

**For: PLANNING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE – 16 APRIL 2012**

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

**Development Proposed:**

**Use of imported inert waste in restoration of quarry with some mechanical screening of materials to create topsoil**

**Division Affected:** Wheatley

**Contact Officer:** Mary Thompson                      **Tel:** Oxford 815901

**Location:** Woodeaton Quarry, Woodeaton

**Application No:** MW.0015/12

**Applicant:** McKenna Plant Hire Ltd.

**District Council Area:** **South Oxfordshire**

**Contents**

- Part 1- Facts and Background
- Part 2 – Other Viewpoints
- Part 3 – Relevant Planning Documents
- Part 4 – Opinion and Conclusions

## **Part 1 – Facts and Background**

### **Location (see site plan Annex 1)**

1. Woodeaton Quarry is located to the immediate north west of the small rural village of Woodeaton, 5 miles (8 km) north east of Oxford and within the Oxford Green Belt.

### **Site and Setting (see site plan Annex 1)**

2. The quarry covers an area of 6.5 hectares surrounded by agricultural land, except to the south east where it abuts a road and the village of Woodeaton and to the south west where it abuts the grounds of Woodeaton Manor School. The quarry is screened with mature woodland from this direction.
3. The main quarry access is into the south east of the site. There is also an access way across farm tracks from the B4027 into the north of the site. The quarry is within South Oxfordshire District but the northern access is within Cherwell District.
4. The site is a disused quarry which has been worked for limestone and clay and left unrestored with some sheer and unstable slopes. The whole site is designated as a geological SSSI due to the exposed quarry faces.
5. The nearest properties include The Lodge 50 metres to the south east, Taverners 50 metres to the east and Woodeaton Manor School 150 metres to the south. There are also a number of properties within the village located within 150 metres of the south eastern boundary and Culvercote Barn lies 150 metres to the west.
6. The site adjoins Woodeaton Conservation Area and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (a Romano Celtic Temple.)
7. A private road runs along the south west boundary and there is an informal footpath along the western boundary.

### **Planning Background**

8. Woodeaton Quarry has been worked intermittently since the 1940s. Under the Review of Old Mineral Permissions it has permission for extraction to continue until 2042. It has not been worked since 2000 and was left in an unrestored and hazardous condition. New conditions were attached by the First Secretary of State in 2005, following an appeal. The current owner purchased the site in 2010.

### **Details of the Development**

9. It is now proposed to restore the quarry by infilling with imported inert waste. The proposed scheme would require a total of 343,000 m<sup>3</sup> (520,000 tonnes) of construction waste over a period of ten years. Although the site has an extant

permission for mineral working, no further extraction is proposed to take place. The current permission does allow for the restoration of the quarry. However, as it is proposed to bring in more material than necessary for basic lower level restoration, a new permission would be required.

10. It is intended that only material which could not be recycled would be brought onto the site. However, topsoil would need to be manufactured for the final restoration layer and therefore it is proposed to screen soils on site. The application also states that it is inevitable that there would be an element of concrete, stone and brick in the loads which would also be screened out. This could produce up to 5000 cubic metres per year of waste which would either be used to maintain haul roads onsite or transported offsite for re-use.
11. It is proposed that the HGVs delivering material to the site would access the quarry from the northern access and the route they would take would be left onto the B4027 then down Bayswater Road to the A40 roundabout ('Hamburger Roundabout'). This would avoid vehicles travelling through Woodeaton village. The main quarry access to the south of the site would not be used.
12. The restoration is designed to reinstate former land levels over most of the site while allowing the geological features of the SSSI to be retained. It would be restored to an agricultural/ nature conservation afteruse comprising unimproved grassland, scrub and a pond. It is proposed that the grassland would be used for grazing. The applicant is willing to enter into a legal agreement to provide 15 years of long term management following the statutory five year aftercare period.

## **Part 2 – Other Viewpoints**

### **Third Party Representations**

13. 33 letters of objection have been received. Copies of the letters are available in the Members' Resource Centre. The key points are:
  - Traffic
  - Amenity –noise and dust

These are detailed and addressed at Annex 2.

### **Consultation Responses**

14. Consultation responses have been received from a number of statutory and non-statutory consultees. The full text of these responses can be seen on the eplanning website. They are also summarised at Annex 3 to this report. There have been no objections from statutory consultees. However, some local Parish Councils are opposed to the detail of the proposals and suggest conditions.

### **Part 3 – Relevant Planning Documents**

#### **Relevant planning documents and legislation (see Policy Annex to the committee papers)**

15. Planning applications should be decided in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
16. The relevant development plan documents are:
  - The South East Plan (SEP)
  - Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (saved policies) (OMWLP)
  - The South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP)
17. 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 13 March and a report will be taken to Full Council on 3 April.
18. 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.
19. At the time of writing the government's National Planning Policy Framework has just been published (27 March). Any consequences which may flow from this new document will be reported at Committee.

#### **Relevant Policies**

20. The relevant policies are:
  - SEP – T1, T7, NRM5, W7, W13, W14, W17, C04.
  - OMWLP – SD10, W2, W3, W4, W5, W7, PE3, PE4, PE9, PE12, PE13, PE18.
  - SOLP –G2, C1, C6, C7, GB3, T1, CON7, CON11.
  - OMWCS – M5 Mineral Safeguarding, M6 Restoration of Mineral Workings, C3 Environmental and Amenity Protection, C4 Biodiversity and Geodiversity, C5 Landscape, C7 Transport, W3 Waste Management Targets, W5 Provision of Additional Waste Management Targets, W6 Site for Waste Management Facilities, W7 Landfill.
  - PPS10 – Planning for Sustainable Waste Management – this document has not been replaced by the new NPPF.
  - NPPF – sections in this document refer to Green Belt and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

## **Part 4 – Opinion and Conclusions**

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

21. The key planning issues are:
  - (i) Need
  - (ii) Traffic
  - (iii) Impacts on neighbouring residents.
  
22. Other important issues include:
  - (i) Mineral Safeguarding
  - (ii) Bio and Geo Diversity
  - (iii) The Water Environment
  - (iv) Recycling
  - (v) Green Belt
  - (vi) Landscape
  - (i) Need:
  
23. There is a need for the quarry to be restored as it is currently in a dangerous and unsatisfactory state. Restoration of mineral workings within a reasonable timescale accords with policy such as OMWLP PE13. However, it would be possible to restore to a lower level using less imported material. Therefore the need for inert waste capacity should also be considered.
  
24. Objectors have queried whether there is a sufficient need for inert waste disposal to justify the proposed quantities. OMWLP requires that proposals for landfill meet a number of criteria including a definite need for the facility that cannot be met elsewhere. However, emerging policy (OMWCS W7) does not set such a test and PPS10 states that need should not be tested if the proposal accords with an up to date plan.
  
25. It is proposed to landfill 52,000 tonnes per year for ten years. There is currently a committed void space for inert waste within the County of over 5 million cubic metres, so there is no strong immediate need for a new facility. However, figures in the OMWCS show that there will be a need for further void space over the period covered by that plan (to 2030). In normal economic circumstances it is estimated that there could be 520 000 tonnes of waste per annum remaining after recycling targets have been met. Therefore, the waste required to restore the site is around 10% of that which could be available in Oxfordshire.
  
26. Although there is no strong immediate need, this need is likely to strengthen over the ten years proposed for the operations. Emerging policy and

government guidance does not require need to be tested for proposals which comply with policy. Although there is not an immediate need for inert waste landfill capacity, there is a need for the quarry to be restored satisfactorily. The volume of waste proposed is necessary to create the proposed restored landform, which would be similar to the pre-quarrying contours and fit into the surrounding landscape. Therefore, subject to the proposals being in accordance with other policies, there is no objection on the basis of need.

(ii) Traffic

27. Transport policy supports development that uses suitable roads that are well connected to the strategic network.
28. Although there has been much concern locally regarding the impact of lorry movements, there has been no objection from the Highways Authority. The vehicle movements associated with this development would be controlled by a routeing agreement to ensure that HGVs use the most suitable route onto the A-road network to avoid travelling through local villages such as Woodeaton and Islip. Lorries would travel along the B4027 and Bayswater Road to reach the Headington roundabout (see plan). This is considered to be the most suitable route onto the A40.
29. There have been concerns raised about HGVs along the roads through Barton and on the B4027 past villages such as Beckley and these concerns are detailed in the Annex. However, the development would not lead to an increase in traffic above that which is permitted under the extant consent for mineral extraction (albeit the lorries would carry waste into the site rather than limestone out of it).
30. The number of vehicles generated by this development would average 20 movements per day, which is a small number in the context of existing vehicle flows on these roads. Figures supplied by the Council's Monitoring Team indicate that traffic flows along the B4027 amount to over 5,000 vehicles per day. This proposal would increase vehicle numbers along this stretch of road by approximately 0.4%. Lorries can be required to be sheeted as this has been a concern raised in representations and uncovered waste lorries can create a nuisance where waste falls onto the highway.
31. Under the conditions determined at appeal to control mineral extraction, there is a limit on the annual output from the site of 100,000 tonnes. This was imposed because it was considered that due to access constraints, even using the B4027, the site location of the site was not appropriate to meet large contracts. As the access constraints remain I consider that it is reasonable to impose a similar condition on this consent, restricting the amount of waste transported and therefore vehicle movements. A restriction on the total waste imported and exported would also prevent the site developing into a recycling operation in its own right, which would be inappropriate given the access constraints.
32. I consider that subject to the proposed routeing agreement and the condition outlined above, the proposals are consistent with transport policy.

(iii) Impacts on neighbouring residents

33. Planning policy requires that proposals for minerals and waste development should not have unacceptable adverse impacts on residential amenity and other sensitive receptors.
34. Much of the operation would take place below surrounding ground level in the quarry void, which would considerably reduce any noise impact. However, there would be some working at ground level and therefore to mitigate any potential impact the applicant proposes to construct noise barriers between 2 and 2.5 metres high along parts of the south west and south east quarry boundary to protect the closest sensitive receptors; the Lodge, Taverners and Woodeaton Manor School. The noise assessment indicates that this mitigation would reduce noise levels at noise sensitive properties to the MPS2 guideline of 55 dB in line with government guidance (Minerals Planning Statement 2.)
35. There has been particular concern that the development would have an adverse impact on the pupils at Woodeaton Manor School as this is a special school and many of the pupils are especially sensitive to noise. Although the school boundary is very close to the quarry, it would be protected from noise as it is above the quarry and the school buildings are set back from the boundary.
36. The Environmental Health Officer has not raised an objection to this application and conditions can be applied to ensure that noise is kept within reasonable limits. This is an opportunity to strengthen the conditions relating to noise and make them more enforceable than the ones on the current mineral consent. The noise assessment submitted with the application suggests that subject to mitigation, ambient noise levels in the school buildings would be unchanged. Ultimately, the restoration of the quarry will result in a safer landform adjacent to a school and it would prevent the quarry being worked for mineral again, which could potentially cause greater noise disturbance.
37. The noisiest of the proposed operations would be topsoil screening. A noise assessment was carried out in the quarry during test screening operations which found that there was no clear difference in noise at sensitive receptors between when the screen was operating and when it wasn't. Conditions can be added to any consent issued to ensure that noise levels are kept within limits that would not pose a nuisance.
38. The other main concern raised in representations in relation to amenity is dust. A dust management plan has been submitted with the application and provides a number of methods to control dust. Regular dust monitoring would be undertaken. These measures are considered to be acceptable and conditions can be added to ensure that the development is carried out in this way.
39. Alternative operating hours have been proposed by some consultees concerned about the impact of the development on residential amenity and of the impact of traffic movements during peak times. However, I consider that the hours in the condition attached by the Secretary of State to the minerals

permission would also be appropriate to this development. These are 7.30-18.00 Monday to Friday and 08.30-13.00 on Saturdays.

40. I am satisfied that this development is not likely to cause a significant adverse effect on neighbouring amenity, subject to it being carried out as proposed and in accordance with conditions setting noise limits and requiring the proposed dust monitoring.

(iv) Mineral Safeguarding

41. Policy (OMWLP SD10, OMWCS M5) supports the safeguarding of mineral resources for future development. These proposals would mean that mineral reserves at Woodeaton Quarry would not be able to be worked in the future. However, it is considered that the extraction of mineral from this location has the potential to have an adverse impact of local amenity as it is so close to Woodeaton village. No working has taken place since modern planning conditions were attached as part of the Review of Old Mineral Permissions process. The material in the quarry is generally of poor quality and, because there is a considerable permitted limestone reserve in the county, the mineral safeguarding argument is weak in this case. In these circumstances, it is considered that the need to restore the quarry outweighs the need to safeguard the mineral resource.

(v) Bio and Geodiversity and the historic environment

42. SOLP C7 states that development that would adversely affect an SSSI would not be permitted. These proposals offer adequate protection for the geological faces of interest as the landform design incorporates their preservation. There has been no objection from Oxford Geology Trust. I consider that the development is acceptable in terms of its impact on the SSSI.
43. The site is adjacent to a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). Policy protects important archaeological remains and their settings (SOLP CON11). However, this feature would not be affected by the development. There are currently views from the area of the SAM into the quarry void. The setting of this monument would therefore be improved by the final restoration.
44. Policy generally supports the conservation and improvement of biodiversity, particularly on protected sites. OMWDF policy C4 states that the County Council will seek the enhancement of Conservation Target Areas to implement Biodiversity Action Plan targets.
45. The site is not affected by any ecological designations. The ecological survey report submitted with the application concludes that the infilling of the quarry would not have a significant adverse effect on the quarry and area as the current disturbed, bare habitats would remain throughout the operational phase. In the longer term the creation of unimproved grassland would make a significant contribution to the Biodiversity Action Plan for this habitat.

46. There has been no objection from the County's ecology officer, who considers that subject to positive management the proposals would contribute to biodiversity targets. In this case the County's ecology officer has recommended a 15 year long term management plan in addition to the 5 year aftercare period. This is slightly shorter than the standard for restored mineral sites as the site would be used predominantly for grazing and a total of 20 years is sufficient for the establishment of the ecological features. This is also in line with the provisions of the new NPPF which proposes that developments should have a minimum impact on biodiversity providing net gains in biodiversity where possible. It also encourages development which remediates and mitigates despoiled, degraded and unstable land.
47. I consider that the proposals are consistent with biodiversity policy, subject to conditions to ensure that the works are carried out as proposed and the completion of a section 106 agreement for the long term management of the site to ensure that the site is managed appropriately to contribute to biodiversity targets.

(vi) The Water Environment

48. Policy requires that proposals should not risk groundwater quality (OMWLP PE4 and OMWCS C2) or increase the risk of flooding (OMWCS C1).
49. The Environment Agency has advised that the environmental permit process would assess pollution risks to groundwater. They have requested a condition for the submission of details of surface water drainage.
50. Subject to the outcome of any permit application I am satisfied that the development is acceptable in terms of the impact on the water environment. If the development requires a permit it would not be able to go ahead unless and until the applicant had obtained both planning permission and an environmental permit. The planning process should not be delayed to await the outcome of the permitting process.

(vii) Recycling

51. In addition to the landfilling of the quarry void, the proposals would involve a small amount of recycling as some material would be screened and taken offsite. OMWLP policy PE4 allows recycling in the open countryside as long as the development forms part of a landfill site and would be removed on completion of landfilling. More recent policy (OMWCS W5) also supports temporary facilities at landfill sites. Waste which could be recycled should not be landfilled and therefore a small element of recycling onsite may be appropriate. However, this may not be an ideal location for a large scale recycling operation and therefore the consent should include a condition or informative to ensure that loads brought onto the site are suitable for landfilling or for topsoil manufacture and therefore the recycling operations are kept minimal.

(viii) Green Belt

52. Green Belt Policy (SOLP GB3) requires that development should not injure the visual amenities of the Green Belt, impact on its openness or conflict with its purposes. Inappropriate development can only be permitted in the Green Belt in very special circumstances. Whilst PPG2 (Green Belts) has now been superseded by the new NPPF, the latter retains the government's aim of maintaining Green Belts and protecting their essential characteristics of openness and permanence. Oxford Green Belt Network have welcomed the scheme as they consider that the quarry is presently an eyesore. The works to restore the quarry would largely take place within the quarry itself so visual impact would be limited. In the longer term the restoration works would return the landscape to a similar landform to how it was originally before mineral extraction.
53. Green Belt designation does not preclude mineral extraction or the subsequent restoration of worked areas and as such I do not consider the proposal to be inappropriate development. I consider that these proposals accord with Green Belt policy and in the long term would have a positive impact in restoring the landscape.

(ix) Landscape

54. Landscape policy requires that development protects and where possible enhances Oxfordshire's landscape quality and potential adverse impacts are mitigated. Proposals for development outside a conservation area which would have a harmful effect on the conservation area will not be permitted
55. The proposals would alter the landscape but ultimately restore it to a landform similar to the situation prior to mineral extraction. The land would rise to a high point of 102 metres AOD to allow for drainage of the landform, but this would be no higher than points on surrounding land. The proposed landform is considered to be appropriate as the proposals would enhance the landscape. Potential adverse impacts during the operations would be mitigated by the retention of mature perimeter vegetation and the fact that the development would take place within the quarry void. I consider that the development would not have a harmful effect on the adjoining conservation area.

**Conclusions**

56. The proposed development would be beneficial in terms of providing an appropriate restoration scheme for an unrestored quarry, in accordance with planning policy. The site has an extant permission for mineral extraction. Traffic and noise impacts associated with the proposed infilling with inert waste would be no greater than that currently allowed under the mineral permission and could be adequately controlled by condition.
57. The proposal accords with relevant policy on waste, restoration of mineral workings, traffic, amenity, protection of bio and geo diversity, Green Belt, landscape and the protection of the historic environment.

**Recommendation**

58. It is **RECOMMENDED** that subject to:

(a) a Section 106 agreement to cover:

- non implementation of existing minerals consent (M162/49);
- 15 year long term management of restored site;
- Appropriate access to the restored site;

(b) a routeing agreement to ensure that vehicles access the network of A-roads via the northern quarry access, left onto the B4027, Bayswater Road to the A40 roundabout and to ensure that lorries are sheeted;

that Application No. MW.0015/12 be approved subject to conditions to be determined by the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Growth & Infrastructure) to include the following matters:

1. Complete accordance with plans
2. Commencement within 2 years
3. Wheel cleaning to prevent mud on highway
4. Deposit of waste shall cease within 10 years of the date of the permission
5. Operating hours (0730-1800 Mondays to Fridays, 0830-1300 Saturdays)
6. No use of southern access
7. Dust monitoring as proposed
8. Dust suppression measures implemented should dust monitoring show it is necessary
9. Noise monitoring and submission of records
10. Maximum noise levels at noise sensitive properties
11. White noise on reversing vehicles
12. Mobile plant fitted with silencers
13. No fixed plant or machinery
14. No external lighting
15. Oil storage on impervious bases
16. Development to be subject to Environment Agency Permitting Process
17. Trees planted in accordance with restoration scheme to be maintained and replaced if necessary
18. Submission and implementation of a detailed restoration scheme with completion within 1 year of the cessation of waste deposit
19. No material stockpiled higher than 3 metres above the nearest rim of the quarry

20. **Topsoil, subsoil and overburden to be stored and respread separately and not removed from the site**
21. **Scheme for the protection of geology**
22. **Submission of full details and erection of noise barrier as proposed**
23. **Drainage – submission of a surface water drainage scheme**
24. **Soils should only be handled when dry and friable**
25. **Submission and implementation of fencing details, maintenance of fence**
26. **Visibility splays – as per submitted plan and kept clear from obstruction**
27. **Records should be kept of waste import and export and made available on request. Waste brought into and leaving the site shall not exceed 100,000 tonnes per annum Submission of a detailed restoration, aftercare and ecological management plan**
28. **Implementation of restoration proposals and mitigation as set out in submission**

**Informatives – waste brought onto the site should only be clean, inert materials**

**Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 requirements for oil storage tanks**

**Developers have a duty of care to deal with waste responsibly; records should be kept to demonstrate that this has been adhered to.**

**No sewage or trade effluent to be disposed of into surface water system. If protected species are found work should cease immediately and not recommence until a fully survey has been undertaken and licence obtained.**

**Participation in liaison committee**

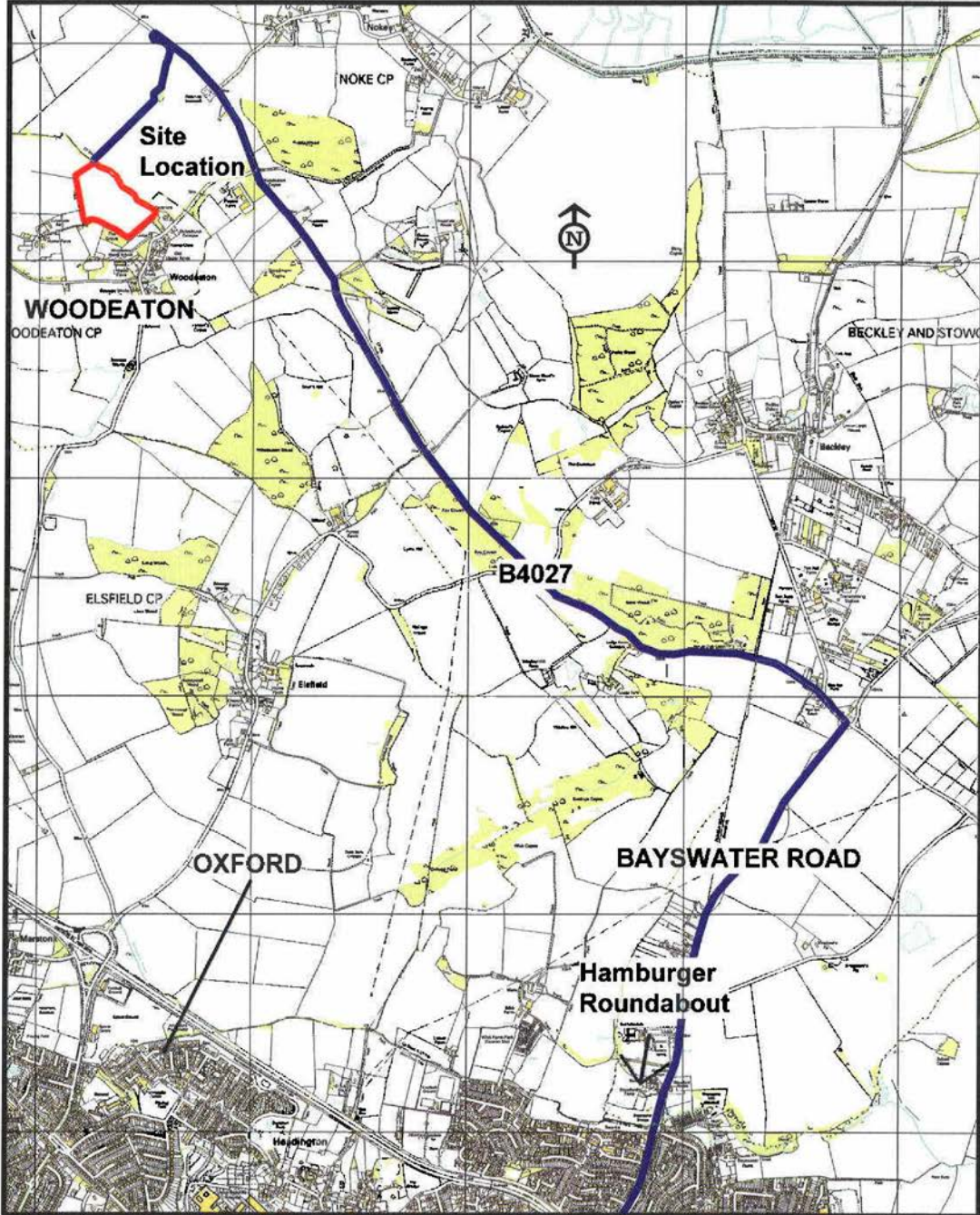
**Loads brought onto the site are suitable for landfilling or for topsoil manufacture and therefore the recycling operations are kept minimal.**

MARTIN TUGWELL  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY(GROWTH &  
INFRASTRUCTURE)

April 2012

Annex 1 – Site Plan

Plan1 - Location Plan



This plan shows only an indication of the proposed development and should not be scaled from

## Annex 2 - Representations

1. A representation has been received from the local County Councillor. This stating that the main causes for concern are the infilling activity at the quarry and traffic. A better noise assessment should be undertaken in relation to both the traffic and the screening machinery. Noise could have a particularly adverse impact on Woodeaton Manor School. The local road network is not suitable for an increase in HGVs. There would be an adverse effect on the residents of properties close to the road, the B4027 has a poor accident record and is used by cyclists. The road network suffers from congestion already. The only way to prevent the negative impacts is to refuse the application. However, should the application be approved suitable conditions must be imposed, and some are suggested.
2. An objection has been received by the local member for Barton and Churchill. This states that the increased volume of HGVs on Bayswater Road would be inappropriate for a residential road which cuts through the Barton estate and is therefore often crossed by children and families. Further pressure should not be placed on the Headington Roundabout as traffic there has already been blamed by the bus companies for late buses. Many Barton residents rely on public transport. The speed bumps in Barton would cause a problem with noise disturbance from larger vehicles.
3. 33 letters have been received from individuals in response to this application, including one letter of support and a number of letters which supported some kind of infill and restoration but expressed concern about the details of the current proposals. The officer response to the objections raised is provided in italics.

### Traffic concerns

- B4027
  - The B4027 is narrow and has corners of limited visibility.
  - Problems with cars overtaking on the B4027 near the junction with New Inn Road into Beckley village. Lorries would make this even more dangerous and a speed limit wouldn't help.
  - Slow moving HGVs would impede motorists speed and vision.
  - Concerned about horserider safety.
  - This route is much used by cyclists especially on a Saturday morning.
  - There should be a voluntary speed limit and speed should be monitored on this road.
- Barton, Bayswater Road
  - Children crossing the road in Barton to get to school. Area not designed for lorries from either a congestion or emissions perspective.
  - Traffic humps are used by children and elderly.
  - Shaking of houses caused by HGVs over the traffic calming features.
  - Bayswater Road – on a hill, causes speeding.

- Impact on residents of Meadowbrook – close to the carriageway and accommodation for elderly, disabled and ill people.
  - There should be liaison with Oxford crematorium for particularly busy or sensitive funerals.
- General
- Traffic study misleading as it shows the increase in traffic rather than the increase in HGV traffic, which would be substantial.
  - Danger for pedestrians and cyclists.
  - Particular concern for danger to cyclists after dark – lorries should be during daylight hours only.
  - Contrary to transport policy – not well related to the highway network.
  - Routeing agreement would be difficult to enforce.
  - Already delays on the Headington roundabout.
  - More traffic on Wheatley/Islip road will make access to this road from Woodeaton more difficult.
  - Operating hours should be reduced to avoid peak times for vehicle movements (9-3 Monday to Friday only, no Saturday working).
  - Smaller lorries should be used – maximum of 24 tonnes.
  - Should comply with the emission restrictions operating in London.
  - There should be traffic monitoring to ensure that levels are adhered to.
  - Sightlines at the access junction should be improved and roadside vegetation removed.

*There has been no objection from the Highways Authority and the transport assessment submitted with the application shows that HGV generation as a result of this development is not likely to be any higher than under the permitted mineral extraction operation. The applicant has submitted a plan with sightlines that satisfy the Highways Authority and development in accordance with this and maintenance of visibility splays should be a condition. A condition is also recommended to limit the annual tonnage of waste in order to ensure that lorry movements are kept in line with that proposed. This is consistent with the conditions on the existing mineral consent.*

### **Green Belt**

- Strict regulations on residential development in the Green Belt so this industrial development should not be permitted.
- There are other sites available outside of the Green Belt.

*Green Belt Policy is considered in the main report.*

### **Geo- and Biodiversity**

- Wildlife might get hit by lorries or affected by emissions.
- Impact on flora and fauna.
- Impact on SSSI.

*There has been no objection from the County's ecology officer or Natural England. As detailed in the report it is considered that the overall long term impact on biodiversity and the SSSI would be positive.*

**Quarry Operation** – the quarry operation had a negative impact and it would be the same if this were allowed to go ahead.

- Noise.
- Air contamination impact on health.
- Dust in the air – couldn't dry washing.
- Dousing to prevent dust could cause water pressure to drop in surrounding properties (this is a problem already in the village).
- OCC did not monitor or enforce effectively either the quarry operations or the routeing agreement.

*The impacts of this development would be different to the impacts of quarrying and has less potential for noise and dust nuisance as stone would not be loaded onto metal lorries. The last time that the quarry was worked was before the new conditions were attached in 2005. Oxfordshire County Council now has a monitoring and enforcement team who regularly visit sites to monitor compliance with planning conditions .*

### **Amenity Concerns**

- Noise/vibration.
- Air pollution.
- Dust – dispute the relevance of windrose used.
- Noise survey inadequate – materials used not representative and screener not in correct location.
- Traffic.
- Hours – there should be no Saturday working.
- Reversing beepers.

*The amenity concerns listed can be adequately dealt with through planning conditions. There has been no objection from the Environmental Health Officer who is satisfied with the submitted work by the applicant on noise. The operating hours recommended are in line with the hours that were imposed on the quarry operations by the Secretary of State following an appeal. These are shorter than standard operating hours but do include some Saturday working.*

### **Impact on children at Woodeaton Manor School**

- This school caters for the needs of pupils with emotional and social difficulties – more sensitive to noise
- Dangerous for pupils to know quarry is there – typically they have no sense of danger and are obsessive
- School has a residential facility only 80 metres from edge of site.
- School is rated outstanding and the quiet and attractive setting is part of its success
- When quarry was last worked it was a different type of special school – children with less challenging difficulties.

*The noise assessment submitted with the application suggests that subject to mitigation, ambient noise levels at the school would be unchanged. This is an opportunity to ensure that development on the site is controlled by strong and enforceable conditions. Ultimately, the restoration of the quarry will result in a much safer landform adjacent to a school and it would prevent the quarry being worked for*

*mineral again, which could potentially cause more noise. Noise conditions containing noise limits could be imposed.*

**Groundwater/hydrogeology**

- Other evidence contradicts the supporting statement and illustrates that there is continuous groundwater within principle aquifers.
- More information should be provided on the types of inert waste.
- Application only refers to a secondary aquifer but the site also lies on a primary aquifer.
- Risk of underground water pollution.

*There has been no objection either from the Environment Agency or the County Council drainage team. I am satisfied that the proposal is acceptable in terms of the impact on the water environment. Matters relating to water pollution are dealt with under the Environment Agency’s permitting process.*

**Planning Policy**

- Not included in the sites list for the emerging waste plan.
- Waste development should not be located in the open countryside unless there is an overriding need and no other suitable site available.
- There is not the need for inert waste disposal to justify this scheme.
- PPS2 and PPS10 state that waste development in Green Belt is inappropriate.
- Justified on the basis of bringing in waste from the local area, but there would be nothing to stop a national firm coming in and bringing waste from further afield.

*Planning policy does not exclude minerals or waste development from the Green Belt and in this case there is an existing quarry which requires restoration. It is unlikely that waste would be brought in from great distances because of the transport cost.*

**Alternative restoration using less waste would be preferable**

- Evidence that there is not enough suitable material for the restoration – surplus of recycling capacity.
- Inspector considered that 150,000 tonnes would be sufficient to restore to agriculture – the amount now proposed is excessive.
- Shipton on Cherwell Quarry has a 3 year consent – this would be sufficient for this site also; 10 years is excessive.

*While it would be possible to restore the site at a lower level using a smaller quantity of material, the main committee report finds that there is no overriding reason to refuse permission for the quantities proposed. This would allow the creation of a landform with contours similar to the pre-quarrying situation.*

**Restoration**

- Villagers want an agricultural restoration – not nature conservation as this will become derelict.
- Applicant made a loss in 2010 – concerned that they might not complete the restoration works – should be a guarantee that is binding on successors in title.
- Restoration plan ignores the existing levels of spoil in the quarry.

- Does not adequately address how the SSSI would be accessed following restoration. Suggests it would be through the village but there is no parking.
- Evidence from old maps suggests that the final restoration contours would be higher than the original ground levels – should be no higher than original.

*The restoration scheme incorporates both grassland, which would be used for grazing and wetland, and scrub/woodland features, which would enhance biodiversity. This would be supported by a total of 20 years of management (5 year statutory aftercare period and a 15 year long term management period secured by legal agreement.) Planning policy supports the restoration of mineral workings to uses which enhance biodiversity. By the end of the long term management period stock grazing on the land and the ecological features would be well established. The application includes a survey and takes account of the current site contours. Full details of the restoration including access arrangements would be approved at a later date, however, it is considered unlikely that the access arrangements to the SSSI geological face would cause a problem with parking in the village. It is a possibility that the site could be kept locked with a key holder scheme for access.*

#### **Other comments**

- Impact on house prices.
- Quarry is not currently a safety concern.
- If there is still stone in the quarry this is a resource and shouldn't be covered in waste.
- How would they be sure that waste was indeed inert?
- No legal easement over adjacent land for access.
- Better fencing should be required.
- There should be no weekend working.
- Topsoil production should take place elsewhere.

*The impact on house prices is not a material planning consideration. Although the safety of the quarry is primarily a matter for the landowner, the restoration of quarries is required by planning policy. The issue of safeguarding the mineral resource is covered in the main report. The applicant would require a waste permit from the Environment Agency in order to carry out the development and that would include conditions to ensure only suitable wastes were used. It is recommended to attach a condition prohibiting the use of the southern access. The permission could only be implemented if the applicant could secure a right of access over the northern access. Details of the fencing of the site can be required by planning condition. It is recommended that operating hours for this development are consistent with those for the mineral permission. This does allow some Saturday working but starting at 8.30am, rather than at 7am as per Oxfordshire County Council's standard operating hours. The proposals to create topsoil onsite are considered acceptable as it would not give rise to any significant adverse impact.*

### Annex 3 – Consultation Responses

*South Oxfordshire District Council* –No objection.

- Green Belt – The openness of the Green Belt would be maintained as views are very limited and the quarry is below ground and at the brow of a hill.
- Noise – The majority of the work will be within the quarry and noise will be contained within the site. The restoration process has the most potential for disturbance but this will be temporary. Overall it is considered that the works will not cause a loss of amenity to the area.
- Ecology and geology – the proposals would safeguard the ecological and geological interest of the site.
- Land contamination – There is a nearby water abstraction hole located at an Oxfordshire County Council control centre. The impact on the borehole should be considered when determining the application.

*Woodeaton Parish Meeting* –Opposed to the application on the following grounds:

- Need has not been demonstrated; the quarry could be restored with less material.
- Noise assessment is inadequate.
- Impact on pupils at Woodeaton Manor School not assessed.
- Road safety issues.
- No detail on access to the site following restoration.
- Risk of flooding at the base of the geological features.

Suggests conditions to be applied should permission be given.

*Beckley and Stowood Parish Council* – Concerned for parishioners who live close to or on the proposed route. The B4027 is not suitable for the type of vehicle proposed and there would be a danger to other users. There would also be increased noise, fumes and vibration from the traffic. There is adequate capacity elsewhere and no need to re-open this quarry for inert waste. The noise generated, particularly by lorries, would be detrimental to health. The quarry is not well related to the strategic road network. More information should be provided on the minimum amount of waste required to restore the quarry, the total amount of waste already on the site, a more detailed traffic survey and additional noise tests. If permission is granted it should be subject to suitable conditions – suggestions are provided.

*Noke Parish Council* – No objection. The quarry is presently in a dangerous state. The proposed section 106 agreement to no longer implement the existing consent would bring more certainty and control and provide for completion of works at the quarry within a shorter timescale. The proposed restoration has benefits in terms of landscape, biodiversity, education, safety and protection of archaeology. Conditions should be applied to avoid the dust and mud on the road that were problems when the quarry was last worked. There should be a noise management plan. The largest problem with the development is traffic. There would be a significant increase in HGV traffic, although overall traffic levels would only rise slightly. Mitigation measures should be considered – voluntary 40 mph speed limit for HGVs,

improvement of sightlines at junctions, hedgerow removal on verges, occasional use of a mobile speed radar, limit on HGV movements on Saturday mornings.

*Stanton St John Parish Council* – Object. The applicant has not demonstrated a need for the facility. Other sites have capacity. There would be an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment and amenity. The proposed access and routes to it are not suitable for the traffic that would be generated. The roads are already heavily used and there are accident blackspots. Road bumps in Barton are unsuitable and the roads are used by cyclists and pedestrians. Traffic movement at Headington roundabout would be affected.

*Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council* – If planning permission is granted for this development, it should be in accordance with the conditions suggested by Woodeaton Parish Council. Also, lorries should be restricted to 40 mph on the B4027.

*Woodeaton Quarry Action Committee* – There is no need to landfill the quarry with imported waste. The need for inert waste disposal has been exaggerated and it is not necessary for the restoration of the quarry as there is quarry waste on site. Restoration would not make the quarry safe as an SSSI face would be left. The development would cause disturbance to villagers in terms of noise. Concerned about how the noise tests were carried out. The proposed transport route is not suitable as it would compromise the safety of road users and would affect residential and environmental amenity. If permission is to be granted then conditions should be attached including a reduction in the amount of waste and working hours, road safety measures, a liaison committee and monitoring.

*CPRE* – Endorses proposed restricted route to protect Woodeaton, Islip and Forest Hill. The transport statement states that there would be an average of 11 trips per day. However, this could be much higher on occasion. There should be a condition to cap lorry movements to 11 per day, with no trips at weekends.

*Oxford Green Belt Network* – Scheme provides a welcome means of restoring the Green Belt at Woodeaton. The present quarry is an eyesore. Hope the restoration can be carried out as proposed to unimproved grassland or nature conservation with public access with regard for the geological interest. Aware of concerns regarding the movement of waste, expect that this would be addressed through conditions to include control of vehicle numbers, adherence to a timetable, wheel washing and avoidance of noise and dust impacts on Woodeaton.

*Environment Agency* – No objection. The hydrological assessment incorrectly identifies the Tayton Limestone as a secondary aquifer, it is a principal aquifer. The applicant will need to obtain an environmental permit for this development. They state that no artificial sealing liner will be required, if it is operated as an inert landfill this would be needed. However, this is not a reason to prevent the issue of planning permission at this stage as if a basal liner is required this is not likely to have significant implications from a land use perspective. There should be no increased risk of flooding off site as the site will slope into the site. However, a condition for a drainage scheme should be added. Suggest a condition for a surface water drainage scheme and informatives.

*Natural England* – Regarding the SSSI it is considered that the restoration plan would be beneficial to the site in terms of protection of, and access to, the geological features. Welcome the submission of ecological surveys, the County Ecologist should advise on these. Soils used for the creation of the restoration should be suitable for the purpose and only handled when they are in a dry and friable condition and the ground is dry.

*Oxfordshire Geology Trust* – No objection. Would like to highlight the fact that this is a registered Local Geology Site (LGS) as well as an SSSI.

*Sustrans* – Traffic associated with this development will follow a route used by cyclists. Measures should be put in place to protect them and other vulnerable road users.

*Highways Authority* –

- Access - Satisfied with amended plan showing visibility splays.
- Traffic generation – Although the access road to the quarry is too narrow for two way traffic, a passing place is not required given the anticipated traffic flows. The application shows that the development would mean a slight reduction in movements when compared to the extant permission. Therefore, the proposed traffic generation would not be of detriment to the operation of the surrounding highway network. A routeing agreement is required.

Drainage – A condition is needed requiring the provision of details of the design and size of swales (including the infiltration tests and supporting calculations).

*Rights of Way* – No objection. The proposal would not appear to affect any recorded public rights of way.

*Ecology and Landscape* – No Objection. The restoration is consistent with the priority habitats set out for the Oxford Heights Conservation Area and would contribute to biodiversity targets subject to positive management. Works and restoration should be carried out in accordance with the submitted proposals. The applicant should enter into a section 106 agreement to ensure the suitable management of the site. An ecological management plan should be submitted prior to the start of operational works. Conditions should be added to ensure that development commences while the ecological survey work is up to date and that protected species are protected.

*Archaeology* – No objection. The proposals would not appear to have an invasive impact upon any known archaeological sites or features. As such there are no archaeological constraints to this scheme.