

Contact Officer: Taufiq Islam ([mohammad.islam@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mohammad.islam@oxfordshire.gov.uk))  
Tel: 01865 815884

## **PLANNING & REGULATION COMMITTEE – 11 APRIL 2011**

### **SHELLINGFORD QUARRY**

- 1) CONTINUATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT PERMITTED UNDER PERMISSION STA/SHE/8554/8 (EXTENSION OF AREAS OF EXTRACTION OF LIMESTONE AND SAND AND RESTORATION TO AGRICULTURE AT ORIGINAL GROUND LEVELS USING INERT FILL OVER TOTAL QUARRY AREA AND RETENTION OF EXISTING FACILITIES) WITHOUT COMPLYING WITH CONDITIONS RELATING TO APPROVED PLANS, BUND DETAILS, ACCESS, DEPTH FO WORKING DEWATERING AND WATER DISCHARGE, REMOVAL OF BAGGING AND PROCESSING PLANT, THE IMPORTATION OF AGGREGATES, RESTORATION DETAILS, AND SAND MARTIN HABITAT AND EXTENSION OF THE TIME PERIOD FOR OPERATIONS AT THE SITE;**
  
- 2) AN EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING QUARRY TO THE EAST FOR THE EXTRACTION OF LIMESTONE AND SAND WITH RESTORATION TO AGRICULTURE AT ORIGINAL GROUND LEVELS USING INERT FILL**

**Report by Deputy Director for Environment & Economy - Growth & Infrastructure**

**Location:** Shellingford Quarry, Stanford Road, Stanford in the Vale, Faringdon

**Applicant:** Multi-Agg Limited

**Application Nos:** (1) STA/SHE/8554/12-CM and (2) STA/SHE/8554/11-CM

**District Council Area:** Vale of White Horse

#### **Introduction**

1. These planning applications have been made by Multi-Agg Limited to: (1) vary various conditions of the existing planning permission for the extraction of sand and limestone at Shellingford Quarry. The applicant seeks planning permission to change, amongst other things – the phasing of soft sand and limestone extraction and the subsequent infill operations, and the depth of working of the existing site and time period for the operation of the site. At the

same time a number of minor amendments have been requested to the approved bund details, water discharge, access improvements, removal of bagging and processing plant, importation of aggregates, site restoration and relocation of the biodiversity improvement area. Any new consent can be accompanied by a new set of conditions to control the development; and (2) extract further sand and limestone by extending the present quarry to the east. Subsequent restoration would be to agriculture following infilling with inert waste (similar to the existing quarry).

### **Location (see Plan 1)**

2. Shellingford Quarry is located on the south side of the A417 (Faringdon Road) between the villages of Shellingford to the west and Stanford in the Vale to the east in the south east corner of the county.
3. The quarry is located south of the A420 (Swindon to Oxford Road) in an area that supports a number of soft sand quarries.

### **The site and its setting (See Plan 1)**

4. The nearest dwelling in Shellingford Village is about 550 metres to the west of the existing quarry with the nearest dwelling in Stanford in the Vale about 200 metres to the east of the proposed extension area. The White Horse Business Park lies about 150 metres to the south.
5. Immediately opposite the quarry, on the north side of the A417 is a former quarry in which is currently located the Stanford in the Vale waste recycling centre.
6. An SSSI known as Shellingford Crossroads Quarry is located about 300 metres north of the application site.

### **Background Information and History**

7. Permission was first granted for the extraction of sand and limestone at Shellingford Quarry in 1986. A further permission for an extension of the site was granted in November 1993 (reference STA/SHE/8554/7). In 2009, the applicant secured consent for the modification of various conditions attached to the 1993 consent.
8. Last year planning permission (ref STA/SHE/8554/10) for the erection of a new screen bund was granted along the north western perimeter of the quarry.

### **Details of the Development**

#### **1) The existing quarry and variation of conditions**

9. This application seeks a number of modifications to current working practices at the quarry. The principal features of this application are:

- the rephrasing of mineral extraction and infill operations
- a modification to the depth of working of the existing site
- an extension of the time period for the existing permission.

10. A number of conditions are also proposed to be modified since they are consequential to the amendments to the phasing plans, or provide an update on minor matters such as the location of the bunds, and some are to be deleted (e.g. Conditions 10 (working sequence), 14 and 15 (soil storage bunds) as they either have been superseded by other plans or have been complied with and are therefore now redundant regarding any new permission.
11. It is not proposed to change the current site layout, restoration details, landscaping or access arrangements. The quarry would continue to work at its existing permitted rate of extraction (sand – 70,000 tonnes per year and limestone – 80,000 tonnes per year).
12. The applicant operates a plant for the recycling of construction and demolition waste (under a separate planning permission) within the quarry. This operation would not be affected by this current proposal.

i) Re-phasing of mineral extraction and infill operations

13. The applicant has submitted a revised scheme for the phasing of mineral extraction and the subsequent infill with inert material. This followed on from a site monitoring visit (by council officers) which identified that the approved plans do not reflect the current extraction operations on site. The applicant explained that a re-assessment of the mineral reserves at Shellingford Quarry has been carried out to identify the location of any remaining workable sand and limestone. This survey has found that there are still reserves of sand and underlying limestone (known as part of the Highworth Limestone Formation) in some parts of the site which have been previously worked. To extract these reserves efficiently, the applicant proposes to revisit the parts of the site that have previously been worked out (but not restored) and remove this material. Removal of the material would create a total void space of up to 1,350,000m<sup>3</sup> within the quarry. The applicant proposes to infill at a rate of at least 100,000m<sup>3</sup> per year.

ii) Modification to the Depth of Working

14. The applicant has submitted a plan showing modifications to the depth of working of the site. The average *existing* depth of working is about 14 metres below ground surface level. The depth of working of the existing permission has changed as the extraction of the Highworth Limestone from the site has meant digging deeper. A revised drawing has been submitted showing a revised average depth of the working of 16 metres below ground surface level.

iii) Extension of time

15. The existing permission for the site requires extraction to finish by December 2020 and restoration by December 2021. This application proposes an extension of the end date for mineral working by 8 years, up to 2028 and restoration by 2029. This however would only be needed if the proposed eastern extension is permitted (subject to separate application). Otherwise, it would be the intention for the reserves of sand and limestone within the existing quarry area to be worked out by the end of 2020 as originally permitted.

iv) Access and Traffic

16. The access to the quarry is from the A417 and improvements are proposed to be carried out to provide extensive kerbing, drainage and edge strengthening works extending along the highway either side of the quarry access.
17. The applicant says that the level of traffic movements allowed to and from the site would remain the same as now i.e. average 140 movements per day (70 in, 70 out) rising to a maximum of 200 movements per day (100 in, 100 out).

2) Eastern extension to existing quarry

18. This application seeks permission to extend the existing quarry boundary to the east. The proposed area of extraction is 5.97 hectares.
19. The proposal would involve the extraction of 935,000 tonnes of soft sand and limestone. The maximum annual output would be 200,000 tonnes, though average production would be lower. The anticipated duration of extraction is 8 years (up to 2020) and restoration is proposed to be fully completed within 12 months of extraction being completed. The applicant proposes to restore the site progressively to agriculture at original ground levels (as for the existing quarry).
20. If planning permission is granted, sand and limestone extraction would move into the eastern extension area immediately following completion of the current phase within the existing quarry (the current operation is taking place in the eastern area of existing quarry). Once the extension area has been worked out operations would return to the existing quarry to work out the remaining mineral reserves. A consequence of working in this way is that an extension of time for the existing quarry would be needed (this is one of the variations of conditions applied for in the other application described above).

Extraction and Processing

21. Sand and limestone would be extracted in two phases in the extension area working from south to north. The maximum depth of the working would be 16 metres. Prior to any extraction, perimeter screen bunds would be formed.
22. Topsoil and subsoil would initially be stripped from the first phases (the southern part) and sorted in the northern (roadside) bund for screening

(maximum height would be 3m). These materials would subsequently be used in restoring the extension area at a later date. The eastern perimeter bund would be constructed using suitable materials from the existing screen bund supplemented if necessary with quarry waste. The bund would be between 3m to 6m high.

23. The existing site infrastructure (such as the minerals processing plant, site offices and mess facilities, workshops and wheelwash) within the existing quarry would continue to be used for the quarry extension. The method of extraction, processing and filling would be the same as currently in place for the existing quarry.

#### Access and Traffic

24. Access to the extension area would be via the existing quarry access onto the A417. Again, improvement works outlined in para 16 would be carried out.
25. The rate of working proposed would be similar to that currently generated at the existing quarry. The applicant says that traffic movements therefore to and from the site would remain about the same i.e. average 140 movements per day (70 in, 70 out) with maximum 200 movements (100 in, 100 out).

#### Restoration

26. Restoration to agriculture would be carried out in a phased manner. It is proposed to restore as close as practicable to existing ground levels with an allowance made for settlement. To achieve the required restoration it would be necessary to fill the void with inert materials. The void space created by the extraction operation would be about 520,000 m<sup>3</sup>.
27. As part of the restoration scheme tree planting would be carried out which would include a tree belt on the eastern boundary, strengthening of the existing planting on the southern boundary, the planting of a hedgerow with hedgerow trees on the western boundary and individual tree planting along the northern boundary.

### **Consultation Responses and Third Party Representations (to both applications)**

#### **Shellingford Parish Council**

28. Make the same comments on both applications:

The Parish Council supports the applications subject to the following comments:

- As agreed by the operator kerbing should be installed on the A417 from Shellingford crossroads to the junction with Cottage Road. The 140 metres of kerbing proposed in the planning application is totally inadequate.

- There is at present a dangerous gully between the edge of the existing road surface and the grass verge, which should be remedied without delay.
- As agreed by the operator the Parish Council member should be included in the annual monitoring of the site.
- Any screening and bunding should be in place before extraction is started.

**Stanford in the Vale Parish Council**

29. No comments have been received on either application.

**Vale of White Horse District Council**

30. No planning or environmental health objections to the application to vary conditions.
31. No objections to the proposed extension providing the site is adequately screened from the surrounding area with bunds and landscaping and that the County Council is satisfied that the site is far enough from residential properties so as not to harm residential amenity.

**Environment Agency**

32. No objection to either application subject to conditions being imposed (on both applications) relating to submission of a scheme for the monitoring of the ground water quality of the site, a scheme for surface water drainage, a scheme for the biodiversity gain area and depth of mineral extraction.
33. The proposed changes to the operation of the site are likely to require variation of the existing Environmental Permit to cover water features in the quarry.

**Natural England**

34. No objection to both applications. They comment that in view of the possibility of land settlement following infill, they advise that the installation of any land drains should be delayed until the end of year 4 to allow the land to fully stabilise.

**Thames Water**

35. No objections in relation to waste and water issues to both applications.

**BBOWT**

36. Have only commented on the application for the extension to the quarry. They suggest that restoration should be reviewed to seek further biodiversity enhancements and long term management of the restored areas should be secured.

### **County Ecologist Planner**

37. No objection to the application to vary conditions subject to conditions to protect any protected species and to ensure satisfactory restoration of the site.
38. No objections to the extension application subject to conditions to cover badger presence on the site, restriction of ground clearance works to outside the bird breeding season, protection of reptile habitats and restoration to agriculture. The restoration to agriculture along with a nature conservation after-use would include a pond, wetland and species-rich grassland. These features would be in the south of the existing quarry and would be in addition to the nature conservation area previously agreed in the northern triangle of the quarry (which would contain a sand face for sand martins).

### **Transport Development Control**

39. No objection to either application providing the existing highway conditions are carried over to any new permissions. Make the following comments:
  - These developments require improvements to the existing access arrangements from the adjacent A417, including kerbing, drainage improvements and Routeing Agreement. Access improvement works should be carried out prior to any quarrying to the east and through a S.278 Agreement.
  - A Code of Practice and management plan should be submitted.

### **Third Party Representations** (copies of the letters are available in the Members' Resource Centre)

40. Fifteen local residents have raised objections to these planning applications. The following points are made and relate to both proposals:
  - The applicant requests permission to increase the current level of traffic (up to 200 movements) which is unacceptable.
  - Increase in traffic would increase the risk to the nearby residents.
  - Extra lorries would increase the danger for children and elderly persons.
  - Increased risk of road traffic collisions and injury to pedestrians.
  - Detrimental impact on the local environment.
  - Debris on the road dropped from the lorries.
  - Would have a negative impact on the character of Stanford village transforming it from relatively rural safe area to busy dirty industrial neighbourhood.
  - The lorry speed along the stretch of the A417 is not acceptable.
  - Significant increase in noise generation from road traffic.
  - Wheelwash facilities are inadequate.
  - Lack of sheeting on any lorries.

- Poor housekeeping by the applicant and arrogant behaviour of lorry drivers.
- A routing agreement to be put in place where lorries could only use the A417 to access the A420 and not drive (through Sanford) towards Wantage.
- The adjacent quarry road does not have a suitable surface which can accommodate the existing level of traffic.
- When lorries go to Wantage they drive through many residential areas including past a school.
- Mud/sand on the roads for miles giving very slippery road surface.
- The A417 past Stanford in the Vale is not designed for the amount of traffic from the quarry.
- Heavy lorry load passing the nearby houses makes the houses vibrate.
- The applicant yet to implement improvement to the quarry entrance.
- Want to know from County Council what penalties are they putting in place to ensure that the applicant would not breach conditions in future.

**Relevant Planning Policies for both applications (see policy annex attached to this Agenda)**

41. Development should be decided in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
42. The Development Plan for this area comprises the South East Plan, the saved policies of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (OMWLP) and the Vale of White Horse Local Plan (WOWHLP) 2011.
43. Minerals Policy Statement 1 (MPS 1) Planning and Minerals is also relevant.
44. Whilst the South East Plan (SEP) forms part of the Development Plan, the Government has made it clear that it intends to abolish regional strategies. This intention has been upheld as being a material consideration in determining planning applications.

**Comments of the Deputy Director for Growth and Infrastructure**

**1) Application to vary conditions on the existing quarry consent**

45. The main issues to be addressed in deciding this application are;
  - the need for sand and limestone and potential loss of permitted reserves if the proposal were to be refused;
  - whether the extra time to work at the sand and limestone is acceptable.
  - whether the restoration of the site can be implemented in a timely manner (which would include modifications to the phasing and depth of working).
  - whether traffic, environmental and amenity impacts can be dealt with satisfactorily.

### **Need for the mineral**

46. Government Policy in MPS1 requires a landbank for sand and gravel of at least 7 years and for crushed rock of at least 10 years. The soft sand and limestone remaining with the existing Shellingford Quarry site form part of Oxfordshire's existing permitted reserves and therefore part of the existing sand and crushed rock landbank.
47. The landbank position for these respective minerals is emerging. Using the apportionment figures from the South East Plan (which still form part of the Development Plan for the area) the permitted reserves are about 6 years (for soft sand) and about 12 years (for crushed rock). However, the Cabinet decision in February this year, which agreed the locally derived figures for sand and gravel and crushed rock for the County's emerging minerals strategy (for consultation this summer) proposes a soft sand apportionment of 0.25 mt and limestone apportionment of 0.63 mt which results in current landbanks of 9 years for soft sand and up to 20 years for crushed rock. The Cabinet also endorsed these on the emerging policy figures when consideration is given to any planning application.
48. Regardless of the landbank position, it is sensible that the remaining reserves of soft sand and limestone in the existing quarry remain accessible for working, to fully exploit the mineral within the landtake and reduce the need to permit reserves elsewhere to replace them. MPS1 recommends the maximisation of reserves from existing mineral workings to assist in reducing environmental disturbance rather than opening up new sites. In this case the proposed removal of the sand and then working to the base of the Highworth Limestone beneath it would be good planning as it would maximise the recovery of both minerals from within the already permitted area and would be a prudent use of resources in line with the national objectives for minerals planning outlined in MPS1. If these minerals are not worked now, whilst the quarry is open they would be sterilised by landfill.
49. The remaining reserves at Shellingford Quarry have been reassessed and if worked to the base of the Highworth Limestone as proposed, the remaining reserves total 490,000 tonnes of sand and 850,000 tonnes of limestone. As these are within the existing quarry, no increase in either sand or crushed rock production capacity of the county would result. Capacity would be retained at the existing levels.

### **Extension of time**

50. The applicant seeks permission to extend the time period for the extraction of mineral for further period of 8 years up to 2028 with restoration by 2029. This extended time period would only be required if the proposed eastern extension is permitted (subject to a separate application and described later in this report). Whilst the applicant intends to work out the revised reserves of sand and limestone within the exiting quarry area by 2020, it would be difficult for him to infill and restore the site appropriately with this time frame. Further

discussion with the applicant confirms that in the event that the extension is not permitted, the current infilling rate would need to increase (even more than the proposed rate) to complete infilling and restoration of the site by 2021 (the existing permitted time period for restoration).

51. It is likely that should that scenario occur, vehicle movements in the order of the maximum number of movement described in Para 17 (i.e. 200 movements per day) would be the norm for the operational life of the site. It is my view that the extension of time (for a further 8 years) is justifiable (to allow mineral reserves to be worked efficiently and subsequent restoration of the whole site to be properly implemented), **but this is only justified if the eastern extension application is granted planning permission.**

### **Restoration**

52. Restoration of the quarry will require the import of inert waste to infill the void. This would take longer than originally envisaged with the amendments to the phasing scheme and depth of working to extract the further reserve of mineral from the quarry. If the entire workable mineral to the base of the Highworth Limestone is extracted, the total void to be filled would be 1,350,000m<sup>3</sup>/year, which at the current rate of infilling could take up to 17 years to fill. The application proposes to increase the rate of infill to 100,000m<sup>3</sup>/year, which would reduce the infill period to 14 years and then final restoration would take place. The proposals provide the opportunity to achieve good quality restoration whilst still allowing valuable mineral reserves to be worked.

### **Environmental Impacts (including traffic)**

53. The principle objections to this application (as with the eastern extension) relates to the impact on the local area from lorry traffic, particularly excessive speed, additional lorry movements, materials falling onto the highway from lorries and increased risk of accidents. Shellingford Parish Council and some of the objectors have also raised concerns over access improvements to the site and maintenance /repair of the A417 near the site entrance.
54. The site has a good access onto the A417. The applicant advises that the quarry would continue to operate at the current level of activity and therefore the level of traffic should remain the same. However, if import of inert waste is increased to achieve restoration in the timescales currently permitted, it is possible that there will be some increase in lorry movements. However, the applicant has agreed to carry out access improvement works which would include extensive kerbing, drainage and edge strengthening extending either side of the quarry access onto the A417. The concern about the materials falling onto the road and the problems of detritus on the public highway could be successfully mitigated by following good working practices and conditions could be attached to any permission granted to ensure loads are properly covered (sheeted). The applicant's lorries do now have electronically operated covers. Traffic speed enforcement is the responsibility of Thames Valley Police. The concern of residents over speeding vehicles needs to be raised with the operator and if necessary with the police. Transport

Development Control is aware of the objections raised by local people; they have nevertheless confirmed that they have no objections to the proposal subject to the conditions requiring access entrance improvements to be undertaken.

55. Some of the local residents have requested a routeing agreement to be put in place where lorries could only use the A417 to access the A420 and not drive through Stanford in the Vale towards Wantage. Transport Development Control have considered this request but consider that it would be unreasonable to ask for a routeing agreement based on the level of traffic proposed from the quarry. The applicant has also indicated in his planning submission that the greater proportion of movements are from the A420 to the west. Minor roads, including the B4508 through Hatford are not used except for local deliveries. All company lorries now have tracking devices which allows close monitoring of lorry movements. The impacts of lorry traffic appear in my view to be the matters of greatest concern to local people. The applicant asserts that there will be no overall increase in lorry traffic generation. I think that HGV movements should be capped at 200 (100 in, 100 out) and that this needs to be controlled through an independent monitoring programme paid for by the applicant.
56. There has been some concern about the increase of pollution levels and the risk of accidents on the assumption that this proposal would involve an increase in the level of traffic. The applicant has confirmed that the amount of traffic would remain the same i.e. an average of 140 movements per day with an estimated maximum of 200 per day but I consider that an increase in average movements would be generated if importation was increased to achieve restoration of the quarry in the currently approved timescale. These movements however in my view, should not significantly increase the level of pollution in the surrounding area nor should there be any significant additional risk of accident from the quarry activities. The development would therefore comply with VoWHL policy DC5 and SEP policy T1.
57. Local residents have raised concerns that there will be an increase in noise and dust generation from the site. However, this proposal involves a continuation of the existing operations of the site, it does not involve any increase to the permitted activities which could generate more noise and dust.
58. In terms of any visual impact the quarry is well screened by bunds alongside the A417, the eastern perimeter, and the access. The extraction areas and other activities are well hidden within the quarry. The Environmental Health Officer and the County Ecologist have not raised any concern about these matters. In my view, subject to appropriate conditions which are already in place, the proposal is in line with VoWHL policy DC9.
59. As a result of the responses received to this application, the applicant has confirmed that they are happy to set up a local liaison meeting to meet at least twice a year, where issues of local concerns relating to quarry activities and its operation can be raised and addressed.

## Conclusion

60. There is a need to maintain a landbank of permitted sand and limestone reserves supply materials for the construction industry. Indeed it is sensible if possible to enable reserves that are available within an existing quarry to continue to be worked to reduce the planned need for new sites.
61. The proposed modifications to the planning conditions attached to the original consent would enable the phasing of working, depth of working and subsequent restoration to be achieved to allow the remaining minerals resources with the quarry to be properly worked. An extension of time for extraction and subsequent infilling and restoration would be acceptable only if planning permission is granted for an eastern extension to the quarry.
62. Conditions and agreements from the existing planning permission can be applied to any new consent to protect local people and the environment, and ensure that the site is properly restored in due course.

### 2) Application for an extension to the east of the existing quarry

63. This is an application to work a new reserve of sand and limestone (albeit an extension to an existing quarry). The main issues to be considered in determining the application therefore are:
  - the need for further sand and limestone
  - the acceptability of any traffic and highway impacts
  - the impact on local people and business
  - the acceptability of the proposals on the landscape, water environment and biodiversity
  - restoration of the site using inert fill.

### Need for minerals

64. As has already been discussed in relation to the application for varying conditions on the existing quarry operation. Government policy in the form of MPS1 requires that provision be made for a landbank of sand and gravel of at least 7 years and for crushed rock of at least 10 years.
65. Under South East Plan policy M3 the Oxfordshire landbank should be based on apportionments of 1.82 million tonnes a year for sand and gravel and 1.0 million tonnes a year for crushed rock. The sand and gravel figure is subdivided as 0.36 million tonnes soft sand (20%) and 1.46 million tonnes sharp sand and gravel (80%), based on the split of production over the last 3 years. In July 2010 the government advised that the apportionment for Oxfordshire should be increased (as part of the Proposed Changes to the South East Plan) to 2.1 million tonnes a year for sand and gravel and 0.66 million tonnes year for crushed rock. The forthcoming Localism Bill however

proposes the abolition of regional plans, and in July 2010 the government issued advice that planning authorities can use alternative apportionment figures if based on robust local evidence.

66. On 16 February the Council's Cabinet agreed locally derived figures of 1.26 million tonnes a year for sand and gravel and 0.63 million tonnes a year for crushed rock which should be used as the basis for the County Council's preferred minerals strategy for consultation in the summer. The figure of 1.26 million tonnes a year is subdivided into 0.25 m tonnes per year soft sand and 1.01 m tonnes a year for sharp sand and gravel. At the same time the Cabinet also endorsed these figures for development control purposes when considering planning applications.
67. For soft sand therefore based on the South East Plan policy figure, the current landbank of permitted reserves is about 6 years (below the government policy level of at least seven years). If the alternative Cabinet figure is used however the landbank is about 9 years. For crushed rock, based on the South East Plan policy figure, the current landbank of permitted reserves is about 12 years (above the government policy level of at least 10 years). If the alternative Cabinet figure is used, the landbank is about 20 years.
68. Based on the Cabinet endorsed apportionment figure there is no current urgent need for further reserves of soft sand to be permitted. Nevertheless, the Council's emerging strategy for minerals identifies the area south east of Faringdon for future working.
69. Based on the apportionment in the South East Plan (Policy M3) there is a need for further reserves of soft sand to be permitted, in order to maintain a landbank of at least 7 years. There is no current need for any further reserves of limestone to be permitted.
70. This extension would provide an additional 560,000 tonnes of soft sand, equivalent to an increase in the landbank of about 1.5 years. This would increase the landbank to about 7.5 years. It is important to note that the 7 year landbank is regarded by Government as a *minimum* target. Using the Cabinet endorsed figures, permitting this proposal would result in a landbank of 10.5+ years.
71. The proposed extension would also provide an additional 375,000 tonnes of limestone (located beneath the sand deposit). There is no current need for additional reserves of crushed rock to be permitted whichever apportionment figure (South East Plan or Cabinet) is used. Nevertheless, the Strategy approved by Cabinet identifies this area (south east of Faringdon) as the area where any future reserves should come from. Although the landbank target would be exceeded by allowing this proposal it would be in an area identified for future extraction and it would involve an extension to an existing quarry operation. If the sand deposit is worked in this extension area it would be good planning for the deposits of limestone to be worked at the same time as the sand. This would maximise recovery of minerals from one permitted area and would be a prudent use of resources in line with national objectives for

minerals planning in MSP1. If the limestone was not worked at the same time as the sand, it would be sterilised by landfill.

72. The proposal would not increase the production capacity of the county for either soft sand or limestone. Given that the existing quarry has a current permitted life to 2020; it could be argued that there is no need for an extension to be permitted at this time. But, if the proposed extension is in other respects acceptable, it would be good planning for it to be permitted now. It could then be incorporated into the working, infilling and restoration scheme for the quarry as a whole, making for a more efficient quarrying operation with a lower overall environmental impact. If the eastern part of the existing quarry is worked and restored first, it would make it more difficult to then work the eastern extension area (as an isolated working area) and would increase the overall impact of mineral working on the locality. Working this proposed extension area in conjunction with the existing quarry (and its existing processing facilities) would therefore be a wise use of resources in line with the national objectives for minerals planning in MPS1.

### **Traffic and highway impacts**

73. The traffic and highway implications of both these proposals have been a significant concern for local people. Individual responses from local residents have raised concerns to the application on highway and traffic grounds, particularly materials falling onto the highway, the increased risk of accidents and access improvements and the maintenance and repair of the A417. Shellingford Parish Council has also raised concerns over access improvement to the site.
74. As an extension to the existing quarry, the existing good access onto the A417 is to be used. The new extension area should continue to operate at the current rate of extraction and therefore it should not increase the level of mineral traffic.
75. The matters raised by local residents, and the means of mitigation and management have been addressed under my comments on application 1 above. Subject to conditions I believe that the proposal is acceptable in transport terms.

### **Impacts on local people and businesses**

76. OMWLP policy PE3 requires that an 'appropriate' buffer zone is provided between areas of extraction and nearby residents and other sensitive uses in order to protect them from unacceptable noise, dust, visual intrusion and other nuisances. The Plan suggests that 100 metres should be the minimum buffer between mineral working and individual dwellings or small groups of dwellings and says that regard should be had to the historic 350 metres standard between mineral workings and towns, villages and hamlets.
77. There have been concerns raised from the local residents regarding the impacts from noise and dust generation. In my view, a significant number of

these concerns are related to traffic generation from the site rather than internal activities from the proposed extension area. The issue of noise and dust generation from the traffic has already been discussed elsewhere in this report.

78. In this case, a buffer zone of approximately 200 metres would be provided to the nearest houses in Stanford in the Vale. The White Horse Business Park lies about 150 metres to the south of the site. Its activities are such that it is not as sensitive as residential uses. There would be no processing plant on the extension area as the extracted minerals would be processed in the existing processing plant area within the existing quarry site. Although properties in Stanford would be 200 metres from the site (less than 350 metres referred to in the OMWLP), a combination of screening bunds, existing trees/ hedgerows, new planting, and the distance between dwellings – and the extraction area and processing area – should mitigate the impact of any noise, dust and visual intrusion upon local residents.
79. The proposed extension area is visible from the A417 and cottages in Stanford in the Vale. However, the proposal includes the provision of screening bunds and planting alongside the A417 and the eastern boundary to reduce visual impact of the development. The outer banks of the bunds would be grass seeded to ensure they blend in with the surroundings. In my view, subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal is in line with VoWHLP policy DC9.

#### **Landscape, water environment and biodiversity**

80. The landscape character of this area is characterised by wooded estates, arable farming and small villages with a strong vernacular character (from the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)).
81. The proposal is to work the sand and limestone across the site from south to north and restore the site back to agriculture whilst strengthening tree and hedgerow planting. Overall, upon conclusion of mineral working this site can be restored to achieve an acceptable final landscape together with some benefit in biodiversity interest. The County Planning Ecologist has indicated her desire to see biodiversity enhancements on the restored quarry site but these are more likely to be on the wider site rather than the extension area. The proposal is therefore in line with the aim of policy C4 of SEP.
82. There is a badger sett in the eastern part of the site. Both the County Ecologist and BBOWT prefer not to remove the badger sett from the site and there should not therefore be any mineral working within 20m of the sett. The applicant has agreed with this proposal and any badger sett would be protected by planning conditions if any consent is to be granted. The proposal, therefore, accords with policy NRM5 of SEP and policy NE5 of VoWHLP.
83. The site is not in the flood plain and therefore there should be no risk of any flooding. The Environment Agency has indicated in their consultation

response that there may be a pollution issue in the local area (to do with historic landfill site on the northern side of the A417). The Environment Agency therefore suggests a condition to protect groundwater quality in underlying and surrounding aquifers and in local surface water features. It is my view that subject to conditions the proposal would not affect the water environment and in accordance with policy PE4 of OMWLP.

### **Restoration of the site**

84. OMWLP policy PE13 requires restoration of mineral workings within a reasonable timescale. This proposal involves the restoration of the site to agriculture (similar to the surrounding land use). The restoration proposals incorporate significant tree planting on the site boundaries that would improve the landscape structure of the area. It is agreed that there would be some ecological enhancement features in the final restoration scheme in addition to agricultural restoration. However, that benefit needs to be over wider site rather than this extension area.
85. The proposed mineral working would create a void of 520,000 m<sup>3</sup>, which would be filled with inert waste. For the first 3 years of the development it is unlikely that any waste would be imported (whilst extraction operation gets underway). Although this proposal would create additional inert landfill capacity, this would be as an extension to the existing Shellingford Quarry void. The overall rate of landfill would not be increased and the potential supply of infill material to other quarries being restored with inert fill material should not be affected.
86. This application proposes a rate of infill of 100,000 m<sup>3</sup>/year. The increased rate of infilling should ensure that the restoration of the site is managed within a reasonable timescale (in this case 2021 whilst at the same time maintaining vehicle movements to what is happening at the existing quarry at the moment.

### **Conclusion**

87. There is a need to maintain a landbank of permitted sand and limestone reserves supply materials for the construction industry. Planning policy at local, regional and national levels support the extension of existing quarries.
88. The concerns of the local resident regarding the impacts from traffic can be addressed and mitigated through appropriate planning conditions together with the establishment of a local liaison group.
89. The proposed extension of the quarry should not result in any significant harm to local amenities and surrounding landscape. Conditions can be applied to any consent to protect local people and the environment, and ensure that the site is properly restored in due course.

## **Recommendation**

90. It is **RECOMMENDED** that planning permission be granted for the developments described in Applications STA/SHE/8554/12-CM and STA/SHE/8554/11-CM subject to conditions to be determined by the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy -Growth & Infrastructure to include the matters set out in Annex 1 (with regard to Application 1) and Annex 2 (with regard to Application 2) of this report.

MARTIN TUGWELL  
Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure)

Background papers: Planning application

April 2011

**Application No. STA/SJE/8554/12-CM (existing site) – Heads of Conditions:**

- Detailed compliance condition.
- Extraction to cease by December 2028 with restoration by December 2029 (**only included if permission for Eastern extension is granted**).
- Plan to be submitted to show an area to be left for sand martin colonisation.
- Stockpiles of imported or bagged materials to be stored in accordance with approved location and height.
- Structures for managing landfill gas or leachate to be erected in accordance with approved plan.
- The bagging plant, workshop, and the office to be located as per the approved plan.
- Extraction of minerals, landfill, and restoration to take place according to approved plans and details.
- Bunding to be constructed in accordance with approved details.
- No extraction or landfill operations or construction of bunds to take place within two metres of the northern edge of planting.
- Soil stripping, working, landfill and restoration to be carried out in accordance with the sequence shown on approved plan.
- Soil handling, cultivation and trafficking over the top soil and sub soil material to take place when the moisture content of the soil 5% or more below the lower plastic limit of soils.
- Topsoil, subsoil and other soil-forming materials to be moved by loading shovel, hydraulic excavator and dump truck.
- All topsoil and subsoil stripped from the site to be stored separately in soil bunds and retained on site. No indigenous topsoil or subsoil to be taken off site or used for day to day cover during the landfill operations.
- No additional soil bunds to be erected and existing bunds to be vegetated.
- Screen bunds to be retained until required for restoration.
- Extraction of minerals to take place in accordance with approved depth of working.
- Operating hours – Mon-Fri 0700-1800 and Saturdays 0700-1300.
- No operation on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- Access to the site is to be as per approved plan.
- Access improvement works to be carried out within a specified period of time.
- Internal site haul roads to be kept free from pot holes while in use and haul roads to be removed when no longer required.
- Lorries to leave the site with wheels washed to prevent mud or dust.
- Loaded vehicles to leave the site as sheeted.
- No reversing beepers.
- No blasting.
- No floodlighting to be erected.
- The sand and limestone processing plant to be located at the base of the limestone deposit.
- Noise limits to be agreed and implemented.
- Oil storage tanks to be sited on impervious bases surrounded by oil tight bund walls.

- No discharge of water from the site except in accordance with discharge license.
- Submission of a scheme for the monitoring of the ground water quality of the site.
- Planting to be carried out in accordance with approved scheme.
- Existing hedges to be retained and maintained.
- All trees on the site to be preserved and maintained.
- No excavation from faces occupied by sand martins between 11 March and 31 October.
- The site to be kept free from weeds.
- The bagging plant and sand processing plant to be removed from the site by the specified time period.
- Aggregates to be imported to the site up to the permitted period of sand extraction.
- The site to be restored in accordance with approved scheme and within the specific time period.
- No special waste to be deposited at the site.
- Waste materials imported to the site to be deposited only on topsoil.
- Waste skips or containers to be stored in the working part of the quarry.
- Subsoil materials recovered from incoming loads and quarry reject material to be used to provide 1000 millimetres of cover over compacted waste materials.
- Imported soil or soil making material to be handled in accordance with an approved scheme.
- Topsoil to be spread over the restoration area to achieve the final land levels and the topsoil shall have a settled depth of 300 millimetres. All stones and rocks exceeding 100 millimetres in any dimension and any other deleterious material to be removed from the topsoil.
- The full depth of the restored topsoil and top 100 millimetres of subsoil to be tined using an agricultural machine at 600 millimetre centres.
- All stones/rocks exceeding 150 millimetres in any dimension or other deleterious material to be removed from the topsoil and subsoil.
- To avoid compaction the uppermost metre of the restored profile to be replaced in narrow strips, to a width not exceeding the reach of the hydraulic excavator.
- Final restoration levels not to exceed the approved level.
- A nesting area designated for the use of sand martins to be included in the biodiversity gain area.
- A scheme for the restoration of the biodiversity gain area to be submitted and approved.
- An aftercare scheme to be submitted and approved.
- Aftercare to take place for the period of 5 years.
- Extraction and landfilling to be ceased within the specific time period.
- Local liaison meeting to be established.

**Application No. STA/SHE/8554/11-CM (extension site) – Heads of Conditions:**

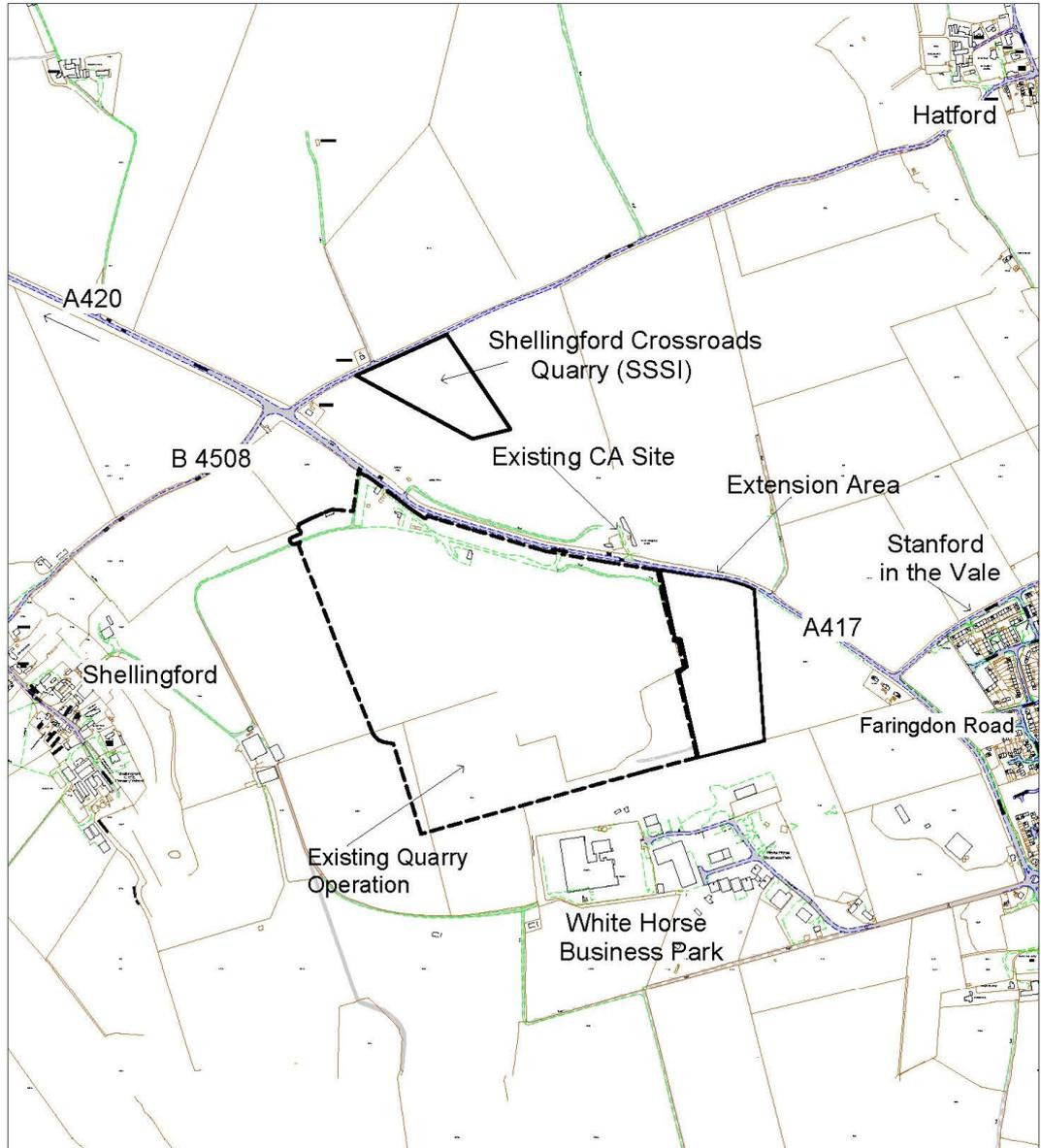
- Detailed compliance condition.
- Mineral extraction to be completed by 2020 and restoration to be completed by 2021.
- Structures for managing landfill gas or leachate to be erected in accordance with approved plan.
- Extraction of minerals, landfill, and restoration to take place according to approved plans and details.
- No extraction or landfill operations or construction of bunds to take place within two metres of the northern edge of planting.
- Soil stripping, working, landfill and restoration to be carried out in accordance with the sequence shown on approved plan.
- Soil handling, cultivation and trafficking over the top soil and sub soil material to take place when the moisture contents of the soil is 5% or more below the lower plastic limit of soils.
- Topsoil, subsoil and other soil-forming materials to be moved by loading shovel, hydraulic excavator and dump truck.
- All topsoil and subsoil stripped from the site to be stored separately in soil bunds and retained on site. Indigenous topsoil or subsoil to be taken off site or used for day to day cover during the landfill operations.
- New bunds to be erected and existing bunds to be vegetated.
- Bunding to be constructed in accordance with approved details.
- Screen bunds to be retained until required for restoration.
- Extraction of minerals to take place in accordance with approved depth of working.
- Operating hours – Mon-Fri 0700-1800 and Saturdays 0700-1300.
- No operation on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- Existing access onto A417 via existing quarry to be used.
- Access improvement works to be carried out within the specified period of time.
- Internal site haul roads to be kept free from pot holes while in use and to be removed when no longer required.
- Lorries to leave the site with its wheels have been washed to prevent mud and dust.
- Loaded vehicles to leave the site as sheeted.
- No reversing beepers.
- No blasting.
- No floodlighting to be erected.
- Noise limits.
- Oil storage tanks to be sited on impervious bases surrounded by oil tight bund walls.
- No discharge of water from the site except in accordance with discharge license.
- Submission of a scheme for the monitoring of the ground water quality of the site.
- Surface water drainage scheme to be submitted and agreed.
- Scheme for biodiversity gain to be submitted and agreed.
- No excavation shall take place below 64m Ordnance Datum or into the Lower Calcareous Grit Formation.

- Planting to be carried out in accordance with approved scheme.
- Existing hedges to be retained and maintained.
- All trees on the site to be preserved and maintained.
- The entire site to be kept free from weeds.
- No works to take place in the eastern extension unless a mitigation scheme to protect badgers has been submitted and approved.
- The site to be restored in accordance with approved scheme and within the specific time period.
- No special waste to be deposited on site.
- Waste materials imported to the site to be deposited only on topsoil.
- Waste skips or containers to be stored in the working part of the quarry.
- Subsoil materials recovered from incoming loads and quarry reject material to be used to provide 1000 millimetres of cover over compacted waste materials. The more permeable subsoil to be deposited in the upper part of the profile.
- Imported soil or soil making material to be handled in accordance with an approved scheme.
- Topsoil to be spread over the restoration area to achieve the final land levels and the topsoil shall have a settled depth of 300 millimetres. All stones and rocks exceeding 100 millimetres in any dimension and any other deleterious material to be removed from the topsoil.
- The full depth of the restored topsoil and top 100 millimetres of subsoil to be tined using an agricultural machine at 600 millimetre centres.
- All stones/rocks exceeding 150 millimetres in any dimension or other deleterious material to be removed from the topsoil and subsoil.
- To avoid compaction the uppermost metre of the restored profile to be replaced in narrow strips, to a width not exceeding the reach of the hydraulic excavator.
- Final restoration level not to exceed the approved level.
- An aftercare scheme to be submitted and approved.
- Aftercare to take place for the period of 5 years.
- A local liaison meeting to be established.

# Shellingford Quarry

Application No: STA/SHE/8554/10-CM - Extension Area

Application No: STA/SHE/8554/12-CM - Existing Quarry



28/3/11  
T.Philp