

Annex 2 – Environmental Statement

An Environmental Statement (ES) was submitted with the planning application.

Chapter 1 - Introduces the application, states the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations, and sets the scope of the Environment Statement (EA) and format. The chapter gives a site description of the existing quarry and proposed extension. Also gives a brief summary of the planning history.

Chapter 2- describes the existing environment with respect to archaeology and cultural heritage. It provides an assessment of the potential impacts of the operation and restoration phases of the proposed scheme on the known historic environment resource including individual heritage assets and their settings.

Chapter 3 – assesses the likely significant effects of the proposed development on agricultural and soil resources. The chapter also describes the legislative and policy framework; the methods used to assess the effects; the baseline conditions currently existing at the site; the mitigation measures required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant negative effects; and the likely residual effects after these measures have been adopted.

Chapter 4 - Considers the potential environmental impacts from the development on biodiversity. The chapter describes a methodology including desk-based study and field survey. The application also includes an Ecological Impact Assessment. The chapter assesses the potential impacts of the development and mitigation work needed both during the operational phase and during restoration and aftercare.

Chapter 5 –The chapter assesses the potential impacts of noise from the development and mitigation work needed during the operational phase.

Chapter 6 - Considers the potential environmental impacts of development in relation to hydrology, hydrogeology and flood risk.

Chapter 7 – The chapter contains a Landscape and Visual Appraisal originally in August 2016, with minor changes made in December 2016 after revisions were made to the restoration scheme. The report assesses the visual impact from various viewpoints surrounding the development, including surrounding properties and nearby Faringdon Folly. The report also covers proposed mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the development during the operational phases.

Chapter 8 – The report covers the geological investigations carried out on the land to the east of the current quarry workings at Chinham Farm, to confirm the quantify potential mineral resources as viable quarry extension.

Chapter 9 - This chapter contains a Dust Assessment. The assessment considers the potential for dust impacts associated with the operation of mineral extraction scheme. The chapter also cover mitigation work needed during the operational phase.

Chapter 10 – This chapter outlines the transport and access matters associated with the proposed extension to the Bowling Green Farm Quarry. The chapter describes the baseline conditions and indemnifies the likely effects of the proposed development.

Chapter 11 - This is a short chapter which evaluates the process of understanding ‘alternatives’ in terms of alternative locations and sites, method of working and alternative supply options. Chapter summaries the existing site and methods of workings are the most viable and sustainable options as it enables the continuation of the existing operations, and avoids the need for a new infrastructure to set up a new site. The site also has a well-established market for soft sand and limestone.

Chapter 12- This is a short chapter which evaluates the drivers of climate change relevant to the development proposals. Assesses how the development has been designed to minimise impact on climate change.

Chapter 13 – considers the socio-economic impacts which the development proposal for the proposed quarry extension may have on the local community.

Appendix 1a- Copy of the Scoping Opinion provided and completed by Oxfordshire County Council.

Appendix 1b/1c – Introduction to the development including description of the development proposals and a review of the policies and plans.

Appendix 2 – Copy of the Heritage Statement. The statement concludes the assessment identified no overriding heritage constraints which should preclude development in accordance with the proposed scheme, although archaeological interest of regional significance has been identified with its bounds.

Appendix 3 – Agricultural land Classification. The proposed extraction area of approximately 19ha was surveyed. The extension contains grade 1 (1.8ha), grade 2 (0.9ha), grades 3a (3.1ha) and 3b (13.3ha) agricultural land. The appendix is includes a copy of the ‘Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils’.

Appendix 8 – Copy of the borehole logs, grading results and reserves calculations.

Appendix 10 – Copy of the Location Plan showing the site history of extensions.

Annex 3 Conditions

- i. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the particulars of the development, plans and specifications contained in the application except as modified by conditions of this permission.
- ii. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission. The date of commencement of development shall be notified to the planning authority within 7 days of commencement.
- iii. The extraction element of the development hereby permitted shall cease on or before 31 December 2037 and the site shall be restored in accordance with the details submitted with the application and with approved plan CHIN001Rev.A, and any other plan approved under condition 16, by 31 December 2038.
- iv. No aggregates shall be imported to the site for any purpose whatsoever.
- v. Notwithstanding the provisions of part 17 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order amending, replacing or re-enacting that Order), no fixed plant or machinery, buildings, structures and erections, or private ways shall be erected, extended, installed, rearranged, replaced, repaired or altered at the site without prior planning permission from the Mineral Planning Authority, other than for limestone and sand processing plant erected in accordance with the approved plans.
- vi. With the exception of the movement and loading of heavy goods vehicles, water pumping and works necessary in emergency situations, no operations authorised or required by this permission shall be carried out, and plant shall not be operated:
 - a) other than between 0800 and 1800 hours Mondays to Fridays and 0800 to 1300 hours on Saturdays;
 - b) at any time on Sundays or recognised public holidays or on Saturdays immediately following public holidays
- vii. Heavy goods vehicles shall not enter or leave the site or be loaded except between the hours of 0700 and 1800 hours Mondays to Fridays; 0700 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or recognised public holidays or on Saturdays immediately following public holidays.
- viii. All internal site haul roads shall be maintained in a condition free from potholes while in use and shall be removed when no longer required or during the course of site restoration, whichever is the sooner. Sections of haul road formed to a level higher than one metre below the final restoration level shall be removed before overburden and soils are re-spread. All sections of haul road shall be ripped before being covered with overburden and soils during restoration.
- ix. No heavy goods vehicles shall leave the site unless their wheels are sufficiently clean to prevent mud being carried onto the highway. If, in the opinion of the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, heavy goods vehicles leaving the site are bringing mud onto the highway and causing a traffic safety problem or an amenity disbenefit, then, at the

- written request of the Minerals Planning Authority, facilities shall be provided on the site to clean the wheels of the heavy goods vehicles.
- x. No clay shall be excavated from the quarry other than for uses within the site.
 - xi. No water shall be discharged from the site which is sufficiently contaminated with clay or silt to cause clouding or sedimentation in adjoining ditches, ponds or watercourses.
 - xii. Tanks containing fuel, oil or chemicals shall not be located at the site other than on an impervious base surrounded by liquid tight bund walls capable of retaining at least 110 per cent of the tank(s) volume and any spillages from fill or draw pipes. No drainage outlet shall be provided. All fill pipes, draw pipes and sight gauges shall be enclosed within the bunded area and the vent pipe directed downwards into the bund.
 - xiii. Notwithstanding other conditions of this permission dewatering pumps may operate continuously.
 - xiv. No waste materials shall be imported to the site for the purposes of sorting for sale, storage, or disposal at some other location.
 - xv. Only clean, uncontaminated rock, subsoils and stones, brick rubble, crushed concrete, tiles and ceramic shall be permitted as infill material at the site.
 - xvi. Noise from operations on the site, including both fixed plant and mobile machinery, shall not exceed 62.5 db (A) Leq as measured on the boundary adjacent to the back facades of Bowling Green Cottages and the operators shall take such action, including the insulation of fixed plant, the silencing of vehicles and mobile machinery and the provision of acoustic screening, as may be necessary to ensure that these noise levels are not exceeded.
 - xvii. No blasting shall be carried out at any time.
 - xviii. The only pumps and generators which are permitted to operate on the site are those that are acoustically sound-proofed such that the background noise outside the operating hours set out in condition 4 is not exceeded when measured at the boundary adjacent to the back facades of Bowling Green Cottages.
 - xix. No reversing or other audible forms of warning reversing vehicles shall be fixed to, or used on, any mobile plant except in accordance with details to be agreed in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority.
 - xx. No working or deposit of waste shall take place within 100 metres of Bowling Green Cottages.
 - xxi. Sand processing plant shall not be located on the site other than on the floor of the quarry near the base of the limestone deposit.
 - xxii. Limestone processing plant shall not be visible from Bowling Green Farm Cottages or from the A417.
 - xxiii. In the event of the failure of any trees or shrubs planted or required to be retained on the site, such trees or shrubs shall be replaced with live specimens of such species and at such time and in such number as may be specified by the Minerals Planning Authority in writing.
 - xxiv. No topsoil storage shall take place above 3 metres in height.
 - xxv. No subsoil storage shall take place above 5 metres in height.
 - xxvi. No stockpile of overburden, limestone or soft sand shall exceed 5 metres in height.

- xxvii. No work shall be carried out within 2 metres of any retained hedgerow or within one and a half times the crown spread of any tree either underground or on the surface, including the trenching for services for drainage or storage of materials or subsoil and topsoil, location or operation of plant and machinery or siting of buildings.
- xxviii. No excavation shall take place from faces occupied by sand martins between 1 March and 30 October in any year.
- xxix. All stripped topsoil and subsoil shall be stored separately. Subsoils shall be retained on site for use in site restoration.
- xxx. Soil handling, cultivation and moving of vehicles or machinery over the topsoil and subsoils material shall not take place other than when the moisture content of the soils is 5% or more below the lower plastic limit of the soils.
- xxxi. Movement of topsoil, subsoil and other soil-forming materials shall not be by any method other than loading shovel, hydraulic excavator and dump truck.
- xxxii. The whole site, including topsoil and subsoil heaps and those parts of the site where stripping has not been undertaken, shall be kept free from weeds, and all necessary steps shall be taken to destroy weeds at an early stage of growth to prevent seeding.
- xxxiii. To avoid compaction the upper one metre of the restored profile shall be replaced using low ground pressure machinery.
- xxxiv. All the topsoil and subsoil used in restoration shall be replaced evenly and sequentially across the site following the final contours of the reinstated land.
- xxxv. The areas labelled 'proposed Meadow Grassland' on the approved 'Proposed Restoration Scheme' (Drawing No. CHIN001Rev.A) shall be placed with subsoil and no topsoil shall be placed as the top layer. This area is not to be treated with lime or fertilisers.
- xxxvi. The final land levels after any settlement shall not exceed those shown on approved plan CHIN001Rev.A.
- xxxvii. No waste skips or containers shall be stored on site.
- xxxviii. No floodlighting shall be erected on site without the prior written approval of the Minerals Planning Authority.
- xxxix. Prior to the commencement of the development a staged programme of archaeological investigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The programme of work shall include all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication which shall be submitted to the Minerals Planning Authority/Waste Planning Authority.
- xl. Aftercare of the restored site shall take place in accordance with a scheme to be submitted and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority. The aftercare scheme shall be submitted within 10 years of the date of this permission. The scheme shall include provision for an annual meeting between the operator and the Mineral Planning Authority and any other party as may be agreed by the Mineral Planning Authority. Aftercare shall start when restoration is completed in accordance with conditions of this permission. The

annual meeting shall be held either in June or July each year. No later than 2 weeks following the annual meeting, any required revisions shall be submitted for the approval of the Mineral Planning Authority in writing and any that are agreed shall be implemented within the timescales agreed at the annual meeting.

- xli. The area covered by Planning Permission STA/8417/7-CM shall be restored in accordance with approved plan CHIN001Rev.A. The area is to be restored within 3 years of the commencement of permission, other than to access phases 1 to 8. The area covered by STA/8417/7-CM to be maintained in good condition in accordance with approved plan CHIN001Rev.A.
- xlii. The soil stockpile shown on the Topographical Survey (Drawing no. BOW/1250/28) to the north of the proposed Meadow Land shall be removed with 2 years and 6 months of the commencement of the permission.
- xliii. The meadow to be restored using the following seed mix, using native seed from non-agricultural sources:
Emorsgate mixture EM4, EM5 or EM7 to be selected to suit subsoil type.
- xliv. The haul route to be fenced or clearly marked out to protect the meadow and pond areas on either side, and a fence to be erected between the pond and meadow area and the land to the east. Fences should be standard stock fence of post and rail or post and wire construction.

Annex 4:

1. Stanford in the Vale Parish Council – No Comments Received.
2. Hatford Parish Council – No Comments Received.
3. Shellingford Parish Council - No Comment Received.
4. Faringdon Town Council – No Objections
5. Vale of White Horse District Council – No Objections
6. Environmental Health Officer -The Air quality chapter of the Environmental Statement predicts that dust emissions are not predicted to be significant and can be mitigated by adherence to good industry practice. In view of this I would recommend that there should be a condition for the applicant to submit a dust management plan for approval by the planning authority and thereafter adhere to the plan in quarrying and restoration activities.

With respect to noise I have reviewed the Environmental Statement chapter on noise, this has included prediction of noise impacts on the nearest sensitive receptors, this indicates that noise levels during the preparation stage and the operational stage can meet appropriate noise objectives subject to suitable bunding being in place. I am not aware of complaints in respect of noise from current operations on Bowling Green farm which is operated as a quarry by the same operator. The quarrying methods on the land subject to this planning application are reported to be the same. In view of this I do not foresee noise being a significant issue after the bunds have been constructed. Noise will need to be mitigated as far as possible in the preparation of the site and in view of this I think that planning approval should be conditional on the submission of a noise management plan for approval by the planning authority and adherence to the plan thereafter.

Second Round of Consultation – I've reviewed the noise and air quality reports submitted in support of this application. The existing operation seems to operate without causing any nuisance. I do not anticipate the quarrying of the extension site will have any significant adverse effect on neighbours so long as the mitigation measures outlined in the noise and air quality reports are implemented.

7. Environment Agency – No Objection

Advice to the LPA

The Lead Local Flood Authority is responsible for assessing risk from groundwater flooding from any changes in groundwater levels.

Advice to applicant

The dewatering activities on site may have an impact upon local wells and water supplies. These activities are currently exempt from control, in

accordance with Section 29 of the Water Resources Act 1991, but could lead to problems for and representations by, current water users.

Informative

Item 3.14 of the Application to Carry Out Mineral Working, Waste Disposal and Associated Development document states that the site will be restored back to agriculture at original ground levels using imported inert wastes. Since item 3.10 states that dewatering will take place this suggests that the water table is shallow in the Secondary A Aquifer that underlies this site. We need to ensure that the inert waste used to fill the void is clean and uncontaminated and this will be covered by the Environmental Permit that will be required for this activity.

8. Natural England - No Objection - Subject to Appropriate Mitigation Being Secured

As submitted the application would:

- have an adverse effect on the integrity of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
- have an impact on Protected and Priority Species.

In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following mitigation measures are required:

- Soil Management Plan
- Reclamation Plan to Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land (including habitat for Protected and Priority Species)
- Protected and Priority Species Management Plan

We advise that an appropriate planning condition or obligation is attached to any planning permission to secure these measures.

The applicant submitted the requested information. Natural England was happy with the proposed plans and have no objection to the development.

9. County Ecologist -

I have reviewed the documents submitted with the planning application, and have no objection to the quarry extension, provided all recommendations in the Environmental Statement Section 4.6 Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy are carried out as specified. I also require clarification on after management and water supply to the eastern pond.

I recommend that the restoration includes a new hedgerow along the northern edge of the site along the track which runs east from the copse at the northern end of the site in line with the aims of the nearby West Oxon heights, streams and woods Conservation Target Area.

Can the applicant provide details of how the eastern pond will be supplied with water? My understanding is that the water table is some distance below the current level, and the western pond appears to be more steeply contoured.

The area around the ponds will need low-nutrient input management to protect water quality in the ponds. Can the applicant supply more information with regard to the use and management of this area? I recommend that the main aim of management in this area should be nature conservation.

In addition, it would be helpful to have an Ecological Clerk of Works in attendance before major excavation works (soil stripping etc.) to check areas for protected species and provide a toolbox talk for operatives).

I have outlined conditions and informative needed; I can provide exact wording if required.

Conditions & Informative

Conditions

- Specify working hours (protection of badger, bat foraging, brown hare).
- Specify the attendance of an Ecological Clerk of Works before soil stripping operations.
- Specify how smaller excavations within or outside the worked quarry area will be appropriately profiled, installed with an escape ramp, covered or back-filled at the end of the working day to avoid entrapment and/or accidental injury/mortality to animals (protection of badger, brown hare).
- Specify the production of an ecology restoration and management plan, with monitoring. This should be prepared in advance of work starting, and detail how the area around the ponds will be managed.

Informatives

Breeding Birds

All bird nests, eggs and young are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it illegal to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is use or being built. Therefore, no removal of [trees, scrub, hedgerows, grassland] should take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive to prevent committing an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Badgers

All deep excavations should be suitably ramped and any pipe-work associated with the development covered overnight to minimise the risk of badgers being inadvertently killed and injured within the active quarry after dark. This is to ensure the protection of badgers and avoid committing a criminal offence under the Badger Act 1992.

Wild Mammals

All wild mammals are protected from unnecessary suffering, including suffocation in burrows. Where common mammals such as hedgehogs, rabbits, foxes, voles and mice are found during works, they should be allowed to escape the working area to avoid unnecessary cruelty. Should any burrows be located in or near earthworks, ecological advice should be sought to determine which species is present and what measures can be taken to avoid any unnecessary suffering.

Comments after second consultation:

Recommendation: If minded to consent, I have recommended a number of conditions. I seek clarification on other points.

Further information required:

Clarification on timing of removal of soil stockpile to the northeast of the meadow area (3 below).

Clarification on how pond will be managed post operation of extension area (if minded to approve) (5)

Clarification on specification for size and location of any pipework to the pond (8)

Comments

1. I have reviewed the revised restoration plan (Dec 2016), and the revised Protected Species and Habitat Management Plan (PS&HMP). I welcome the inclusion of a meadow area. The latest version of the PS&HMP (received 02/02/17) does not give details of the seed mix to be used for this area. I therefore suggest a condition for this.

2. The meadow area to be restored appears to contain the haul route for the next operational phases. I have therefore included a condition for this to be fenced to protect the restored meadow and pond area.

3. The northeast side of the meadow contains a soil stockpile. I understand that this will be removed after the first stages of the new operation. However it is not clear when this will occur and I seek clarification. Meadow restoration cannot commence on this part of the site until the soil is removed, and this will affect also timing of aftercare period.

4. Soils on the meadow area need to be low in plant nutrients, therefore it is best if the soil is restored from subsoil with topsoil either placed beneath or used elsewhere on site. The meadow area must not receive any lime or fertiliser. I therefore suggest a condition for this.

5. I am concerned that post operation, the ponds will be silted up and tend to dry out. I therefore seek clarification on how this area will be managed after this time. The PS&HMP should be amended to show this.

6. I note that the hedge section between the two ponds has now been relocated to the northern boundary of the site and agree that this is a more logical situation for it.

7. I welcome the inclusion of arable margins in the restoration plan.

8. Restoration and aftercare timing for meadow and pond – as the pond will effectively be operational for the life of the extension (if minded to approve) it may need to be removed from the current site and added to the

extension. This does not however appear to make sense given the restoration of the surrounding area to meadow.

I therefore suggest that it will need measures to protect it from accidental damage, for example specifying location and dimensions of any pipework, plus fencing this area from the rest of the site.

9. Aftercare of scheme – as the extension is proposed for arable restoration, with some additional field margins and hedgerow, I am happy that the aftercare period for this area would be 5 years.

10. I note that my previous requests regarding ecological clerk of works and ramping of earthworks to protect animals, and informatives are now incorporated into the PS&HMP.

Conditions & Informatives

Conditions

1 The meadow to be restored using the following seed mix, using native seed from non-agricultural sources.

Emorsgate mixture EM4, EM5 or EM7 to be selected to suit subsoil type.

Reason: to ensure the development results in biodiversity enhancement in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 9, 109 and 118 and NERC Act 2006.

2 Soils to be placed on the meadow area shall be placed in reverse order, that is topsoil below subsoil. This area is not to be treated with lime or fertilisers.

Reason: to ensure the development results in biodiversity enhancement in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 9, 109 and 118 and NERC Act 2006.

2 The haul route to be fenced to protect the meadow and pond areas on either side and a fence to be erected between the pond and meadow area and the land to the east. Fences should be standard stock fence of post and rail or post and wire construction.

Reason: To ensure that flora is protected from the effects of development in accordance with Oxfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan policy PE3 and PE10 to ensure the development does not result in a loss of biodiversity in accordance with [Oxfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan (1996) PE14 and] NPPF paragraphs 9, 109 and 118.

European Protected Species

The Local Planning Authority in exercising any of their functions, have a legal duty to have regard to the requirements of the Conservation of Species & Habitats Regulations 2010 which identifies 4 main offences for development affecting European Protected Species (EPS).

1. Deliberate capture or killing or injuring of an EPS
2. Deliberate taking or destroying of EPS eggs

3. Deliberate disturbance of a EPS including in particular any disturbance which is likely
 - a) to impair their ability –
 - i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
 - ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
 - b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
4. Damage or destruction of an EPS breeding site or resting place.

Our records, the habitat on and around the proposed development site and ecological survey results indicate that European Protected Species are unlikely to be present. Therefore no further consideration of the Conservation of Species & Habitats Regulations is necessary.

Applicant Responded to comment:

Point 2;

I note the proposed condition for fencing and whilst we would be prepared to accept this can I question if it is necessary? There have been no issues related to operational movements and the restored ground of Bowling Green.

Point 3

approximately 2 years for its removal

Point 4

We are talking about the current workings which we haven't sought to amend the details for so this is a change over and above the approved details of that scheme. Again we would accept this as a condition if deemed necessary but can I ask if this has been fully thought through as it does seem a waste of topsoil and could preclude quality agricultural operations if required in some future context? The area in question is subject to the extended aftercare i.e. an extra 20 years so I would anticipate this management would address any weed and/or nutrient level issues without the need to permanently lose the topsoil.

Point 5

With the final depth of the pond there will be no issue with the silting up of the pond requiring any management. The pond is >7m deep and there are only very limited quantities of material that will settle out (it is not washed process water containing high levels of silt but pumped ground water which will have only a limited amount of disturbed solids to be settled out).

The pond created in the original workings has had no issue with drying out and this is with 'suppressed' water levels as the final water levels will be several metres higher than at present which are currently lower due to pumping.

Point 8

The 'infrastructure' with the dewatering is very limited, a submersible pump and pipework, whilst portable the reality is that it doesn't move.

Again if you look to the existing pond created at Bowling Green you can appreciate how limited the impact of the pump is and the line of the pipe is just that a narrow line which typically will barely be noticeable other than as a line of rough grass. We can supply details of this if required (they will be as per the present arrangements) but we would suggest fencing as unnecessary and would present difficulties for management of the meadow area.

Ecologist Response:

Point 2;

If the operator can clearly mark the boundaries of each area to avoid accidental damage to restored meadow and pond area, then fencing may not be necessary. It would, however, mean that grazing of the meadow area would be possible. Ideally, late summer or autumn grazing would form part of the management of the meadow area, once a hay crop has been taken.

Point 3

I am happy with this timescale - so we are looking at the aftercare starting after the restoration of this part of the site, which is about 2 years from the start of the extension (if permitted)?

Point 4

Yes, this point is thought out as I have many years' experience in meadow creation, I refer also to the Rural Development Service Technical Advice Note 31, which states that the soil phosphorus status should be index 1 or lower for development of botanical diversity. It is not only about avoiding weeds, but about getting the correct balance of plants with low proportions of grasses. It is very difficult to lower P once it is too high; this is highly probable given the arable management on site. I suggest using the topsoil elsewhere if possible. I think this is a reasonable request given the need to revise the restoration plan in light of the proposed extension.

Point 5

I accept these reassurances regarding the future of the ponds.

Point 8

I accept the reassurances regarding the pump and pipework.

The Case Officer discussed Point 3 with the County Ecologist and Applicant, and agreed as the pond will be used during the operational phase for de-watering, the site will formally go into aftercare when the entire site is restored. The biodiversity elements covering the existing Chinham Farm extension will go into long term management for 20 years once 5 year aftercare period is completed. The agricultural restoration element will not be included in the long term management of the site, but additional hedgerow and field margins around the arable field will be included.

10. Arboricultural Officer – No Objections

11. BBOWT - has no objection to the scheme but we would like to make the following comments:

We have not examined the protected and priority habitat and species information at any detail but believe that adverse impacts on habitats and species can be adequately mitigated. Proposed mitigation and enhancement measures as outlined in the Environmental Statement should be secured via condition should the scheme be consented.

Proposed Restoration

We welcome that parts of the quarry are proposed to be restored for the benefit of biodiversity. However, we note that the majority of the extension area is proposed to be restored to agricultural land. I am not sure what restoration was agreed for the current workings but given the proximity of the site to the Conservation Target Area 'West Oxon heights, streams and woods', and the requirement of the NPPF to achieve a net gain in biodiversity we would welcome if a larger area was given over to biodiversity.

The 'Proposed Restoration Scheme' drawing outlines the proposed restoration. We welcome the proposal in general but have the following suggestions / questions:

The drawing suggests that the area around the eastern pond is to be restored to agricultural land. Considering the complex shape of this area between the pond and the proposed hedgerow we wonder how this land will be farmed. We are concerned that the close proximity of agricultural use to the pond and the limited provision of buffers along the pond margin might adversely affect the nutrient levels within the pond. More information with regard to the use and management of this area should be sought. We recommend that the whole western field, in which the ponds lie is given over to nature conservation.

The alignment of the proposed central hedgerow seems rather random and does not appear to follow existing field boundaries or respond to characteristic field patterns. We recommend that the restoration scheme seeks to reinstate hedgerows along boundaries where they have been lost or align new hedgerows in a way that is more in keeping with the landscape pattern;

We recommend that any restoration includes a new mixed native hedgerow along the northern edge of the site between Chinham Farm and the little woodland copse at the northern end of the site to improve ecological networks and habitat and species connectivity.

We welcome proposed setbacks from hedgerows and the provision of field margins but would welcome more information on make-up, management and width.

We welcome that an Ecological Management Plan will be produced. This will need to provide sufficient detail on new habitats and their management in the long term. It should also include ecological monitoring proposals.

Second Round of Consultation:

We welcome the proposed changes to the Restoration Plan and the submission of the Protected Species & Habitat Management Plan, which addresses most of our previous comments.

Having said this I could not see any information on what management period is proposed. It is my understanding that there is a requirement for a S106 agreement to secure the management of the pond and trees for 20 years. I welcome this but wonder whether the scope could be extended to also include the meadow and hedges and potentially even the arable field margins? I feel this could deliver additional benefits for biodiversity.

12. Thames Water – No Comment Received.

13. Transport Development Control- I confirm there are not any transport related objections to the proposal. It is understood the working of the extended quarry area would not commence until working of the existing quarry area had ceased. Future trip generation would be comparable to the existing, in terms of both the number and type of vehicle; although a very small increase in HGV traffic has been identified this would have a negligible impact upon the safe and convenient operation of the local highway network.

The existing site access would be used to gain access to the highway network. I confirm the suitability of this access, which has appropriate visibility and geometry to accommodate the expected quarry vehicles in a safe and convenient manner, a matter reflected in the accident records of the adjacent highway. Also I note the surface appears to be in a reasonable state of repair.

I recommend any perpetual conditions and obligations of the current permission are applied to any planning permission that may be granted in this instance.

The case officer emailed TDC asking for clarification on whether a Routeing Agreement is needed, TDC reply below:

"I have considered the technical note and conclude the routeing agreement is an unreasonable burden upon the development. The original purpose of the agreement was to prevent HGV traffic passing through Wantage Town Centre; however this matter is now covered by a restriction to through traffic and an appropriate alternative route to the North of the town centre."

14. Lead Flood Authority - Having gone through the application and as the discharge flow from the proposed works does not increase from the existing flow rate, I have no objection to the application
15. Archaeology - The application site is within an area of considerable archaeological potential. It lies at the western end of the Corallian Ridge and previous archaeological investigations related to the quarry have revealed the presence of a Romano British settlement, a Bronze Age barrow, a small rectangular enclosure dating to the later prehistoric and

Romano British periods and a variety of smaller discreet features that relate to agricultural and domestic activities.

The applicant has submitted an archaeological desk based assessment that recognises the archaeological potential of the application area and its immediate vicinity. The applicant has also undertaken a geophysical survey of the evaluation area. This has identified a number of linear features that would appear to relate to late prehistoric and Romano British field systems. There do not appear to be any archaeological features present that would preclude the principle of extraction nor does the geophysical survey identify any features that require predetermination investigation.

We would therefore recommend that, should planning permission be granted, the applicant should be responsible for implementing a programme of archaeological work. This can be ensured through the attachment of suitable negative conditions along the lines of:

No development shall commence until a Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority. This scheme shall provide details of the professional archaeological organisation that will carry out the investigation . The approved scheme shall be implemented in full.

Reason - To safeguard the recording of archaeological matters within the site in accordance with the NPPF (2012)

2) Prior to the commencement of the development and following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition 1 [insert correct condition number], a staged programme of archaeological investigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The programme of work shall include all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication which shall be submitted to the [Minerals Planning Authority/Waste Planning Authority/Deputy Director for Growth and Infrastructure].

Reason - To safeguard the recording of archaeological matters within the site in accordance with the NPPF (2012)

If the applicant makes contact with us we shall be pleased to outline the procedures involved, provide a brief upon which a costed specification can be based.

16. National Planning Casework Unit - We have no further comments to make.

17. Countryside (OCC) – No Comment

18. Ministry of Defence – No Objections

19. Environmental Strategy Officer (Landscape OCC): No objection

I have reviewed the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and accompanying plans and have the following comments.

The application has referenced the appropriate planning background and character area descriptions.

The chosen viewpoints all appear reasonable however, the basis on which the assessment of visibility has been made is not clear. There does not appear to be a zone of visual impact or similar mapping to support the extent of where visual impacts may be felt.

I note the reference to the North Wessex Downs AONB and that there is considered to be no impact on the setting of the AONB. However, given the council's duty to comply with the aims of the AONB and, that the prominent and popular view point of White Horse Hill and the Ridgeway is due south it would be appropriate to have evidence to support this conclusion.

There does not appear to have been an assessment of the visual impact on those living / using the collection of buildings at Chinham Farm which are immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site.

On the basis of existing consents the proposals are likely to be the only active quarry workings in this area for a proportion of their operational life. During this period the significance of the visual impacts from the proposed site are likely to be greater than when seen within the context of the existing quarry activity. Screening bunds, whilst accepted as a well-established mitigation measure, are not in themselves in keeping with the underlying landscape character and have an adverse impact, albeit one that is reduced compared to the effect without mitigation. It is not apparent from the information provided how the location and size of the bunds will vary during the course of the operations and therefore how the assessment of impact can be confirmed.

The assessment rightly identifies the views from Faringdon Folly as being particularly sensitive. The landscape photographs used in the assessment are taken in mid-summer. This illustrates a best-case scenario in terms of screening. It seems likely that the workings and those of adjacent sites which are considered under cumulative effects will be more visible in winter when the leaves are off the trees and hedgerows. The current assessment may therefore underestimate the severity of visual impact for visitors to the Folly.

In conclusion the LVIA acknowledges that there are a range of potential adverse impacts of varying severity and that these are long-term (i.e. within the expected lifespan of the quarry) but temporary. I do not consider

that there is yet the evidence to fully justify all the conclusions on severity. In particular

- The process by which viewpoints were selected.
- The impact on year round views from Faringdon Folly
- The expected location and dimensions of screening bunds to inform the assessment of severity
- The impact on views from Chinham Farm and adjacent buildings.
- Confirmation of the absence of impacts from within the North Wessex Downs AONB

Should the council be minded to grant permission I would recommend a condition, reflecting the proposals in the applicant's Planning Statement that defines the height of screening bunds, their management and maintenance and limits the height of storage and spoil mounds to at or below the height of the bunds.

Green Infrastructure Issues

The pond at the western side of the site has been permitted under a previous consent but falls within the scope of the current application. Current best practice on pond-habitat creation identifies the value of shallow water as a major factor in biodiversity value. The application does not provide information on the topography of the pond sides. The earlier application indicates that the slopes are relatively steep. A pond profile that provides a greater area of marginal habitat would improve biodiversity gain.

I note the uncultivated field margins and would wish to see such margins alongside all hedgerows included as part of the scheme. Such margins are an important part of maximising the biodiversity gain from hedgerows. I note that the new hedgerow east of the pond follows existing site features, but would welcome clarification whether this alignment has to be retained following extraction. It would seem to have the potential to hamper farming operations and is out of keeping with the general pattern of hedgerows in the local area. A less angular alignment would ease farming and provide additional space for non-arable habitat.

Community Infrastructure Investment

The proposal will maintain the existing level of quarry traffic for an extended period. Whilst noting that these are at a relatively low level, if consent is given local communities will not benefit from the reduction in the noise, dust and vehicle movements from HGV traffic that would otherwise occur when the existing permission is completed.

Should the council be minded to grant permission I would ask that the council seeks a contribution towards the development and maintenance of Stanford Community Woodland – an area of community greenspace that is owned by OCC and being developed in conjunction with the local community 1.2km east of the site along the Faringdon Road. This site provides an area of informal recreational and activity space that contributes to individual and community well-being. The form that this contribution takes to be determined.

Response from the applicant with the Environmental Strategy Officer comments in **Bold**:

A Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) or Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) model was not produced in order to inform the location of the selected viewpoints as it was considered that any such work would be unnecessary in order to adequately select a number of representative locations. ZVI/ZTV models can be useful if the proposed development in question is likely to be particularly visible from a long distance away, usually due to surrounding undulating topography or the elevated level of the development (i.e. such as a proposed inert tip or large warehouse). The proposed development in this case is a quarry extension, which is not vertical in nature and the surrounding topography is not considered to be particularly undulating. A ZVI/ZTV model would not provide any additional information that could not be ascertained from an initial desk study followed by careful fieldwork.

Thank you for confirming the reasoning for this.

White Horse Hill and the Ridgeway close to the northern boundary of the North Wessex Downs AONB are nearly 9km away, to the south of the site. Even if there were unrestricted views from the top of the hill/ridgeway to the site, which there are unlikely to be, the proposed works would be all but invisible for anyone using this route due to the effects of distance. It is considered therefore that the proposed works would have no effects on users of the AONB and people using these viewpoints as they would not be visible to the naked eye, if not entirely screened from view. The evidence for this is clearly the fact that the site is so far away, so further evidence is considered unnecessary.

Thank you for clarifying the basis for the judgement. I note that confirmation that field work was not undertaken from this viewpoint. The view north from White Horse Hill does not contain much development; which could draw further attention to the site if visible. I accept that the scale of the site would be very small within any view and any impact would at most be minor.

The LVIA doesn't include the residents at Chinham Farm because they own the site, so any visual effects they may experience need to be judged in that context – i.e. that they are of much lower sensitivity than other residents so any adverse effects would therefore be of much lower significance than would otherwise be the case. The LVIA did not include assessment of impacts on these residents for that reason. This is similar to the accepted convention that quarry workers are not assessed for the impact of the works on their visual amenity.

Thank you for the clarification. I do not have further information to confirm whether all those who are resident at Chinham Farm fall within the owner category.

It is accepted that screen bunds can in themselves result in adverse visual effects, albeit of lower significance than the workings themselves. The existing quarry operations include screen bunds which influence the character of the adjacent site, so the LVIA baseline has taken this into account, although these are not typical of the wider landscape character. Information provided as part of the submission includes phased working drawings illustrating how the site would be worked and the position of screen bunds, either 5m high (subsoil/overburden) or 3m high (topsoil). The LVA used these drawings, and the positions/heights of the bunds, to carry out the appraisal work, for instance at points 7.7.7, 7.7.8 and 7.7.9. The report is not an LVIA but rather an LVA as stated above, looking at Key Effects. Therefore it is considered outside the scope of work to assess different views from each viewpoint during different phases of the proposed development, when bunds would be in different positions. The LVA looked at the worst case scenarios from each viewpoint location, when the active works would be in closest proximity and the most visual activities were taking place, often involving bund construction or removal (as stated in point 7.7.7 in the LVA).

Thank you for the clarification. Noting the limits to the assessment the likely range of impacts from Minor-Moderate Adverse to Moderate-Major Adverse is noted.

For timescale reasons, the fieldwork had to be undertaken in summer. Faringdon Folly is approximately 1.1km away from this sensitive location with intervening vegetation curtailing views of some parts of the site, with gaps in the vegetation and lower canopies allowing views of other parts. It is acknowledged that the screening effect of vegetation would be reduced in winter although this would not result in a significant increase in adverse effects. The leaf-less bulk of trunks and woody branches would still filter views to a certain extent and at over a kilometre away, distance would ensure that the slither of site visible comprises a very limited proportion of the overall panorama, as stated in the LVA. Referring to Table 7.1: Landscape and Visual Significance of Effects Definitions in the LVA, the Significance of Effects on views from the Folly in winter may increase to a Minor - Moderate (adverse) level, but no more than that considering the existing baseline context, whereby views of the current site are already visible to some extent throughout the year.

I agree that the significance on views from the Folly would be increased to Minor-Moderate Adverse.

The Environmental Strategy Officer has no Objections to the development, but wished to highlight key points which have not been fully assessed. The officer also wished to highlight the case for contributions towards the committee project at Stanford Community Woodland.

