

For: PLANNING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE – 5 JUNE 2017

By: DIRECTOR FOR PLANNING AND PLACE

Development Proposed:

Small extension to Bridge Farm Quarry to extract sand and gravel and restoration to agriculture and lakes with reed fringes.

Division Affected: Sutton Courtenay and Marcham
Contact Officer: David Periam **Tel:** 01865 895151
Location: Bridge Farm Quarry, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, OX14 4PP
Application No: MW.0127/16 **District Ref:** P16/V2694/CM
Applicant: Hanson Quarry Products Europe Limited
District Council Area: Vale of White Horse
Date Received: 5 October 2016
Consultation Period: 27 October 2016 – 17 November 2016
9 February 2017 – 2 March 2017
6 April 2017 – 27 April 2017

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Part 1 – Facts and Background

Location (see site plan Annex 1)

1. The proposed extension area is located immediately north and west of the existing Bridge Farm Quarry, which is located 1km¹ east of Sutton Courtenay and 150 metres west of Appleford. The quarry lies to the north of the Sutton Courtenay minerals and waste management complex.
2. The proposed extension is within areas designated as flood zones 2 and 3, with the majority in flood zone 3. It includes 7.7 ha of grade 2, 4.4 ha of grade 3a (all high quality for agriculture) and 16.3 ha of grade 3b agricultural land. The total application site area including the line of the existing conveyor, existing plant site and access to the A4130 totals 45.28 ha.
3. The site is within an area designated Vale of White Horse District Council as the Lowland Vale, and as an Area for Landscape Enhancement.

¹ All distances are approximate.

4. The nearest residential properties to the proposed extension are located 245 metres away to the south east on the B4016 in Appleford.
5. The area to be extended is partly bounded by the existing quarry area. The combined quarry and extension are bounded by the B4016 to the south, and the Sutton Courtenay Landfill Complex beyond. The Didcot to Oxford railway line lies to the east with open fields beyond. Open fields lie to the west of the site, and the site is bounded by the River Thames to the north with open fields beyond. The conveyor which runs between the quarry and the plant site crosses public footpath no. 12 Sutton Courtenay. The haul route for lorries leaving the plant site runs partly along the Byway Open to All Traffic (Boat) no. 10 Sutton Courtenay and the Restricted Bridleway no. 3 Appleford.
6. The area to be extended is currently three agricultural fields that have field boundaries lined with trees and hedgerows.
7. Access to the site would continue to be via the established access from the A4130 Didcot northern perimeter road and The Portway, crossing the B4016.

Details of the Development

8. The existing sand and gravel reserves at Bridge Farm Quarry are running low and the applicant has identified that the sand and gravel reserves (approximately 500,000 tonnes) in the adjacent fields could be worked as an extension to their current operation, and processed by their existing plant. They have said that if this reserve is not worked as part of their existing operations, it is unlikely to be viable and the reserve would effectively be sterilised.
9. This application therefore seeks to extend Bridge Farm Quarry so that the reserves can contribute to the requirements for sand and gravel in the South Oxfordshire area.
10. The extension proposes working and restoration to continue in a progressive manner in three phases, commencing with Phase 5, located to the west of the approved Phase 4. Phases 6 and 7 then follow in a clockwise sequence.
11. The working life of Phase 5 is approximately eight months, with Phases 6 and 7 being six and ten months respectively. Restoration would as far as possible be achieved as part of a progressive working methodology, with sowing and planting carried out in the first suitable season but the application proposes final restoration will be no later than three years from the date of commencement of extraction in the proposed extension area.

12. The Phase 5 field would be worked dry, by dewatering into Phase 4B. This field has the best quality land on the site and would be restored back to agricultural use.
13. Phases 6 and 7 of the scheme, nearest to the river would be worked wet, with gravel allowed to drain before being loaded on to the conveyor. These areas would be restored to water bodies fringed with reedbed, and with lake margins of grassland within the existing hedgerow boundaries.
14. Gravel would be extracted by long reach excavator and transported to the plant site by conveyor, which goes under the B4016, in the same way as at present. The silt arising from the processing is taken back to the existing working area by pipe which will run along the conveyor corridor.
15. A minimum standoff of 25m is allowed to the River Thames and a minimum of 18m is allowed from the boundary fence to the railway (meaning the toe of the embankment is 22-23m from the edge of extraction.)
16. All the existing field boundary hedgerows and riverside trees are retained throughout the working, and additional hedgerow planting is included in the restoration scheme. No lighting is proposed.
17. The application is supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and an Environmental Statement (ES) was submitted along with the application. This covers the key environmental impacts of the proposal. Further information was requested from the applicant under Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (EIA Regs) on two occasions. The main potential environmental effects considered are set out in Annex 3.

Part 2 – Other Viewpoints

Representations

18. No letters of objection have been received to this application.

Consultations

19. Vale of White Horse DC (Planning & Environmental Protection Officer) – No objection, but recommend a noise condition be attached.
20. South Oxfordshire DC (Environmental Health Officer) – no objection subject to mitigation measures in the acoustic and dust control reports.
21. Sutton Courtenay Parish Council - has concerns regarding the workings so close to the river Thames, and fears contamination and possible leachate. It regrets the loss of the existing habitat, and would like to see a very long term management plan for the area.

22. Didcot Town Council – No strong view but makes the following comments:

- Sand and gravel is needed to supply local housing needs and it is preferable that they be sourced locally and support jobs locally.
- The inconvenience is noted, but so is its temporary nature.
- Welcomes the prospect of more lakes locally.

23. Environment Agency – Object for the following reasons:

- The assessment of the risks to nature conservation provided is inadequate.
- The applicant has not shown that there will be an adequate buffer zone to the River Thames and the ditch which forms a boundary to the west of the site.
- The absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
Additional clarification on water resources was also requested.

NB – following a meeting with the Environment Agency and the applicant a further updated response is awaited which is understood will withdraw these objections.

24. National Grid – No objection.

25. Historic England – No objection, but suggest we seek advice from our conservation specialists (see OCC Archaeologist comments below).

26. Network Rail – originally objected because there might be an adverse safety impact to the operational railway. Following submission of further information from the applicant their objection was withdrawn subject to a ensuring that any outfall/discharge is to the River Thames and not to Network Rail land. Advice was also given for the safe operation of the railway and the protection of Network Rail's land including fencing to the mutual boundary.

27. Natural England – No objection subject to conditions to cover the provision of soil handling methodologies and an aftercare plan and submission of a scheme for additional screen planting to the River Thames National Trail.

28. Ministry of Defence – No objection subject to:-

- The lakes being designed to have deep water and a continuous reed fringe around the lake.
- A legal based Bird Management Plan during and after the restoration.

29. Oxford Green Belt Network – No comments.

30. CPRE – No objection, but the timetable and restoration plans should be made conditions of approval.

31. Southern Gas Network – A low/medium/intermediate pressure gas main is near the site. No mechanical excavations should take place above or within 0.5m of a low/medium pressure system or above or within 3.0m of an intermediate pressure system. The position of the pipes should be confirmed by hand dug holes. Second response – no comment.

32. Health and Safety Executive – No objection.

33. County Council as Lead Flood Authority – No drainage concerns.

34. County Council as Highway Authority – No objection subject to routing agreement to take traffic to and from the A4130 Didcot north perimeter road as for the existing planning permission for the quarry.

35. County Rights of Way Team – No comments.

36. County Environmental Strategy Officer – No objection but makes the following comments:

- It is difficult to confirm from the application whether an appropriate assessment of the extent of visibility has been made:
 - i. Potential views from Bridge House and Bridge Farm House are noted but not examined.
 - ii. The impact of the view from Wittenham Clumps is stated as negligible, but the impact of the development including site operations e.g. moving vehicles, warning lights etc has been understated.
- The 6m high gravel store will be visible above the bunds. Arranging the layout of the site so that the maximum height of the gravel tip is not above the boundary bunds would reduce this impact.
- The screening bunds should be seeded to provide quick cover and short-term biodiversity benefit.
- The inclusion of car park and bird hide on the currently approved restoration scheme is noted and welcomed. Could this path be extended northwards to an additional hide / screen to afford views over a different habitat area? The construction of a path, and upgrade of the existing consented path, to a specification that affords access to people with mobility problems would be an additional benefit.
- The requirement for a 5+20 year aftercare and management plan in line with regular county council requirements is noted.

37. County Arboriculture Officer – No objection.

38. County Archaeologist -

The applicant has undertaken an archaeological evaluation of the application site.

The geophysical survey identified an L shaped enclosure, a ring ditch and other slight anomalies. West of the existing quarry three distinct phases of activity were identified. The earliest phase of activity relates

to several flint implements that have been dated to the early Neolithic period. A second phase of activity dates to the middle Bronze Age. Some struck flints and pottery of that period were recovered from a ditch. The ring ditch also dated to this period but the only dating evidence has been abraded pottery from the fill of the quarry ditch. However this feature is very similar to other Bronze Age features in the adjacent quarry area. The third phase of activity relates to the L shaped enclosure and dates to the middle Iron Age.

Trenching south of the river suggests that this area was not utilised nor did it have long term or substantial habitation due to fluvial activity.

No archaeological features of such significance to preclude the principle of development were revealed. Nor are any features demonstrably of equivalent significance to a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

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 a suitable negative condition

39. County Ecologist – No objections subject to the following conditions:

- A stand-off distance of 30 m from the two badger setts.
- All deep excavations should be suitably ramped and any pipe-work to be covered overnight.
- No operations are to take place within 50m of OS ref 4518 1945 (red kite nest site in the centre north of the site) during the nesting season unless the nest has been checked for occupancy by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- No works to take place until a scheme for protecting the woodland / trees/ hedgerows have been agreed, and that no work shall take place other than in accordance with that scheme.

The permission should be subject to a Section 106 agreement to include:

- A 20 year management plan.
- Funding to monitor the implementation of the management plan.

Following the submission of further information to address objections raised by the Environment Agency showing the presence of otters and water voles further comments were made:

- A restoration plan should be submitted showing more details of the restoration work.
- The EA should be asked to specify data needed to ensure restored areas do not cause harm in times of flood.
- Stand off strip to the water course on the west of the site seems narrow and might impact on protected species.
- Concern about the closeness of soil bunds to hedges remains as further information had not been supplied by the applicant.

- Agrees with the EA that more information on the morphology of channels between the River Thames and the new water bodies is needed.

Part 3 – Relevant Planning Documents

Relevant planning policies (see Policy Annex to the committee papers)

40. Planning applications should be decided in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for this area comprises:

- Oxford Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1996 (saved policies).

As the OMWLP pre-dates the NPPF, an assessment of the consistency of the saved policies with the NPPF and NPPW has been undertaken to ensure the continued validity of these policies to assist decision makers, developers and the local communities.

- Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 (saved policies)
- Adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies (VOWHLP 2031)

41. Other material considerations are:

- i) The Draft Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 - Core Strategy (OMWCS) was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in January 2016. Following an examination hearing held in September, the Inspector has produced an Interim Report dated October 2016. Following the Inspector's Interim Report, the Council carried out further Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal (SEA/SA) work and have now published the Proposed Modifications (February 2017) and a SEA/SA update report for consultation, which runs from 3rd February to 20th March. Therefore, although the OMWCS is not yet adopted, it is at an advanced stage and the draft policies should be given due weight.
- ii) The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites (VOWHLP 2031 Part 2) was subject to a period of consultation which closed on 4th May 2017. Whilst a material consideration, in accordance with paragraph 216 of the NPPF, these policies are at an early stage and should be given limited weight in any decision made. The access to the site from the A4130 Didcot northern perimeter road and The Portway falls within an area which has been designated by central government as Didcot Garden Town.
- iii) The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Policy for Waste (NPPW) are material considerations in taking planning decisions.

42. The relevant Development Plan policies are:

Oxfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan (OMWLP) 1996

- SD1 – Landbanks.
- SD2 – Small extensions to quarries.
- SC3 - Sutton Courtenay vehicle routing
- PE2 – Mineral working in areas outside those identified in the plan
- PE3 – Buffer zones
- PE4 – Groundwater
- PE5 – River Thames
- PE7 – Flood plain
- PE8 – Archaeology
- PE13 – Restoration in a reasonable timescale
- PE14 – Nature conservation
- PE18 – Imposition of conditions to protect amenity

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 (VWLP 2011)

- DC5 – Access
- DC6 – Landscaping
- DC9 – Neighbourhood amenity
- DC12 – Groundwater
- HE9 – Historic Environment evaluation
- HE10 – Protection of nationally important archaeological remains
- HE11 – Historic Environment excavation & recording
- NE9 - Landscape
- NE11 – Development within areas of damaged or compromised landscapes

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (VWHLP 2031)

- Core Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Core Policy 33 - Sustainable Transport
- Core Policy 39 – Historic Environment
- Core Policy 42 – Flood Risk
- Core Policy 43 – Natural Resources
- Core Policy 44 – Landscape
- Core Policy 45 – Green infrastructure
- Core Policy 46 – Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

43. The relevant policies of the OMWCS are:

- M2 - Landbanks
- M3 – Locations for working aggregate minerals
- M4 – Sites for working aggregate minerals
- M5 – Working of aggregate minerals
- M8 – Safeguarding of mineral resources

- M10 – Restoration of mineral workings
- C1 – Sustainable development
- C4 – Water Environment
- C5 – General environmental and amenity protection
- C6 – Agricultural land and soils
- C7 – Biodiversity and geodiversity
- C8 – Landscape
- C10 - Transport

44. The relevant policies of the VWHLP 2031 Part 2 are:

- Core Policy 16b: Didcot Garden Town
- Development Policy 15 (Access)
- Development Policy 22 (Amenity)
- Development Policy 24 (Noise)
- Development Policy 29 (Watercourses)

Part 4 – Analysis and Conclusions

Comments of the Director for Planning and Place

45. The key policy issues to consider in determining this application are whether the development would cause adverse amenity or environmental effects.

Minerals Policy

46. The NPPF paragraph 144 states that in determining planning applications great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy.

47. The Sutton Courtenay complex is identified as an area for sand and gravel working in the OMWLP, however, the Bridge Farm extension area to the north of the B4016 was not included at that time. OMWLP policy SD2 states that planning permission will normally be granted for small extensions to existing operating sand and gravel quarries which otherwise comply with national and Local Plan policies. OMWLP policy PE2 applies, which states that planning permission will not be granted for areas other than those identified in the plan unless specific criteria are met or that the working would be acceptable under policy SD2. The application proposal is for what is described as a small extension to the Bridge Farm site which would essentially complete the working of the mineral reserves in this area to the north of the B4016. Therefore, I do not consider there to be a conflict with OMWLP policy PE2.

48. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that Minerals planning authorities should plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates by:

- preparing an annual Local Aggregate Assessment, either individually or

jointly by agreement with another or other mineral planning authorities, based on a rolling average of 10 years sales data and other relevant local information, and an assessment of all supply options (including marine dredged, secondary and recycled sources);

- participating in the operation of an Aggregate Working Party and taking the advice of that Party into account when preparing their Local Aggregate Assessment;
- making provision for the land-won and other elements of their Local Aggregate Assessment in their mineral plans taking account of the advice of the Aggregate Working Parties and the National Aggregate Coordinating Group as appropriate. Such provision should take the form of specific sites, preferred areas and/or areas of search and locational criteria as appropriate;
- taking account of published National and Sub National Guidelines on future provision which should be used as a guideline when planning for the future demand for and supply of aggregates;
- using landbanks of aggregate minerals reserves principally as an indicator of the security of aggregate minerals supply, and to indicate the additional provision that needs to be made for new aggregate extraction and alternative supplies in mineral plans;
- making provision for the maintenance of landbanks of at least 7 years for sand and gravel and at least 10 years for crushed rock, whilst ensuring that the capacity of operations to supply a wide range of materials is not compromised. Longer periods may be appropriate to take account of the need to supply a range of types of aggregates, locations of permitted reserves relative to markets, and productive capacity of permitted sites;
- ensuring that large landbanks bound up in very few sites do not stifle competition; and
- calculating and maintaining separate landbanks for any aggregate materials of a specific type or quality which have a distinct and separate market.

49. Policy SD1 of the OMWLP requires that separate landbanks will be maintained for sharp sand and gravel and for soft sand at levels which accord with current Government advice and with the current regional apportionment. The consistency of this policy has been assessed against the NPPF and the NPPW, the outcome of which is that the policy is consistent only in part. In this case, as they are more up-to-date, it is appropriate to give greater weight to the NPPF and NPPG on matters of landbank. The NPPG makes it clear that landbanks are principally a monitoring tool to provide MPAs with early warning of possible disruption to the provision of an adequate and steady supply of aggregate. It should be used as a trigger for a MPA to review the current provision and consider a review of the allocation of sites. At paragraph 82, the NPPG says that low landbanks may be an indicator that suitable applications should be permitted as a matter of importance.

50. The NPPG, which supports the NPPF and is more recent guidance than that pertaining at the time of the OMWLP, makes it clear that there is no

maximum landbank level and each application for minerals extraction must be considered on its own merits (paragraph 84). It goes on to set out reasons why an application for mineral extraction might be brought forward where an adequate landbank exists, these include:

- Significant future increases in demand that can be forecast with reasonable certainty;
- The location of the consented reserve is inappropriately located relative to the main market areas;
- Known constraints on the availability of consented reserves that might limit output over the plan period.

51. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Annual Monitoring Report 2016 (AMR 2016) records permitted reserves of sharp sand and gravel totalling 12.487 million tonnes (mt) at the end of 2015, with an additional 0.515 mt being provided by further permissions granted in 2016. This gives a total of 13.002 mt available from the end of 2015. Sales of sharp sand and gravel in 2015 are recorded in AMR 2016 as 768,000 tonnes (t), which was an increase of 20% from 2014, and of 92% from 2013. The average of 10 years sharp sand and gravel sales figures (2006-2015) was 628,000 t. The current Local Aggregate Assessment provision rate for sharp sand and gravel, in the Oxfordshire Local Aggregate Assessment 2014, is 1.015 mt per annum. Based on this figure (in line with the national Planning Practice Guidance), the AMR 2016 records the landbank for sharp sand and gravel at the end of 2015 as 12.3 years. Inclusion of the further permissions granted in 2016 increases this to 12.8 years. Therefore, new permissions are not currently needed to maintain the landbank of at least 7 years. However, the NPPF is clear that a 7 year landbank is a minimum and not a maximum level to be maintained. The fact that the landbank is currently more than 7 years is not a reason to refuse planning permission.

52. OMWCS policy M2 states that provision will be made through policies M3 and M4 to enable a supply of sharp sand and gravel of 1.015 million tonnes per annum giving a total over the plan period of 18.27 million tonnes. It also sets out that permission will be granted to allow a landbank of at least 7 years of sand and gravel to be maintained. OMWCS policy M3 includes the site within a wide area within the 'Thames and Lower Thame Valleys area from Oxford to Cholsey' (classed as in "southern Oxfordshire"), which is identified as a strategic resource area for aggregate minerals extraction within which sites for mineral working will be allocated in the Part 2 Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Allocated sites will be located such that 75% of the additional tonnage requirement is in southern Oxfordshire. OMWCS policy M5 states that prior to the adoption of the Part 2 Minerals and Waste Local Plan permission will be granted for the working of aggregate minerals where it would contribute towards the requirement for provision identified in policy M2 and is in accordance with the locational strategy in policy M3 and the core policies for minerals and waste (C1-C12).

53. The principle of mineral extraction at Bridge Farm to which this application would be an extension has already been accepted. OMWCS Policy M2 sets out the landbank provision required. The current sharp sand and gravel landbank in Oxfordshire is around 12.8 years from the end of 2015, above the required minimum of 7 years. Approximately half of the current permitted reserves of sharp sand and gravel are at a single site (Gill Mill Quarry) and those reserves are expected to be worked over a period up to 2036. Therefore, it would not be possible for Oxfordshire's production of sharp sand and gravel to be maintained at the LAA level of 1.105 mtpa throughout the theoretical period of the current landbank (12.8 years), since the reserves at other sites are expected to be worked out within a shorter period. Some quarries are expected to be worked out in less than 7 years (the minimum landbank period required by the NPPF). This provides an argument for the point made within the NPPF that MPAs should "*ensure that large land banks bound up in very few sites do not stifle competition.*"
54. The working of the mineral proposed in this application would add approximately 6 months to the landbank and maintain supply from this quarry for a further two years. It would contribute 10% to the overall requirement for further sharp sand and gravel reserves of 5 million tonnes identified over the OMWCS plan period. The application accords with the spatial strategy in OMWCS policy M3 both in terms of the strategic resource areas and the 25% / 75% split in additional tonnage requirement between northern and southern Oxfordshire.
55. Subject to there not being an overriding reason not to extract the mineral in this location, it would minimise environmental impacts to work that material from an extension to this existing site which is already disturbed.
56. The NPPF contains a presumption on favour of sustainable development and OMWCS policy C1 reflects this with a positive approach to minerals and waste development, where applications accord with other policies in the plan. Core Policy 1 of the VWHL 2031 favours sustainable development in accordance with the provisions of the plan where appropriate and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) otherwise, unless there are material considerations which indicate otherwise. As set out above, subject to there being no overriding reason to refuse permission, it is a sustainable option to work mineral from an extension to an existing quarry where remaining reserves would otherwise be sterilised.

Impacts on the Environment - Water

57. OMWLP policy PE4 states that proposals for mineral extraction must not put at risk the quality of groundwater or groundwater levels. OMWCS policy C4 makes similar provision. Policy DC 12 of the VWHL 2011, Core Policy 43 of the VWHL 2031 and VWHL 2031 Part 2 Development Policy 29 also seek to protect the water environment.

58. The site lies in flood zones 2 and 3 and so the sequential test has been carried out to see whether the development could be located instead in Flood Zone 1 (Annex 4). The application is an extension to an existing quarry to enable the extraction of mineral deposits which would otherwise be sterilised. There are no alternative sites available outside flood zones 2 and 3 of equivalent yield. The development is in any instance water compatible.
59. The Environment Agency has been consulted on the application and whilst initially objection was raised on the grounds of an inadequate Flood Risk Assessment, it is understood this objection has now been withdrawn although confirmation in writing of this is awaited and I will update the committee orally on this point. The Lead Local Flood Authority also has no objection to the application. Network Rail now has no objection subject to a condition requiring drainage to not be onto Network Rail land. It is therefore recommended that a pre-commencement condition be attached to any planning permission granted requiring details of the drainage including the discharge arrangements to the River Thames to be submitted for approval. Subject to this I consider that the application is in accordance with the aims of the above policies.

Impacts on Amenity

60. Planning policy requires that proposals for minerals development should not have unacceptable adverse impacts on residential amenity and other sensitive receptors and that suitable buffer zones should be provided (OMWLP policies PE3 & PE18, VWHLP 2011 policy DC9, OMWCS policy C5, VWHLP 2031 Part 2 Development Policies 20 & 22).
61. The extraction of mineral in the proposed extension area would not have any additional, significant impacts on amenity other than mineral working would continue in the area for a longer period of time which, including the completion of restoration, would extend the duration of any minor amenity impacts experienced by neighbours for a further three years. However, the quarry has not generally attracted complaints and generally operates in accordance with conditions. The applicant has advised that they would accept conditions limiting the size of the stockpiles of mineral to not exceed those of the surrounding screening bunds and also to require that a biodiversity friendly seed mix be sowed on the screening bunds, albeit that they would only be in place for a limited period. Natural England have requested additional screen planting to the River Thames Path but given the relatively short time period proposed for extraction and restoration operations, I do not consider that any planting would have time to mature so as to be any significant benefit. I therefore consider that with regard to impacts on amenity, the proposal is therefore in accordance with OMWLP policy PE18, VWHLP 2011 policy DC9, OMWCS policy C5 and VWHLP 2031 Part 2 Development Policies 22 & 24.

Restoration

62. OMWLP policy PE13 and OMWCS policy M10 require that mineral workings should be restored appropriately and within a reasonable timescale. The three years extension to the overall timescale for restoration of the extended Bridge Farm Quarry is considered to be reasonable.
63. The proposed restoration to agricultural land in phase 5 and lakes in phases 6 and 7 with a nature conservation afteruse is considered to be appropriate. Whilst the existing quarry is subject to a legal agreement requiring a 20 years long term management plan, the applicant is not able to offer this for the extension area. Whilst such an extended period of long term management would be desirable, I do not consider that without it the development would be unacceptable such that a sustainable reason for refusal could be justified. The applicant has nonetheless advised that they would accept a condition requiring a seven year aftercare period which is two years more than the standard five. There would also in any instance be a requirement for a legal agreement to be provided to provide for the long term bird management plan which the Ministry of Defence would require to be in place for so long as there are operational airfields at RAF Benson and Dalton Barracks.
64. The proposed extension does include the working of mineral from 12.1 ha of high grade agricultural land. The intention is that phase 5 which is the area where this land is found, would be restored back to high grade agricultural land. Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Policy C6 of the OMWCS states that proposals for minerals and waste development shall demonstrate that they take into account the presence of any best and most versatile agricultural land and that the permanent loss of best and most versatile agricultural land will only be permitted where it can be shown that there is an overriding need for the development and where all options for reinstatement without such loss of quality have been considered taking into account other relevant considerations. Core Policy 43 of the VWHL 2031 also states that the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land should be avoided, unless it is demonstrated to be the most sustainable choice from reasonable alternatives, by first using areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality. As there would be no overall loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, it is considered that the application meets the requirements of these policies.
65. The application is considered to be in accordance with OMWLP policy PE13, OMWCS policies M10 and C6 and Core Policy 43 of the VWHL 2031.

Biodiversity

66. NPPF paragraph 9 states that sustainable development includes moving from a net loss in biodiversity towards achieving net gains for the future. OMWLP policy PE14 states that proposals which would affect a nature conservation interest will be assessed taking into account the importance of the affected interest, the degree of damage and the extent to which replacement habitat could preserve the interest in the long term. OMWCS policy C7 states that minerals development should conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity and development shall avoid harm to protected species. Core Policy 46 of the VWHLP 2031 makes similar provision.

67. As well as the area to be restored to agriculture, two water bodies fringed with reedbed, and with lake margins of grassland within the existing hedgerow boundaries would be created which would provide biodiversity enhancements over the existing situation where the land is in intensive agricultural use. The County Council's Ecology Officer has no objection to the application subject to conditions. The Environment Agency had raised objection on two biodiversity grounds as set out above but following a meeting between officers, the Environment Agency and the applicant, it is understood that these concerns had been addressed and that the Environment Agency will be sending an amended response withdrawing their objections subject to conditions. I will update the committee orally at the committee meeting on this revised response.

68. Whilst the existing quarry to which this would be an extension is subject to a management plan for 20 years following the statutory five years aftercare period, the applicant has not been able to offer this for the extension area. Whilst it is always a positive gain to obtain extended management for areas to be restored to biodiversity uses, there is no specific support for this in national, development plan or developing policy and I do not consider that there is any overriding reason for refusal which would otherwise render it necessary to make this specific application acceptable.

69. Subject to confirmation of the Environment Agency's revised position, I consider that the development is supported by the NPPF paragraph 9, OMWLP policy PE14, OMWCS policy C7, and VWHLP 2031 Core Policy 46.

Landscape

70. OMWLP policy PE5 states that mineral workings should not harm the immediate setting and nature conservation value of the River Thames. VWHLP 2011 policies NE9 and NE11 are landscape policies applying to the area on which the site is located which state that development will not be permitted that has an adverse impact on landscape (NE9) or if a landscaping plan that enhances the appearance of the area has not been

provided (NE11). VWHLP 2031 Core Policy 44 seeks to protect and enhance local landscape character. OMWCS policy C8 states that minerals development should respect and where possible enhance the local landscape. VWHLP policy DC6 provides for the landscaping of developments.

71. This application would result in a change to the landscape in close proximity to the River Thames, as it would result in an area of water being present in the landscape in the long term over the areas of phases 6 & 7, rather than the currently agriculture. The Thames Path runs along the northern bank of the river but the application site is generally screened by existing vegetation. However, in the context of the rest of the already consented quarry being restored to water bodies and reed beds and the wider context which is very much the existing Sutton Courtenay mineral and waste management complex, this is not considered to be significant. Screening would be provided through the provision of soil bunds during the working and additional planting would be carried out as part of the proposed restoration scheme. The restoration and aftercare plans will ensure that the restored site is of high quality and makes a positive contribution to the landscape. As set out above, Natural England have requested additional screen planting to the River Thames Path but the applicant does not consider this would be of any benefit. Given the relatively short time period proposed for extraction and restoration operations, I also do not consider that any planting would have time to mature so as to be any significant benefit in landscape terms whilst the site was disturbed. Whilst it would be of benefit in the longer term in terms of providing a strengthened habitat resource, I do not consider that this would constitute a sustainable reason for refusal to the application or to the attachment of a condition requiring such a planting scheme to be provided, both of which could be appealed against.

72. It is considered that the development complies with VWHLP 2011 policies DC6, NE9 and NE11, VWHLP 2031 Core Policy 44 and OMWCS policy C8.

Archaeology

73. OMWLP policy PE8 states that before determining an application for mineral extraction, the County Council will require the applicant to carry out a preliminary archaeological assessment to determine the nature and significance of any archaeological remains. Subject to the results of this assessment, an archaeological field investigation may be required. OMWCS policy C9 states that proposals for minerals development will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the historic environment. The NPPF states where a site includes heritage assets with archaeological interest, that local planning authorities should require applicants to submit an appropriate desk based assessment and where necessary a field

evaluation. Policies HE9, HE10 & HE11 of the VWHL 2011 and Core Policy 39 of the VWHL 2031 make similar provision.

74. The County Council's Archaeologist has no objection subject to conditions requiring the submission of a Written Scheme of Investigation and following archaeological investigation as works progress. Subject to this it is considered that the application would be in accordance with the above policies.

Transport

75. Saved VWHL policy DC5 states that developments will only be permitted provided there is safe and convenient access to the highway network and it can accommodate the traffic arising from the development. Core Policy 33 of the VWHL 2031 supports sustainable transport and the limitation of any adverse impacts from traffic. VWHL 2031 Part 2 Development Policy 15 makes similar provision. It is understood that there would be no additional throughput compared to the existing asphalt plant and so no need for additional vehicle movements associated with the proposed development. Policy C10 of the OMWCS seeks to secure safe and suitable access from waste sites to the advisory lorry routes shown on the Oxfordshire Lorry Routes Map. OMWLP policy SC3 seeks to see vehicles routed to and from the A4130 Didcot Northern Perimeter Road and avoiding local villages including Sutton Courtenay.

76. The County Council as Highway Authority has no objection subject to a routing agreement being entered into to take traffic to and from the A4130 Didcot north perimeter road. The existing quarry is subject to such a routing agreement applicant has advised that they will enter into a supplementary routing agreement. Subject to this I see no conflict with the aims of the above policies.

Legal Agreements

77. The existing permission is subject to a routing agreement and a legal agreement which secures long term management. As set out above, the applicant will enter into a supplementary routing agreement. A S.106 legal agreement will also be required to secure the provision of the bird management plan to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Defence.

Conclusions

78. The application is for an extension to an existing mineral working which will prevent the sterilisation of the remaining sand and gravel deposits in the area. The total additional time which would be added to mineral working in the area would be three years. The extended workings would continue to utilise the existing conveyor to move the extracted mineral to the existing plant site in the Sutton Courtenay complex and the access from there to the A4130. The development would not have any overriding and significant additional adverse impacts on the environment including

the amenity of local residents, the landscape, the water environment, best and most versatile agricultural land and biodiversity. It would lead to some biodiversity enhancements and continued employment for existing staff working at the quarry.

79. The development would be sustainable development with environmental, economic and social benefits in line with paragraph 7 of the NPPF and would be generally in accordance with both development plan policy and developing policies. Subject to the further response of the Environment Agency, the completion of a supplementary routeing agreement and legal agreement to cover the provision and implementation of a bird management plan, it should be approved subject to conditions as discussed above and as set out in Annex 2.

RECOMMENDATION

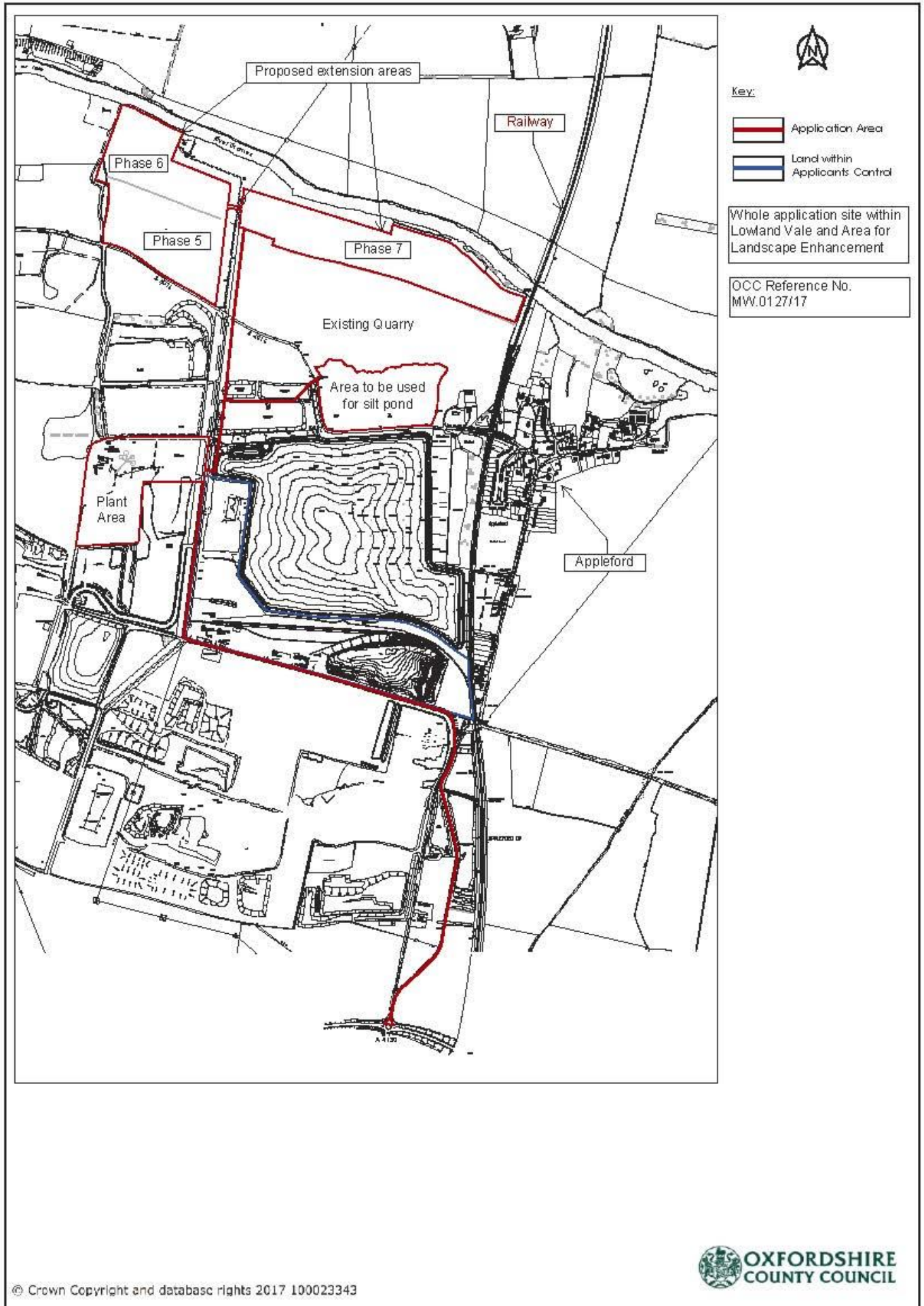
80. It is **RECOMMENDED** that subject to:

- (i) **the further response of the Environment Agency;**
- (ii) **completion of a section 106 legal agreement to provide for the submission and implementation of a bird management plan;**
and
- (iii) **to a supplementary routeing agreement**

it is RECOMMENDED that Application MW.0127/16 be approved subject to conditions to be determined by the Director of Planning and Place including those set out in Annex 2 to this report.

SUSAN HALLIWELL
Director for Planning and Place

5 JUNE 2017



Annex 2 - 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 (commencement of mineral extraction) 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 development shall cease, all associated pumps, plant and machinery shall be removed and the site shall be restored in accordance with the detailed restoration plan to be submitted pursuant to condition xvi) no later than three years from the date of commencement of the development.**
- iv. No operations authorised or required by this permission shall be carried out, and plant shall not be operated other than between 07.00 and 18.00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 07.00 to 12.00 hours on Saturdays;
No operations shall take place on Sundays, Public or Bank Holidays or on Saturdays immediately following Bank Holiday Fridays.**
- v. The noise levels arising from the development shall not exceed 50 dB(LAeq) (1 hour) at the closest dwelling.**
- vi. The noise levels arising from temporary operations for construction and removal of bunds shall not exceed 57 dB(LAeq) (1 hour free field) measured at the closest dwelling and the temporary operations shall not occur for more than 28 days at one time with a gap of at least 28 days between each such period of temporary operations.**
- vii. Noise from typical site operations shall be monitored every 3 months throughout the life of the development. A monitoring report shall be submitted to the Minerals Planning Authority in writing within 2 weeks of each set of monitoring.**
- viii. No reversing beepers or other means of audible warning of reversing vehicles shall be fixed to, or used on any vehicles, plant and machinery, other than those which use white noise.**
- ix. No vehicle shall exceed a speed of 25 kph on site;**

- x. **No development shall take place other than in accordance with the approved scheme for the minimisation of the emission of dust 'Sutton Courtenay Quarry Bridge Farm – Dust Control Scheme' dated 10/07/07. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full and the suppression equipment thereafter maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for the duration of the permission.**
- xi. **Material shall not be handled and moved if conditions are such that this creates a visible dust cloud.**
- xii. **A stand-off distance of 30 metres from the two badger setts on the western boundary should be maintained during excavation work in order to prevent disturbance to badgers on site. Soil shall not be stored in this area.**
- xiii. **All deep excavations shall be suitably ramped and any pipe-work associated with the development covered overnight to minimise the risk of badgers and other mammals, such as hedgehog being inadvertently killed and injured within the active quarry after dark.**
- xiv. **No operations are to take place within 50 metres of OS ref 4518 1945 (red kite nest site in the centre north of the site) during the nesting season (1st March to 31st August) unless the nest has been checked for occupancy by a suitably qualified ecologist. If the nest is occupied operations must be withdrawn from the area specified until young have fledged.**
- xv. **No works to take place until a scheme for protecting the woodland / trees/ hedgerows has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority and no work shall take place other than in accordance with that scheme.**
- xvi. **Prior to the commencement of the development, a detailed Restoration Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority. This shall include the following details:**
 - **The levels in the new lakes;**
 - **How the new lakes will be connected, both between waterbodies and with the River Thames.**
 - **Restoration of grassland around the lakes as species-rich grassland using local hay as a seed source.**
 - **Installation of at least one barn owl box within the extension area.**
 - **Provision of a bird hide with access near the pump house.**
- xvii. **All work of soil stripping, stockpiling and reinstatement shall be carried out when the material is in a dry and friable condition.**

- xviii. Stockpiled materials shall be sited such that they do not exceed the heights of the boundary soil storage screening.**
- xix. Plant or vehicle movements shall be confined to clearly defined haul routes or to the overburden/infill surface and shall not cross areas of topsoil and subsoil except for the express purpose of soil stripping or replacement operations.**
- xx. No development shall be carried out until details of the drainage works to be carried out including the arrangements for discharge to the River Thames have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority.**
- xxi. No floodlighting shall be erected on site.**
- xxii. 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.**
- xxiii. Prior to the commencement of the development and following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation, 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 no later than six months from the date of completion of restoration.**
- xxiv. All soil and soil forming materials shall be handled in accordance with Defra's Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils.**
- xxv. Within 3 months of the formation of storage bunds the operator shall submit a plan to be approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority showing the location, contours and volumes of the bunds, and identifying the soil types and units contained therein.**
- xxvi. Soil shall only be moved when in a dry and friable condition. For cohesive soil this may be assessed in accordance with the "Worm Test" for field situations described by Annex AP 8 Para 1 (g) of the Defra Guidance for Successful Restoration of Mineral and Waste Sites to determine if the moisture content is drier than the lower plastic limit and therefore, less prone to damage if handled.**

- xxvii. For all soil types no soil handling shall proceed during and shortly after significant rainfall, and / or when there are any puddles on the soil surface.**
- xxviii. Soil handling and movement shall not be carried out between the months of October to March inclusive, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority.**
- xxix. All available topsoil (and subsoil) shall be stripped before any part of the site is excavated, built upon or otherwise traversed by heavy machinery (except for the purpose of stripping or stacking soil on those parts).**
- xxx. Written notification shall be made giving the Mineral Planning Authority five clear working days notice of the intention to start stripping soils.**
- xxxi. Bunds for the storage of agricultural soils shall conform to the following criteria:**
 - a) Topsoils, subsoils and subsoil substitutes shall be stored separately.**
 - b) Where continuous bunds are used dissimilar soils shall be separated by a third material, previously approved in writing with the Mineral Planning Authority.**
 - c) Topsoil bunds shall not exceed 3 metres in height and subsoil bunds shall not exceed 5 metres in height.**
 - d) Materials shall be stored like upon like, so that topsoil shall be stripped from beneath subsoil bunds and subsoil from beneath overburden bunds.**
- xxxii. All storage bunds intended to remain in situ for more than 6 months or over the winter period shall be seeded with a standard agricultural pollen-rich legume mix to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority no less than one month before it is expected to complete the formation of the storage bunds.**
- xxxiii. All topsoil, subsoil, and soil forming material shall be retained on the site.**
- xxxiv. Restored soil depths shall accord with the proposals set out in the Environmental Statement and Supporting Technical Reports.**
- xxxv. All stones and other materials in excess of 100 mm in any dimension which are likely to obstruct cultivation in the agricultural afteruse shall be picked and removed from the site.**
- xxxvi. The applicant shall notify the Mineral Planning Authority at least 5 working days in advance of the commencement of the final**

subsoil placement on each phase, or part phase to allow a site inspection to take place.

xxxvii. In any part of the site where differential settlement occurs during the restoration and Aftercare period, the applicant, where required by the Mineral Planning Authority, shall fill the depression to the final settlement contours specified with suitable imported soils, to a specification to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority.

xxxviii. In relation to Phase 5 of the Scheme, an Aftercare Scheme requiring that such steps as may be necessary to bring the land to the required standard for the use of agriculture shall be submitted for the approval of the Mineral Planning Authority not later than 3 months prior to the date on which it is first expected that the replacement of topsoil shall take place. The submitted Scheme shall:

a) Provide an outline strategy for the five year Aftercare period in accordance with Paragraph: 057 of Minerals Planning Practice Guidance. This shall specify the steps to be taken and phasing in the management of the land to promote its rehabilitation to the target afteruses including where appropriate:

A map identifying clearly all areas with phasing, subject to aftercare management, A remedial field drainage system, and

- A pre-release report to demonstrate that the land has been reclaimed to the required standard.

b) Provide for a detailed annual programme, in accordance with Paragraph: 058 of Minerals Planning Practice Guidance, to be submitted to the Mineral Planning Authority not later than two months prior to each annual Aftercare meeting.

Unless the Mineral Planning Authority, after consultation with other interested parties, agree in writing with the person or persons responsible for undertaking the Aftercare steps that there shall be lesser steps or a different timing between steps, the Aftercare shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted Scheme.

xxxix. No works of site clearance, demolition or development shall take place in either phase 6 or 7 unless or until an aftercare scheme for nature conservation afteruses has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority. The scheme shall provide for:

a) A five year period of aftercare following the restoration of each phase or discrete area of restoration, specifying the steps to be taken and the period during which they are to be taken, and who will be responsible for taking those steps. The

scheme shall provide for any drainage measures and an annual meeting between the developer, the Mineral Planning Authority, the landowners and any other body appointed by either party.

b) The management of marginal planting, control of algal blooms and aquatic plants & any retained and newly planted trees and hedgerows.

Any scheme that is approved shall be fully implemented.

- xi. Before 1st August of every year during the aftercare periods for each of phases 5, 6 & 7, a site meeting shall be arranged by the developer, to which the Mineral Planning Authority and the landowners shall be invited to monitor the management over the previous year and to discuss and agree future aftercare proposals. The meeting shall also be attended by any other person(s) responsible for undertaking the aftercare steps. Any proposals that are agreed shall be set out in writing and shall be implemented in the timescales agreed.**

Annex 3 – Environmental Statement

An Environmental Statement (ES) was submitted with the planning application. This scoped out those elements where it was considered there would be no or very limited environmental impacts including agriculture and soil, bird strike, highways and transport, noise, dust and socio-economic impacts. The ES therefore concentrated on addressing those identified as potentially having significant effects/requiring further consideration as follows:

1. Heritage - The assessment refers to many records and sources to identify any heritage assets on or near the site. Only seven undesignated assets were identified within the site, one being of importance, two of low importance, and four of low importance. The potential effect of these is in one case moderate, and in all the others, minor. Consideration was also given to the possibility of archaeological deposits being on the site and the assessment confirms that there may be remains, and that it is possible to mitigate any effects of the development by appropriate monitoring, site stripping and recording/excavating as appropriate.

2. Biodiversity - A series of surveys were undertaken in relation to habitats and species. The chapter provides a full Impact Assessment and some of the key aspects of this are:

- the existing habitats on site are 95% arable land which is of negligible ecological significance;
- all trees as well as marginal and linear habitats of value to bats are retained ;
- some disturbance during the construction phase for breeding birds .

The assessment concludes that whilst there are some local level negative effects during the initial phases, these are outweighed by the benefits from the habitat creation included in the proposals. Additionally, in the long term, the scheme will have a significant positive effect for habitats, breeding birds, bats, otter and water vole.

3. Hydrology and flood risk - Baseline conditions are identified and the potential effects in terms of hydrology and flood risk analysed, through a range of hydrological data and with reference to the requirements of the Environment Agency.

The assessment notes that the use of “wet working” techniques of extraction avoids any effect on groundwater levels. Where “dry working” techniques are used, this is so the land can be restored to agriculture, and full provision is made in the scheme to avoid any adverse effects on hydrology. The scheme is beneficial in terms of flood risk as it creates a net increase in flood storage capacity.

4. Landscape and visual effects - A full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was carried out. The assessment identified that during the operational phase, the extraction process would have moderate/major impact at site level, but in the wider landscape character area, the effect will be

minor/negligible. Similarly for visual impacts, in the wider area, the visual impacts are predicted to be negligible.

The restoration is identified as sympathetically integrating the site with the river corridor and areas of wetland restoration within the existing site.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment concludes that in the medium to long term, significant landscape and visual enhancement will be experienced over an extensive area to the east of Sutton Courtenay village, and this is predicted to have a major beneficial impact on the local landscape character.

Annex 4 - Sequential test

Introduction

1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 101 states that a sequential approach should be used in areas known to be at risk from any form of flooding and that the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. Development should not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding.
2. NPPF paragraph 103 states that local authorities should only consider development appropriate in areas at risk of flooding where, informed by a specific flood risk assessment following the sequential test, it can be demonstrated that within the site the most vulnerable development is located in the areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location.
3. As the application site extension area falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and the site has not previously been sequentially tested through a development plan allocation, it is necessary to undertake a sequential test exercise to establish whether there is an alternative site in an area of lesser flood risk which could accommodate the proposed development and also to establish whether the most vulnerable development is located in the areas of lowest flood risk within the site. NPPG paragraph 033 (Reference ID: 7-033-20140306) advises that a pragmatic approach should be taken to applying the sequential test.
4. NPPG paragraph 018 (Reference ID: 7-018-20140306) states that 'planning authorities should apply the sequential approach to the allocation of sites for waste management and, where possible, mineral extraction and processing. It should also be recognised that mineral deposits have to be worked where they are found (and sand and gravel extraction is defined as 'water-compatible development' in table 2, acknowledging that these deposits are often in flood risk areas). However, mineral working should not increase flood risk elsewhere and needs to be designed, worked and restored accordingly. Mineral workings can be large and may afford opportunities for applying the sequential approach at the site level. It may be possible to locate ancillary facilities such as processing plant and offices in areas at lowest flood risk. Sequential working and restoration can be designed to reduce flood risk by providing flood storage and attenuation. This is likely to be most effective at a strategic (county) scale.'
5. The NPPF paragraph 105 indicates that the Local Planning Authority Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will provide the basis for applying the Sequential Test. Oxfordshire County Council Minerals

and Waste Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was published in August 2015 to support the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Core Strategy. In March 2015 an initial assessment of potential minerals and waste sites and broad areas was undertaken in the Initial Assessment Tables.

6. It is the responsibility of the minerals planning authority to conduct their own sequential test and this is set out below.

Potential Alternative Sites

7. Local Plan evidence base documents have been used to identify possible alternative sites which includes site nominations which have been made.
8. The proposed quarry extension would provide approximately 0.5 million tonnes of sand and gravel. Two of the nominated sites have significant lower estimated yields and therefore would not be capable of providing an alternative to the development proposed at Bridge Farm and so were eliminated at stage 1 of the sequential test. All bar one of the remaining nominated sites would provide yields considerably in excess of that proposed by the application site. Given the scale of the development, it was decided that those sites with estimated yields of more than 50% greater (0.75 million tonnes) were also not comparable and should be eliminated. The full list of sand and gravel sites assessed including details of their yield is set out in Table 1.

Table 1

Site Name and Location	Site Ref.	Estimated Yield (million tonnes)	Site Status	Is the yield comparable
Land west of A420, Faringdon	SG-01	0.4	Nomination withdrawn	N/A
Land west of Wicklesham and south of A420	SG-02	0.3	Nomination withdrawn	N/A
Land adjacent to Benson Marina	SG-03	0.07	Active nomination	No
Extensions to Sutton Wick	SG-06	0.25	Nomination withdrawn	N/A

PN6

Land at Lower Road, Church Hanborough	SG-08	2.5	Active nomination	No
Land north of Drayton St Leonard	SG-09	4.5	Active nomination	No
Benson Marina	SG-11	0.07	Nomination withdrawn	N/A
Land South of Chazey Wood, Mapledurham,	SG-12	3.0	Active nomination	No
Land at Shillingford	SG-13	5.3	Active nomination	No
Stonehenge Farm, Northmoor	SG-14	1.7	Nomination withdrawn	N/A
Dairy Farm, Clanfield	SG-15	5.4	Active nomination	No
Land at Culham	SG-17	4	Active nomination	No
Bridge Farm, Appleford,	SG-19	0.5	Active nomination	Application site
Land between Eynsham & Cassington	SG-20	1.5	Active nomination	No
Wharf Farm, Cassington	SG-20a	1.6	Active nomination	No
Land at Eynsham	SG-20b	1.9	Active nomination	No
Sutton Farm, Sutton	SG-29	5.0	Active nomination	No
New Barn Farm, South of Wallingford	SG-33	4.0	Active nomination	No

PN6

Land at Friars Farm, Stanton Harcourt	SG-36	0.4	Active nomination	No
Land at Grandpont	SG-37	1.5	Active nomination	No
North of Lower Radley	SG-41	1.5	Active nomination	No
North of Lower Radley	SG-41a	2.3	Not a nominated site	N/A
Nuneham Courtenay	SG-42	4.4	Not a nominated site	N/A
Land at Marcham	SG-43	8.7	Not a nominated site	N/A
Land at Little Wittenham	SG-44	24.4	Not a nominated site	N/A
Land at Appleford	SG-45	17.7	Not a nominated site	N/A
Land northeast of Cholsey	SG-46	1.5	Not a nominated site	N/A
Land at Wallingford Benson	SG-47	2.5	Not a nominated site	N/A
Land North of Didcot Perimeter Road, Didcot,	SG-53	0.75	Not a nominated site	N/A
Land south of River Thames near Radcot	SG-54a/b	31.0	Not a nominated site	N/A
Thrupp Lane, Radley	SG-56	0.2	Nomination withdrawn	N/A

New Barn Farm, Cholsey	SG-57	0.4	Nomination withdrawn	N/A
Chestlion Farm, Clanfield	SG-58	5.0	Active nomination	No
Manor Farm, Clanfield	SG-58a	12.0	Active nomination	No
Stadhampton	SG-59	1.0	Active nomination	No
White Cross Farm, Wallingford	SG-60	0.5	Active nomination	Yes
Mains Motors, Eynsham	SG-61	Not known	Not known	N/A
Appleford, Didcot,	SG-62	1.1	Active nomination	No

9. As shown in Table 1, following the elimination of sites which could not provide a comparable yield and sites for which the nomination had been withdrawn or not taken forward, there was one potential alternative site remaining:

SG-60 White Cross Farm, Wallingford

10. The application site has more than 85% of the extended extraction area in Flood Zone 3 with the rest in Flood Zone 2. White Cross Farm has over 75% of its area in Flood Zone 3 with around 20% Flood Zone 1. The application extension does not include any new built development within the Flood Zones 2 and 3 as it would utilise the existing permitted plant site which lies in Flood Zone 1. As no application has been received for White Cross Farm it is not known whether or not any plant or built development would be required.

Conclusion

11. The development of White Cross Farm would lead to less development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 than is proposed at the application site, however, this is of relatively small order. The White Cross Farm site would be an entirely new mineral extraction site with no associated existing plant or other infrastructure whereas the application site is a relatively small extension to an existing quarry and the proposed development proposes the creation of two lakes which would

increase the capacity of the flood plain in this area and so would not have any effect on flooding elsewhere. It is also considered unlikely that White Cross Farm could be delivered within the same timescale as the application site. In addition, further assessment work of the White Cross Farm site would be needed and should this work be undertaken in the future it is possible it could find the site to be unsuitable, or significantly reduce the area of the site which could be worked.

12. It is therefore considered that a pragmatic approach should be taken to applying the sequential test in this instance. The application as submitted does pass the sequential test as there is no clearly deliverable alternative likely to come forward with the same level of yield and so scale in the timescale proposed in an area of less flood risk. The restoration proposals through the creation of two lakes would increase flood capacity. The development is in any instance water compatible development.

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.

Ecological survey results indicate that a European Protected Species is likely to be present.

The survey submitted with the application details the following mitigation measure - a standoff strip will be maintained along all hedges to protect trees and flight routes.

The mitigation measures detailed within the survey are considered to be convincing and in your officers' opinion will secure "offence avoidance" measures.

Your officers consider that sufficient information has been submitted with the application which demonstrates that measures can be introduced which would ensure that an offence is avoided. The application is therefore not considered to have an adverse impact upon protected species provided that the stated mitigation measures are implemented.

