

For: PLANNING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE – 16 APRIL 2012

By: DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY (GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE)

Development Proposed:

Extraction of sand, construction of new access to Pinewoods Road, construction of internal access road to stockyard, laying out of conveyor to extraction area, stripping and temporary storage of soils and restoration of land.

Division Affected: Kingston Bagpuize

Contact Officer: Taufiq Islam **Tel:** 01865 815884

Location: Land off Pinewoods Road, Longworth

Applicant: Hanson Aggregates

Application No: MW.0080/11

District Council Area: Vale of White Horse

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Recommendation

The report recommends that the application be refused for the reason set out on page 11 of this report.

Part 1 – Facts and Background

1. This is an application to extract 880,000 tonnes of soft sand over a period of 11 years from a site off Pinewoods Road, Longworth.
2. It is proposed to process the sand on site. The maximum annual output from the site would be 80,000 tonnes per year. The restoration of the site is proposed to be to agriculture at a low level with some biodiversity improvement.

Location (See plan 1)

3. The application site is located immediately to the north of the A420 between Oxford and Faringdon.
4. The site lies between the villages of Longworth, Hinton Waldrist and Kingston Bagpuize.

The Site and its Setting (See plan 2)

5. The application site covers an area 28 hectares (70 acres). The area of proposed extraction is 18.5 hectares (46 acres).
6. The site is currently in use as arable agricultural land with the majority being of Agricultural Land Classification Grade 2 (regarded as one of the 'best and most versatile' grades).
7. The application site is located on the south slope of the North Vale Corallian Limestone Ridge.
8. The A420 forms the southern boundary of the site. Agricultural land lies to the west of the site. Pinewoods Road extends all the way along the eastern boundary of the site. To the north of the site there is a residential property and garden. There is a market garden located immediately north-west of the site.
9. A group of dwellings is located on the eastern side of Pinewoods Road. Of these dwellings the nearest property to the application site is Squirrel Lodge at approximately 80 metres distance. Other properties close to the site include - Little Owls 40 metres to the north; Ashen Copse 60 metres to the east; the Lamb and Flag Public House 160 metres to the south on the opposite side of the A420 and The Warren 250 metres to the west.
10. The distances above are measured from the edge of the application site, rather than the edge of the proposed extraction area. In all cases the distances between the dwellings and the proposed mineral extraction area are greater.
11. Access to the site would be via an existing agricultural access on Pinewoods Road, approximately 150 metres from the A420.

12. Lamb and Flag Quarry (a Site of Special Scientific Interest) lies 350 metres south-west of the site on the opposite side of the A420.
13. Public footpath no. 18 crosses the site.
14. There are a number of trees located within the site. In particular the tree line between two fields within the proposed site, a length of the western boundary north of String Copse and four oaks within the northern field. Four of the trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

Background

15. A planning application for a similar development was submitted to the County Council in 2007. That application was withdrawn by the applicant before determination by the Planning & Regulation Committee in the light of an officer recommendation for refusal. The reasons for refusal were as follows:
 - *The development proposed is contrary to policy PE2 of the Oxfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan. The site is not within an area identified for mineral working as referred to in policy PE2 of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Moreover the apportionment for soft sand identified for Oxfordshire in the South East Plan can be met from the existing permitted and resolved to be permitted sites.*
 - *Policies PE3 and PE18 (by reference to the accompanying Code of Practice) of the Oxfordshire Mineral and Waste Local Plan require that appropriate buffer zones should be established around mineral extraction sites to protect nearby sensitive uses from the damaging effects of mineral working. This development is proposed to be located immediately alongside a market garden. The Council considers that the measures proposed to minimise the impact on the market garden are not sufficiently robust to ensure that the produce of the market garden is adequately protected. As a result it is considered that the proposal is not consistent with the aims of the policy PE3 or with PE18 of OMWLP.*
 - *The detriment to the landscape including the loss of oak trees protected by a tree preservation order, is unjustified and not consistent with the aims of Vale of White Horse Local Plan policy NE7.*

Details of the proposed development

16. This proposal would follow the same general principles as those proposed for the 2007 scheme, but with a number of refinements (see paragraph 36).

Extraction and Processing

17. Sand would be extracted in phases (5 phases in total) working mainly from south to north of the site, except three small sub-phases (phase 4b,3b,2b) where sand would be extracted from north to south (see plan 3).

18. Prior to sand extraction of each phase, topsoils and subsoils would be stripped separately, and either stored on the site perimeter as screening bunds or directly placed on previously worked out areas to achieve progressive restoration.
19. Hansons propose to use the topsoil and subsoil from the first phase to create screening bunds around the southern, south-west and south-east corner of the site. Topsoil and subsoil from phase 2 would be used to construct screening bunds along the entire Pinewoods Road and northern side of the site. A separate soil storage bund would be positioned in the north-western corner of the site to protect the market garden.
20. The perimeter soil bunds would provide visual screening and noise attenuation, and would be shaped, grassed and maintained whilst in place. The maximum depth of the working would be 9 metres.
21. The soil screening bunds would be progressively removed in different phases to use in the restoration process.
22. It is proposed to extract the sand by loading shovel, feeding the sand through a mobile screen (to remove large lumps and fine clays) via a hopper onto a conveyor which would then transport the sand to a stocking and weighbridge area located near the site entrance (see plan 3).
23. Public footpath 18 crosses the site from north-west to south-east. Hanson propose that it be diverted along the southern edge of phase 2a (with a footbridge crossing of the conveyor) and then north along the western boundary of phases 2a and 3a. The diverted path would then rejoin the footpath to the west of the site (see plan 2). Upon completion of restoration, the path would be restored to its original alignment.
24. The trees subject to the TPO on the boundary of the two fields would be retained. The individual oaks in the north part of the site would be removed. An advance plant of new woodland areas and the filling of gaps in existing hedgerows is proposed within the site as replacement for the loss of the oak trees.
25. A field conveyor would transport extracted material within the site to the stocking and weighbridge area. The conveyor would be gradually extended northward as extraction progressed. For most of its length the conveyor is expected to be about 6-8 metres below existing ground levels running along the base of the quarry.

Traffic and Transport

26. A transport assessment has been provided as part of the Environmental Statement. The applicant has indicated that the development would generate approximately 30 vehicle movements per day (inbound 15 and outbound 15) .

27. The normal working hours for the quarry would be 0700-1800 hours Monday-Friday and 0700-1300 hours on Saturday.
28. The proposed access onto Pinewoods Road would use the existing double-gated agricultural access. This is 150m from the A420. It is proposed that all construction vehicles would exit the site turning right onto Pinewoods Road and then left onto the A420 at the Pinewoods Road junction.
29. All traffic movements around the Pinewoods Road junction would remain as now except that west bound HGVs leaving the quarry would not be allowed to turn right out of Pinewoods Road onto A420 westbound (Swindon). These vehicles would turn left and travel up to the roundabout at Kingston Bagpuize.
30. As part of the design for the new access arrangement at the Pinewoods Road/A420 junction Hanson propose acceleration (left out) and deceleration (left in) lanes to a minimum length of 130 metres.
31. They propose refuge islands on the exit of the Pinewoods Road to prevent the right turning movement to the westbound carriageway of the A420 for HGVs. A right turn ban would only apply to HGVs and not to agricultural or light traffic such as private cars and vans.
32. The transport impacts of the development have been the subject of discussion with the Highway Authority and the proposal described above represents the highway scheme as finally submitted by Hanson.

Restoration

33. The restoration of the quarry would be carried out progressively throughout the life of the sand extraction operation. The site would be restored back to agricultural land at a low level. Biodiversity improvements are incorporated within the restoration design. No fill materials are proposed to be brought onto the site to achieve restoration. Natural waste materials from the sand extraction would be used to achieve a graded landform.
34. The restored land levels would include two ponds which would provide drainage to the restored fields. Apart from the initial restoration to grass, the vegetation around the margins of the ponds would be allowed to regenerate naturally. New tree and shrub planting would supplement and strengthen the existing field boundary pattern with species characteristic to the area.
35. The principle differences between this and 2007 proposal are:
 - The reduction of available reserve from some 1.1 million tonnes to 880,000 tonnes.
 - A revised assumption regarding output of 80,000 tonnes per annum down from 125,000 tonnes per annum.
 - Revised phasing along the eastern boundary of the site to provide a wide temporary buffer zone to Pinewoods Road.

- Provision of wider buffer zone (350 metres) to mitigate the impacts of the development on nearby market garden.
- The amalgamation of the phases to a 5 phase rather than a 10 phase operation.
- Minor revisions to the final restoration contours to reflect the amended footprint of the development and reduced extraction tonnage.
- Total HGV movements of 30 per day rather than 50 movements per day.
- Provision of acceleration and deceleration lanes.

Environmental Statement

36. The application is supported by an Environmental Statement (ES). This covers landscape and visual amenity, ecology, hydrology and hydrogeology, soils, archaeology, traffic, noise and dust. It proposes mitigation measures. The ES is summarised at Annex 1 to the report.

Part 2 – Other Viewpoints

37. This application was submitted in July 2011 and was subject to the normal consultation process. The responses received resulted in the applicant submitting additional information about ecology, rights of way and amenity issues together with some highway changes (described above). A second round of consultation was therefore carried out in January 2012.

Representations

38. 75 letters of representation were received during the original consultation period in 2011. A further 45 representations have been received during the 2012 consultation period. Annex 2 to this report contains a summary of points raised. Copies of the letters are available in the Members' Resource Centre.

Consultations

39. Consultation responses have been received from a number of statutory and non-statutory consultees. These are summarised at Annex 3 to this report. The full text of these responses can be seen on the eplanning website. Objections have been raised by the four Parish Councils and the CPRE. There have been no objections from other statutory consultees.

Part 3 – Relevant planning documents (All the relevant policies are set out in the Policy Annex to the Committee papers)

40. Planning applications should be decided in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

41. At the time of writing, the Development Plan for this area comprises:
- The South East Plan (SEP), relevant policies: M3, C4, C6, CC7, NRM5, T1;
 - The saved policies of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan, relevant policies: M2;
 - The saved policies of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (OMWLP), relevant policies: SD1, PE2, PE3, PE4, PE13, PE14, PE18;
 - The Vale of White Horse Local Plan (VoWHLP), relevant policies: DC5, DC9, NE7.
42. The SEP forms part of the development plan. However, the government has made it clear that it intends to abolish regional strategies. The Localism Act enables the Secretary of State to revoke the whole or any part of a regional strategy by order. Whilst no such order had been made at the date this report was drafted, the published intention to revoke is a material consideration to which substantial weight should be given.
43. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document (draft) (OMWCS) is a material consideration. It has not been formally adopted but is at an advanced stage. The draft has been out to consultation and proposed changes were considered by Cabinet on 13th March and approved. A report will be taken to full Council on 3 April.
44. Policies M2 and M3 of the OMWCS are of particular relevance.
45. At the time of writing the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has just been published (27 March) which includes a list of policy and other documents it replaces (Annex 3 of the NPPF).

Part 4 – Assessment and conclusions

Comments of the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Growth and Infrastructure)

Introduction – changing policy context

46. This is a planning application for extraction of 880,000 tonnes of soft sand over an 11 year period.
47. The proposal comes before you for consideration at a pivotal time. The weight that should be attached to various plans and policies is changing.
48. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework has been issued. The realisation of the Government's intention to abolish regional plans is imminent (the Strategic Assessment of the South East Plan (SEP) has now been concluded). At the local level, this Council's Minerals and Waste Core Strategy

(OMWCS) comes before the Council on 3 April for approval for submission to the Secretary of State.

49. The NPPF deals with minerals and is positive in its stance. It makes the link between the desire to achieve growth and the need to support that with the raw materials to build infrastructure to accompany that growth.
50. In line with our work programme, the OMWCS will be tested for soundness this autumn through an Examination in Public. The ability of our strategy to provide an adequate and steady supply of aggregates, and the means by which the plan enables that to happen, will be key elements for discussion at the EIP.
51. National policy expects the level of need for minerals to be determined at the local level. It continues with the landbank concept, requiring that mineral planning authorities plan to enable maintenance of at least a 7 year landbank of permitted reserves of soft sand.
52. Saved policies of the Structure Plan and Minerals and Waste Local Plan form part of the Development Plan. The importance to be attached to these policies diminishes as the emerging OMWCS gains weight.

Need for soft sand

53. The OMWCS plans for a local average annual apportionment of 0.25mt. Whilst substantially lower than the 0.42mt identified in the outgoing SEP, the new figure is higher than the average of the last 10 years production in Oxfordshire (0.22mtpa).
54. At present the landbank stands at 12.7 years using the 0.25mt figure, or just over 7 years using the SEP figure. At this time I recommend that you attach weight to the Council's policy document (OMWCS) and the 0.25mt figure. The plan is advancing through the statutory process and the 0.25mt figure is robust. At no time over the last 10 years has soft sand production reached the SEP 0.42 per annum figure. Annual sales have ranged from highest 0.351 in 2002 to lowest 0.142 in 2010.
55. Oxfordshire's landbank presently exceeds the minimum 7 year requirement. Existing permitted quarries have on site plant production capacity totalling 0.235mtpa. We expect that both landbank and production capacity will increase by means of extensions at existing quarries to enable the annual average apportionment to be met and to cope with the potential for production peaks which might arise from the growth agenda.

Locational policy for soft sand

56. Policy M3 of the OMWCS identifies a broad area north and south of the A420 for soft sand working (the Pinewoods Road site falls within this). The policy goes on to say that preference will be given to extensions to existing soft sand quarries, and that new quarries will only be permitted if sufficient provision

cannot be made through extensions. The Pinewoods Road proposal is for a new quarry.

The planning application

57. The applicant has invested considerable time in developing this proposal and sharing it with local representatives. The application is the second attempt at submitting a suitable scheme, and this submission itself was amended during the process – mainly with respect to access arrangements and controls from Pinewoods Road onto the A420.
58. There is substantial opposition to the scheme reflected particularly in comments from local representatives. Concerns fall into a number of categories. One is around proximity of dwellings and the market garden and the various effects of noise, dust and visual intrusion. One is the impact of a quarry working on the landscape and rural environment. You can see the full list of matters of concern at Annex 2 to the report.
59. A most particular concern identified by local people is the perceived danger of heavy goods vehicles turning into and across the A420 to and from Pinewoods Road to get to the site. At this point the A420 has around a half mile stretch westwards before it returns to a single carriage way for the remainder of its length to Swindon.
60. Notwithstanding all these concerns, we have received no objections to the scheme from the Environment Agency, the District Environmental Health officer or the County as Highway Authority (see Annex 3). All seek mitigation measures to offset the harm that a quarry would bring. If permission was to be granted, all these measures would need to be secured through conditions/legal agreement.
61. I think it fair to say that most people regard quarrying as a necessary but harmful activity in the countryside. Where justified by need and the associated economic benefit which comes from meeting that need, such adverse impacts as are not capable of being fully mitigated may be accepted. However, that is not the case at the present time.
62. The landscape forms a part of the Corallian Ridge. The highest point of the site is located along the line of the oak trees. The site slopes down from this ridge line towards the A420. There are some areas of the site which are not well screened, notably in some places looking northwards from the A420, and from the northern most length of Pinewoods Road and the north west boundary abutting the market garden although soil bunds and tree planting would reduce any close view into the site from these points.
63. There are a number of trees on the site, 4 of which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The applicant proposes to remove four protected oak trees from across the centre of the site.

64. Overall, there would be adverse visual impact from the development during working and such impacts are not consistent with the aims behind policy NE7 of VOWHLP.

Soft sand policy and impact of this proposal

65. The proposal does not accord with the emerging Core Strategy because it is for a new soft sand quarry.
66. Through the OMWCS the Council has chosen to adopt an approach to soft sand supply which prefers extensions over new quarries. This is based in a desire to provide an adequate and steady supply, yet minimise harm (for people and the environment) from quarrying activity. Extensions are less likely to give rise to new and/or additional processing plant and related activity, or to the creation of new access points onto roads. Extensions seek to ensure that all the mineral is taken that can be acceptably quarried, which is preferable to the pockmarking of the wider landscape. The Pinewoods Road proposal would of course (as a new quarry) exhibit the negative traits to which I refer.
67. If permitted, the Pinewoods Road quarry would add 3.5 years to the landbank for soft sand (using the OMWCS apportionment). This would extend the landbank of permitted reserves from 12.7 to 16.2 years. The plan runs to 2030. In this circumstance the landbank would last to 2028, almost through the full life of the plan.
68. The primary policy consequence, therefore, of permitting the proposal, would be to render largely redundant the locational strategy for soft sand expressed in policy M3 as to be approved by Council on 3 April.
69. At this point there is every reason to expect that the extensions policy can be successful. Once the core strategy is adopted, the intention is to prepare and adopt a site allocations document. Through the Core strategy preparation process there have been 4 extensions nominated by landowners and mineral companies. These nominations will be scrutinised through the site allocation process. They might in the meantime come forward as planning applications. There is every reason to expect that suitable extension sites will come to fruition to enable the locational strategy behind the plan to succeed. To grant the Pinewoods Road application would mean that this site would effectively jump the policy queue.
70. The saved policies of the 1996 Minerals and Waste Local Plan form part of the Development Plan.
71. This plan is old, but still has relevance. Two policies SD2 and PE2 are pertinent and they indicate consistency of approach by the County Council. The Plan was adopted at a time when there was already a significant permitted supply of soft sand (as there is now) and policy PE2 allows only small extensions to existing sand pits. In acknowledgement that it was environmentally desirable to limit the amount of mineral working to that which was considered necessary,

policy PE2 seeks to prevent new mineral working (including soft sand) where it is not needed to meet the County's apportionment.

Conclusion

72. The proposals do not accord with the Development Plan, about which I would advise:
- The apportionment in the SEP should be given very limited weight for the reasons given above. My recommendations are based on the 0.25mtpa apportionment which underpins the OMWCS.
 - The proposals are not consistent with PE2 of the MWLP and NE7 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan.
73. Turning to the MWCS Submission Draft (about which an update will be given at the meeting following its consideration by full Council on 3 April):
- The proposals are not consistent with policy M3 of the emerging Core Strategy which states that Preference will be given to extensions to existing soft sand quarries. New quarries will only be permitted if sufficient provision cannot be made through extensions. It is not considered there is a cogent case for departing from this emerging policy which can be given significant weight.
74. This Council has concluded that for soft sand supply, an extensions strategy is less environmentally damaging than one which promotes new quarries. For this reason, it would be inappropriate to recommend that the Pinewoods Road proposal be granted permission.

Recommendation

75. **It is RECOMMENDED that Application No. MW.0080/11 be refused for the following reason:**

The development proposed is contrary to policy PE2 of the Oxfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan. The site is not within an area identified for mineral working as referred to in policy PE2 of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and there is no urgent need for additional soft sand reserves. The proposed development is inconsistent with Policy M3 of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy approved for submission to the Secretary of State. The development would have an unnecessary adverse impact on the environment which the Council's extensions policy M3 seeks to avoid. For the period of extraction the detriment to the environment and landscape of the area including the loss of oak trees on the site protected by a tree preservation order, is unjustified and not consistent with the aims of Vale of White Horse Local Plan policy NE7.

MARTIN TUGWELL
Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure)
April 2012

Annex 1 - Summary of Environmental Assessment

1. Landscape - The landscape and visual impact assessment in the ES considers the landscape character of the area and the impacts on the surrounding landscape at all stages of the development. This includes the extraction area, processing plant and the conveyor. It identifies that the proposed extraction site is within a landscape characterised by its ridgeline landform with generally open views restricted by small woodlands and hedgerows. There are a number of residential properties relatively close to the site and a footpath crosses the site. There are several visual receptors, therefore, which are potentially highly sensitive to the development. In order to mitigate adverse visual impacts, it is proposed to construct soil bunds and planting trees and hedges to provide visual screening during working. The ES concludes that the impact of the development on the landscape and on local people is acceptable.
2. Noise - A noise assessment considering the different types of noise which may be generated by the development is included in the ES. Mitigation measures to keep the noise levels below those recommended in government guidance are suggested. The predicted noise levels (with mitigation) at dwellings for each phase of mineral extraction would be below the maximum level (55db (A) Leq 1 hour free field) outlined in government guidelines. The noise assessment concludes that there would be no significant noise impact upon any of the surrounding residential dwellings as a result of the proposed extraction operation.
3. Dust and air quality - The main sources of dust generation are identified as the mineral extraction operation, materials handling, the processing plant, haul roads and stripping and restoration operations. The ES concludes that the impacts of dust emissions would be very low and insignificant. Mitigation and control measures such as the use of water bowser to dampen down dust, use of appropriate standoffs to dwellings, settlements and market garden, grassed perimeter bunds along the boundary of the proposed extraction area are proposed.
4. Ecology - The ecological assessment indicates that the site has two types of habitat – arable and hedgerows. The ES concludes that the site is considered to be of minimal botanical interest as it is largely in intensive arable cultivation. The most important features (the peripheral hedgerows) would be left untouched by the development. Within the application area, there is no direct evidence of protected species such as badger or water vole. Overall, the impact on ecology is assessed to be negligible and the restoration is considered to offer potential for a net ecological gain.
5. Soils- The soils on the site are identified as being of high quality. The development proposals involve the temporary removal/storage of the soils and then reuse of them for restoration of the site. It is stated that all soil handling would be carried out in accordance with best practice to ensure no significant damage to soil structure.

6. Hydrology and hydrogeology - The hydrological study of the extraction area identifies that it does not contain any significant hydrological features nor does it lie within a floodplain. The hydrological survey considers that extraction of the sand does not pose a risk to local well boreholes. However it notes the sensitivity of one licensed borehole on the edge of Hinton Waldrist village. Mitigation measures have been proposed to protect this borehole such as setting a buffer zone of 350 metres minimum, provision of alternative water supply in the event of derogation of the licensed borehole and regular monitoring.
7. Archaeology - A desktop archaeological study has revealed no regional or national features of significance on the site. Various scatterings of flints have been found which are largely Mesolithic with some smaller quantities of Neolithic and Bronze Age finds. Remains from other periods appear to be associated with agricultural activity. To mitigate the impact of the development a scheme of investigation could be agreed with the Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Service.

Annex 2 – Summary of Representations

(Issues and objections raised by topic)

Transport and Traffic

- A420 / Pinewoods Road junction would be made more hazardous through HGV use.
- Mix of slow and fast moving vehicles in such a junction will be terrifying.
- Visibility of the A420 Pinewoods Road Junction is very limited and even worse in winter.
- Introduction of a roundabout at A420/Pinewoods Junction needs to be considered.
- Change of road network at Pinewoods Road would make journeys longer, make local amenities less accessible, increase traffic in Hinton Waldrist.
- A420 road condition would deteriorate and become dangerous.
- A420 congestion would increase through HGV crossing.
- Impact of HGV traffic on nearby residents.
- Impact on cyclists.
- Hinton Road may become dangerous through HGVs using it as alternative route. Already dangerous due to parked cars along main streets.
- HGVs should be banned from using village roads.
- If scheme is permitted then lorry movements needs to be for limited hours (e.g. 9am to 5pm).
- What penalties would be imposed if a lorry driver does not follow the routeing agreement?
- Who will pay for extra maintenance of the roads?

The following additional points have been made following consultation on the amended highway scheme now before the council

- Revised highways access proposals would increase the risk of accidents on the A420.

PN6

- Slow moving vehicles will add hazard despite acceleration and deceleration lane. Will not make junction safe.
- The Pinewoods Road junction will become more dangerous as traffic turns from Southmoor on to the central reservation and then eastwards towards Oxford.
- Increased risk of accidents to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Reduce the opportunities for traffic and cyclists to turn right safely out of Pinewoods Road.
- Hanson has never commissioned independent safety audit.
- Development cannot be accepted on the basis of PICADY modelling.
- Swept path analysis demonstrates the dangers of introducing HGVs into Pinewoods Road.
- Access to the Pinewoods Road would become more difficult and dangerous.
- Any changes and associated increase in danger and inconvenience would last nine years.
- Deviation would increase commuting time.
- Would cause frustration to HGV drivers having to drive further and confusion to other road users.
- Large, slow moving HGVs crossing the eastbound carriageway to enter the Pinewoods Road and exiting Pinewoods Road to join the eastbound traffic would encourage longer car journeys to avoid this junction.
- Would increase difficulties for emergency vehicles.
- Would increase traffic at Hinton Waldrist and Longworth Village.
- The addition of acceleration and deceleration lane would not decrease congestion at the junction.
- Junction works would cause queuing and slow traffic.
- The proposal would break the commitment to reduce the traffic in the local villages.
- Problems of crossing the westbound carriageway into Pinewoods Road would increase.

Noise and Dust

- Noise pollution will be increased. Will impinge on rights to enjoy surrounding environment.
- Impact of noise from extraction on nearby residents.
- Proposal will cause noise problem at 'Little Owls.'
- Noise level proposed by Hanson is higher than the recommended level of EHO.
- Dust and noise - risks to health.
- Air pollution will be increased.
- South-West winds would cause dust to be blown towards Longworth Village.
- Impact on nearby market garden by the dust blown from the site.
- Would Hanson give compensation for damaged crops?

Buffer Zone

- Buffer zones proposed are not appropriate.
- There are dwellings within 350 metres and 100 metres of proposals.

Restoration and Impact on Agricultural land

- Impact on agricultural land.
- Deterioration of soil will prevent future agricultural use.
- Land will no longer be agriculturally workable following extraction.
- Site will not be restored to its current level of agricultural land.

General Amenity Impacts

- Quality of life experienced within the area will decrease.
- Increased community segregation through extra distances travelled.
- Tranquillity of the area would suffer.

- Leisure activities such as horse riding would be negatively affected.

Landscape, visual and Ecology

- Would damage landscape with local designation.
- Visual aspect of land would be adversely affected.
- Current vegetation screening the site is insufficient.
- Lowered landscape would change visual aspect of land and prevalent future agricultural use.
- Vegetation within the site area will deteriorate.
- Trees under tree protection order will be destroyed.
- Wildlife within the area would suffer greatly.

Hydrology

- Adverse effect on water table.
- Risks involved in increasing water penetration of the marine deposits underlying the Corallian Ridge.
- Water quality within the area may decline.
- Excavation will lead to land erosion and increased water run-off.
- Increased levels of flooding likely due to lack of drainage.
- Effect of rising water table on septic tanks would be detrimental.
- Increased risk of salination of soil and water.
- Loss of water for the market garden. No actual guarantee for the source of water for market garden.
- Would Hanson finance mains water supply for market garden.

Need and planning policy

- There is no need for sand in the county.
- The need for more sand has not been demonstrated by the applicant.

- No overriding need to overrule policy NE7 of Vale local plan.
- Proposals contrary to various development plan policies.
- The site was not included within the original Development Plan.
- The site is not in accordance with the emerging policy of MWDF as this is an extension.
- Possibilities of limestone extraction following sand extraction.

Monitoring and enforcement

- Effective management of any conditions imposed will not be possible.
- Non-compliance of operator with routeing agreements might happen.
- Applicant has poor reputation for enforcing conditions.
- Regulation of dust and control of water levels needed.
- Concern that OCC cannot monitor the proposed working effectively and enforce conditions.
- Would prefer a local liaison committee.

Other matters

- Maximum of 5 working days per week should be proposed, not 6.
- Use of land following extraction is uncertain in ownership and use.
- Diversion of public footpath is unacceptable.
- The communities of Hinton Waldrist and Longworth village would be separated.
- Damage to local economy.

Annex 3 – Consultation responses

1. Vale of White Horse District Council

Planning - No objection subject to issues about highways, trees, landscape and buffer zones to dwellings being addressed. Comments are:

- A detailed scheme for wheel washing and keeping the public highway free from mud and dirt must be submitted, approved and installed prior to commencement of work.
- Extraction should be phased so as not to leave Tree Preservation Order (TPO) trees on an exposed ridge. They see no reason to remove the four oak trees in the phase 3 and 4 areas of the development. However, if removal is justified, they must be replaced with a greater number of suitable species on the eastern side of the site, along the Pinewoods Road.
- The proposed changes in the Pinewoods Road/A420 junction would require the road and its associated verges and lighting to be changed and may result in the significant removal of the site boundary vegetation. More details of how the changes to the junction would be implemented are required to ensure that the existing vegetation is protected/retained.
- An adequate buffer zone to existing dwellings must be provided in accordance with adopted policy standards.

Environmental Health - No objection subject to attachment of conditions to ensure that impacts of noise and dust from the proposed development can be adequately mitigated.

2. Longworth Parish Council

Object on the following grounds:

- The adjacent market garden's crops and its owners' livelihoods stand to be injured by reason of dust blow and borehole water restriction. The proposals by the applicant to mitigate these threats are theoretical, inadequate and not legally binding sanctions.
- The statement in the application that the A420/Pinewoods Road junction is fit in its present form to carry safely the additional HGV generated by the proposal is supported by flawed calculations, inadequate data and false assumptions.
- Speed survey data is unverified, visibility splays are inadequate for safety and Pinewoods Road itself will be rendered hazardous for road, foot and equestrian traffic.

- Despite the junction's adherence to Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, as described in the application, its accident record and the daily experience of local users indicate that the junction, even in its present state, is unsafe.
- Raise concern about the buffer zone, which is proposed by the applicant of just 150m from the nearest properties. This is contrary to the normal practice policy of the County Council of a minimum buffer zone of 350 metres.
- Pinewoods Road and its surrounding environment will be polluted by the wind-blown sand from the proposed quarry.
- The Corallian Ridge, one of the few remaining unspoilt landscapes of the County will be destroyed by the proposal. There is an implied responsibility on the County Council to preserve this for future generations.
- The Council's own commissioned report indicates a greater reserve of soft sand and therefore there is no need for soft sand.
- The emerging county minerals and waste plan favours extension of existing mineral sites. Considerable weight should be given to this new definitive policy.
- Should the application be granted, monitoring of any condition/S106 agreement will be beyond the restricted resources of the County Council and the burden will therefore fall upon the shoulders of the residents of Longworth.

3. Hinton Waldrist Parish Council

- Strong objections on the grounds of traffic and road safety on the A420 and on surrounding roads and villages; impact on the water table and the market garden adjacent to the site; buffer zones and proximity to the site; noise & dust (during operation and after restoration); additional traffic from direct minerals sales from the site; likelihood of other minerals being extracted from the site
- The emerging county minerals and waste plan favours extension of existing mineral sites. Therefore, this new proposed quarry should be discouraged as it would seriously spoil such a predominantly attractive rural, agricultural location.

4. Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council

Object on the following grounds:

- The extra slow-moving heavy traffic entering and leaving Pinewoods Road will significantly increase the danger to users of the A420 dual carriageway.
- The impact of dust and potential contamination of the existing borehole is likely to lead in the loss of sustainable employment in this rural area and an increase in 'food miles'.
- The Parish Council understands that the landbank for soft sand in Oxfordshire is now almost 13 years. This is way in excess of the minimum figure of 7 years which OCC is required to maintain.
- OCC would be unable to ensure that the essential mitigation measures proposed by the applicant are maintained.

5. **Buckland Parish Council**

Object to this proposal on the following grounds:

- Currently traffic in busy periods queues back from Southmoor as far as Pusey Furze and the additional traffic will only exacerbate this problem pushing traffic back further and potentially causing problems at the Little Chef and BP garage entrances, if not Buckland itself.
- Additional slow moving traffic will increase pollution; both noise and air pollutants in Buckland and the surrounding countryside.
- The A420 is a lifeline for Buckland and increasing the traffic load and making it harder to turn out of the village towards Oxford will not make life any easier. The junctions at Buckland are already prone to accidents. Any changes will put extra pressure on them.
- The proposal to drive back towards Oxford and around the Kingston Bagpuize roundabout will put additional pressure on an already busy junction.

6. **Environment Agency**

Groundwater and Flood Risk:

The impact of site restoration is unlikely to be significant. Further details will be required on the proposed drainage of the site, including how the groundwater drainage will be designed. Recommend conditions to address these points:

- Submission of surface water and ground water drainage scheme for the site restoration.
- Monitoring data to be subject to an annual review.

Biodiversity:

- Pleased to see the ponds are intended to be for biodiversity gain and welcome the stated intention to provide a buffer around the pond to reduce the impact from agri-chemicals.
- Concern that the pond, as it is effectively a sump, would fill with silt and necessary management will reduce its biodiversity value.
- Would like to see the pond created so that the upstream part acts as a sediment trap which can be dug out and maintained without undue disturbance to the downstream section.
- Fencing to prevent excessive trampling and poaching by cattle should also be considered if the biodiversity value of the pond is to be maximised.

7. Natural England

No objections to the proposal in principle. Suggest a list of best practice measures for the applicant related to soil handling and agricultural aftercare.

8. Ministry of Defence

Principle concern is with respect to the proposed ponds in this area are their potential to attract large and/ or flocking bird species hazardous to air traffic. MOD does not object to the application subject to conditions.

9. Thames Water

No objection.

10. CPRE

Object to the application on the following grounds:

- The development would cause permanent damage to an important feature of Oxfordshire's landscape and to the natural environment.
- The development would represent an inappropriate industrial intrusion into a rural area.
- The development would have adverse effects on the quality of life of people living within the 350m buffer zone specified in current local planning guidance.
- The development would cause significant traffic hazards.

- The justification for the development is weak and is incompatible with evolving Oxfordshire County Council policy as set out in the Draft Minerals Planning Strategy approved by the Cabinet of the County Council.

11. Food Standards Agency

Make the following comments:

There is a potential risk to the market garden operation from dust generated by the proposed quarrying activity. The Applicant does not dispute the existence of such a risk. They have indicated a number of possible mitigation measures but have not stated what they would actually do in such a way that it could be made an enforceable planning condition.

If the applicant does produce a clear protocol or operating procedure to address dust mitigation, the County Council will need to have it assessed by an independent expert.

12. County Ecologist

No objection subject to attachment of conditions to protect the nesting birds, bats, badgers, existing flora and fauna and plantation of new trees to improve the visual screening.

The proposal would require a long term ecological management plan. In order to ensure that 20 years of management will take place, a S106 legal agreement needs to be agreed between applicant and County Council. Provided that the site Biodiversity Action Plan submitted by the applicant covers the aspects of the management plan, it can be used as the long term management plan.

13. County Archaeologist

No objection. The archaeological assessment carried out on behalf of the applicant is accepted. Recommend a planning condition to ensure a programme of archaeological investigation and recording.

14. Transport Development Control -

No objection subject to conditions/agreement to ensure that the associated works on the highway are built to the appropriate standards and requirements, and the effects of the vehicular traffic from the development are controlled appropriately.

Proposed conditions/agreement would amongst other things cover the following key matters:

- Provision of acceleration and deceleration lanes for Pinewoods Road to a minimum length of 130m.

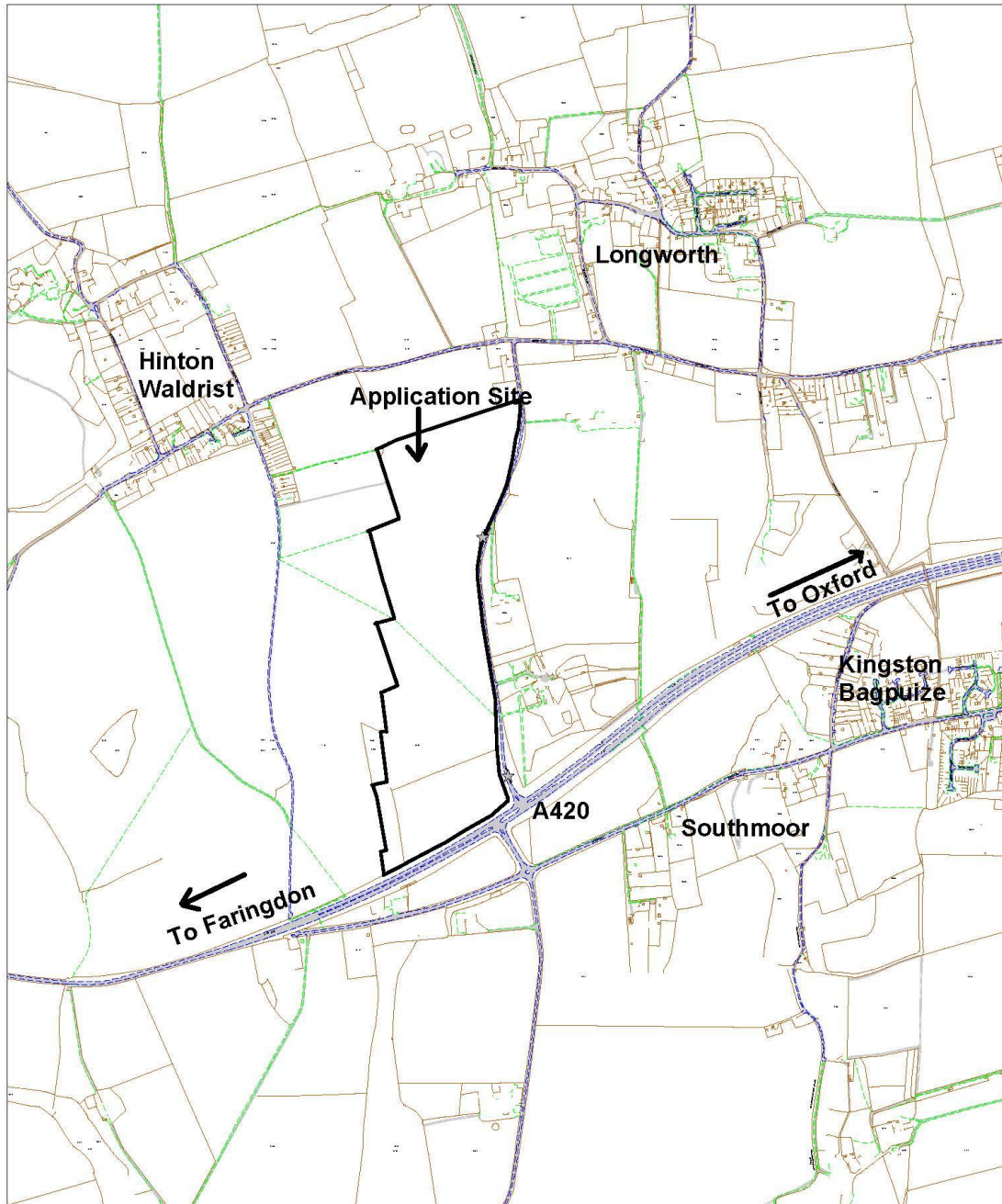
PN6

- Provision of refuge islands on the exit of Pinewoods Road accommodate a right turn ban onto the A420.
- Provision of required visibility splays.
- The applicant to fund the cost of the traffic regulation order to ban right turning vehicles for vehicles over a laden weight of 7.5 tonnes from Pinewoods Road to the west bound carriageway of the A420.
- Provision of a wheel wash facility for quarry related vehicles.
- Provide an undertaking (routeing agreement) not to route vehicles over 7.5 tonnes to and from the proposal using Pinewoods Road which leads to/from Longworth
- As part of the mitigation works the developer will extend the westbound deceleration lane on the A420 turning into Pinewoods Road by 10m.
- A scheme of additional vehicle activated signs on the approaches of the Pinewoods Road junction on the A420 shall be submitted to the Council.
- Submission of construction management plan.

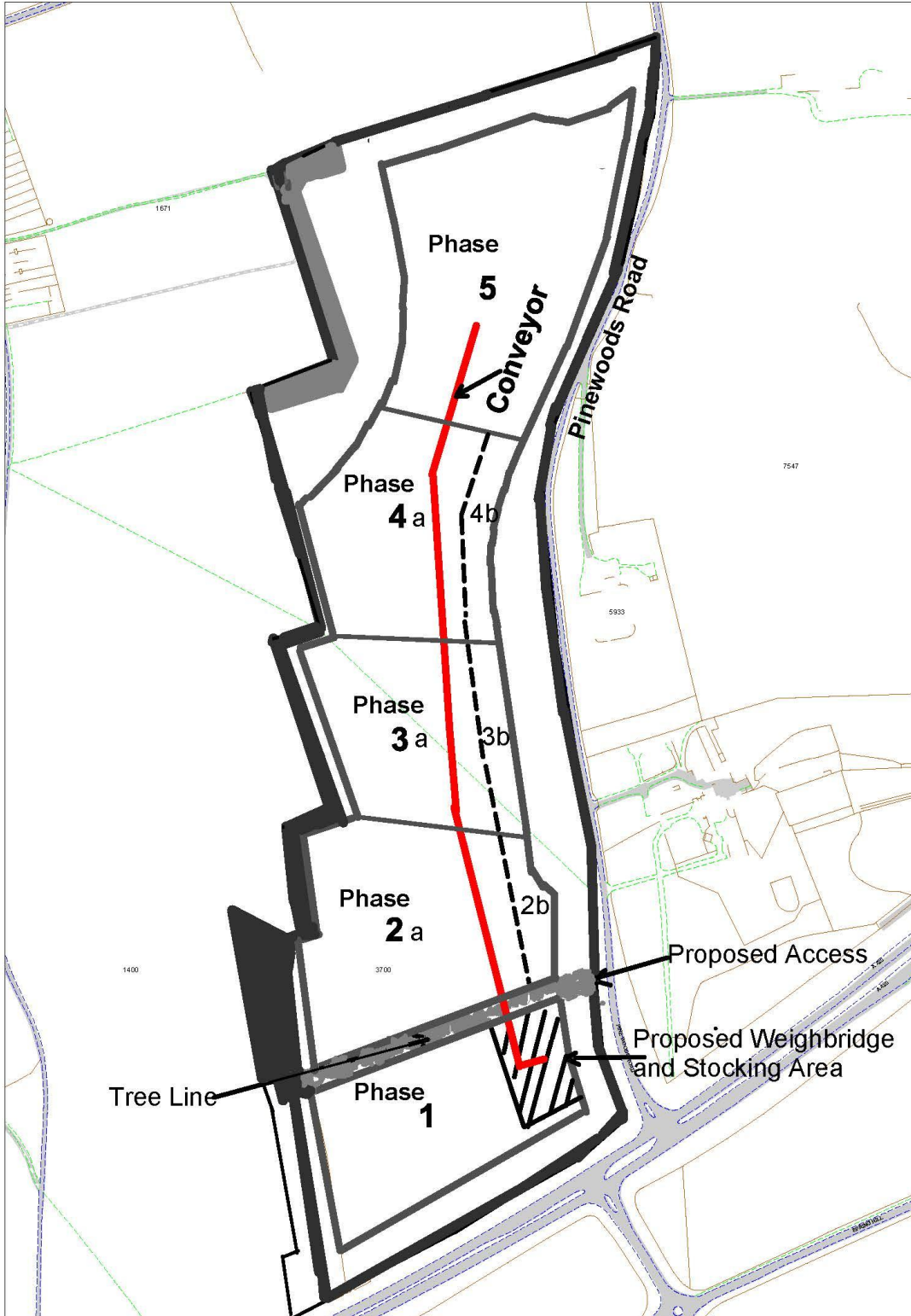
15. Rights of Way

No objection. It will be necessary to divert the existing footpath to enable development to proceed should planning permission be granted. Details of any diversion proposals by the applicant can be discussed with the Rights of Way officer at that stage. Funding is sought to improve the rights of way network to offset the disturbance that would be caused by the temporary re-routeing of the footpath across the site.

Plan 1 (Location Plan)



Plan 3 (Proposed Phasing)



Plan 2 (Site Plan)

