



The countryside charity  
Oxfordshire

Campaigning to protect our rural county

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Attn: Mary Hudson – Case Office  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Via email: [planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

13<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Dear Ms Hudson

The Committee of CPRE South Oxfordshire District would like to object to gravel abstraction on the White Cross Farm site (MW.0115/21) on the following grounds:

1. **Loss of Amenity.** The Thames Path, running along the east side of the site is used by hundreds of walkers a day, mostly local people from Wallingford and Cholsey but also long distance walkers. The Thames itself is heavily used by pleasure craft, kayakers, paddle boarders and, even, swimmers. The area to the south of the bypass is open country and very scenic – with views over the water meadows towards the Wessex Downs. The gravel extraction works will inevitably destroy this exceptional view and the feeling of 'being in the countryside'. We also comment that the site borders onto the Chilterns AONB and is with a mile or so of the North Wessex Downs AONB. While the application claims no impact on the AONBs it is inevitable that this creeping industrialisation of the landscape will impact the setting of the adjacent AONBs.
2. **Loss of Biodiversity and Nature.** Removing the shrubs and trees that line the field and the banks of the Thames and the wetland areas, associated with the drainage features. Will inevitably impact nesting sites for many bird species and contribute significantly to the reduction of bugs, butterflies, moths and dragonflies that are ever present in the Spring & Summer on these fields and constantly under threat due to the continued development of the land surrounding Wallingford. The Thames riverbanks here are home to many iconic birds, notably kingfishers, owls, warblers, cormorants and herons. It is hard to believe the noise, lights and general disturbance will not negatively impact these birds. We cannot, therefore, agree with the environmental assessment that 'there will be limited habitat loss to allow the development of the quarry'. The application claims it will create the 'diverse and locally scarce (UK BAP) habitats such as a pond, wet woodland and reedbed habitat' but these already exist on the site and cannot be recreated without many years, or even decades, or restoration.
3. **Flooding.** This part of the floodplain regularly floods, often to a depth approaching one metre. It is hard to believe that the temporary removal of this flood storage will not impact on downstream flooding. In addition, the bypass channel, which runs from the large culvert on the west of the



bypass embankments diagonally across the site, is likely to become blocked. We believe this could lead to the backing up of water in the fields and houses upstream of the bypass. Finally, the sand and gravel underneath this site will be hydrologically connected to the Thames and will both provide water storage during flood development and water pathways to and from the Thames. You disrupt these at your peril. It is not clear what the 'inert material;' proposed for infill is? Can the applicant's guarantee the hydraulic and chemical properties of the infill will match that of the removed sand and gravel? We are doubtful.

4. **Traffic.** The Wallingford bypass is already under pressure of increased traffic from existing and developing developments (such as the CABI and Crowmarsh developments and the existing, new gravel workings). Add to this the cumulative impacts of the two new 500+ house developments and the new industrial estate, all feeding traffic directly onto the bypass and we already have a problem. The addition of 50+ heavy goods vehicles a day will inevitably add to congestion and pollution.
5. **Local character.** Wallingford and Cholsey are currently in danger of having their local character eroded by the expansion of housing and industry filling the gaps between the town and neighbouring settlements and will lead to the inevitable merging of Wallingford, Cholsey, Brightwell, Shillingford and to some extent Crowmarsh Gifford. CPRE objects to this additional loss to our local distinctiveness and loss of green space.

Yours sincerely

*Richard Harding*

For the Committee of CPRE South Oxfordshire District