the phase and the sand and gravel removed. Overburden clay will then be placed within the trench that will provide a clay barrier and reduce the inflow groundwater from the south. The principal flow path in the area is west to east (higher ground to the River) but it is known that a well is present in the property to the south thus the clay filled barrier will provide an additional level of mitigation in the unlikely event that flow paths through the River Terrace sand and gravel were to be altered.

5.3.9 It is proposed that the soils within Phase 3 will be stripped and stored in bunds off the floodplain as these will be required to restore the western area of the site back to agricultural land. The restoration plan is shown in Plan PA21-9 with the restoration strategy and details given in Appendix 3.

5.3.10 The final phase of the extraction works will be Phase 4, located adjacent to the processing plant. The soils and overburden from the area will have been partly removed as part of the Phase A works as the western part of Phase 4 will have been used for as-raised mineral stockpiling. Any as-raised stockpiled material on Phase 4 will be processed prior to the extraction of the mineral in the ground then backfilling will progress behind the sand and gravel face.

5.4 Landscaping

5.4.1 The retained trees and hedgerows on the external boundaries of the site, together with the central hedgerow that divides Phase 2 and 3 will ensure that the majority of the operations will not be seen from the surrounding main roads and the majority of the River Thames footpath. The addition of more planting and the construction of screening bunds on the western boundaries will further reduce the views into the site.

5.4.2 The landscaping of the site allows external retained boundaries to be strengthened and improved by new planting proposals and provides for new groups of trees at strategic locations within the site. New planting at the site will incorporate species of local provenance as promoted by local planning guidance, as set out in the restoration strategy for the site (see Appendix 3).

5.5 Public Rights of Way and Footpaths

5.5.1 There are no proposals to encroach onto or near the Thames footpath, as all of the proposed development will take place 30m from the river bank. This 30m unworked zone will be retained and will be incorporated into the restoration plan for the site.

5.5.2 Access for the general public following completion of the restoration works is provided by the completion of a permissive footpath around the northern perimeter of the site, linking the Reading Road and the Thames Path (see Plan PA21-9).

5.6 Cumulative Impact

5.6.1 The proposals are located on land within the parish of Cholsey, to the south of the Town of Wallingford. In the area surrounding Wallingford a significant number of recent planning permissions have been approved for new built residential development (Winterbrook Park) and quarrying activities (New Barn Farm).

5.6.2 To the west of the site, beyond a new solar farm development, a strategic minerals development has been approved at New Barn Farm, Cholsey for a 20 year sand and gravel operation with restoration to agricultural land at original levels using imported inert fill. The Environmental Impact Assessment for this new mineral development included a section on cumulative development that addressed the activities of the proposed White Cross Farm development during the construction phase of the scheme. These included noise, dust, and traffic impacts on the local highway network, which concluded that there would be no significant cumulative impacts.

5.6.3 The housing scheme at Winterbrook Park has also been approved with over 500 residential properties. The housing land lies about 1km to the north-west of the proposed quarry site. A housing scheme for Cala Homes on the agricultural college has

also been approved for 70 residential properties . Construction has already commended on this scheme that is located within the Chiltern AONB.

5.6.4 The potential cumulative impact of the proposed quarry development has been assessed within the accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The proposed construction phase of the development may coincide with development phase of New Barn Farm quarry development.

5.6.5 It is considered that the Whitecross Quarry development will be completed before the construction phase of the Winterbrook housing scheme is too advanced. The assessments within the EIA confirm that the predicted levels of noise, dust, traffic and other assessed potential impacts are in line with Planning Practice Guidance for mineral sites and will not cause any adverse cumulative impacts.

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE MINERAL EXTRACTION DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Mineral Extraction Plant

6.1.1 It is proposed that the operations to extract and process the sands and gravels will be divided into two separate processes:

(i) Operations at the quarry faces and daily excavation from the stockpile area
(ii) Operations within the plant area

6.1.2 The types of mobile plant and equipment likely to be employed at the face and at the mineral stockpile area are listed below:

(i) tracked excavator for extraction of the sand and gravel
(ii) wheeled loading shovel feeding hopper and conveyor to wash plant
(iii) articulated dump trucks to haul the gravel to the stockpile
(iv) bulldozer to blade out and compact the backfill materials and maintain haul roads
(v) pumps and mobile generators

6.1.3 The types of plant and equipment to be employed within the plant area is likely to comprises the following:

(i) sand and gravel wash plant, including sand classifier, gravel screens, stocking conveyors, silt plant
(ii) wheeled loading shovel to load the plant and load HGV's for sale off site
(iii) pumps and mobile generators

6.1.4 Ancillary plant and equipment that is also used on the site includes the following:

(i) tractor and water bowser
(ii) fuel bowser
(iv) site 4 x 4 vehicles
(v) JCB for general site duties
(vi) cherry picker
(vii) welfare facilities and temporary cabins for contractors and staff

6.1.5 Typical examples of plant and machinery listed above are shown in Appendix 6.

6.2 Weighbridges, Offices, Wheel Cleaning & Workshop

6.2.1 Within the proposed plant area, a weighbridge, site office, welfare facilities and wheel wash will be constructed on commencement of the Phase A operations. The general weighbridge configuration is shown on Plan PA21-7, which will allow vehicles to "tare" into the site and “weigh-out” without drivers having to leave their cabs. Adjacent to the offices and access road, a car park with space for up to 15 cars will also be constructed.

6.2.2 It is proposed that the offices, welfare facilities and workshop will not be permanent buildings but “portakabin” type structures.

6.2.3 If deemed necessary, a wheel wash will be installed. If it is required, prior to leaving the site, all vehicles from the plant area will pass through a wheel wash, which will be an enclosed spray system that cleans both the wheels and under-body of the vehicles. The wheel wash (if required) will be installed approximately 80m from the site entrance to mitigate the possibility of dust and mud being taken onto the A4130.

6.2.4 A quarry office and weighbridge office will be constructed at the locations shown on Plan PA21-7. This office will be required for quarry personnel, such as the Quarry Manager, administration team etc. It is proposed that a mess room, canteen and welfare facilities will also be constructed as part of this development.

6.3 Fuel Tanks & HGV Facilities

6.3.1 It is proposed that parking for up to 8 HGV's within the plant area will also be made. A fuel tank will also be required for re-fuelling the mobile plant operational on the quarry site, which will also be located within the plant area. All fuel tanks will be bunded to ensure to ensure that there will be no pollution from the fuel tanks due to leakage.

6.4 Lighting

6.4.1 All mobile plant will have to operate with lighting fitted and maintained to provide adequate illumination, as stipulated by Health and Safety requirements. This mobile plant lighting will be turned off when the plant is not in operation.

6.4.2 It is proposed that the area around the offices will be illuminated by a series of low emission lights, which will remain on during the hours of darkness for Health and Safety and security reasons. It is proposed that all other lights around the plant and workshop areas will be switched off when the site is closed. The site entrance area is currently illuminated from the large scale street lighting on the A4130 roundabouts so no additional lighting is deemed necessary adjacent to the public highway.

6.4.3 There is no fixed lighting proposed within the extraction area at any time.

6.4.4 All of the proposed lighting on the site proposed will comprise low emission light where possible and will be directional and shielded to minimise their off-site impact.

6.5 Site Drainage

6.5.1 The design of the proposed plant area will ensure that all surface water run-off will be directed into the silt lagoons, or into the surface water catchment ponds located around the site, as shown on Plan PA21-7. This will also reduce the potential water losses from the site during the mineral processing operations, minimising the environmental impact of the operations. There will be no discharge of surface water to any off-site drainage or sewer system.

6.5.2 All of the surface water collected from the HGV parking area and the fuel tanks area will be directed through an interceptor to ensure that no oils or fuel can enter the surface water drainage system.

6.5.3 The quarry access road leaving the weighbridge will have a slight upward incline to the site entrance which will ensure that no water can leave the site and flow on to the public highway. At the site entrance, a slight rise in the entrance road level will ensure that no run-off water enters the site from the A4130.

6.5.4 Within the extraction area surface water will be collected in drains and ditches that will issue into the de-watering and silt settlement system.

6.6 Traffic Movements & Vehicle Routing

6.6.1 It is anticipated that sales of approximately 140,000 tonnes per annum will be achieved from the site, which will comprise a range of aggregate products.

6.6.2 Over the course of a year this equates to an average daily output of just under 540 tonnes per day. Assuming a 20 tonne load it is estimated that over the course of a year some 28 HGV's will leave the site on average, each day, thus total movement will be about 56 per day can be anticipated (10-12 movements per hour).

6.6.3 The importation of engineering fill over the 4 year construction phase will also create nominal HGV movements. These are mainly predicted to occur prior to the mineral sales commencing as part of the plant area foundation works. HGV's delivering fill will leave with aggregate as part of the operations.

6.6.4 However, day to day variations of vehicle movements are typical estimates, but during the intensive periods (e.g. specific infrastructure projects requiring large volumes of aggregate or concrete) the level of traffic may increase above "average levels". During the busy operational period there could be in excess 56 HGV's leaving the site per day. Conversely, during slow sales periods e.g. bad weather, holidays etc, HGV movements will be significantly lower than the anticipated average of 56 per day. However, the annual output is not considered to be exceeded over the life of the quarry.

6.6.5 Vehicles entering the quarry will do so via the A329, turning left into the site. All traffic leaving the site will turn left onto the A4130. From this point the products could be transported the short distance to the new housing allocations proposed within the South Oxfordshire District as well as serving the wider Oxfordshire construction market and providing aggregates into the major infrastructure schemes.

6.7 Hours of Working

6.7.1 It is proposed that hours that the site will be open are as follows:

Monday to Friday	07.00 to 18.00 hours.
Saturday	07.00 to 13.00 hours.
Sundays & Bank and Public Holidays	Closed

6.7.2 Outside these hours, any work within the site will be restricted to essential plant maintenance and for essential safety work.

6.8 Employment

6.8.1 The proposed development is expected to directly employ some 10 persons at the site during the majority of the year. In addition to direct employment the proposals will also create a demand for road haulage to deliver products, which may include up to 15 drivers that may be employed on a regular daily basis depending upon site output.

6.8.2 The operation will give rise to further employment in the use of local services to supply the needs of the quarry and administration facilities together with occasional contracts for hired in plant and equipment. The contribution to the local economy will typically involve the purchase of local services such as:

Site staff and employees	Road haulage
Fuel and oil purchase	Plant and vehicle hire
Plant repairs and spares	Building contractors
Landscape contractors	Tree and shrub purchase
Office supplies and equipment	Canteen supplies

6.8.3 The proposal will therefore provide significant additional local employment within the Wallingford area.

6.9 Fencing and Security

6.9.1 It is proposed that security fencing will be installed around the plant area where bunds, hedgerows and highway fencing are not deemed adequate. The access into and leaving the quarry off the A329 and the A4130 will have a main security gate.

6.9.2 Security fencing may also be installed around the quarry offices together will CCTV cameras. These cameras will also be installed at the site entrance up to the processing area.

6.9.3 Fencing will be installed between the extraction area and the Thames Path Public Right of Way (PROW). This will prevent the public from accessing the construction area of the site. Vegetation growth has varied the location of the path, it is considered that the current location of the footpath is approximately between 5 and 10m in from the river bank.

6.9.4 It is therefore proposed that this fencing is located about 15m from the river bank, which provides users of the PROW a buffer zone in which to walk freely. It is proposed that this fencing will be constructed of post and wire that is common in this landscape, which will not have a flood risk impact.

6.10 Environmental Monitoring

6.10.1 It is proposed that a range of environmental monitoring will be undertaken as part of the normal operations of this proposed sand and gravel site. This monitoring will include (as a minimum) the following:

- Noise Monitoring -various locations including (but not restricted to) residential properties located near to the site.
- Dust Monitoring - residential properties located near to the site
- Groundwater Monitoring – Boreholes located around perimeter of extraction area
- Surface Water Monitoring – Discharge to River Thames or any other watercourse.

6.10.2 In relation to noise monitoring, it is proposed that noise management measures/controls are implemented as part of a Noise Management Plan, having regard to the further environmental information concerning potential noise outputs and avoiding

unacceptable impacts upon local residential properties with the aim of full compliance with local Policy.

6.10.3 The suggested noise controls are founded on the basis of noise limits of 55db(A) as set out int the Noise Assessment or the proposals, as shown the Noise Assessment within the ES, as shown below.

Location	Background Noise Levels (dB) $L_{A90,1hr}$	Predicted Worst Case (dB $L_{Aeq,1h}$)	Difference Background Noise	Difference NPPG Max 55 dB
Elizabeth House	46	49	+3	-6
Meadow Farm	46	49	+3	-6
Waterside Court	56	53	-3	-2
Whitecross House	56	51	-5	-4
Winward House/ Mead Furlong	48	53	+5	-2
Founders House Carmel College	44	50	+6	-5
Mansion House Carmel College	44	49	+5	-6

6.10.4 It is proposed that Noise & Dust Management Plans will be submitted and the requirements carried out at all times of the quarry development. This will include a scheme of noise management measures that must be adhered to for all Phases of the excavation, but which will be reviewed and updated as the quarry operations progress. In the first instance the noise levels at the specified receptors will comply the specified limits set out in any Planning Conditions.

6.10.5 On commencement of extraction operations within the Phase 1 area of the site, a scheme of "live/real time" monitoring of the mineral working and site operations will be carried out to allow potential revisions to the noise controls and the noise limits required under the Noise Management Plan. The regular submission of noise monitoring data to the Mineral Planning Authority in accordance with an agreed schedule of environmental monitoring.

6.10.6 It is proposed that all the monitoring information (including noise, dust and water) will be made available to all interested parties as part of the community liaison between the site, local residents and statutory authorities.

6.10.7 As part of the groundwater management scheme, it is proposed that the existing boreholes will continue to be monitored, especially along the southern boundary of the site where residential properties are located with a well in the garden. It is also proposed that the well could be monitored as the works in the southern part of the site are progressing, subject to landowner access.

7. Proposed Conceptual Restoration

7.1 Outline Scheme

7.1.1 On completion of mineral extraction, the application site will be fully restored in accordance with outline proposals as shown in Plan PA21-9 and the Appendix 3. The restoration scheme comprises mainly agricultural land in the large western are, separated by an east-west trending hedge, with levels no higher than original ground contours as confirmed in the flood risk assessment.

7.1.2 In the eastern area, it is proposed that the land will be restored to a range of habitats and landforms to promote native dry and wet woodland, small areas of species rich grassland, together with a lake and aquatic marginal land. These habitats offer potential to promote a range of species and habitats provide an overall Biodiversity "Net Gain" on the site of at least 10%.

7.2 Restoration proposals

7.2.1 On completion of the final restoration phase of the works, it is proposed that the weighbridge, office and other facilities will be removed and the area restored back to agricultural land. It is proposed that the internal haul roads may be retained for agricultural access around the site and the site entrance will revert back to use associated with the farm activities.

7.2.2 When each restoration phase is complete a programme of aftercare will be implemented for a minimum of 5 years. Each phase will be managed to obtain the final restoration agricultural objective. A scheme of aftercare will be agreed with the local planning authority and other interested specialist bodies and will include:

- additional site drainage
- special rates and cover for fertilizer treatment
- maintenance of grassed areas
- cropping programmes and stocking rates
- weed control and fertiliser applications
- general maintenance of trees and hedgerows
- activity to encourage marginal flora and fauna

7.3 Soil Storage & Restoration Soil Placement

7.3.1 The volumes of top soils and sub-soils to be stripped and used in restoration within each phase area are given in Appendix 3. The volume of inert imported fill required for the interim face restoration is also provided, together with the volumes of fill required to restore the site to within 600mm of original site levels, prior to the placement of the stored sub soils and top soils are also provided.

7.3.2 The soils stripping, soil storage and soil placement operations for the proposed quarry development are set out in the Environmental Statement (Appendix 8).

7.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

7.4.1 The Biodiversity Impact Calculator carried out for the restoration concept (shown in Plan PA21-9) is given below. At present, the baseline value of the site has been assessed as comprising of 74.97 units, with 9.22 linear units. The below table sets out the breakdown in gains incurred together with the combined calculations.

7.4.2 It is calculated that the "post restoration" comprises 92.30 units and 24.11 hedgerow linear units. Therefore, the development may deliver an increase of 23.11%, which is well above the minimum 10% required in the draft Environmental Act proposals.

On-site baseline	*Habitat units*	74.97
	Hedgerow units	9.22
	River units	0.00
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	92.30
	Hedgerow units	24.11
	River units	0.00
On-site net % change (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	23.11%
	Hedgerow units	161.56%
	River units	0.00%
Off-site baseline	*Habitat units*	0.00
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	River units	0.00
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.00
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	River units	0.00
Total net unit change (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	17.33
	Hedgerow units	14.89
	River units	0.00
Total on-site net % change plus off-site surplus (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	23.11%
	Hedgerow units	161.56%
	River units	0.00%

8. PLANNING POLICY

8.1 Background

8.1.1 Planning law requires that planning applications, including those for mineral development, be determined in accordance with the "Development Plan", unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework, February 2019, makes clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay.

8.1.2 This chapter therefore firstly considers the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire within which the proposed extraction site is situated. It gives consideration to the potentially relevant planning policies contained within the documents that make up the Development Plan that relate to this planning application to extract sand and gravel and restore the land to agriculture and nature conservation end uses . There is therefore some emphasis on the policies contained in the adopted Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan - Part 1 Core Strategy 2017 as they relate specifically to proposals for minerals extraction.

8.1.3 The chapter then goes on to consider other planning policy and related documents that have the potential to contain policies or evidence that are material considerations to the determination of the application to carry out the sand and gravel extraction.

8.1.4 The sequence and overall approach of this chapter is therefore generally reflective of the legislative requirements and national planning policy with the aim of informing the decision maker and interested parties of the policies and policy related considerations that should be taken into account when determining this planning application.

8.2 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE

8.2.1 The Development Plan for South Oxfordshire relating to this planning application for sand and gravel extraction is made up of the following adopted planning policy documents:

- Saved Policies of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan - 1996
- The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan - Part 1 Core Strategy - 2017
- The South Oxfordshire Local Plan - 2020

8.2.2 Given the legislative requirements, and therefore the importance of the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire, consideration is given below to the most potentially relevant policies contained in these policy documents.

8.3 Saved Policies of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan - 1996

8.3.1 The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1996 was replaced by the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 1 Core Strategy on 12th September 2017, except for a series of "saved" policies. These saved policies will remain in force, and will therefore continue to form part of the Development Plan for Oxfordshire, until the adoption of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 2 Site Allocations, which is currently at draft/consultation stage.

8.3.2 The saved policies of the 1996 Local Plan are those contained in Chapter 7 which deals with the identification of site specific areas proposed for the extraction and supply of sharp sand and gravel from the following areas:

Sutton Courtenay

Sutton Wick

Stanton Harcourt

Cassington-Yarnton area

8.3.3 Comments

8.3.4 These saved policies do not directly relate to this planning application site. They relate to sand and gravel supply sites that were formally identified and allocated 24 years ago. The County Council as Mineral Planning Authority is in the process of trying to identify and then allocate a series of new sand and gravel supply sites to meet current and future construction needs. The emerging Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 2 Site Allocations document, will, once adopted, allocate sites to maintain supplies of aggregate in the County, but at present the plan is in draft with a series of options/sites under consideration.

8.3.5 The planning application site has the ability to be operational stream quickly and contribute positively to aggregate supply for a period of 5 years at a time of current demand/need for sand and gravel. The proposals therefore broadly accord with the aim and intent of both the saved policies of the 1996 plan and the emerging replacement Part 2 Site Allocations document in helping ensure an adequate supply of sand and gravel in Oxfordshire over the next 5 years.

8.4 The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan - Part 1 Core Strategy - 2017

8.4.1 Policy M2: Provision for working aggregate minerals

Provision will be made through policies M3 and M4 to enable the supply of:

- sharp sand and gravel - 1.015 mtpa giving a total provision requirement of 18.270 million tonnes;
- soft sand - 0.189 mtpa giving a total provision requirement of 3.402 million tonnes;
- crushed rock - 0.584 mtpa giving a total provision requirement of 10.512 million tonnes;

from land-won sources within Oxfordshire for the period 2014 – 2031 inclusive.

8.4.2 Permission will be granted for aggregate mineral working under policy M5 to enable separate landbanks of reserves with planning permission to be maintained for the extraction of minerals of:

- at least 7 years for sharp sand and gravel;
- at least 7 years for soft sand;
- at least 10 years for crushed rock; in accordance with the annual requirement rates in the most recent Local Aggregate Assessment, taking into account the need to maintain sufficient productive capacity to enable these rates to be realised.

8.4.3 Policy M3: Principal locations for working aggregate minerals

The principal locations for aggregate minerals extraction will be within the following strategic resource areas, as shown on the Policies Map for sharp sand and gravel:

In northern Oxfordshire (Cherwell District and West Oxfordshire District):

The Thames, Lower Windrush and Lower Evenlode Valleys area from Standlake to Yarnton;

In southern Oxfordshire (South Oxfordshire District and Vale of White Horse District):

- The Thames and Lower Thame Valleys area from Oxford to Cholsey;
- The Thames Valley area from Caversham to Shiplake. Soft sand
- The Corallian Ridge area from Oxford to Faringdon;
- The Duns Tew area.

8.4.4 Crushed rock

- The area north west of Bicester;
- The Burford area south of the A40;
- The area east and south east of Faringdon.

8.4.5 Specific sites (new quarry sites and/or extensions to existing quarries) for working aggregate minerals within these strategic resource areas will be allocated in the Minerals & Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations Document, in accordance with policy M4.

8.4.6 Specific sites for extensions to existing aggregate quarries (excluding ironstone) outside the strategic resource areas may also be allocated in the Minerals & Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations Document provided they are in accordance with policy M4.

8.4.7 Sites allocated for sharp sand and gravel working (including both new quarry sites and extensions to existing quarries, including any extensions outside the strategic resource areas), to meet the requirement in policy M2 will be located such that approximately 25% of the additional tonnage requirement is in northern Oxfordshire and approximately 75% of the additional tonnage requirement is in southern Oxfordshire, to achieve an approximately equal split of production capacity for sharp sand and gravel between northern and southern Oxfordshire by 2031.

8.4.8 Policy M4: Sites for working aggregate minerals

Specific sites for working aggregate minerals in accordance with policy M3, to meet the requirements set out in policy M2 will be allocated in the Minerals & Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations Document, taking into account the following factors:

a) the quantity and quality of the mineral resource;

b) priority for the extension of existing quarries, where environmentally acceptable (including taking into consideration criteria c) to l)), before working new sites;

c) potential for restoration and after-use and for achieving the restoration objectives of the Plan in accordance with policy M10;

d) suitability & accessibility of the primary road network;

e) proximity to large towns and other locations of significant demand to enable a reduction in overall journey distance from quarry to market;

f) ability to provide more sustainable movement of excavated materials;

g) avoidance of locations within or significantly affecting an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;

h) avoidance of locations likely to have an adverse effect on sites and species of international nature conservation importance and Sites of Special Scientific Interest; in the case of locations within the Eynsham / Cassington / Yarnton part of the Thames, Lower Windrush and Lower Evenlode Valleys area, it must be demonstrated that there will be no change in water levels in the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation and the proposal must not involve the working of land to the north or north east of the River Evenlode; in the case of locations within the Corallian Ridge area, it must be demonstrated that there will be no change in water levels in the Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation;

i) avoidance of locations likely to have an adverse effect on the significance of designated heritage assets, including World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens and Registered Battlefields, or on archaeological assets which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to a Scheduled Monument; OMWLP Core Strategy – adopted plan 52 September 2017

j) avoidance of, or ability to suitably mitigate, potential significant adverse impacts on:

i. locally designated areas of nature conservation and geological interest;

ii. non-designated heritage assets;

iii. local landscape character;

iv. water quality, water quantity, flood risk and groundwater flow;

v. best and most versatile agricultural land and soil resources;

vi. local transport network;

vii. land uses sensitive to nuisance (e.g. schools & hospitals);

viii. residential amenity & human health; and

ix. character and setting of local settlements

k) potential cumulative impact of successive and/or simultaneous mineral development, including with non-mineral development, on local communities; and

l) ability to meet other objectives and policy expectations of this Core Strategy (including policies C1 – C12) and relevant policies in other development plans.

8.4.9 Policy M5: Working of aggregate minerals

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.

Permission will be granted for the working of aggregate minerals within the sites allocated further to policy M4 provided that the requirements of policies C1 – C12 are met.

Permission will not be granted for the working of aggregate minerals outside the sites allocated further to policy M4 unless the requirement to maintain a steady and adequate supply of aggregate in accordance with policy M2 cannot be met from within those sites and provided that the proposal is in accordance with the locational strategy in policy M3 and the requirements of policies C1 – C12 are met.

Permission will exceptionally be granted for the working of aggregate minerals outside the sites allocated further to policy M4 where extraction of the mineral is required prior to a planned development in order to prevent the mineral resource being sterilised, having due regard to policies C1 –C12.

Permission will exceptionally be granted for borrow pits to supply mineral to associated construction projects, having due regard to policies C1 – C12, provided that all of the following apply:

- the site lies on or in close proximity to the project area so that extracted mineral can be conveyed to its point of use with minimal use of public highways and without undue interference with footpaths and bridleways;
- the mineral extracted will only be used in connection with the project;
- it can be demonstrated that supply of the mineral from the borrow pit would have less environmental impact than if the mineral were supplied from an existing source;
- the borrow pit can be restored without the use of imported material, other than that generated by the project; and
- use of the borrow pit is limited to the life of the project.

Notwithstanding the preceding paragraphs, permission for working of ironstone for aggregate use will not be permitted except in exchange for an agreed revocation (or other appropriate mechanism to ensure the non-working) without compensation of an equivalent existing permission in Oxfordshire containing potentially workable resources of ironstone and where there would be an overall environmental benefit.

8.4.10 Policy M10: Restoration of mineral workings

Mineral workings shall be restored to a high standard and in a timely and phased manner to an after-use that is appropriate to the location and delivers a net gain in biodiversity. The restoration and after-use of mineral workings must take into account:

- the characteristics of the site prior to mineral working;
- the character of the surrounding landscape and the enhancement of local landscape character;
- the amenity of local communities, including opportunities to enhance green infrastructure provision and provide for local amenity uses and recreation;
- the capacity of the local transport network;
- the quality of any agricultural land affected, including the restoration of best and most versatile agricultural land;
- the conservation of soil resources
- flood risk and opportunities for increased flood storage capacity;
- the impacts on flooding and water quality of any use of imported material in the proposed restoration;
- bird strike risk and aviation safety;
- any environmental enhancement objectives for the area;
- the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity appropriate to the local area, supporting the establishment of a coherent and resilient ecological network through the landscape-scale creation of priority habitat;
- the conservation and enhancement of geodiversity;- the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment; and
- consultation with local communities on options for after-use. Planning permission will not be granted for mineral working unless satisfactory proposals have been made for the restoration, aftercare and after-use of the site, including where necessary the means of securing them in the longer term.

Proposals for restoration must not be likely to lead to any increase in recreational pressure on a Special Area of Conservation.

8.4.11 Policy W6: Landfill and other permanent deposit of waste to land

Non-hazardous waste

Provision for disposal of Oxfordshire's non-hazardous waste will be made at existing non-hazardous landfill facilities which will also provide for the disposal of waste from other areas (including London and Berkshire) as necessary. Further provision for the disposal of nonhazardous waste by means of landfill will not be made.

Permission may be granted to extend the life of existing non-hazardous landfill sites to allow for the continued disposal of residual nonhazardous waste to meet a recognised

need and where this will allow for the satisfactory restoration of the landfill in accordance with a previously approved scheme.

Permission will be granted for facilities for the management of landfill gas and leachate where required to fulfil a regulatory requirement or to achieve overall environmental benefit, including facilities for the recovery of energy from landfill gas. Provision should be made for the removal of the facilities and restoration of the site at the end of the period of management.

8.4.12 Inert waste

Provision for the permanent deposit to land or disposal to landfill of inert waste which cannot be recycled will be made at existing facilities and in sites that will be allocated in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations Document. Provision will be made for sites with capacity sufficient for Oxfordshire to be net-self-sufficient in the management of inert waste.

Priority will be given to the use of inert waste that cannot be recycled as infill material to achieve the satisfactory restoration and after use of active or unrestored quarries. Permission will not otherwise be granted for development that involves the permanent deposit or disposal of inert waste on land unless there would be overall environmental benefit.

8.4.13 General

Proposals for landfill sites shall meet the requirements of policies C1 – C12. Landfill sites shall be restored in accordance with the requirements of policy M10 for restoration of mineral workings.

8.4.14 Policy C1: Sustainable development

A positive approach will be taken to minerals and waste development in Oxfordshire, reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and the aim to improve economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this plan will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application, or relevant plan policies are out of date, planning permission will be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

- any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development when assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework; or

- specific policies in the National Planning Policy Framework indicate that the development should be restricted.

8.4.15 C2: Climate change

Proposals for minerals or waste development, including restoration proposals, should take account of climate change for the lifetime of the development from construction through operation and decommissioning. Applications for development should adopt a low carbon approach and measures should be considered to minimise greenhouse gas emissions and provide flexibility for future adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

8.4.16 Policy C3: Flooding

Minerals and waste development will, wherever possible, take place in areas with the lowest probability of flooding. Where development takes place in an area of identified flood risk this should only be where alternative locations in areas of lower flood risk have been explored and discounted (using the Sequential Test and Exceptions Test as necessary) and where a flood risk assessment is able to demonstrate that the risk of flooding is not increased from any source, including:

- an impediment to the flow of floodwater;

- the displacement of floodwater and increased risk of flooding elsewhere;

- a reduction in existing floodwater storage capacity; ● an adverse effect on the functioning of existing flood defence structures; and

- the discharge of water into a watercourse.

The opportunity should be taken to increase flood storage capacity in the flood plain where possible, particularly through the restoration of sand and gravel workings.

8.4.17 Policy C4: Water environment

Proposals for minerals and waste development will need to demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable adverse impact on or risk to:

- The quantity or quality of surface or groundwater resources required for habitats, wildlife and human activities;

- The quantity or quality of water obtained through abstraction unless acceptable provision can be made;

- The flow of groundwater at or in the vicinity of the site; and
- Waterlogged archaeological remains.

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.

8.4.18 Policy C5: Local environment, amenity and economy

Proposals for minerals and waste development shall demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on:

- the local environment;
- human health and safety;
- residential amenity and other sensitive receptors; and
- the local economy; including from:
    - noise;
    - dust;
    - visual intrusion;
    - light pollution;
    - traffic;
    - air quality;
    - odour;
    - vermin;
    - birds;
    - litter;
    - mud on the road;
    - vibration;
    - surface or ground contamination;
    - tip and quarry-slope stability;
    - differential settlement of quarry backfill; subsidence; and
    - the cumulative impact of development.

Where necessary, appropriate separation distances or buffer zones between minerals and waste developments and occupied residential property or other sensitive receptors and/or other mitigation measures will be required, as determined on a site-specific, case-by-case basis.

8.4.19 Policy C6: Agricultural land and soils

Proposals for minerals and waste development shall demonstrate that they take into account the presence of any best and most versatile agricultural land.

Significant development leading to the permanent loss of best and most versatile agricultural land will only be permitted where it can be shown that there is a need for the development which cannot reasonably be met using lower grade land and where all options for reinstatement without loss of quality have been considered taking into account other relevant considerations.

Development proposals should make provision for the management and use of soils in order to maintain agricultural land quality (where appropriate) and soil quality, including making a positive contribution to the long-term conservation of soils in any restoration.

8.4.20 Policy C7: Biodiversity and geodiversity

Minerals and waste development should conserve and, where possible, deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

The highest level of protection will be given to sites and species of international nature conservation importance (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation and European Protected Species) and development that would be likely to adversely affect them will not be permitted.

In all other cases, development that would result in significant harm will not be permitted unless the harm can be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for to result in a net gain in biodiversity (or geodiversity). In addition:

(i) Development that would be likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other development) will not be permitted except where the benefits of the development at this site clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the Site of Special Scientific Interest and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

(ii) Development that would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees, will not be permitted except where the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

(iii) Development shall ensure that no significant harm would be caused to: - Local Nature Reserves; - Local Wildlife Sites; - Local Geology Sites; - Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation; - Protected, priority or notable species and habitats, except where the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the harm.

All proposals for mineral working and landfill shall demonstrate how the development will make an appropriate contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of local habitats, biodiversity or geodiversity (including fossil remains and trace fossils), including contributing to the objectives of the Conservation Target Areas wherever possible. Satisfactory long-term management arrangements for restored sites shall be clearly set out and included in proposals. These should include a commitment to ecological monitoring and remediation (should habitat creation and/or mitigation prove unsuccessful).

8.4.21 Policy C8: Landscape

Proposals for minerals and waste development shall demonstrate that they respect and where possible enhance local landscape character, and are informed by landscape character assessment. Proposals shall include adequate and appropriate measures to mitigate adverse impacts on landscape, including careful siting, design and landscaping. Where significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, compensatory environmental enhancements shall be made to offset the residual landscape and visual impacts.

Great weight will be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and high priority will be given to the enhancement of their natural beauty. Proposals for minerals and waste development within an AONB or that would significantly affect an AONB shall demonstrate that they take this into account and that they have regard to the relevant AONB Management Plan. Major developments within AONBs will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest, in accordance with the 'major developments test' in the NPPF (paragraph 116). Development within AONBs shall normally only be small-scale, to meet local needs and should be sensitively located and designed.

8.4.22 Policy C9: Historic environment and archaeology

Proposals for minerals and waste development will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated, including where necessary through prior investigation, that they or associated activities will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the historic environment.

Great weight will be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets: Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site; scheduled monuments; listed buildings; conservation areas; historic battlefields; registered parks and gardens; and non-designated archaeological

assets which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to a scheduled monument; and the setting of those assets.

Where an application would affect a non-designated heritage asset, the benefits of the proposal will be balanced against the scale of harm to or loss of the heritage asset and its significance.

Where, following assessment of an application, the loss (wholly or in part) of a heritage asset is considered acceptable in principle, the applicant will be required to record and advance understanding of that asset, proportionate to the nature and level of the asset's significance, and to publish their findings.

Proposals for mineral working and landfill shall wherever possible demonstrate how the development will make an appropriate contribution to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

8.4.23 Policy C10: Transport

Minerals and waste development will be expected to make provision for safe and suitable access to the advisory lorry routes shown on the Oxfordshire Lorry Route Maps in ways that maintain and, if possible, lead to improvements in:

- the safety of all road users including pedestrians;
- the efficiency and quality of the road network; and
- residential and environmental amenity, including air quality.

Where development leads to a need for improvement to the transport network to achieve this, developers will be expected to provide such improvement or make an appropriate financial contribution.

Where practicable minerals and waste developments should be located, designed and operated to enable the transport of minerals and/or waste by rail, water, pipeline or conveyor.

Where minerals and/or waste will be transported by road:

a) mineral workings should as far as practicable be in locations that minimise the road distance to locations of demand for the mineral, using roads suitable for lorries, taking into account the distribution of potentially workable mineral resources; and

b) waste management and recycled aggregate facilities should as far as practicable be in locations that minimise the road distance from the main source(s) of waste, using roads suitable for lorries, taking into account that some facilities are not economic or practical below a certain size and may need to serve a wider than local area.

Proposals for minerals and waste development that would generate significant amounts of traffic will be expected to be supported by a transport assessment or transport statement, as appropriate, including mitigation measures where applicable.

8.4.24 Policy C11: Rights of way

The integrity and amenity value of the rights of way network shall be maintained and if possible it shall be retained in situ in safe and useable condition. Diversions should be safe, attractive and convenient and, if temporary, shall be reinstated as soon as possible. If permanent diversions are required, these should seek to enhance and improve the public rights of way network.

Improvements and enhancements to the rights of way network will generally be encouraged and public access sought to restored mineral workings, especially if this can be linked to wider provision of green infrastructure. Where appropriate, operators and landowners will be expected to make provision for this as part of the restoration and aftercare scheme.

8.4.25 Comments

8.4.26 Analysis of the relevant policy extracts highlights the following important points:

- A significant volume of sand and gravel needs to be supplied year on year in Oxfordshire to 2031 and beyond. This proposal will make a valuable contribution to that supply.

- The application site is situated in a Strategic Resource Area (SRA) in southern Oxfordshire where there is a policy priority to facilitate additional sand and gravel supply to counter balance past over-emphasis of supply from north Oxfordshire. The site's location in the SRA should therefore be treated as a positive of some weight in the planning balance.

- Prior to the adoption of the follow up document to the adopted Part I Core Strategy – the Part II Site Allocations document (which is currently some way off in terms of timescale) – permission will be granted for sand and gravel

extraction where this contributes to meeting the sand and gravel supply requirements and provided the proposal accords with the spatial strategy of prioritising south Oxfordshire as a source of supply and subject to meeting the environmental tests of the Core Strategy.

- As will be seen later in this chapter the County is not managing to meet the annual sand and gravel supply requirement of the Core Strategy so year on year supply is falling below that which is required. This proposed development will make a positive contribution to supply and can come on-stream quickly (whilst the Part II Plan moves through to adoption over the next few years) and will help contribute to counter-balancing the previous over emphasis of supply from north Oxfordshire.

8.4.27 The use of inert fill to reclaim and restore the site accords with policy on landfill and the site can be restored to an appropriate mix of uses that accord with the Core Strategy within a relatively short duration. The proposed restoration scheme and the assessment of the proposals confirm the required net gain in biodiversity. The proposals therefore strike the appropriate balance of meeting economic and social needs through aggregate supply whilst avoiding unacceptable impacts to the environment during these operations, and then achieving long-term permanent environmental benefits through the delivery of the restoration scheme.

8.4.28 In terms of the specific policy tests in policies C1 to C12 of the Core Strategy it is important to note that the EIA/Environmental Statement confirms no unacceptable levels of impact (no significant adverse effects) on: the water environment/flood risk; human health; residential amenity; biodiversity; local landscape; the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONB's; the historic environment and archaeology; the transport network and local road users/communities; and, the rights of way network.

8.4.29 The proposals provide for careful management of the best quality soils and the restoration of an appropriate area of the site back to the best and mos versatile agricultural land. The remainder of the site will be restored to nature conservation end uses, delivering a net gain to biodiversity, as well as an enhanced amenity experience for users of the Thames Path. In turn, the maturing of the restored land will enhance the local landscape character in the long-term thus fully according with Policy C8 of the Core Strategy on landscape.

8.5 South Oxfordshire Local Plan to 2035 – adopted December 2020

8.5.1 The policies set out below are considered to be the most potentially relevant policies of the recently adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan relating to this proposed sand and gravel extraction scheme and subsequent restoration of the site to agriculture and nature conservation/biodiversity uses.

8.5.2 Policy TRANS2: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to:

i) ensure that where new development is located close to, or along, existing strategic public transport corridors, bus and/or rail services can be promoted and strengthened in response to increases in demand for travel and freight;

ii) plan positively for rail improvements within the area that support improved connectivity to areas of new development;

iii) ensure new development is designed to encourage walking and cycling, not only within the development, but also to nearby facilities, employment and public transport hubs;

iv) support provision of measures which improve public transport (including Park & Ride), cycling and walking networks within and between towns and villages in the district;

v) support, where relevant, sustainable transport improvements in the wider Didcot Garden Town area and in and around Oxford, particularly where they improve access to strategic development locations;

vi) promote and support improvements to the transport network which increase safety, improve air quality, encourage use of sustainable modes of transport and/or make our towns and villages more attractive;

vii) adopt an approach to the provision and management of car parking aimed at improving the attraction of our town and village centres; and

viii) ensure the needs of all users, including those with impaired mobility are planned for in development of transport improvements.

8.5.3 Policy TRANS4: Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans

1. Proposals for new developments which have significant transport implications that either arise from the development proposed or cumulatively with other proposals will need to submit a Transport Assessment or a Transport Statement, and where relevant a Travel Plan. These documents will need to take into account Oxfordshire County Council guidance and Planning Practice Guidance and where appropriate, the scope should be agreed with Highways England.

2. Appropriate provision for works and/or contributions will be required towards providing an adequate level of accessibility by all modes of transport and mitigating the impacts on the transport network. Consideration should be given to the cumulative impact of relevant development both in South Oxfordshire and adjacent authorities, and how this links to planned infrastructure improvements. This should take into account the latest evidence base work, which, where relevant, will inform the scoping of the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.

3. The Transport Assessment or Transport Statement should, where relevant:

i) illustrate accessibility to the site by all modes of transport;

ii) show the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site;

iii) detail the proposed measures to improve access by public transport, cycling and walking to reduce the need for car travel and reduce transport impacts;

iv) illustrate the impact on the highway network and the impact of proposed mitigation measures where necessary;

v) include a Travel Plan (that considers all relevant forms of transport including accessible transport for disabled people) where appropriate; and

vi) outline the approach to parking provision.

4. Where relevant, evidence obtained from this detailed work will inform the number and phasing of homes to be permitted on proposed development sites and will be established (and potentially conditioned) through the planning application process, in consultation with the highway authority.

5. In accordance with the guidance, Travel Plans will be required, implemented and monitored for all developments that will generate significant amounts of movement.

8.5.4 Policy TRANS7: Development Generating New Lorry Movements

Proposals for development leading to significant increases in lorry movements, such as freight distribution depots should only be permitted in locations where:

any increase in lorry movements can be appropriately accommodated on the surrounding road network;

the opportunities for sustainable transport access have been maximised; and

the development does not result in adverse environmental effects on the surrounding area.

8.5.5 Policy INF4: Water Resources

1. All development proposals must demonstrate that there is or will be adequate water supply, surface water, foul drainage and sewerage treatment capacity to serve the whole development. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that there is adequate capacity both on and off site to serve the development and that it would not lead to problems for existing users. When there is a capacity constraint and improvements to off-site infrastructure are not programmed, the developer should set out how the infrastructure improvements will be completed prior to occupation of the development. For phased development proposals, each phase must demonstrate sufficient water supply and water treatment capacity.

2. New developments are required to be designed to a water efficiency standard of 110 litres/head/day (l/h/d) for new homes.

3. Proposals that increase the requirement for water will only be permitted where adequate water resources either already exist or can be provided without detriment to existing abstraction, river flows, groundwater flow to and from springs, water quality, biodiversity or other land uses.

8.5.6 Policy ENV1: Landscape and Countryside

1. The highest level of protection will be given to the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs):

- Development in an AONB or affecting the setting of an AONB will only be permitted where it conserves, and where possible, enhances the character and natural beauty of the AONB;
- Development in an AONB will only be permitted where it is appropriate to the economic and environmental wellbeing of the area or promotes understanding or enjoyment of the AONB;
- Major development in an AONB will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest; and
- Development proposals that could affect the special qualities of an AONB (including the setting of an AONB) either individually or in combination with other developments, should be accompanied by a proportionate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- AONB Management Plans will be a material consideration in decision making.

2. South Oxfordshire's landscape, countryside and rural areas will be protected against harmful development. Development will only be permitted where it protects and, where

possible enhances, features that contribute to the nature and quality of South Oxfordshire's landscapes, in particular:

i) trees (including individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands), hedgerows and field boundaries;

ii) irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland;

iii) the landscapes, waterscapes, cultural heritage and user enjoyment of the River Thames, its tributaries and flood plains;

iv) other watercourse and water bodies;

v) the landscape setting of settlements or the special character and landscape setting of Oxford;

vi) topographical features;

vii) areas or features of cultural and historic value;

viii) important views and visually sensitive skylines; and

ix) aesthetic and perceptual factors such as tranquility, wildness, intactness, rarity and enclosure.

3. Development which supports economic growth in rural areas will be supported provided it conserves and enhances the landscape, countryside and rural areas.

4. The Council will seek the retention of important hedgerows. Where retention is not possible and a proposal seeks the removal of a hedgerow, the Council will require compensatory planting with a mixture of native hedgerow species.

8.5.7 Policy ENV3: Biodiversity

1. Development that will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in the district will be supported. All development should provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible. As a minimum, there should be no net loss of biodiversity. All proposals should be supported by evidence to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain using a recognised biodiversity accounting metric.

2. Development proposals which would result in a net loss of biodiversity will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that alternatives which avoid impacts on biodiversity have been fully explored in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. In the absence of alternative sites or layouts, development proposals must include adequate mitigation measures to achieve a net gain of biodiversity. Where harm cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated, appropriate compensation measures will be

sought, as a last resort, through planning conditions or planning obligations (depending on the circumstances of each application) to offset the loss by contributing to appropriate biodiversity projects to achieve an overall net gain for biodiversity.

3. Planning permission will only be granted if impacts on biodiversity can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated fully.

8.5.8 Policy ENV4: Watercourses

1. Development of land that contains or is adjacent to a watercourse must protect and where possible, enhance the function and setting of the watercourse and its biodiversity. As a last resort development should provide mitigation for any unavoidable impacts.

2. Development should include a minimum 10m buffer zone along both sides of the watercourse to create a corridor favourable to the enhancement of biodiversity. Where a 10m wide buffer zone is not considered possible by the local planning authority, (for example in dense urban areas where existing development comes closer to the watercourse) a smaller buffer zone may be allowed, but should still be accompanied by detailed plans to show how the land will be used to promote biodiversity and how maintenance access to the watercourse will be created. Wherever possible within settlements a minimum 10m buffer should be maintained.

3. Proposals should avoid the culverting of any watercourse. Opportunities taken to remove culverts will be supported.

4. Outside settlements, proposals for mooring stages will not be permitted. Proposals for posts, earthworks or facing riverbanks with piles and planking will not be permitted except under exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the Environment Agency. Where it is necessary to protect a riverbank from erosion, the protective measures must be designed to maintain and enhance the special character of the river and its environment, including its biodiversity.

5. Major development proposals which are located within 20m of a watercourse will require a Construction Management Plan to be agreed with the Council before commencement of work to ensure that the watercourse will be satisfactorily protected from damage, disturbance or pollution.

6. Sites for new development with existing culverts will be expected to investigate the feasibility of de-culverting the watercourse. Where bridges are proposed as an

alternative to culverting, the construction method should take into account the importance of maintaining an obstruction free bank for wildlife.

8.5.9 Policy ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Developments

1. Development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of additional Green Infrastructure and protect or enhance existing Green Infrastructure.

2. Proposals should:

i) protect, conserve or enhance the district's Green Infrastructure;

ii) provide an appropriate level of Green Infrastructure with regard to requirements set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, AONB Management Plan or the Habitats Regulations Assessment;

iii) avoid the loss, fragmentation, severance or other negative impact on the function of Green Infrastructure;

iv) provide appropriate mitigation where there would be an adverse impact on Green Infrastructure; and

v) provide an appropriate replacement where it is necessary for development to take place on areas of Green Infrastructure.

3. All Green Infrastructure provision should be designed with regard to the quality standards set out within the Green Infrastructure Strategy, or where relevant the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan. Consideration should also be given to inclusive access and contributing to gains in biodiversity, particularly through the use of appropriate planting which takes account of changing weather patterns. Where new Green Infrastructure is provided, applicants should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure its ongoing management and maintenance.

8.5.10 Policy ENV6: Historic Environment

1. Proposals for new development that may affect designated and non-designated heritage assets should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of those assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Heritage assets include statutorily designated Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings or structures, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, archaeology of national and local interest and non-designated buildings, structures or historic landscapes that contribute to local historic and architectural interest of the district's historic environment, and also includes those heritage assets listed by the Oxfordshire Historic Environmental Record.

2. Proposals for new development should be sensitively designed and should not cause harm to the historic environment. Proposals that have an impact on heritage assets (designated and non-designated) will be supported particularly where they:

i) conserve or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and settings. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that will be given to its conservation;

ii) make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (through high standards of design, reflecting its significance, including through the use of appropriate materials and construction techniques);

iii) make a positive contribution towards wider public benefits;

iv) provide a viable future use for a heritage asset that is consistent with the conservation of its significance; and/or

v) protect a heritage asset that is currently at risk.

3. Non-designated heritage assets, where identified through local or neighbourhood plan-making, Conservation Area Appraisal or review or through the planning application process, will be recognised as heritage assets in accordance with national guidance and any local criteria. Development proposals that directly or indirectly affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be determined with regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

4. Applicants will be required to describe, in line with best practice and relevant national guidance, the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance. In some circumstances further survey, analysis and/or recording will be made a condition of consent.

5. Particular encouragement will be given to schemes that will help secure the long term conservation of vacant and under-used buildings and bring them back into appropriate use.

6. Alterations to historic buildings, for example to improve energy efficiency, should respect the integrity of the historic environment and the character and significance of the building.

8.5.11 Policy ENV7: Listed Buildings

1. Proposals for development, including change of use, that involve any alteration of, addition to or partial demolition of a listed building or within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of a listed building will be expected to:

i) conserve, enhance or better reveal those elements which contribute to the heritage significance and/or its setting;

ii) respect any features of special architectural or historic interest, including, where relevant, the historic curtilage or context, such as burgage plots, or its value within a group and/or its setting such as the importance of a street frontage or traditional shopfronts; and

iii) be sympathetic to the listed building and its setting in terms of its siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), design and form, in order to retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design, with regard to the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.

2. Development proposals affecting the significance of a listed building or its setting that will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that demonstrably outweigh that harm or loss or where the applicant can demonstrate that:

i) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

ii) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

iii) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

iv) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

3. Development proposals that would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a listed building will be expected to:

i) minimise harm and avoid adverse impacts, and provide justification for any adverse impacts, harm or loss of significance;

ii) identify any demonstrable public benefits or exceptional circumstances in relation to the development proposed; and

iii) investigate and record changes or loss of fabric, features, objects or remains, both known and unknown, in a manner proportionate to the importance of the change or loss, and to make this information publicly accessible.

4. Changes of use will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the new use can be accommodated without any adverse effect on the significance of the building and its setting.

8.5.12 Policy ENV9: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

1. Development must protect the site and setting of Scheduled Monuments or nationally important designated or undesignated archaeological remains.

2. Applicants will be expected to undertake an assessment of appropriate detail to determine whether the development site is known to, or is likely to, contain archaeological remains. Proposals must show the development proposals have had regard to any such remains.

3. Where the assessment indicates archaeological remains on site, and development could disturb or adversely affect archaeological remains and/or their setting, applicants will be expected to: i) submit an appropriate archaeological desk-based assessment; or ii) undertake a field evaluation (conducted by a suitably qualified archaeological organisation), where necessary.

4. Nationally important archaeological remains (whether scheduled or demonstrably of equivalent significance) should be preserved in situ. Non-designated archaeological sites or deposits of significance equal to that of a nationally important monument will be assessed as though those sites or deposits are designated.

5. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of such remains consent will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

6. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of such remains, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

7. For other archaeological remains, the effect of a development proposal on the significance of the remains, either directly or indirectly, will be taken into account in determining the application.

8. In exceptional cases, where harm to or loss of significance to the asset is considered to be justified, the harm should be minimised, and mitigated by a programme of archaeological investigation, including excavation, recording and analysis. Planning permission will not be granted until this programme has been submitted to, and approved by, the Council and development should not commence until these works have been satisfactorily undertaken by an appropriately qualified organisation. The results and analysis of findings subsequent to the investigation should be published and made available to the relevant local and county authorities.

Policy ENV12: Pollution - Impact of Development on Human Health, the Natural Environment and/or Local Amenity (Potential Sources of Pollution)

1. Development proposals should be located in sustainable locations and should be designed to ensure that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on human health, the natural environment and/or the amenity of neighbouring uses.

2. The individual and cumulative impacts of development on human health, the natural environment and/or local amenity will be considered when assessing development proposals.

3. The consideration of the merits of development proposals will be balanced against the adverse impact on human health, the natural environment and/or local amenity, including the following factors:

noise or vibration;

smell, dust, odour, artificial light, gases and other emissions;

air pollution, contamination of the site or its surroundings and hazardous substances nearby;

land instability; and

any other relevant types of pollution

8.5.13 Policy EP4: Flood Risk

1. The risk and impact of flooding will be minimised through:

i) directing new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding;

ii) ensuring that all new development addresses the effective management of all sources of flood risk;

iii) ensuring that development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; and

iv) ensuring wider environmental benefits of development in relation to flood risk.

2. The suitability of development proposed in Flood Zones will be strictly assessed using the 'Sequential Test' and where necessary the 'Exceptions Test'. A sequential approach should be used at site level.

3. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be provided for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. In Flood Zone 1 a FRA should accompany all proposals involving:

- sites of 1 hectare or more;
- land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems;
- land identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as being at increased flood risk in future; or
- land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where development would introduce a more vulnerable use.

4. All development proposals must be assessed against the current South Oxfordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment or any updates and the Oxfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to address locally significant flooding. Appropriate mitigation and management measures must be implemented and maintained.

5. All development will be required to provide a Drainage Strategy. Development will be expected to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems and ensure that run-off rates are attenuated to greenfield run-off rates. Higher rates would need to be justified and the risks quantified. Development should strive to reduce run-off rates for existing developed sites.

6. Sustainable Drainage Systems should seek to enhance water quality and biodiversity in line with the Water Framework Directive.

8.5.14 Comments

8.5.15 It should be noted that the South Oxfordshire Local Plan policies are mainly structured and worded to control built development in South Oxfordshire and that the control of mineral development is therefore (correctly) left as a matter for the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

8.5.16 Notwithstanding this point there are certain policy requirements and broad policy principles that are of potential relevance. It is also noted that the South Oxfordshire Local Plan contains proposals for a significant amount of development to take place in the period to 2035 (a 15 years period), including: new housing, employment development; tourism; new infrastructure and services; transport infrastructure; along with strategic scale mixed use developments.

8.5.17 The carrying out of this development and the construction of buildings and infrastructure will require construction materials, including considerable volumes of concrete. In turn this will create a considerable demand in South Oxfordshire for sand and gravel (aggregate) for use in concrete production as well as general construction

material. Clearly this creates an ongoing need for an adequate and steady supply of sharp sand and gravel in South Oxfordshire during the Plan period to 2035. In this regard the application site is well located and capable of making a positive contribution to aggregate supply during the first half of the Plan period.

8.5.18 Having regard to the policies set out above, which are considered to be the most potentially relevant policies to this sand and gravel application, the points to highlight are as follows:

A transport assessment (TA) has been submitted in accordance with the local plan policy and demonstrates no unacceptable impact from the proposed temporary, operational development on the local highway network or local communities/the environment.

- The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) confirms compliance with the local plan policy on landscape and countryside with the setting and special qualities of the AONB'S preserved and protected. The Environmental Statement and the LVIA also confirms that areas/features/buildings of cultural/historic value, including Listed Buildings, will not be subject to unacceptable impacts on their setting during the operational phases of the development and the restoration of the site will lead to long-term benefits to the local landscape.

- The restoration proposals contained in the Planning Application accord with the local plan policy on biodiversity – delivering a net gain to biodiversity.

- The proposals have been designed to protect the River Thames (and its users) during operational phases and the restoration scheme includes the management of drainage and the creation of wetland thus according with local plan policy.

- The EIA/ES confirms that the development will not result in significant adverse effects on human health, the local environment or local amenity. Noise, dust and visual effects of the operational phases of the development are all capable of being managed and mitigated to within acceptable thresholds in accordance with local plan policy.

- The EIA/ES confirms that the development will not have an unacceptable impact on the potential for flooding in the locality/Thames Valley and that appropriate management and mitigation can be employed as part of the development in accordance with local plan policy.

8.6 MATERIAL PLANNING POLICY AND RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

8.6.1 As explained in the introduction to this chapter, planning law requires that Planning Applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

8.6.2 Material considerations include policy documents and related policy document evidence base material that are not formally part of the Development Plan. This includes the National Planning Policy Framework, which should have been taken into account in the formulation of policy documents making up the Development Plan, as well as documents being prepared that will form part of the Development Plan in the future.

8.6.3 Evidence base documents that inform the Development Plan and its review are also relevant considerations as is any significant aspects of planning case law relating to decisions in regard to interpretation and application of the Development Plan.

8.6.4 The previous section set out various aspects of policy and supporting text, highlighted from the various Development Plan documents that apply to the Planning Application, that are considered particularly relevant to this Planning Application. This section deals with those aspects of documents that are not part of the Development Plan (or not at this stage part of the Development Plan) but are considered to be potentially "material" to the making of the decision on the Application. The documents and references that are considered to be material considerations are as follows:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – February 2019
- Local Aggregates Assessment for Oxfordshire - Report published in October 2019
- Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 2 Site Allocations – Preferred Options Consultation – January 2020
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- National Planning Policy for Waste

8.7 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – 2021

8.7.1 As stated, the NPPF should, in any event have been taken into account in the formulation and adoption of policy documents that make up the Development Plan.

8.7.2 In this case there are certain Development Plan documents that pre-date the NPPF and in any case the NPPF is a potential material consideration in its own right and helpfully

contains policy guidance specific to minerals as well as matters like Green Belt policy and its application.

8.7.3 The following references set out below are of potential relevance and weight should be attached to them in the making of the decision on this Planning Application.

8.7.4 Introduction- Paragraph 2

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.

8.7.5 Achieving Sustainable Development - Paragraph 7

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

8.7.6 Paragraph 8-

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective;

b) a social objective; and

c) an environmental objective

8.7.7 Paragraph 10

So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

8.7.8 Paragraph 11

Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

8.7.9 Determining Applications- Paragraph 47

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

8.7.10 Building a Strong and Competitive Economy - Paragraph 81

Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

8.7.11 Paragraph 83

Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

8.7.12 Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals -Paragraph 209

It is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.

8.7.13 Paragraph 211

When determining planning applications, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy. In considering proposals for mineral extraction, minerals planning authorities should:

a) as far as is practical, provide for the maintenance of landbanks of non-energy minerals from outside National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and World Heritage Sites, scheduled monuments and conservation areas;

b) ensure that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment, human health or aviation safety, and take into account the cumulative effect of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or from a number of sites in a locality;

c) ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any blasting vibrations are controlled, mitigated or removed at source, and establish appropriate noise limits for extraction in proximity to noise sensitive properties;

d) not grant planning permission for peat extraction from new or extended sites;

e) provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity, to be carried out to high environmental standards, through the application of appropriate conditions. Bonds or other financial guarantees to underpin planning conditions should only be sought in exceptional circumstances;

f) consider how to meet any demand for small-scale extraction of building stone at, or close to, relic quarries needed for the repair of heritage assets, taking account of the need to protect designated sites; and

g) recognise the small-scale nature and impact of building and roofing stone quarries, and the need for a flexible approach to the duration of planning permissions reflecting the intermittent or low rate of working at many sites.

8.7.14 Paragraph 212

Local planning authorities should not normally permit other development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas if it might constrain potential future use for mineral working.

8.7.15 Paragraph 213

Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates by:

a) preparing an annual Local Aggregate Assessment, either individually or jointly, to forecast future demand, based on a rolling average of 10 years' sales data and other relevant local information, and an assessment of all supply options (including marine dredged, secondary and recycled sources);

b) participating in the operation of an Aggregate Working Party and taking the advice of that party into account when preparing their Local Aggregate Assessment;

c) making provision for the land-won and other elements of their Local Aggregate Assessment in their mineral plans, taking account of the advice of the Aggregate Working Parties and the National Aggregate Co-ordinating Group as appropriate. Such provision should take the form of specific sites, preferred areas and/or areas of search and locational criteria as appropriate;

d) taking account of any published National and Sub National Guidelines on future provision which should be used as a guideline when planning for the future demand for and supply of aggregates;

e) using landbanks of aggregate minerals reserves principally as an indicator of the security of aggregate minerals supply, and to indicate the additional provision that needs to be made for new aggregate extraction and alternative supplies in mineral plans;

f) maintaining landbanks of at least 7 years for sand and gravel and at least 10 years for crushed rock, whilst ensuring that the capacity of operations to supply a wide range of materials is not compromised;

g) ensuring that large landbanks bound up in very few sites do not stifle competition; and

h) calculating and maintaining separate landbanks for any aggregate materials of a specific type or quality which have a distinct and separate market.

8.7.16 Comments

8.7.17 The NPPF is a material consideration of some importance. In this case the minerals and related policies are relevant and should be given weight in the determination of the Planning Application. The main points to highlight are as follows:

- The NPPF makes clear that it is essential there is sufficient supply of minerals and there are number of important benefits to society from the extraction of minerals. The NPPF makes clear that Mineral Planning Authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals. This proposal will help contribute to delivery of a sufficient year on year supply of sand and gravel at a time when Oxfordshire is struggling to meet its own planned for annual supply level. In that regard the proposal accords with the NPPF.

- When determining Planning Applications for minerals careful regard should be had to avoiding unacceptable impacts (rather than avoiding impacts altogether) on the environment or people/communities. The EIA/ES demonstrates that the short term impacts of the operational phases of the development can be managed and mitigated to within acceptable thresholds. Unacceptable levels are thus avoided in accordance with the NPPF.

- Provision must be made in mineral proposals for restoration and aftercare of the site to high environmental standards as soon as practicable. The proposed restoration will deliver and appropriate mix of high value agriculture and nature conservation, with a biodiversity net gain. It will also enhance recreation in the Thames Valley. These end uses and the delivery within a 5 years timescale accords with the requirements of the NPPF on restoration.

- The proposals constitute sustainable development. They will contribute to both the economy and social needs through aggregate supply and will bring long-term land uses benefits which benefit the local environment. This balance fully accords with the aim of the NPPF.

8.8 Local Aggregates Assessment for Oxfordshire (Report published in October 2019)

8.8.1 The NPPF at paragraph 207 requires Mineral Planning Authorities to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates. One of the tools to be used is the carrying out of an annual Local aggregates Assessment (LAA) to forecast future demand.

8.8.2 Oxfordshire, as Mineral Planning Authority, published its last LAA in October 2019. This contains data for the year 2018.

8.8.3 This is an important document in terms of monitoring of supply and permitted reserves (the landbank) of sand and gravel. In this regard the findings of the LAA provides an indication as to whether the County Council needs additional/alternative sites to

contribute to sand and gravel supply in order to meet its commitments in terms of maintaining adequate annual supply levels across the plan period.

8.8.4 The potentially most relevant extracts from the Oxfordshire LAA are as follows:

8.8.5 Sand and Gravel - Paragraph 1.5.

Sales of sharp sand and gravel increased in 2018 but were still below the LAA 2018 provision figure of 1.015mtpa. There was an increase in the 10-year sales average (0.592mt), this being the first such increase since the LAA 2014 and reversing the previous trend of annual decreases in the 10-year average. The 3-year sales average of sharp sand and gravel increased again to 0.717mt and is 21% higher than the 10-year average. Both are still below the LAA provision figure. Having considered the sales trends and other relevant information contained within this report it is not necessary to change the LAA 2019 provision figure for sharp sand and gravel and it will remain at 1.015mtpa.

8.8.6 Paragraph 1.10.

At the end of 2018, Oxfordshire had 10 active sand and gravel quarries within Oxfordshire, a further three not yet commenced and three currently inactive. One site closed in 2018. Planning permission was granted for one extension to an existing quarry, and one new site was permitted during 2018.

8.8.7 Paragraph 1.11.

Total permitted reserves of sharp sand and gravel in Oxfordshire at the end of 2018 were 12.925 mt. Using the LAA provision figures of 1.015mpta, this gives a landbank of 12.3 years.

8.8.8 Paragraph 1.12.

In terms of the plan period, the provision level figure for sharp sand and gravel of 1.015mtpa multiplied by the plan period of 18 years, gives a total provision requirement of 18.27 mt for the period 2014 to 2031. The permitted reserves of sharp sand & gravel at 31 December 2018 amount to 12.925 mt. Taking into account sales in 2014 – 2018 (total 3.558 mt), and reserves that are not expected to be worked until after the plan period (1.85 mt), the remaining requirement for the period to 2031 is 3.637 mt.

8.8.9 Economic Forecast - Paragraph 4.11

It seems reasonable to assume that growth will be at least in line with the indications given by National GDP projections and the MPA construction outlook. Therefore, it would be prudent to assume that future levels of economic growth activity and thus demand for construction aggregate, are likely to be higher in the future than has historically been the case. Unfortunately, no evidence is available to quantify the level of increase likely to be experienced, but it seems reasonable to assume that at least a modest level.

8.8.10 Major Infrastructure Projects/Key Development Conclusions -Paragraph 4.14

Whilst it is difficult to quantify, there are some indications that planned infrastructure and major development within the County may be greater during the Plan Period than was the case during the baseline period, and it would therefore be prudent to anticipate at least a modest increase in demand for construction aggregates from this sector.

8.8.11 Population and Housing Growth Conclusions- Paragraph 4.24

It is clear that we need to consider the implications of population and housing growth on the minerals provision over the plan period. The indications are that demand could be significantly higher during the Plan period than previously.

8.8.12 Conclusion/Sand and Gravel Provision - Paragraph 4.25

The evidence available suggests that Economic Forecasts, Major Infrastructure Projects/Key Development and Population Growth and Housing are all expecting some form of growth over the plan period and that recent demand would continue for the foreseeable future.

8.8.13 Paragraph 4.26

For sharp sand and gravel, sales in 2018 were still below the LAA level of 0.189mtpa but the generally upward trend in sales continued and there was an increase in the 10-year sales average, reversing the previous trend of decreases. The 3-year sales average increased and is 21% higher than the 10-year average, although still below the LAA provision level. This is consistent with the expectation of increasing demand and consequent sales when the LAA 2014 provision level figure was set at 1.015 mtpa, which has been continued in subsequent LAAs. This comparison can be seen in Figure 4.1. Available evidence indicates that supply is likely to increase further in response to rising demand. In conclusion, at this time there is no justification for a change in the

LAA provision level figure from the current level of 1.015 mtpa and this should continue to apply in the LAA 2019.

8.8.14 Comments

8.8.15 The evidence and commentary contained in the Local Aggregates Assessment (October 2019) for Oxfordshire is important for the monitoring of the sand and gravel supply and demand situation in the County. The content of the LAA 2019 therefore has relevance to the determination of this Planning Application and is therefore a material consideration. Some of the points to note are as follows:

- The LAA makes absolutely clear that there is insufficient year on years sharp sand and gravel supply in Oxfordshire to meet the County's own planned for annual requirement of supplying just over one million tonnes of sand and gravel to the construction market. This highlights the need to ensure increased supply to address this problem. The proposals therefore have the potential to make a positive contribution in increasing annual supply for a 5 years period. This a is a positive material consideration of considerable weight in favour of granting planning permission.

- Notwithstanding the above the 3 years sales average in 2018 was showing some increase in supply and therefore growth in the demand for aggregate. The document also acknowledges that future development growth and demand for aggregate is likely to increase, particularly with greater amounts of planned infrastructure and major development. These proposals are based upon commercial enquiries and demand for sharp sand and gravel, including enquiries from the HS2 project. This reflects the anticipated demand set out in the LAA and highlights the need to secure additional supply in the near future, particularly as the demand/need is already manifesting itself.

- Notwithstanding the increases in demand since 2018 the LAA 2019 already highlights a sand and gravel requirement of 3.637 million tonnes. Clearly the Planning Application proposals can make a valuable contribution in the short term. This is important when the LAA is highlighting that population growth and housing growth could be significantly higher than previously planned for.

- The LAA is pointing to a likely increase in demand for sand and gravel and this view is based on 2018 data. All recent trends in terms of construction and demand for aggregate indicate that the need for increased supply is more immediate and

will potentially increase as housing delivery continues and major infrastructure like HS2 and the Oxford-Milton Keynes railway are delivered. The proposals therefore have the potential to meet rising demand and support the delivery of housing, infrastructure and other planned development. These are material considerations of significant weight in the planning balance.

8.9 Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 2 Site Allocations – Preferred Options Consultation – January 2020

8.9.1 Paragraph 2.13

The Sites Plan needs to ensure a supply of minerals throughout the Plan period. It is usual practice for site allocation plans to include some contingency allowance, over and above the calculated requirement, and this is commonly between 10% and 20%. This is in order to give flexibility in case sites cannot be brought forward or prove not be able to deliver the expected yield.

8.9.2 Paragraph 2.15

Sales of sharp sand and gravel in recent years have been below the provision requirement rate in Core Strategy policy M3, and sales of sharp sand are well below the LAA rate. For those reasons a contingency of 5% is felt to be a sufficient level of contingency in this instance.

8.9.3 Paragraph 2.17

With the additional 5% contingency, the Sharp Sand and Gravel requirements is:

Sharp Sand and Gravel 3.637 mt + 5% contingency = 3.819 mt.

Sharp Sand and Gravel – North and South Allocations

8.9.4 Paragraph 2.27

In relation to sharp sand and gravel, Policy M3 of the Core Strategy states that the requirements to meet the need identified in policy M2 of the Core Strategy will be located predominantly from southern Oxfordshire (South Oxfordshire / Vale of White Horse). This is in order to achieve an approximately equal split in production between southern Oxfordshire and northern Oxfordshire (Cherwell / West Oxfordshire).

8.9.5 Paragraph 2.28

In light of further planning permissions since the Core Strategy's adoption and recent sales figures for northern Oxfordshire and southern Oxfordshire the figures for the north and south have been recalculated in order to achieve this equal split of production. (Annex 1). Southern Oxfordshire has increased to 84%, and the additional requirement for northern Oxfordshire has decreased to 16% to update the requirements of northern and southern areas.

8.9.6 Paragraph 2.29

Therefore, with the addition of the 5% contingency for Sharp Sand and Gravel the amount we need to provide is:

- Northern Oxfordshire 0.583 mt + 5% contingency = 0.612 mt;
- Southern Oxfordshire 3.054 mt + 5% contingency = 3.207 mt;
- Total Oxfordshire 3.637 mt + 5% contingency = 3.819 mt

8.9.7 Sharp Sand and Gravel Sites - Paragraph 6.1

Eighteen sand and gravel sites were assessed in the Stage 1b of the Site Assessment process. Of these six were not considered suitable to be allocated in the Sites Plan. These sites, and the reasons they are not suitable are set out in Table 10.

8.9.8 SG60 – White Cross Farm

The site is the subject to a current planning application that would involve restoration to a marina. The development of a marina in that location would be contrary to South Oxfordshire Local Plan policies and it has not been suggested that the material would be excavated for any other reason than to create the marina.

8.9.9 Southern Oxfordshire Preferred Option - Paragraph 6.7

In southern Oxfordshire we have identified the need to deliver 3.207million tonnes (mt) over the Plan period. The priority for allocation of extensions to existing quarries would initially lead to the allocation of site SG11 & SG65 Land situated NE of Sonning Eye. This site however, is not due to come into use until 2029, which is at the end of the plan period (2031), and would only provide 0.34mt. This would be well below the requirement needed in southern Oxfordshire.

8.9.10 Paragraph 6.8

Site SG62 Appleford is proposed as an extension to an existing quarry but it is separated from the existing plant site by the waste recycling uses, waste bodies, roads and a railway. It therefore appears in fact to be a new standalone quarry rather than an extension to the existing The site would have a lifetime of 3 years and would produce 1.1mt of sand and gravel over the lifetime of the site. If we allocated this site there would still be a requirement for a further site to provide 1.9mt of sand and gravel in the southern Oxfordshire area.

8.9.11 Paragraph 6.9

The two remaining sites would have yields of 3.9mt (SG42 Land at Nuneham Courtenay) and 6mt (SG09 & SG59 Land at Drayton St Leonard & Berinsfield). Of these two sites, SG42 Land at Nuneham Courtenay would have fewer constraints, it would yield less mineral reserve but still be well above the remainder of the amount needed for the south of the County.

8.9.12 Paragraph 6.10

Therefore, SG42 Land at Nuneham Courtenay is the preferred option for southern Oxfordshire.

8.9.13 Paragraph 6.11

Taking all those sites together would give a total reserve of 5.76 million tonnes. The split would be as follows:

Northern Oxfordshire (Site SG20b) 1.86 million tonnes (32%)

Southern Oxfordshire (Site SG42) 3.90 million tonnes (68%)

8.9.14 Paragraph 6.12

8.9.15 s well as being above the requirement for the county this would not achieve the rebalancing of production from northern Oxfordshire to southern Oxfordshire to the extent set out in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy. It does however move towards rebalancing the production capacity of the Minerals sites within northern and southern areas of the County. The need for further rebalancing would need to be taken into account as part of the next review of the Local Plan.

8.9.16 Comments

8.9.17 The following points are relevant to the Planning Application proposals:

- The Mineral Planning Authority (MPA) needs to ensure an adequate supply of aggregate through the plan period to meet the minerals strategy for the County. The Part II plan proposes to do this by proposing and allocating sites that will contribute to supply across the plan period. In that regard the Planning Application brings forward a well designed site whose purpose is to contribute positively to supply rapidly. In that regard the site is deliverable, which is an amount material consideration of some weight. By contrast the site contained in the Part II plan are not at that level of design so some doubt exists over their deliverability, certainly in terms of timescale for delivery.

- The MPA needs to find extraction supply sites for sharp sand and gravel that increase the proportion of supply from South Oxfordshire to achieve (ultimately) an equal split of production between north and south Oxfordshire. Latest production figures indicate that since the adoption of the Part I Core Strategy in 2017 the proportion of sand and gravel that needs to be sourced from South Oxfordshire has increased to 84% of total supply. Therefore, with this increased emphasis on raising the supply output from South Oxfordshire, it is important to note that the proposal site has the potential to make a rapid contribution to meeting the requirements of the adopted strategy for sand and gravel supply in Oxfordshire. This is a point of significant planning wight in favour of granting planning permission for the proposals.

- The draft Part II document also indicates that a 5% addition to the provision for sand and gravel is appropriate (to take account of additional growth potential), although there is an acknowledged argument that this figure could/should be higher. Therefore the total tonnage to be planned for has risen since 2017. In this regard the application proposals will provide an additional tonnage to the overall supply and again significant weight should be attached to this material consideration given the rising need/demand.

- The draft Part II document does not propose the allocation of the previous marina based development which was proposed on this application site as the Mineral Planning Authority takes the view that the location of a marina south of Wallingford would be contrary to the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and viewed the sand and gravel supply as being reliant on the creation of a marina. It is therefore critical to note that this re-submission application proposes the much needed supply of sand and gravel, in a Strategic Resource Area (i.e. Priority Area), during a period of high demand, but without the creation of a marina in the residual void.

Rather, the Planning Application proposes a mix of best and most versatile agricultural land with nature conservation and informal/quiet recreation. This scheme will deliver clear biodiversity gains. In the light of these points the supply benefits previous the proposals and the appropriateness of the end uses (which accord with the South Oxfordshire Local Plan) should be given significant positive planning weight.

- The draft Part II Site Allocations document proposes a large 3.9 million tonnes site at Nuneham Courtenay to help sustain supply of sharp sand and gravel in South Oxfordshire in the plan period. Even if this site gets allocated through the adoption of the Part II document, and adoption is highly likely to be some years away (raising some doubt over the level of contribution the site can make during the plan period), the draft Part II document still acknowledges that this site would not be sufficient to achieve the re-balancing of supply from north to south Oxfordshire that is required by the adopted Part I Core Strategy for minerals. In this context it is of significant planning weight to note that the supply from the proposal site has the potential to minimise this acknowledged deficiency in planned supply and the Part II document's inability to properly implement the MPA's adopted strategy for sand and gravel supply. The potential though for the application proposals to come "on-stream" rapidly and meet high demand from the construction industry is a material consideration of significance in the determination of this application.

8.10 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) – Minerals - 17 October 2014

8.10.1 Some of the relevant sections from the NPPG Minerals are set out below, as follows:

8.10.2 "Significant environmental impacts are best addressed through consideration of an Environmental Statement which will have to accompany nearly all planning applications for new mineral working. Statutory regulators must be consulted as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process. This ensures that the mineral planning authority has sufficient information on all environmental matters at the time the planning decision is made".

8.10.3 Mineral operators should look to agree a programme of work with the mineral planning authority which takes into account, as far as is practicable, the potential impacts on the local community and local environment (including wildlife), the proximity to occupied properties, and legitimate operational considerations over the expected duration of operations.

8.10.4 Some parts of a mineral planning authority area may have been subjected to successive mineral development (such as aggregate extraction or surface coal mining) over a number of years. Mineral planning authorities should include appropriate policies in their minerals local plan, where appropriate, to ensure that the cumulative impact of a proposed mineral development on the community and the environment will be acceptable. The cumulative impact of mineral development is also capable of being a material consideration when determining individual planning applications.

8.10.5 Responsibility for the restoration and aftercare of mineral sites, including financial responsibility, lies with the minerals operator and, in the case of default, with the landowner.

8.10.6 The most appropriate form of site restoration to facilitate different potential after uses should be addressed in both local minerals plans, which should include policies to ensure worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity and that high quality restoration and aftercare of mineral sites takes place, and on a site-by-site basis following discussions between the minerals operator and the mineral planning authority.

8.10.7 Mineral planning authorities should secure the restoration and aftercare of a site through imposition of suitable planning conditions and, where necessary, through planning obligations.

8.10.8 There are many possible uses of land once minerals extraction is complete and restoration and aftercare of land is complete. These include:

- creation of new habitats and biodiversity;
- use for agriculture;
- forestry;
- recreational activities;
- waste management, including waste storage; and
- the built environment, such as residential, industrial and retail where appropriate.

8.10.9 Some former mineral sites may also be restored as a landfill facility using suitable imported waste materials as an intermediate stage in restoration prior to an appropriate after use.

8.10.10 Separate planning permission is likely to be required for most forms of after-use, except:

- agriculture and forestry;
- uses for which planning permission is granted under a Local Development Order;
- nature conservation and informal recreation which do not involve substantial public use."

8.10.11 Comments

8.10.12 In accordance with NPPG 2014 the Applicant has carried out EIA and presented the findings in an Environmental Statement (ES). This demonstrates that temporary short-term potential impacts of the development are all capable of being controlled and managed to within acceptable levels. The short-term nature of the operation and the low level of impact ensures that there are no "in-combination" cumulative effects of any significance.

8.10.13 The importation of inert fill and the best use of high quality soils ensures restoration of best and most versatile agricultural land with the remainder of the site making net gains to biodiversity. The proposals comply with the requirements of the NPPG on minerals.

8.11 National Planning Policy for Waste – 16 October 2014

8.11.1 Some of the relevant sections from the NPPG Waste are set out below, as follows:

- Ensure that waste management facilities in themselves are well-designed, so that they contribute positively to the character and quality of the area in which they are located.
- Ensure that land raising or landfill sites are restored to beneficial after uses at the earliest opportunity and to high environmental standards through the application of appropriate conditions where necessary.
- In testing the suitability of sites and areas in the preparation of Local Plans and in determining planning applications, waste planning authorities should consider the factors below. They should also bear in mind the envisaged waste management facility in terms of type and scale.
- Protection of water quality and resources and flood risk management

8.11.2 Considerations will include the proximity of vulnerable surface and groundwater or aquifers. For landfill or land-raising, geological conditions and the behaviour of surface water and groundwater should be assessed both for the site under consideration and the surrounding area. The suitability of locations subject to flooding, with consequent issues relating to the management of potential risk posed to water quality from waste contamination, will also need particular care.

8.11.3 Landscape and Visual Impacts

Considerations will include (i) the potential for design-led solutions to produce acceptable development which respects landscape character; (ii) the need to protect landscapes or designated areas of national importance (National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts) (iii) localised height restrictions.

8.11.4 Nature Conservation

Considerations will include any adverse effect on a site of international importance for nature conservation (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and RAMSAR Sites), a site with a nationally recognised designation (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves), Nature Improvement Areas and ecological networks and protected species.

8.11.5 Conserving the Historic Environment

Considerations will include the potential effects on the significance of heritage assets, whether designated or not, including any contribution made by their setting.

8.11.6 Traffic and Access

Considerations will include the suitability of the road network and the extent to which access would require reliance on local roads, the rail network and transport links to ports.

8.11.7 Air Emissions, Including Dust

Considerations will include the proximity of sensitive receptors, including ecological as well as human receptors, and the extent to which adverse emissions can be controlled through the use of appropriate and well-maintained and managed equipment and vehicles.

8.11.8 Noise, Light and Vibration

Considerations will include the proximity of sensitive receptors. The operation of large waste management facilities in particular can produce noise affecting both the inside and outside of buildings, including noise and vibration from goods vehicle traffic movements to and from a site. Intermittent and sustained operating noise may be a

problem if not properly managed particularly if night-time working is involved. Potential light pollution aspects will also need to be considered.

8.11.9 Potential Land Use Conflict

Likely proposed development in the vicinity of the location under consideration should be taken into account in considering site suitability and the envisaged waste management facility."

8.11.10 Comments

8.11.11 In accordance with the NPPW 2014 the applicant has carried out expert assessment of potential effects on both groundwater and flood risk. In both cases the assessment confirms that potential effects will not have unacceptable effects and that the final levels and restoration end uses will ensure effective water management and a site that will not increase flood risk. The development therefore accords with the requirements of the NPPW.

8.11.12 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has had careful regard to the landscape character, AONB's and heritage assets. The LVIA confirms that the development will have only limited short-term and temporary effects during operations and will deliver long-term landscape and visual benefits through the site restoration. The proposals therefore fully accord with the NPPW in respect of these considerations.

8.11.13 The proposals also accord with the NPPW in regard to transport and access requirements, with an acceptably designed access and the ability of the local road network to accommodate the traffic flows generated by the development over a limited period.

8.11.14 In accordance with the NPPW the EIA/ES has had careful regard to sensitive receptors in respect of noise, dust and air quality. The expert assessments confirm all potential effects can be managed and mitigated to within acceptable thresholds as required by the NPPW.

8.12 PLANNING POLICY CONCLUSIONS

8.12.1 The careful planning policy analysis and the findings set out above make clear that these proposals constitute a sustainable form of development that complies fully with the Development Plan. In fact, the proposals draw particularly strong support from

the Minerals Core Strategy for Oxfordshire and the economic and social benefits that will flow from the scheme. Points to highlight are:

8.12.2 The development will make a positive contribution to sand and gravel supply and will assist the County in meeting the year on year supply level required by the Minerals Core Strategy over the next 5 years (at a time when demand is increasing);

8.12.3 The site's location in South Oxfordshire will make a specific early contribution to the County meeting its Minerals Core Strategy requirement of re-balancing supply between north and south Oxfordshire at a point when the need to deliver more supply from South Oxfordshire has increased since the adoption of the Minerals Core Strategy. Specifically the site's location in a Strategic Resource Area for sand and gravel – identified to help achieve the above mentioned Minerals Core Strategy aims is of particular importance;

8.12.4 The EIA/ES demonstrate the compliance with the environmental and amenity tests contained in the adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Core Strategy);

8.12.5 The delivery of an appropriate mix of end-uses through site restoration accords fully with the requirements of the Development Plan.

8.12.6 In regard to the South Oxfordshire Local Plan the scheme will:

- Ensure an improved supply of sand and gravel in South Oxfordshire over a 5 years period which will contribute positively to the construction needs generated by the large quantum of permanent development contained in the recently adopted local plan, including housing, employment/commercial, infrastructure and transport.

- Ensure control and management of short-term impacts in accordance with environmental and amenity tests of the Local Plan

8.12.7 The NPPF is a material consideration and the proposals clearly accord with its various minerals requirements through the delivery of s sustainable development that meets economic/social needs in the short-term and delivery of environmental benefits in the long-term.

8.12.8 The site's contribution to delivery of a steady and adequate supply of aggregate is a point of considerable planning weight as are the land-uses benefits from restoration.

8.12.9 The Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA), although somewhat dated, contains data of some relevance. It makes clear the increasing need for a greater supply of sand

and gravel in Oxfordshire, and specifically South Oxfordshire as the document envisages demand growing from the construction/development sector as a consequence of planned growth. In simple terms the LAA highlights a strong need case for the proposed development, which is considered a material consideration of considerable positive weight in the determination of this application.

8.12.10 The emerging Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part II Site Allocations document is of direct relevance. It too highlights clearly that there is an increasing need for an increase in supply of sand and gravel in the County and the increasing need to supply greater volumes from South Oxfordshire in order for the County to adhere to its own adopted strategy for sand and gravel supply.

8.12.11 These re-submitted proposals, which no longer propose a marina end-use (which the Part II draft Plan considers unsuitable in this location) clearly have the ability to contribute quickly to meeting the increased supply requirements from the priority Strategic Resource Area (SRA) identified in the Minerals Core Strategy. Whilst the Part II document's proposed sand and gravel allocation at Nuneham Courtenay is positive, the likely delay in moving the Part II Plan to adoption and the scale of the site suggest strongly that delivery and contribution to supply are some years away.

8.12.12 The demand and the need is already strong and requires more supply in the short-term. This relatively small-scale proposal can be delivered quite rapidly to respond to current and planned demand, particularly from projects like HS2 together with the substantial increase in planned housing construction in the near future. This potential to make a helpful and meaningful contribution to the supply requirement is a positive material consideration of significant weight.

8.12.13 In terms of planning guidance, in simple terms, the nature and design of the proposals as well as the mitigation and management measures set out in the EIA/ES properly accord with the requirements of the NPPG 2014 and NPPW 2014 Again, this compliance is a positive material consideration to add to those referred to above.

8.12.14 In overall terms there is a compelling planning policy argument both in terms of supply and strategy, but also in environmental terms, for the granting of planning permission at the earliest opportunity. A high level of planning policy compliance (with adopted Development Plan policy) and the positive contributions that the development can make to Oxfordshire meeting its own Minerals Core Strategy are indisputable and demonstrate clearly that the development is in the public interest.

8.12.15 The analysis has taken account of relevant material policy considerations and again the case for granting planning permission is compelling as the proposals constitute sustainable development as they meet all three main facets of sustainability with a suitably designed development in a suitable location.

8.12.16 The granting of planning permission will therefore be a positive step in mineral supply terms and meeting the needs of the construction industry and also in terms of long-term land use benefits in this location.

9. ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL AGGREGATE NEED AND FUTURE DEMAND

9.1 Assessed Available Aggregate Supply

9.1.1 The permitted reserves within the operating sites within Oxfordshire County Council administrative area are set out in the policy section above. The conclusions from the policy review confirm that the demand and the need for sand and gravel resources is already strong, but there is a need for more supply in the short-term.

9.1.2 The MPA also needs to find extraction supply sites for sharp sand and gravel that increase the proportion of supply from South Oxfordshire to achieve (ultimately) an equal split of production between north and south Oxfordshire. Latest production figures indicate that since the adoption of the Part I Core Strategy in 2017 the proportion of sand and gravel that needs to be sourced from South Oxfordshire has increased to 84% of total supply. Therefore, with this increased emphasis on raising the supply output from South Oxfordshire.

9.1.3 The draft Part II document also indicates that a 5% addition to the provision for sand and gravel is appropriate (to take account of additional growth potential), although there is an acknowledged argument that this figure could/should be higher.

9.1.4 The latest Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) for Oxfordshire makes clear that the County is failing to meet its delivery target of ensuring a steady and continuous supply of 1.015 mtpa of sand and gravel each year. The LAA provides evidence that annual supply is around 0.75 mtpa (based on both 3 and 10 years sales averages. There is therefore a real need for rapid allocation and delivery of a range of sand and gravel sites to maintain supply in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF. It should be noted that the Whitecross Farm site is of a size that allows rapid delivery (and therefore rapid contribution to year on year supply), particularly as it has minimal constraint.

9.1.5 This rapid increase in recorded market demand for minerals within the County and the historical closure of a number of quarries over the past decade or so, it is suggested that the increasing demand for aggregate and the reduction in permitted reserves across the County and region will likely reduce the existing landbank figure rapidly over the coming years.

9.1.6 The proposed site would contribute to the landbank – 0ver 0.6 million tonnes of reserve – but the landbank is less important than having operational sites contributing to the year on year supply that has been planned for – as enshrined in Part I of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan for Oxfordshire (OMWLP). In terms of the strategy set out in policies of the OMWLP it is important to note that there is a locational dimension to

sand and gravel supply with policies encouraging a shift away from north Oxfordshire to south Oxfordshire. South Oxfordshire is identified as a Strategic Resource Area (SRA) and it is important to note that the Wallingford site is located in this SRA.

9.1.7 Considerable weight in the planning balance must be placed on sustaining and increasing annual supply of sand and gravel from South Oxfordshire in the relative short term – over a period of about 5 years. In this regard a review of the latest Local Aggregates Assessment for Oxfordshire – 2019 confirms that annual sales of sharp sand and gravel in the County are well below the 1 + mtpa provision/requirement figure in the adopted Core Strategy.

9.1.8 Using this information, there is clear evidence that the County is not meeting it's planned for annual provision level, with figures for 2018 supply/sales of sharp sand and gravel being recorded as 0.796 mt. The 3 years sales average is less, at 0.717 mt. In conclusion, the County is consistently failing to meet its own adopted annual supply provision requirement.

9.1.9 The relatively small-scale proposal for the site at Whitecross Farm can be delivered quite rapidly to respond to current and planned demand. This demand is currently being increased in Oxfordshire particularly from projects like HS2 together with the substantial increase in planned housing construction in the near future. The proposed new short-term site will therefore help to provide an additional secure flow of minerals in to the local and regional aggregate market and assist the County with its requirements and policies for aggregate supply.

9.1.10 The proposed site is located on the main highway network, just to the south of the town of Wallingford and to the south of the City of Oxford, thus is it centrally placed within the southern part of the County to access the main identified commercial aggregate and construction markets via using the local and regional highway network.

9.2 National Aggregate Demand & Published Aggregate Sales

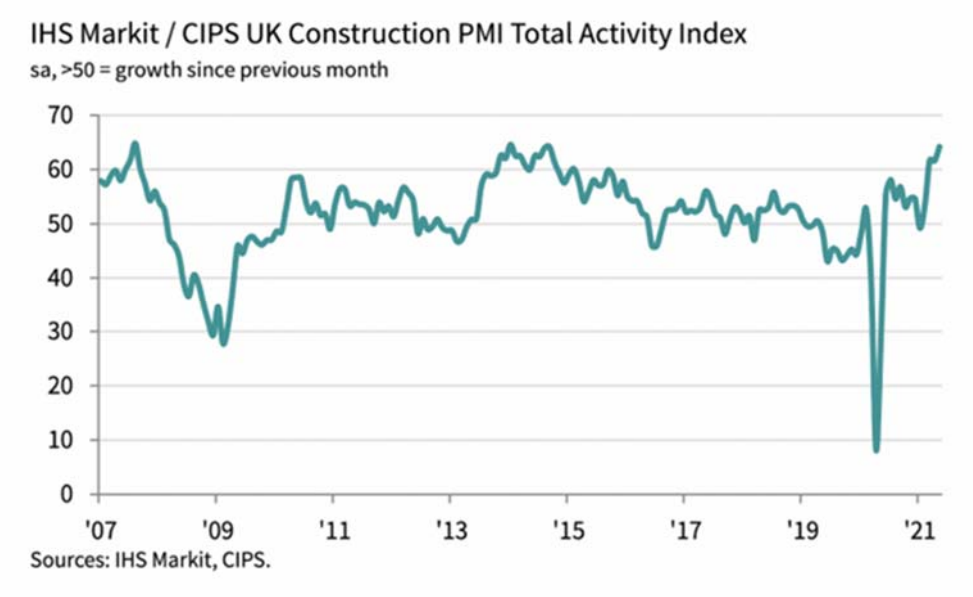
9.2.1 Delivered volumes of heavy-side mineral products and aggregates broke records in the second quarter (Q2) of 2021, as reported by the Mineral Products Association (MPA) in August 2021. The MPA quarterly survey confirms that during the current year (2021) the industry has supplied the highest quarterly volumes of materials such as aggregates and asphalt in more than 12 years.

9.2.2 The May Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) data indicated that the UK construction sector remained on a strong recovery path, with output growth reaching its strongest

since September 2014. Moreover, new order volumes increased at the fastest pace since the survey began just over 24 years ago (see chart below).

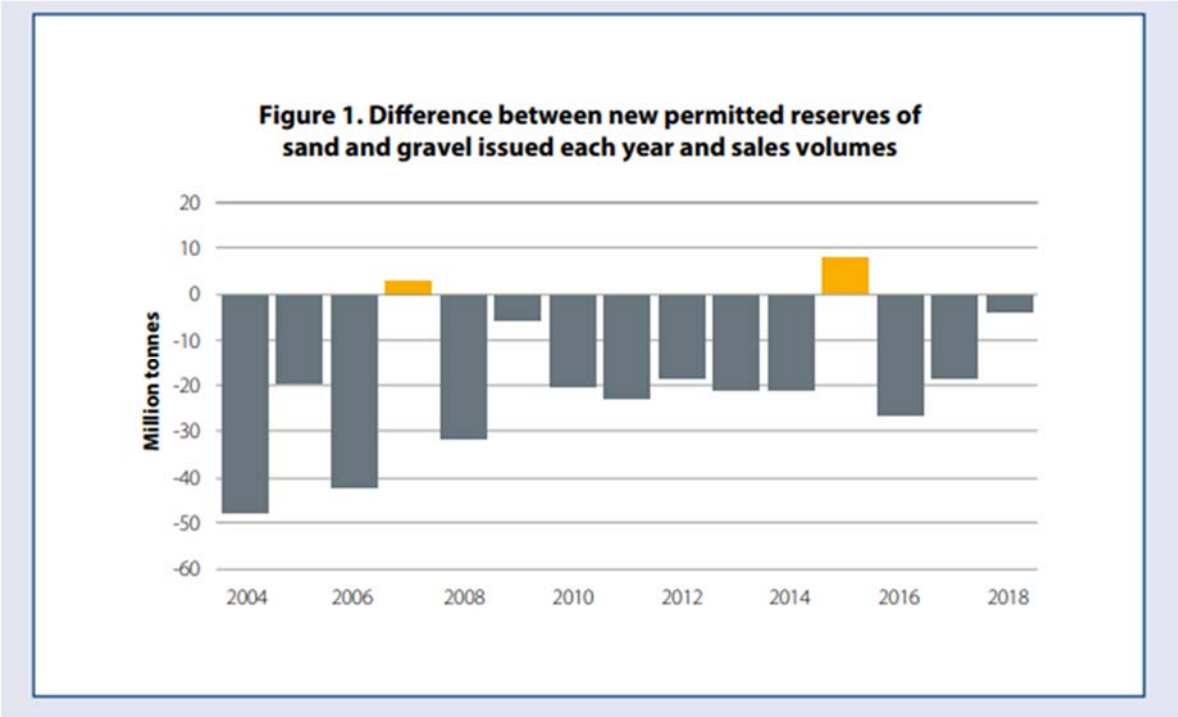
9.2.3 House building (index at 66.3) was the best-performing category of construction activity in May, followed by commercial work (64.4). The latest increase in work on commercial projects was the steepest since August 2007, reflecting strong demand conditions following the reopening of customer-facing areas of the UK economy.

9.2.4 This latest PMI survey pointed to a rapid upturn in new business across the construction sector. Around 47% of the companies surveyed reported higher volumes of new work. Construction companies attributed the surge in order books to strong demand for residential building work and high levels of confidence about the near-term economic outlook. Input cost inflation was also at a survey-record high during May, reflecting a surge in demand for construction materials and severe supply shortages.



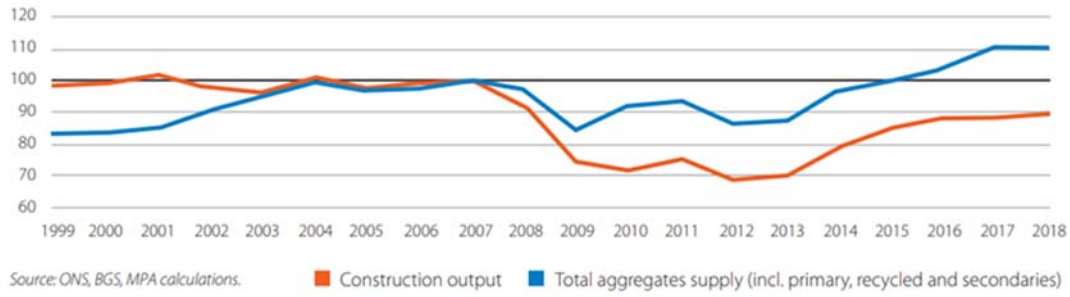
9.2.5 For aggregates, sales of primary crushed rock and sand and gravel recorded a small decline of 0.4% in Q2 compared with Q1 of 2021. However overall, the first half of 2021 saw aggregates sales volumes at their highest since mid-2008. The MPA confirm that aggregates sales have increased significantly boosted mainly by demand for bulk fill materials on major infrastructure projects and highway schemes, together with substantial increased activity in the housebuilding sector.

9.2.6 The latest annual total sales of land-won sand and gravel figures are available for 2018, which showed an increase by 2.9%. However, it is noted that only 92% of annual sales were replenished through new planning permissions in 2018, with the rolling 10-year average at 63%. This confirms that sales of sand and gravel continue to outstrip the amount of new reserves permitted, as shown below



9.2.7 The trend of aggregate sales linked to construction activity is given in the chart below (as given in the latest MPA sales statistics). This shows a dramatic fall during the recession in 2008-13, with static markets at historically low levels to 2014. From 2014, aggregate sales have shown a gradual increase, but the sales are only recently at similar levels recorded prior to the recession.

MPA Sales Statistics: source –AggNet January2021



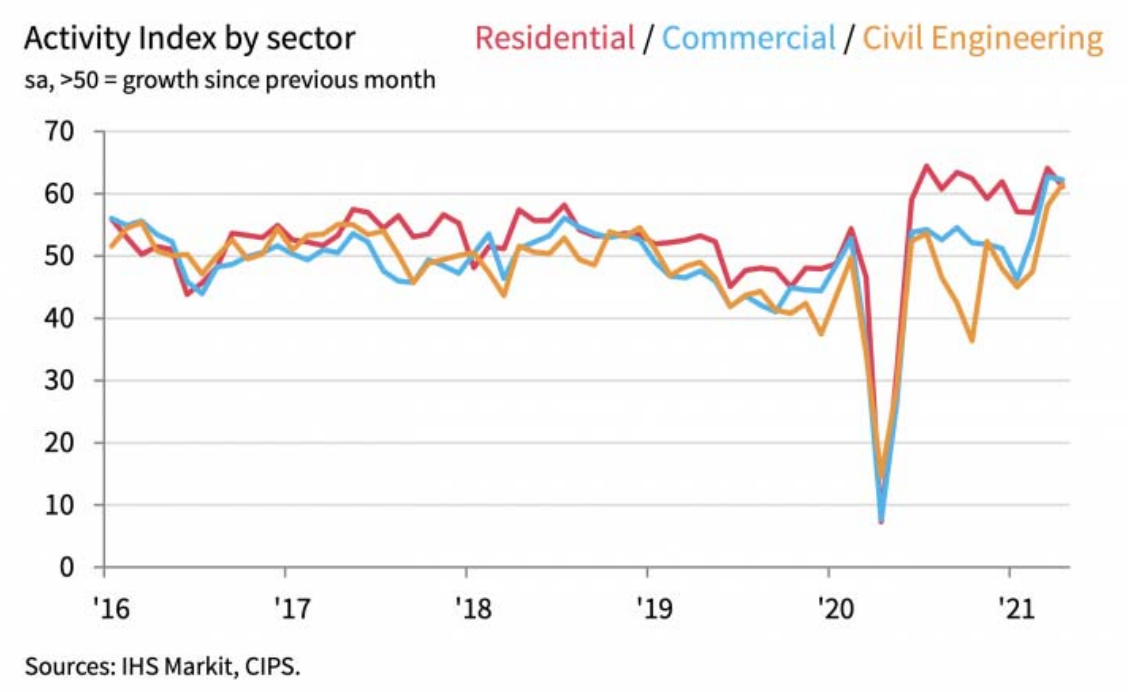
9.2.8 The MPA confirms that materials such as ready-mixed concrete and aggregates, which are used across all major construction sectors, particularly in the earlier stages of projects, provide hard evidence of sustained activity on the ground and that construction markets and the general economy in the UK in 2018 were clearly more resilient than anticipated.

9.2.9 The headline IHS Markit/CIPS UK Construction PMI Total Activity Index in April 2021 was down only fractionally from March's six-and-a-half year peak of 61.7. With any figure above 50.0 indicating an overall expansion of construction output, the index has posted in growth territory in 10 of the past 11 months, with January 2021 being the exception (see chart below).

9.2.10 UK construction companies signalled a strong increase in output volumes during April, with continued recoveries in civil engineering activity, commercial work and house building boosted by the fastest rise in overall new orders since September 2014.

9.2.11 The study confirms that "a rapid rise in demand for construction products and materials continued to stretch supply chains in April" and that "the latest lengthening of suppliers' delivery times was the third greatest since the survey began in 1997".

Construction Activity by sector –AggNet May2021



9.2.12 As the Covid period ends and aggregate demand increases, availability of aggregate supplies from within Oxfordshire and from adjacent counties will decrease due to an increase in local demand. The need for new aggregate sites located within the County is considered to be essential to satisfy the rising demand.

9.2.13 The proposed site at Whitecross Quarry site will ensure that an adequate supply of sand and gravel can be provided into the identified (and rapidly expanding) construction markets in South Oxfordshire.

10. SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021 provides guidance on how "sustainability" should be approached within the planning system. Paragraph 8 states:

"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)". These objectives are listed as:

economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

10.1.2 Paragraph 10 states: "So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development…"

10.2 Development Contribution to the Achievement of Sustainable Development

10.2.1 The mineral proposals at Whitecross Farm have been very carefully designed having regard to mineral/aggregate demand requirements, environmental considerations and the need to deliver longer-term net land-use gains.

10.2.2 In doing so careful regard has been had to the reasons for refusal on the original application, especially concerns over the proposed marina end-use and this revised application has sought to address the need to deliver a sustainable form of development with end-uses considered appropriate for the site's location.

10.2.3 In designing the revised re-submission minerals application regard has been had to the 3 sustainability objectives set out in the NPPF, as explained below.

10.3 Meeting Economic Objectives

10.3.1 The NPPF, July 2021 advises on the approach to mineral supply. Paragraph 209 states:

"It is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation."

10.3.2 Paragraph 211 states: "When determining planning applications, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy…."

10.3.3 Paragraph 213 states: "Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates…."

10.3.4 As explained in some detail in the Planning Policy section of the Planning Statement, the nature and siting of these proposals accord with the Mineral Planning Authority's adopted strategy to sand and gravel supply. The mineral planning policy circumstances and related evidence on supply of sand and gravel in Oxfordshire make clear the need for the sand and gravel that the site proposes to extract and the supply benefit of its location in South Oxfordshire in an identified Strategic Resource Area.

10.4 Meeting Social Objectives

10.4.1 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan, 2020 plans for a mix of development that is required to meet society's needs for the period to 2035.

10.4.2 The Local Plan contains a significant quantum of development planned for delivery over the next 15 years or more. In addition to the development contained in the Local Plan there are other major infrastructure projects, again to meet the needs of modern society, including the delivery of the HS2 high-speed rail infrastructure as well as other transport schemes.

10.4.3 In regard to the South Oxfordshire area the proposed development will:

Ensure an improved supply of sand and gravel (for use in construction) in South Oxfordshire over a 5 years period which will contribute positively to the construction needs generated by the large quantum of permanent development proposed in the recently adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2020, including housing, employment/commercial, infrastructure and transport. The site will also provide the

facility for the positive use of clean, inert construction/excavation waste from construction schemes, which will be put to positive use in the reclamation and restoration of the site in a progressive manner.

10.5 Meeting Environmental Objectives

10.5.1 The application involves delivering a new source of sand and gravel supply (capable of supply mineral for a 5 years period) that is located in a Strategic Sand and Gravel Resource Area identified in the Part I Minerals Local Plan. This means that the processed aggregate is located close to construction markets in South Oxfordshire where there is significant amount of planned future development and infrastructure delivery. Locating a source of supply close to and within areas of demand for construction aggregate minimises transport distances and costs and therefore minimises potential adverse impacts on the environment.

10.5.2 The proposals include restoration of the site to a mix of appropriate long-term land uses following the extraction of the sand and gravel and the backfilling of the site with inert construction waste. The restoration will deliver:

- good quality agricultural land and the retention and positive protection/management/placement and use of soils that are classed as best and most versatile agricultural soils;
- the creation and management of areas of nature conservation interest, delivering biodiversity enhancement with clear net gains to local biodiversity; and,
- protection/enhancement of public access in the Thames Valley.

10.5.3 The proposed site restoration also includes a system of sustainable drainage, designed to ensure that surface water and groundwater flows are well-managed and help contribute to biodiversity. The proposed restoration final levels will not exceed original ground-levels and, in combination with the proposed end-uses, are designed to ensure no increase in flood risk in this part of the Thames Valley.

10.5.4 The proposals provide for the use of a modern mineral processing plant that is both energy efficient and water efficient. Pollution protection measures will be employed during the course of the operational phases of the development with bunded fuel tanking and a site management regime to minimise risks of spills and discharges.

10.5.5 The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) findings that are included in the accompanying Environmental Statement make clear that the proposals will not lead to

significant adverse impacts on the environment during extraction and backfill operations and will lead to long-term environmental gains through the site restoration.

10.6 Conclusions

10.6.1 It is considered that overall the proposed development will:

- Contribute positively to meeting identified economic needs by supplying aggregate for which there is an identified need;
- Contribute positively to meeting social needs by enabling the supply of construction materials for infrastructure and development that has been planned to meet society's needs over the next 15 years;
- Contribute positively in the long-term to the local environment following the extraction of the minerals – with delivery of appropriate end-uses that will deliver biodiversity net gains, quality agricultural land and enhancement to public access and visitors to the Thames Valley; and
- Minimise potential environmental impacts and ensure energy and water efficiency and pollution protection during the course of the temporary operations as the site makes its positive contribution to economic and social needs.

10.6.2 It is clear from this consideration of the sustainability credentials of the proposed development that the proposals will deliver net gains across each of the 3 objectives for sustainability set out in the NPPF 2021. This gives a strong planning and sustainability justification for the granting of planning permission at the earliest opportunity, particularly as the proposals comply with an up to date Development Plan.

11. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Planning Policy Summary

11.1.1 All relevant policies associated with the proposed scheme to extract the aggregate resources at the site have been addressed, including the need for the development, the control and mitigation of potential environmental impacts, site restoration and the stability of the workings.

11.1.2 The site would provide an additional 0.6 million tonnes sand and gravel reserve that would therefore help to sustain a landbank of "at least 7 years", but it would not result in an oversupply of sand and gravel in the county and would not jeopardise the delivery of other sites in the emerging Plan for the County that will be delivered across a much longer timescale.

11.1.3 It can be shown that there is a strong planning justification, supported by both NPPF and policies included in the current development plan to PERMIT the proposed sand and gravel extraction development at the proposed site at the earliest opportunity. To do so will enable delivery of a sustainable development that accords with the relevant elements of the Development Plan, as required by the NPPF 2021.

11.2 Development Proposal Summary

11.2.1 The proposed mineral development on land at Whitecross Farm has an important role to play in the short to medium term provision of sand and gravel for building and general construction industries within the southern part of Oxfordshire. It will make a significant short-term contribution of high quality sand and gravel to local economic prosperity through local employment opportunities and the use of local businesses to supply the day to day needs of the operations.

11.2.2 The overall quarry development has a proposed life of some 4-5 years, comprising mineral extraction at a rate of around 140,000 tonnes per annum and a further year of works to complete the restoration of the site. The application incorporates a comprehensive package of mitigation measures aimed at reducing the impact of the proposed operations on the environment and the local community.

11.2.3 A new purpose built quarry entrance and exit will be constructed linking the proposed quarry development to the existing road network serving the site that links with the regional and national highway network. This will provide acceptable distribution of lorry traffic associated with the development, which is compliant with the stated Sustainable Transport aims set out within local and National Policy documents.

11.2.4 The proposed restoration scheme will ensure that there will be long term benefits from the development for the local environment, including priority habitats that are of local and national significance.

11.3 Conclusions

11.3.1 In conclusion there are no adverse impacts which significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposals that have been identified through the EIA process. In addition, it can be shown that the proposed development is compliant with the government's aims of Sustainable Development and is fully compliant with the policies, objectives and strategy of the recently adopted development plan policies for the both the County of Oxfordshire and the district of South Oxfordshire.

11.4 It is considered that the planning application should be permitted as a matter of importance to ensure a steady and adequate supply of aggregates are provided within the County of Oxfordshire. It is therefore respectfully requested that the application is supported by the Officers and Members of Oxfordshire County Council thus enabling the quarry development to commence at the earliest opportunity.

PLANS