

Item No	Application No. and Parish	8/13 Week Date	Proposal, Location and Applicant
(1)	12/01220/MINMAJ Aldermaston	31 August 2012	<p>Progressive mineral extraction with restoration using imported inert materials to agriculture, lakes and grassland, the construction of a new access onto A340, together with ancillary buildings (site office/mess room, weighbridge, security compound etc.) and internal roads (including improvements to existing bridge across the River Enborne).</p> <p>Lower Farm Wasing Lane Aldermaston Reading Berkshire RG7 4LY</p> <p>Lafarge Aggregates LTD</p>

To view the plans and drawings relating to this application please use the following link:

<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=12/01220/MINMAJ>

Recommendation Summary:

To **DELEGATE** to the Head of Planning and Countryside to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement by the 12th August 2013.

OR in the absence of a completed legal agreement by the 12th August 2013, and where it is expedient to do so, to **DELEGATE** to the Head of Planning and Countryside to **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION** for the following reason:

The development fails to provide an appropriate scheme of works or off site mitigation measures to accommodate the impact of development on local infrastructure, services or amenities or provide an appropriate mitigation measure such as a planning obligation. The proposal is therefore contrary to government advice Policy CS5 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (adopted July 2012) as well as West Berkshire District Council's adopted SPG4/04 – Delivering Investment from Sustainable Development.

Ward Member(s):

Irene Neill

Reason for Committee determination:

Level of Local interest and called in by local Member due to the level of local concern.

Committee Site Visit:

5th June 2013

Contact Officer Details

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1.0. Description of the development and synopsis of the proposals

- 1.1. Proposal: Progressive mineral extraction with restoration using imported inert materials to agriculture, lakes and grassland, the construction of a new access onto A340, together with ancillary buildings (site office/mess room, weighbridge, security compound etc.) and internal roads (including improvements to existing bridge across the River Enborne).

Land at Lower Farm, Wasing Lane, Aldermaston.

- 1.2. The application site is approximately 70 hectares and is situated such that it extends across the boundaries of 3 parishes, Wasing, Woolhampton and Aldermaston (with the access to the application site being in Aldermaston Parish, directly onto the A340). The applicant is proposing to extract aggregates (sand and gravel) from approximately 50 hectares of the application site. Following extraction the site will be restored to agriculture, lakes and grassland. The site will be worked on a phased basis over 17-18 years
- 1.3. It is proposed that approximately 2.4 million tonnes of sand and gravel will be extracted from the site over a 12 year period. This equates to circa 200,000 tonnes of sand and gravel each year. The minerals will be transported, by road, to the nearby tile factory at Beenham for processing. Approximately half the minerals that are proposed to be extracted will be used in manufacturing of tiles at the Beenham factory, with the remainder being sold to the open market for use by the construction industry. The void space created by the mineral extraction operations will be restored using inert waste materials (circa 1.25 million cubic metres) at an average rate of 90,000 cubic meters per year to return the site to a predominantly agricultural use.

1.4. Publicity of application

Site notice expiry:	04/07/12
Press notice expiry:	28/06/12
Neighbour notification expiry:	27/06/12

Member end date:	11/07/12
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1.5. Consultations and Representations

This application has been through two consultation exercises. The first took place in May 2012, upon the receipt of the application, the second took place in December 2012 following the submission of additional information pursuant to the proposals.

**Parish Council
(Aldermaston):**

Aldermaston Parish Council **Object to the proposal** on the following grounds:

1. Increase in heavy HGV traffic levels, including the impact on the Lifting Bridge
2. Visual and noise impacts.
3. Cumulative impact with extraction in the past.
4. Unproven demand (as there is no Minerals Plan).
5. Flooding, including removal of subterranean drainage.
6. Inadequate Flood Risk Assessment.

Should the Council be minded to approve this application Aldermaston PC would ask for the following conditions:

Financial

A financial contribution to traffic relief and road improvements, maintenance costs of Lifting Bridge at Aldermaston Wharf, if additional maintenance is required as a consequence of the development, together with a financial contribution to the provision of a facility at Aldermaston Wharf to enable pedestrians to cross the A340 more safely.

Traffic

Detailed monitoring and reporting of vehicle movements from the site (hours and direction of travel) and remedial action taken to reduce impact if it exceeds projections. The applicant should enter into a legal agreement which limits the total number of vehicle movements in any 4 week period to be no more than 3,300 movements. Any vehicles used as part the operation which are under a long term contract are fitted with an automatic speed monitoring and reporting system, and the results of which are shared with Aldermaston Parish Council. Extension of 30mph village speed limit to a point north of the proposed A340 access. No use of Frouds Lane by HGVs when Lifting Bridge out of service. No access through Aldermaston Village for HGVs carrying extracted material (particularly when Lifting Bridge is out of service).

Flooding

Restoration Plan to take account of the subterraneous flooding issues identified by Professor Dobson, including the provision of appropriate conduits. Appropriate drainage measures adopted for the access road, which lies within a flood plain, particularly where it joins the A340. Adequate financial compensation to the owners of any properties flooded as a direct consequence of the operations.

Noise

Regular noise monitoring at Dolphin Close, Aldermaston School, White Tower Nursery, Malthouse Cottages and The Old Mill, with regular reporting as to whether the noise levels are within approved limits. Provide assurance that noise levels will not impact children's learning at the Primary School. Any particularly noisy activities to be limited to 08.00 am to 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Ecology

WBC take account of its statutory duty under regulation 3(4) of the European Habitats Directive. All the recommendations in the Ecosa Survey Report (Phases 1 and 2) are implemented at an appropriate time. No floodlighting to be used on site.

Operational

A legal agreement to limit working (inclusive of restoration) to a maximum number of years (18?). Restrictions on working hours rigidly adhered to. Legal commitment to no processing plant or crusher plant (for infill) to be erected on site. Legal commitment to no significant changes to restoration plan without the agreement of both WBC and Aldermaston Parish Council. Commitment to complete Phase 1 restoration before commencing Phase 3 extraction.

Other

The establishment of an effective Local Liaison Group to mitigate impact on local residents. No work to commence until Agreement reached with Aldermaston Parish Council on the precise routing of the proposed new footpath that will run close to the proposed new access road.

Parish Council (Woolhampton):

Support the proposals subject to conditions covering:

- Appropriate diversion and signage of footpaths
- Monitoring of traffic movements and noise
- Mitigation measures to manage dust, noise and mud being deposited on the road
- Restrictions on operating hours
- Restoration timescales
- Formation of a liaison committee
- Subsidence monitoring
- Consultation with the Parish Council in respect of any S106 contributions.
- Flood risk mitigation

**Parish Council
(Wasing):** No objections raised.

**Adjacent Parish
(Padworth):** Object on the basis of:
Traffic impacts, 120 heavy goods vehicles through Aldermaston wharf cannot be supported by the road, the bridge and existing infrastructure. The traffic from this site should have a new access directly linked to the A4. Frouds lane should not be used for access. There is not a proven need for the additional gravel to that being extracted at Benyons enclosure on Welshmans Road which has already been approved.

**Adjacent Parish
(Midgham):** Midgham Parish Council have major concerns about this application and are reliant upon West Berkshire Planning department making the correct decision for all parties concerned. The concerns raised are:

1. The impact to local inhabitants for years ahead especially noise, dust, traffic & inevitable impact on housing market/house prices.
2. The impact on the environment/wildlife.
3. The effect on the water table especially in view of the problems experienced in Angel Mead, Woolhampton where a similar excavation caused severe subsidence resulting in extensive underpinning of properties.
4. The increase in vehicle movements to an intolerable level on already busy and dangerous roads.
5. The proposal to construct a new access onto A340 which is already too busy for the size of the road.
6. Adverse visual impact and noise levels.

**Adjacent Parish
(Brimpton):** No objections.

Highways: A 7.3 metre wide haul route is proposed in an east to west direction forming an access onto the A340 north of Aldermaston. The proposed access onto the A340 will consist of turn right lane and ghost island with the A340 widened on the site side to accommodate the junction. The junction is to be designed to the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges (DRMB) TD 41/95. The junction will need to be designed in detail and constructed under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980.

Traffic counts were undertaken from July 12th to 18th 2011 on the A340 near the proposed access and on the A4 / A340 Roundabout. Page 6 of the TA provides the following total weekday average traffic flows on the A340 fronting the site:

- 964 vehicles between 08.00 and 09.00 of which 125 were heavy vehicles.
- 920 vehicles between 17.00 and 18.00 of which 69 were heavy vehicles.
- Within 24 hours there were 9,280 of which 1,408 were heavy vehicles.

An accident analysis has been undertaken and highways officers agree with the conclusions that the accident rate within the area does not cause concern.

The proposals will generate circa 60 HGV's in and 60 HGV's out per day. The TA projects traffic flows on the A340 for the year 2017 using appropriate traffic growth rates added to the existing recorded traffic flows. Highways officers do not consider any other significant development proposals in the area that should be included in 2017. There is currently construction traffic to and from the AWE, however this is likely to be much lower by 2017.

It is projected that two thirds of all vehicle movements from the proposal will travel to and from the north to the Marley Tile Factory. This will mean that based on a ten hour working day that there will be eight HGV's each way per hour to the north and 4 four each way per hour to the south. Adding the development traffic onto the network in 2017 results in:

- an overall increase in traffic of up to 0.5% at the A4 / A340 Roundabout. Highways officers consider that this level of increase is not enough to warrant junction capacity analysis.
- an overall increase in traffic north of the site on the A340 of up to 1.0% including a 6.4% increase in HGV's between 08.00 and 09.00 and 11.7% between 17.00 and 18.00
- an overall increase in traffic south of the site on the A340 of up 0.5% including a 3.2% increase in HGV's between 08.00 and 09.00 and 5.8% between 17.00 and 18.00.

The projected increases are below the 30% recommended by the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment IEMA that would require additional scrutiny of the affect of HGV's along the route. Nevertheless the proposal will result in some impact on the route particularly to the north of the site.

In accordance with SPG 4/04, a financial contribution is sought to mitigate the effects of the development on the surrounding highway network. Table 2 within Topic Paper 2 Transport recommends a financial contribution and / or works to a rate of up to £2,000 per additional large vehicles visiting the site per day. This would equate to up £120,000. A lower rate of £1,000 is also available for sites that use smaller HGV's. In this case highways officers do not consider that this site will use smaller vehicles, however as Lower Farm site is providing a replacement source for extracted material required to ensure the continued production of concrete roof tiles at Marley's factory at Beenham, the majority of HGV movements accord to this purpose and as such are not "new to the network". Highway officers therefore agree that £1,000 is appropriate in this case and this would equate to £60,000.

The additional HGV's along the A340 will have an impact particularly on pedestrians and cyclists. Further there is demand for improved pedestrian crossing facilities across the A340 in Aldermaston Wharf. As this proposal will have an impact on the A340 in these locations, it is considered that the financial contribution should be provided to assist in delivering such projects. The A4 / A340 Roundabout is nearing capacity during peak hours and it is therefore appropriate that financial contributions from this proposal be used to increase capacity at this roundabout.

The additional HGV's will increase the maintenance liability on the A340 particularly in the vicinity of the access resulting in the polishing of the surface of the A340 and reducing skid resistance that would be detrimental to highway safety. Monitoring and liaison with the Highway Authority on this issue will need to be included within any agreement. It is likely that new surface course inlay for 50 metres in each direction of the access will need to be applied costing £20,000 a time to ensure adequate skid resistance in the vicinity of the access. This expected maintenance will be required in addition to any agreed level of Section 106 contribution.

While highways officers acknowledge that there are clearly some impact from the proposal, It is not considered that the impact is severe, especially as there is an access that complies to all standards, and subject to an appropriate level of contributions provided to the items mentioned above to limit any impact from the proposal.

Public Rights of Concern was raised over the precise location of the existing right of way that crosses the site as the legal line of the footpath does not match the actual route “on the ground”. On completion of the works the opportunity should be taken to reinstate the footpath on its correct definitive line.

No objections are raised to the proposals providing the temporary diversion of the footpath is legally carried out in full consultation with the rights of way team. Upon the completion of the restoration operations it would be preferable for the proposed permitted footpath to be legally created under s25 Highways Act 1980 as a public footpath on completion of the works.

Landscape The site lies outside of the AONB but the nearest part of the site is some 750m from the AONB boundary and therefore subject to consideration under the NWDAONB’s Position Statement on Setting. The landscape between the site and AONB at its nearest point is flat along the wooded Kennet corridor, rising up from the A4 northwards, east of Woolhampton, with both areas contributing to the Kennet Valley landscape. The valley here is wooded along the northern boundary of the site with the lower slopes a mix of open fields and woodland. There are no public views from the AONB to the site.

To the south lies the Grade II Wasing Place Registered Park and Garden with its Grade II listed building. There are views from the park over the site and over the valley to the hills of the AONB to the north. These are an important aspect of the northern setting of the heritage asset. The site is separated from the park by the open land at the airfield and the hedgerows along Wasing Lane. The main approach to the house is from Wasing Lane and again the views over the Enbourne Valley to the AONB over the site are an important aspect of the setting.

The nearest Conservation Area (CA) is at Aldermaston. The CA is not directly affected by the site works but the undisturbed rural landscape character of the Kennet Valley around the village is important to the setting of this heritage asset. Brimpton Conservation Area lies 1km to the west on raised ground. Woolhampton is closest to the site, separated by the Kennet river and woodland cover and intervisibility is unlikely. No direct impact on Aldermaston Wharf, 2.5km to the east, nor its setting, is likely. However all of these villages lie on potential haul routes.

The RMLP Landscape and Restoration Strategy for the Kennet Valley looks for the reintroduction of the small scale landscape of copses, hedgerows and meadows which are typical of the Kennet Valley and important local characteristics, which has been eroded on the site in favour of larger open fields. Although the Strategy does not require rigid restoration to historic field patterns, they should be used to inform the restoration of a small scale landscape for the site. The Strategy therefore does not expect restoration to the status quo but an enhancement of the landscape in this area in keeping with the local Kennet Valley character.

There are no public viewpoints within the AONB, although a few private houses are likely to have views of parts of the site. There are no views from within the Conservation Areas. There are however a number of views to the site from Wasing Park, most notably along a good stretch of the main drive leading to the core of the Park which is visited by walkers on the public footpath, guests attending the wedding venue at Wasing Park and the residents and staff at Wasing Park.

Other elevated views of a good part of the site include views from the footpath network west and east of Aldermaston on the rising slopes. Views from the surrounding road network are limited by dense hedgerows although there are a few views such as near the main entrance to the Park, at Wasing Lower Farm and on the western approach to Aldermaston. There will be views from near Malthouse Cottages on A340 of the road access, although the site is otherwise currently screened by intervening vegetation. Finally the site is bisected by a footpath which enjoys a series of varied views of open fields, woodland and the riverine landscape with the hillsides of the AONB to the north and the Greenham to Aldermaston escarpment to the south visible above the valley floor.

The Council's Landscape consultant has confirmed that the proposals will not generate an adverse impact on the AONB. The impact on the Conservation Areas is primarily from haulage traffic which will have a visual impact over the 16 years, adding to existing traffic flow. The number of local views is limited but where there are views the visual impact of the bunds and working will be significant. In some cases the proposed early landscape mitigation has a long term adverse visual impact.

Initially concern was raised over the lack of consideration of the impact of the proposals on the setting of Wasing Park and the visual impact of the proposed screening bunds. It was also recommended that the restoration scheme would benefit from providing additional hedgerows to subdivide the large fields. A landscape management plan and revised restoration scheme should be provided.

Following the submission of additional information covering the identified deficiencies the Council's Landscape consultant has confirmed that, subject to the imposition of suitable conditions relating to landscape management, planting and restoration the proposals are acceptable.

Tree officer

The overall impact to the trees and hedges is acceptable subject to a substantial landscaping scheme being provided to ensure that the loss of the hedges and trees is mitigated; there will also be a requirement for the long term management of this new landscaping for a suitable period to ensure it becomes established.

Conditions covering a landscaping scheme, a landscape management plan, a scheme of landscape maintenance and a tree protection scheme are requested.

Transport Policy

Transport policy officers are satisfied that the applicant has considered alternative methods for transporting the mineral other than road transport between the proposed site and the Beenham factory, and that these are not practical or financially feasible. The relative close proximity of the proposed site to the Beenham tile factory does mean that there will be only a relatively short road haul route in terms of the dug mineral. If material were needed to be sourced from an alternative source in order to maintain manufacturing at the Beenham factory, it is likely that these would be more distant from the factory, which in turn would increase road miles for HGV trips and result in higher carbon emissions.

The haul route between the proposed site and the Beenham factory (and vice versa) will be via the A340 and the A4. Both of these routes are designated on the West Berkshire Freight Route Network as being a "District access route to key destinations". The Highways Team has already considered the impact and distribution of the proposed HGV movements from the site on the A340 and has expressed concerns regarding the impact on the A340 route particularly to the north of the site. Transport Policy Officers concur with these concerns. Improved pedestrian crossing facilities are required on the A340 in Aldermaston Wharf, and that since the proposal will have an impact on the A340 in this area that a financial contribution should be provided to assist in delivering these improvements. There is concern that HGVs travelling between the site and the factory could be tempted use alternative routes to the stated haul route via the A340/A4 roundabout. It will be necessary to prevent alternative route being used by HGVs short-cutting from the A340/A4 haul route.

**Environmental
Health**

Having considered the potential amenity impacts of the proposed development concern was raised over the use of appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that the dewatering pump does not generate adverse noise impacts.

Following the clarification of this point, within the additional information submitted in December 2012, this concern was addressed. Subject to the imposition of conditions relating to noise, no objections have been raised by Environmental Health Officers.

**Conservation
Officer**

The potential impacts of the traffic associated with the mineral extraction application to the north of Aldermaston are understood. The Conservation officer is not aware of any harm that has been caused to the listed buildings adjacent to the A340 as a result of current HGV movements. Therefore the additional HGV movements along the A340 are unlikely to cause any harm to the significance of the heritage assets adjacent to the road.

Archaeology

The Councils Archaeological Officer has reviewed the application using the approach to the historic environment set out in the NPPF and checked the proposed development against the information held on the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record regarding the heritage assets in this area. The proposed mineral extraction lies in a landscape of high archaeological potential, the Kennet Valley having produced a wealth of evidence for the activities of our ancestors.

A desk top study and an archaeological field evaluation have been completed. This information is appropriate and sufficient to comply with the provisions of the NPPF. Clearly the process of mineral extraction means that the impact on any archaeology present will generate a substantial harm. The applicants' commitment to preserve any features of higher significance should unexpected discoveries occur during the extraction process is welcomed.

The potential for archaeological features or deposits of the highest level of significance to survive on the site is low. The evaluation has illustrated that archaeological features and deposits from a broad range of our history do survive on the site. The balance between the level of harm and the level of significance is one that does not require any of the identified features/deposits to be preserved in situ and an objection to planning approval on the basis of archaeological impact could not be sustained.

There are a range of features and deposits of local and regional significance and it is appropriate to ensure that an adequate programme of investigation, recording, analysis and publication is secured should the application be approved. It is suggested that should planning consent be granted for this proposal then a condition securing such as programme of archaeological work should be imposed. Such an approach would be consistent with the advice given in Paragraph 141 of the NPPF. It is also in line with the approach set out in the Environmental Statement included with the application.

**Environment
Agency**

Following consultation on the proposals the Environment Agency originally objected to the application on four grounds; lack of a flood risk sequential test, inadequate flood risk assessment, risks to groundwater due to inadequate assessment of de-watering and inadequate assessment of the risks to biodiversity.

The December 2012 submissions provided by the applicant sought to address these concerns and following the receipt of this information, and clarification from the Planning Authority that the sequential test was considered acceptable the first objection was overcome. However the Environment Agency maintained three objections to the proposal.

A number of exchanges took place on the issues of biodiversity, groundwater impacts and flood risk in 2013 in respect of the Environment Agency's concerns to ensure that the matters had been fully considered and addressed.

Clearly these matters, particularly the flood risk implications of the proposals, are of significant importance due to the location of the site within Flood zone 3 and the fact that the proposals will result in changes to the groundwater environment that could also have flooding related implications.

The submission of additional information from the applicant has enabled the Environment Agency to withdraw all objections to the proposals. The Environment Agency are satisfied that there are no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of suitably worded conditions securing the following matters:

- Extraction and tipping boundaries.
- A scheme of infilling.
- Compliance with the approved flood risk assessment.
- Compliance with flood storage plan.
- Surface water management schemes.
- No increase in ground levels.
- Reduction in ground levels in parts of the site as proposed.

Thames Water	No objections raised from either a water infrastructure or sewerage infrastructure perspective. This position remained unchanged following the subsequent December 2012 consultation.
Canal and River Trust	After due consideration of the application details, the Canal & River Trust had no comments to make. This position remained unchanged following the subsequent December 2012 consultation.
Natural England	Following consultation on the proposals Natural England confirmed that, although the site is in close proximity to SSSI's, the SSSI's do not represent a constraint in determining the application, It was also confirmed that, as there are no views from the AONB to the site, Natural England raised no concerns in respect of protected landscapes.

However Natural England originally raised concerns on the basis that the public benefits by way of biodiversity enhancements are low, inadequately justified, and poorly specified, and as such were not considered to provide “net gains in biodiversity where possible” and it was recommended that the restoration plan be reconsidered and biodiversity opportunities be systematically considered.

Concern was also raised over whether there will be sufficient infill material to allow the restoration proposals to be implemented, and what the fall back position would be if there is insufficient material.

Whilst not objecting to the proposal on agricultural grounds, Natural England made a number of comments on agricultural considerations: 42% of the site comprises “best and most versatile” agricultural land. It is noted that the intention is to reinstate the site so there is no permanent loss of best and most versatile land. However no “target” restored soil profiles giving proposed soil horizon depths, texture, and stone content to 120cm have been provided to illustrate to show how the pre-working ALC grades are to be maintained.

Natural England welcome the intention to handle soils in accordance with sheets 1-4 and sheet 15 of the Defra *Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils*. However more information is needed about the soil to be stripped, stored and replaced, (type, depth and volumes). The working phases do not align closely with the soil types and there is potential for the mixing of different soil types. There is no mention of the on-site pegging out and separate stripping (and storage where necessary) of the soil types identified in order to achieve a high standard of restoration.

Whilst the commitment to handle soils only when in a dry and friable condition is welcome, it is important to stop handling soils during the wetter winter months from November to March (inclusive), when soil conditions are unlikely to be suitable and it would be damaging to leave soils bare without crop cover.

The treatment of soil storage bunds has not been addressed in sufficient detail, for example maximum bund heights, separation of different soil types, storage of materials like upon like, and vegetation management.

It is not clear from the documentation that there will be sufficient freeboard within the ditches for satisfactory drainage following restoration and that suitable outfall(s) have been identified. It is important that a suitable outfall giving sufficient freeboard in the ditches for such works is identified at an early stage, in order not to frustrate any subsequent piped in-field drainage works which may be necessary. Piped under drainage will almost certainly be required.

The submitted information on aftercare is insufficient to meet the requirements of an outline in accordance with paragraphs 45 and 46 of the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012). This should specify in more detail the steps to be taken and the period during which they are to be taken.

Update following additional information:

The December 2012 submissions sought to address these concerns and following the receipt of this information, Natural England withdrew their objections to the proposal and requested the imposition of conditions relating to soil restoration profiles, soil storage and movement, handling of soils, soils storage bund limitations and management and drainage.

Ecology

The Council's ecologist considered that conditional permission and S106 would be appropriate. However it was recommended that the 20m tree planting strip to the SE of the site should be placed the other side of the hedge in the existing arable field so that it avoids the unimproved grassland completely.

Conditions covering the following matters have been requested: Details of measures to ensure that the extractive operations do not impact upon the groundwater flows in the adjacent Local wildlife Site Details on landscaping to cover details of tree and shrub species, grassland mixes. The provision of a detailed badger mitigation scheme. The provision of details on the proposed ponds.

A S106 agreement is also required securing the extension to the life of the Woolhampton Quarry Trust Nature Reserve, the long term management of an 20m corridor around the river together with 4 contributions of £5,000 to be made to the WQTNR on 4 occasions.

The first upon commencement of development, and then every five years there after until all contributions have been made. All contributions should be index linked from the date of the agreement until they are paid.

Subject to the imposition of conditions are completion of a S106 agreement there are no objections from an ecological perspective.

Network Rail

The rolling programme of extraction and infilling and the presence of the river Kennet between the application site and the railway should maintain the groundwater profile beneath the railway. Therefore provided that the application area does not vary from that described there are no comments with regard to this proposal from the mining and waste disposal perspective.

No further comments to make on additional information submission.

**Sustainable
Drainage**

Initial concerns were raised over the proposal to remove aggregates and replace this with inert waste that is less permeable and the proposal to line phases of the site with clay to allow de-watering of the site. Principally these concerns relate to the potential for the proposed operations to result in a reduction of groundwater flows that has the potential to generate flooding upstream from the site. Following the consideration of the additional information exchanged in respect of similar concerns raised by the Environment Agency the Sustainable drainage officers confirmed that they raised no objections to the proposals, subject to the imposition of conditions.

Request that a condition be imposed requiring any welfare facilities to be above the 1 in 100 year plus 30% climate change flood plain level. Also request that a condition be imposed requiring the submission of a scheme of infilling.

HSE

HSE dose not advise against the granting of planning permission in this case in respect of the implications of the development and hazardous installations.

**Defence
Infrastructure
Organisation**

No safeguarding objections raised.

Correspondence Over 110 of letters of objection have been received in respect of this application raising the following planning considerations:

Amenity impacts

Concern has been raised over the noise generated by the operations, with particular reference being made to reversing alarms impacting upon the natural beauty of the area, the local school and on Frouds bridge marina.

Concern has been raised over the pollution from diesel from the HGV's associated with the development together with light pollution.

The impacts of dust have also been raised as a concern.

The amenity impacts of the proposal were a material consideration in 2003 when the last application was dismissed at appeal and this remains unchanged.

Health concerns have been cited as a concern, particularly that of the children at the primary school due to the proximity of the operations and the length of the proposed development. In addition to health concerns residents have raised concerns over the amenity impacts on the education of pupils.

Highways impacts

Concern has been raised over the proposal to increase traffic on the local road network with reference being made to such a traffic heavy industrial activity not being acceptable.

Reference has been made to the traffic data being misleading and erroneous and that there is already a significant level of traffic in the locality and an additional 140 trucks travelling through the village each day is unacceptable and will cause further congestion, particularly during peak hours.

The percentage increase in vehicle movements will have a higher impact than suggested.

The proposed road layout is considered unsafe with the proposed access being between two blind corners and opposite new housing sites and there is insufficient width of carriageway to accommodate the proposed layout.

The associated traffic will generate safety implications for pedestrians and children crossing the road in Aldermaston Wharf to use play areas and open space.

The origin of infill material is unknown so it is not possible to accurately predict the impacts of the infilling operations, the traffic associated with the infilling operations cannot be controlled and could be erratic, generating unforeseen impacts.

The road is a back country road that is already very busy.

Residents remember the level of impact that was generated when Woolhampton quarry was being worked, this proposal will generate the same impacts if approved.

Concern has been raised over the impacts of the traffic on Aldermaston village school

Concern has been raised over the impact of HGV traffic on the lifting bridge in Aldermaston Wharf and contingency measures that could be put in place when the lifting bridge is closed for repairs.

Aldermaston wharf has been the focus of considerable development in recent years and additional traffic will exacerbate the situation.

Vehicles often speed along the A340.

It has been suggested that the A4/A340 junction be redesigned and Frouds lane be strengthened.

West Berkshire already fails to enforce weight restrictions this proposal will exacerbate that situation.

An alternative road should be provided.

Hydrology and Flooding impacts

Particular concern has been raised in respect of flooding related matters with concern raised over the proposal to backfill the extraction site with inert waste, a material that will have a lower hydraulic permeability than the extracted gravels resulting in an impact upon groundwater flows in the valley.

Reference has been made to new development that has been permitted in the flood plain being at risk along with other properties and it has been stated that there have been significant floods in the locality in recent years and any development that could impact on the groundwater dynamics could exacerbate the issue.

Concern has been raised over the impact of the proposals on the drainage integrity of the whole valley, concern has been raised that in periods of high rainfall the floodplain is inundated across the application site and the proposal to alter the material in the floodplain will tend to induce floodwater upstream of the site. It is recommended that drainage conduits be placed in the inert fill to assist in maintaining groundwater flows.

Need

It has been stated that there is no proven need for the development, this is a key issue that the application fails to address. The need argument is based upon the large commercial considerations of Marley Tiles, not an objective assessment of supply.

The construction industry is currently depressed so there is no justification for higher production at this point in time.

It is premature to consider the application prior to the adoption of a Local Aggregates Assessment.

It has been queried why a site that is not a preferred area for mineral extraction is being considered.

Landscape and visual issues

Concern has been raised over the visual impact of the proposals from Aldermaston village and the surrounding area.

Reference has been made to the Kennet Valley being an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Concern has been raised over the impact of the proposals on the local habitat and wildlife and the flora and fauna.

Reference has been made to the proposals resulting in the permanent destruction of rich habitats.

Other issues

Concern has been raised over the potential for subsidence, the impact of the traffic associated with the proposal on listed buildings on Aldermaston main street and the conservation area resulting in a loss of heritage.

Reference has been made to the cumulative impacts of the proposal and previous gravel extraction in the area.

Concern has been raised over whether the site will be restored properly and concern has been raised over the impact of the development on the enjoyment of the local rights of way network and reference has been made to the proposals being contrary to the NPPF in this regard.

It has been suggested that the economic benefits of the proposal are focused on the tile factory and overstated. The specific benefits of the proposal to Marley is not in line with the NPPF. The proposals will only generate minimal jobs

Concern has been raised over the potential loss of high quality agricultural land.

The location of the site is considered to be inappropriate

Reference has been made to the proposals destroying the local community and lack of consultation with local residents

Aldermaston has been surrounded by mineral extraction for decades and it is time this stopped, the village should not have to suffer a further 20 years of extraction.

There must be more gravel available elsewhere.

It has been queried whether the tile factory can be relocated to a less sensitive area.

Reference has been made to the proposed development being within the 3km exclusion zone around AWE.

The development is not in keeping with the local area and provides no benefits to local residents.

Description of Development and Site Location

Proposal: Progressive mineral extraction with restoration using imported inert materials to agriculture, lakes and grassland, the construction of a new access onto A340, together with ancillary buildings (site office/mess room, weighbridge, security compound etc.) and internal roads (including improvements to existing bridge across the River Enborne).

Land at Lower Farm, Wasing Lane, Aldermaston

2.0. SITE LOCATION AND RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

2.1.0. Site History

- 2.1.1. The application site is predominantly agricultural and therefore has a limited planning history.
- 2.1.2. The most pertinent historical planning application pursuant to this proposal was application 00/00644 which was an application for the “Extraction of sand and gravel and erection of processing plant and ready mixed concrete plant, importation of inert materials for recycling and subsequent restoration at Woolhampton Quarry”. This application proposed the extraction of 3.67 million tonnes of gravel over a 20 year period with restoration to agriculture using 1.8 million tonnes of inert waste”.
- 2.1.3. This application (00/00644) was refused by West Berkshire Council in February 2002. In refusing the application 10 reasons for refusal were cited, however at the appeal against the refusal of application 00/00644, the inspector identified that there were two main issues.
 - a. Whether or not there was a need for the appeal proposals in terms of policy 10 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire (2001) (RMLP) which sets out a presumption against mineral extraction from outside the identified preferred areas in the development plan
 - b. The direct and indirect effects on the amenities of the local community and visitors to the area.
- 2.1.4. The inspector presiding over that appeal concluded in his decision, issued in 2003, that the need for the minerals was insufficient to justify the appeal scheme at that time and that the adverse impacts of the development proposed would generate adverse impacts. Whilst the inspector noted that mitigation measures could be used to control the slight adverse impacts he identified the extent and duration of the proposal, and thus the impacts,

would have an adverse impact. The inspector also acknowledged the benefits of the proposals put forward under application 00/00644 and whilst he concluded that these benefits would go a long way towards compensating for the short term adverse amenity impacts they did not outweigh them.

- 2.1.5. Overall, the inspector concluded (in 2003) that the need for the minerals was insufficient to justify the appeal proposals, particularly given the adverse impacts of the operations, and that these matters were not outbalanced by the benefits being proposed or the need for minerals.
- 2.1.6. Clearly there have been a number of changes since the consideration of application 00/00644 10 years ago, and the proposals put forward at that stage also differ to those now proposed. The key differences, which are discussed in more detail throughout this report, are as follows:
- The issues surrounding the need for minerals and the number of sites in West Berkshire has altered significantly in the past 10 years. In 2003 there were 9 sites producing sand and gravel from valley deposits, today there are only 3 (and one scheduled to close soon).
 - Over the past decade the guidelines for the volume of minerals to be produced in Berkshire have changed a number of times.
 - The amount of permitted sand and gravel reserves in West Berkshire stood at circa 3.4 million tonnes in 2003, today it stands at circa 1 million tonnes.
 - Planning application 00/00644 proposed the extraction of 3.7 million tonnes of minerals, this proposal seeks consent for 2.4 million tonnes.
 - Planning application 00/00644 proposed the erection and operation of a mineral processing plant and cement batching plant at the site, together with an inert waste processing facility. The current proposals do not include such infrastructure, with all mineral processing being undertaken off site, at existing facilities at Beenham.
 - There has been a significant change in the planning policy context together with the cessation of joint working across Berkshire on Minerals and Waste planning policy formulation.

2.2.0. Site location

- 2.2.1. The application site is located to the north west of the village of Aldermaston and it extends across the boundaries of 3 parishes, Wasing, Woolhampton and Aldermaston.
- 2.2.2. To the immediate north of the site are areas of woodland, including a local wildlife site, which are located to the south of the Kennet and Avon canal, beyond the canal is the railway line and then the A4. To the east of the proposed extraction areas are a number of fields that separate the areas of

working from the A340. To the south east of the application site is the village of Aldermaston, which is approximately 300m away from the nearest phase of proposed extraction. To the south of the application site are open fields, and the Brimpton Airstrip, which lie to the north of Wasing Lane. To the west of the application site are further agricultural fields and the former Woolhampton Quarry site that has been restored to a combination of nature conservation, agriculture and amenity uses.

- 2.2.3. In terms of nearby residential properties the southern edge of the village of Woolhampton is located approximately 300m to the north east of the application site (phase B) with the residential property known as Bottle Cottage being approximately 130m from the western extent of phase B of the extraction site. The village of Aldermaston is approximately 280m from the nearest extraction area (phase C) with the residencies in Dolphin Close and Aldermaston Primary School being the closest, and separated from the site by agricultural land.
- 2.2.4. The proposed access to the site is directly onto the A340, approximately 200m to the north of the main village of Aldermaston. Malthouse cottages, whilst being some 350m from the nearest extraction area, are approximately 100m to the south of the proposed access road to the extraction side. Therefore whilst Bottle Cottage is the closest residential property to the areas of extraction that are proposed. the location of the access on the A340, which will accommodate all vehicular traffic, is such that these cottages (and the recent development that has taken place opposite (to the east of the A340)) are more likely to be adversely affected by the proposals.
- 2.2.5. The application site is relatively well screened from the nearby residential properties, and additional landscape planting, to be undertaken in the first suitable planting season following the grant of consent, has been proposed to mitigate the views of the site from Bottle cottage and the properties in an around Aldermaston.

3.0. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The Application site is around 70 hectares in of the 70 hectare application site the applicant is proposing to extract minerals and restore approximately 50 hectares on a phased basis over 17-18 years.
- 3.2. It is proposed that the 2.4 million tonnes of sand and gravel reserves will be worked over a 12 year period with circa 200,000 tonnes of sand and gravel being extracted from the site each year. These minerals will be transported, by road, to the nearby tile factory at Beenham for processing. Approximately half the minerals that are proposed to be extracted will be used in tile manufacture at the Beenham factory, with the remainder being sold to the

open market for use by the construction industry from the tile factory in Beenham. The void space created by the mineral extraction operations will be restored using inert waste materials (circa 1.25 million cubic metres) at an average rate of 90,000 cubic meters per year to return the site to a predominantly agricultural use. Alongside the agricultural use it is proposed to create 4 lakes / ponds. One will be used for fishing, with the remainder being nature conservation ponds.

- 3.3. The site will be worked on a phased basis, with the operations being split between 3 principal phases (A, B and C) each with a number of sub phases. The scheme of phasing is complicated slightly by the fact that phase B is located wholly within the functional floodplain and therefore the applicant has devised the phasing of the site on the basis that working may not be possible in phase B during the winter months due to the potential for this area of the workings being flooded, and the fact that undertaking dewatering from this phase during flood events could exacerbate the risk of flooding down stream.
- 3.4. To prevent the need for dewatering whilst maintaining a supply of minerals it is proposed that the western end of phase A will remain unworked when the extraction operations move into phase B. This is so that when phase B is being worked the extractive operations can revert back into Phase A (which is outside the functional floodplain) during the winter months. This means that for a number of years areas of both phase A and Phase B will remain “open” however the phasing scheme has been devised to minimise the extent of “open” operations.
- 3.5. As the site is being worked on a phased basis the restoration of the site will also be undertaken in a phased manner to once again minimise the area of the site “open” at any one time and to ensure that the benefits of the restoration can be realised as early in the working programme as possible.
- 3.6. As the minerals from the site will be transported directly to the Beenham Tile factory all the traffic associated with the extraction operations will travel northwards, away from the village of Aldermaston, along the A340 to the A340/A4 roundabout, through Aldermaston Wharf. Whilst it is known that some silt produced at the tile factory (created by washing the extracted minerals prior to use) will be returned to the site for deposition, equating to approximately 12,500 tonnes per year, it is not known where the remainder of the infill material will originate. This is because it is not possible to accurately predict the likely origin of the inert material used in the restorative operations, as this will be dependant on the availability of material during the infill period. Whilst the origin of the inert material is unknown there is the potential for material to be generated from large projects that could potentially come forward such as cross rail, redevelopment on Station hill in Reading or the continued upgrade of the facilities at AWE. Clearly the

primary road network would be used to import inert materials therefore some of the traffic associated with the infill operations will come to the site from the south, through Aldermaston village.

4.0. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirms that any determination to be made under the Planning Acts must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2. The development plan in this instance comprises of the following adopted documents:
- The West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006 – 2026) (adopted July 2012)
 - The West Berkshire District Local Plan (Saved Policies 2007)
 - The Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (adopted in 1998)
 - The Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire (including the alterations adopted in 1997 and 2001)
 - There are also a number of adopted SPG's and SPD's
- 4.3. It is clear from the above that some of the development plan documents are now rather dated, particularly the Minerals and Waste policy documents, and there are a number of relevant National Policy documents that are more recent and therefore these are a material consideration of considerable weight in respect of this situation. Therefore what follows is the consideration of the development against Local Policy Framework followed by a consideration against the National Policy Position.

**West Berkshire Core Strategy (WBCS) and the
West Berkshire District Local Plan (WBDLP)**

- 4.4. The WBCS, adopted in 2012, sets out the overarching spatial policy framework for the consideration of development proposals in West Berkshire. The WBCS sits alongside the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (WLPB) and the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire (RMLP) and the policies within the WBCS, and the subsequent development plan documents that will support the WBCS, are designed to complement those plans that deal with the specific policies for Minerals and Waste developments. Therefore it is necessary to have regard to the fact that the policies in the WBCS do not necessarily consider the particular issues that relate to minerals and waste development. The WBCS replaces, in part, the WBDLP that was adopted in 2002, however a limited number of policies in the WBDLP remain saved until such time as

they are replaced by policies in the development plan documents that will be drafted and adopted to support the WBCS in due course.

- 4.5. The WBCS sets out the overarching spatial strategy for development in West Berkshire through 6 Area Delivery Plan Policies. The most applicable to this application is ADPP6, which relates to the East Kennet Valley, and sets out the spatial objectives for the area within which the application is located. ADPP6 confirms that the “environment and leisure assets, including the river and its floodplain, the canal and the boating lakes will be conserved and enhanced, and development in the countryside will be strictly controlled”. It is considered by officers that the proposed development will, during the period of operations, conserve the environmental and leisure assets of the locality through the implementation of mitigation measures to mitigate any impacts of the proposed operations upon such assets, in the long term the environmental and leisure assets of the locality will be enhanced through the provision of additional nature conservation and fishing lakes and long term nature conservation management of parts of the site. Whilst the proposal does constitute development in the countryside in the terms of this policy, the proposals are temporary in nature and upon the conclusion of operations the land will be restored back to agriculture with additional nature conservation uses being provided (back to “Greenfield” land).
- 4.6. Policy ADPP6 also confirms that the “Council will continue to implement strategic biodiversity enhancements in conjunction with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), with in the area covered by the Living Landscape Project. The application site straddles the eastern edge of the area covered by the Living Landscape Project and within an area designated as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (discussed further below at 4.21). It is considered that the proposed restoration scheme coupled with the long term landscape management objectives, proposed to be secured through a S106 agreement, will result in biodiversity enhancements within the locality. The S106 agreement secures the provision of additional funds (£20,000) for the nature reserve trust that was set up in association with the extraction of minerals from land to the west of the application site, known as Woolhampton Quarry as well as extending the life of the Woolhampton Quarry reserve trust to the end of 2044.
- 4.7. Policy CS13 of the WBCS relates to Transport related matters and sets out the key traffic and transport related issues to be considered in respect of any development proposal. In respect of this application the site access is directly onto the A340, which is a road that forms part of the Districts Freight Route Network. The applicant has considered various alternative options to transport the extracted materials to the nearby tile

factory where they will be processed; however despite exploring alternative transport options as part of the transport assessment the applicant has confirmed that the most suitable option is to haul the materials by road. Therefore it is proposed that the extracted minerals will travel on the primary road network to the Marley Tile Factory, which is accessed directly from the A4. The application has been supported by a transport assessment which confirms that the site will generate approximately 60 HGV movements per day. The applicant has also agreed to the imposition of a planning condition requiring a traffic management plan to enable them to sign up to a working method which would restrict the time upon which HGV's will be allowed to leave the application site to minimise the impact of the development upon the morning school run.

- 4.8. The applicant has also agreed to sign up to a S106 agreement that secures a payment of £60,000, which has been identified as necessary by the Council's highways officers to mitigate the highways impacts of the proposed development. These funds will be used to provide highways improvements in Aldermaston wharf. Such as improved pedestrian and cycling facilities along the A340, improved pedestrian crossings in Aldermaston wharf and /or improvements to the A340/A4 roundabout. In addition officers recommend that the S106 agreement includes provisions to secure a scheme of road condition monitoring around the access of the site, throughout the life of the site, to include provision for re-surfacing of a stretch of road (approximately 100m) if the monitoring reveals that re-surfacing with a new 50mm wearing course is required.
- 4.9. Policy CS14 of the WBCS relates to design principles for new development, officers recognise that this policy principally relates to built development and that the WBCS was drafted on the basis it would sit alongside a specific minerals development plan document and therefore this policy is not wholly applicable to the proposed development. However the landowner has agreed to enter into the long term management of a wildlife corridor either side of the River Enborne, which dissects the site upon the conclusion of the development that is proposed, which is inline with one of the design objectives in this policy.
- 4.10. Policy CS16 of the WBCS relates to flooding related matters, and requires that development should not be located in areas of highest flood risk. The impact of development of flood risk is recognised by officers to be a key issue, both locally and nationally. The application site is located within the flood plain (being located partly within flood zones 2 and 3 (both 3a and 3b) as this is where the deposits of sand and gravel in the Kennet Valley are generally located (and clearly minerals can only be worked from where they are found). The technical guidance to the NPPF confirms that Sand and Gravel workings are considered to be "water

compatible developments". The Environment Agency have confirmed that they view the restoration of minerals sites with inert materials in a phased manner as all being part of the same "sand and gravel working" operations.

- 4.11. Officers have undertaken a sequential test for the proposals, in line with the NPPF, and policy CS16 of the Core Strategy, which confirmed that the proposed development is water compatible development (as defined in table 3 of the technical guidance to the NPPF). Having considered alternative development sites in West Berkshire, Officers are satisfied that there are no foreseeable reasonably available sites in areas with a lower probability of flooding that would meet the same functional need as the proposed development at the application site.
- 4.12. Considerable concern has been raised locally over the potential for the proposed development to exacerbate the risk of flooding in the locality around the application site. As stated above the proposed development is classified as a water compatible development in the technical guidance to the NPPF and the applicant has devised the layout of the site and the scheme of working and restoration to minimise any flood risk implications of the proposed development. The applicant has endeavoured to keep soil storage bunds outside the flood zones and where soil bunds are located in the floodplain they are orientated to minimise any impingement on surface water flows in period of flooding. The applicant has agreed that any site infrastructure will also be constructed such that it will not impinge surface water flows if the site floods.
- 4.13. Although this application proposes the restoration of the site back to an agricultural after use it is proposed that the majority of phases B and C will be returned to a level that is 100mm below the current level. Whilst a reduction of land levels of only 10cm may appear insignificant this reduction is proposed over a substantial part of the site. The applicant suggests that upon the completion of the restoration this reduction in 10cm across large areas of the site will result in an increase of approximately 15,000 m³ of additional floodplain storage capacity within the application site. This volume is in addition to the 3 ponds and fishing lake to be created. Officers have undertaken their own calculations in respect of this point and suggest that the 15,000 m³ figure suggested by the applicant is very conservative and that the proposals have the potential to generate a greater amount of floodplain storage capacity within the application site.
- 4.14. The areas of the site that are to be restored (where the levels are not to be reduced by 100mm) will be restored in a manner that ensures that there will be no increase in ground levels. As such the proposals will

result in the provision of a net increase in surface flood water storage capacity.

- 4.15. It is recognised by officers that the removal of gravel and replacement with inert fill has the potential to result in a reduction in the permeability of the ground which could have an impact on the flow of water through the ground that could result in the increase in risk of flooding generated by groundwater up stream of the application site. The applicant is of the view that the total groundwater flow across the site will not be reduced by the proposals, but does recognise that there will be changes to the groundwater flow.
- 4.16. The design of the extraction site is such that there will remain areas of undisturbed land in between the phases of the site that are to be extracted where the substrate will not be affected by the infilling operations. In addition conditions have been proposed that require the following details:
- A surface water management scheme to be employed during the working phases;
 - A surface water management scheme to be completed upon restoration;
 - A scheme of infilling that includes the need to detail the steps to be incorporated to maintain groundwater flow across the site;
 - The management of the soil storage bunds to ensure that there is no reduction in flood plain storage capacity.
- 4.17. There has been considerable dialogue between the Planning Authority, the applicant and the Environment Agency (the Planning Authority's key consultee on this matter) and the Council's Sustainable Drainage officers on the issues of flood risk, groundwater flows and hydrogeological impacts.
- 4.18. The Environment Agency have advised that they have only limited concern over the groundwater impacts associated with the removal of aggregates from the site and the replacement of the removed material with inert fill. This is because the existing gravel reserves are located in the saturated zone. The speed which groundwater flows through the saturated zone is always slower than the speed of flow through the unsaturated zone and, as such, the Environment Agency is satisfied that the reduction in groundwater flow that could be generated by the removal of gravel and replacement of this with inert fill is acceptable.
- 4.19. The Environment Agency are satisfied that, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions as set out in the recommendation below

the proposed development will not generate an unacceptable increase in flood risk.

- 4.20. The Council's Sustainable Drainage officers who shared a number of the Environment Agency's concerns are also satisfied that, subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposals are acceptable.
- 4.21. Policy CS 17 of the WBCS relates to Biodiversity and Geodiversity and relates to impacts of development upon such assets and the need to ensure the safeguarding of protected species, sites of ecological importance or nature conservation value. The application site abuts a local wildlife site and the development has the potential to impact upon this site, that is identified for its ecological importance, together with protected species, such as Badgers, that have been identified in the locality. As set out above the application site is located within the "Kennet Valley East" Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Natural England and the Council's ecologist have considered the potential ecological impacts of the proposed development and confirmed that, subject to the imposition of conditions, the potential impacts of the proposed development could be mitigated to an acceptable level and in the longer term the proposals, and associated restoration and long term management commitments will deliver biodiversity benefits resulting in a net gain in biodiversity.
- 4.22. In addition, as referred to above at 3.2 the proposals includes the creation of 3 ponds in the river Enborne corridor, an obligation to manage these ponds, and the river Enborne corridor for nature conservation for a 20 year period. The applicant has agreed to extend the life of the Woolhampton Nature Reserve trust and also provide additional funding to facilitate the running of the trust, which will enable the enhancement of the nature conservation benefits of the area covered by the trust.
- 4.23. The restoration proposals also include the provision of a further lake, for fishing purposes and the provision of a significant amount of additional hedgerow and tree planting that will also improve the biodiversity of the locality through the provision of additional habitat. Therefore Officers consider that the proposals, subject to conditions and the legal agreement proposed, will only generate limited impacts through the operational phase of the site and provide long term biodiversity benefits in the locality together with the enhancement of existing assets upon the completion of the restorative operations.
- 4.24. Policy CS18 relates to Green infrastructure, which includes public rights of way, and confirms that the Districts green infrastructure will be "protected and enhanced" and that development that will result in the "loss of green infrastructure or harm its use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted". In the context of this application the local public

right of way network will be disrupted during the progression of the proposed development, in that the network will be altered for the duration of the works proposed due to the diversion of footpath Aldermaston 10. In addition the mineral extraction operations will have an adverse impact upon users of the rights of way network during the period of operations such that the enjoyment of the use of the footpaths will be affected by the extractive operations. The proposals actively seek to minimise the adverse impacts of the proposal upon users of the rights of way network and this will primarily be achieved through the diversion of the footpath that crosses the site to ensure that users of the network only have to cross one internal haul road, which provides access to phase A (to maintain separation from the extraction traffic). In addition to relocating the footpath away from phases B and C screening bunds are proposed on the periphery of phases A and B to mitigate the impact of the workings on users of the diverted route. In addition the proposed access to the site is opposite part of the recently completed cycleway that links Aldermaston Wharf to Aldermaston village.

- 4.25. Despite the temporary alteration to the rights of way routes and the impacts upon users of the network during the development the network will be enhanced upon the conclusion of development through the provision of an additional permitted footpath that will create a linkage between the junction of footpath Aldermaston 10 and the A340 at the northern extent of Aldermaston. Public rights of way officers welcome this addition to the network and are satisfied that the short term impacts on the network are outweighed by the long term benefits that would be realised by this additional link being proposed.
- 4.26. Policy CS19 of the WBCS relates to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and conservation and enhancement of landscape character. This policy identifies the need to ensure that development in the various landscape areas in West Berkshire conserve and enhance the respective landscape character areas. Clearly mineral extraction operations generate temporary adverse visual and landscape character impacts and these impacts on the landscape are relevant considerations in the terms of this policy. The proposed development would generate adverse visual impacts and generate landscape character impacts throughout the life of the development. However minerals operations are only temporary in nature and, once complete, the site will be restored to a mix of agriculture and nature conservation uses. The proposed restoration scheme includes the planting of additional copses (including a new woodland area between the site access and Malthouse Cottages) and hedgerows and the Council's landscape consultant is satisfied that, notwithstanding the temporary impacts, which will be mitigated through advance planting and screening bunds, the proposals will bring long term landscape benefits to the area.

- 4.27. In respect of the historic environment the applicant has acknowledged the importance of the potential impact of the proposals upon the setting of Wasing Place a grade 2 listed building. Having considered this matter in some detail the Council's landscape consultant is of the view that the potential visual impacts on the landscape setting of Wasing Place are acceptable. The Council's Conservation officer is also satisfied that the proposals will not generate an unacceptable level of impact on the heritage assets of the area.
- 4.28. Although not obviously related to the development proposals Policy CS1 of the WBCS confirms that over the 20 year life of the West Berkshire Core Strategy there is an aim to provide at least 10,500 homes across the district. At the end of March 2012 approximately 3,000 dwellings had been constructed, meaning that some 7,500 dwellings need to be provided over the coming years to achieve West Berkshire's housing target.
- 4.29. The deposit found at the application site is sharp sand and gravel, which is generally used to make concrete. Such aggregates are, quite literally, the building blocks for development, as detailed in section 3.2 the proposed site will provide around 200,000 tonnes of aggregates each year, approximately half of the material extracted will be sold to the general construction market as construction aggregate and it is envisaged that this material will be used locally in construction projects the remainder of the extracted minerals will be used in the Marley Tile Factory for use in the manufacture of concrete roofing tiles. Therefore, if approved, this proposal will assist in ensuring that developments that take place in West Berkshire can source locally won aggregates for use in the construction process.
- 4.30. As set out above at 4.4 a limited number of policies from the WBDLP remain saved until such time as they are replaced by further development plan documents adopted by the Council.
- 4.31. Policies OVS.5 and OVS.6 of the WBDLP demonstrates the commitment of the Planning Authority to ensure that the adverse amenity impacts of developments are fully mitigated to an acceptable level. OVS.6 refers specifically to the need to give special consideration to potentially noisy development across the district. The proposals have the potential to generate adverse amenity impacts, primarily noise and dust associated with the plant undertaking the extractive and restoration operations and the traffic associated with the exportation of minerals and importation of inert materials for use in the restoration.

- 4.32. The likely amenity impacts generated by mineral extraction sites are well known and working practices adopted by mineral operators, such as the storage of soils (stripped from the site to facilitate access to the underlying deposits) in bunds that provide acoustic mitigation, the laying out of internal roads to minimise reversing and the provision of facilities to enable the laying of dust during dry periods are the “industry standard”. Such measures are proposed to be employed in respect of this development and whilst officers consider that the development has the potential to generate adverse noise and amenity impacts it is considered that such impacts could be satisfactorily mitigated through the imposition of appropriate conditions if permission were to be granted
- 4.33. As set out in section 2 the application site, particularly the working phases are relatively remote from nearby residential properties and, subject to the imposition of conditions the Council’s Environmental Health Officers consider the proposals to be acceptable.

Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire including the alterations adopted in 1997 and 2001 (RMLP)

- 4.34. The RMLP sets out a preferred area approach to delivering the level of minerals predicted to be needed in Berkshire. However the RMLP, being first adopted in 1997, is now a dated document and the policy approach to determining the level of mineral provision that an Authority needs to plan for and deliver has recently changed.
- 4.35. The need for sites to produce minerals for construction is a key planning policy consideration for all mineral extraction proposals. Policy 3 of the RMLP sets out this approach in the RMLP and states that: “Subject to the outcome of any future reviews of national or regional policy guidance, the planning authorities will aim collectively to make provision for the release of land to allow production of sand and gravel in Berkshire to be maintained at an average level of 2.3 million tonnes a year.”
- 4.36. Policy 3 of the RMLP is no longer an extant policy (and therefore does not form one of the saved policies in the RMLP) however it is set out here to assist in the explanation of the need for mineral extraction sites in Berkshire, and West Berkshire.
- 4.37. The 2.3 million tonne per annum (mtpa) figure in Policy 3 was derived from the mineral apportionment prescribed by the regional planning body for Berkshire at the time the RMLP was adopted. This apportionment figure was revised a number of times following the adoption of the RMLP, with the most recent revision being carried out as part of the formulation of the South East Plan, which was adopted in May 2009 that set the

figure at 1.57 mtpa. Despite revocation of the South East Plan (in March 2013) guidance that was published following the “initial revocation” of the South East plan confirmed that Minerals Planning Authorities should continue to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates, and that authorities in the South East should work from the apportionment published on 19 March 2010, although alternative figures may be used where there is robust evidence to support them. This reference to the 19 March figures relates to the apportionment set out in the “Proposed Changes” to the revision of Policy M3, published on 19th March 2010 that indicates that the apportionment figure for Berkshire is 1.33 mtpa. DCLG re-confirmed this 1.33 mtpa figure in a note entitled the “National and Local Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England 2005-2020” published in September 2011.

- 4.38. However the regional level of planning no longer exists and the South East Plan has been formally revoked and therefore no longer forms part of the development plan. In addition the apportionment system that historically ensured there was an adequate and steady supply of minerals has changed from a top-down approach, where the regional planning bodies would stipulate the level of minerals each authority would need to aim to produce, to a bottom-up approach whereby the individual mineral planning authorities are now required to make their own calculations in respect of the level of mineral provision required in the authority area. This bottom up approach set out in the NPPF, and subsequent guidance, is principally based upon an assessment of the last 10 years of sales in an authority area, although other matters are also key considerations.
- 4.39. This issue of determining the need for minerals in West Berkshire is further complicated by the fact that historically the mineral planning policy function was carried out at the County level. Even following the dissolution of the County the six Unitary Authorities that make up the former county area continued to work together, through the coordinating body that was the JSPU, to deliver minerals and waste development plan work.
- 4.40. However in 2011 the JSPU was disbanded and each of the individual mineral planning authorities took over complete ownership of minerals and waste planning policy work for their administrative area. The last document published by the JSPU reporting on the state of the Landbank in Berkshire was the Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Annual Monitoring Report for 2010. In respect of minerals this reported on the information from Jan-Dec 2009 (but provided an update to November 2010).
- 4.41. This document confirmed that at the end of 2009 Berkshire’s landbank of permitted sand and gravel stood at 11,650,765 tonnes, equivalent to 7.42

years at an apportionment rate of 1.57mt / year. As discussed above officers take the view that the apportionment rate for Berkshire was 1.33 mt/year not 1.57 mt / year. Due to this reduced apportionment the Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Annual Monitoring Report for 2010 provided a recalculated landbank at the end of 2009 using the revised 1.33mtpa figure, which confirmed that the County landbank stood at 8.75 years.

- 4.42. An aggregate landbank is principally a tool that is designed to provide mineral planning authorities with an indication of when there is the potential for a possible disruption to the steady and adequate supply of minerals in a particular area. The landbank is the sum, in tonnes, of all permitted reserves, and the length of the landbank is calculated by dividing this total by the expected annual level of demand for minerals.
- 4.43. Since the publication of the 2010 AMR for Berkshire the South East England Aggregates Working Party published the regional AMR for 2010 (which also uses the 1.33mt apportionment figure referred to above). This confirms that at the end of 2010 Berkshire's landbank of permitted sand and gravel stood at 9,845,000 tonnes, which equates to 7.4 years. Further work undertaken by West Berkshire's officers working with the other Berkshire Unitary Authorities suggests that at the end of 2011 Berkshire's landbank of permitted sand and gravel stood at 9,094,000 tonnes, which equates to a landbank of 6.8 years (if the 1.33mt legacy apportionment figure is used).
- 4.44. Given that this was the position at the end of 2011 (and as far as officers are aware there have been no new or extensions to mineral sites permitted in Berkshire since that time) it is envisaged that today (2013) Berkshire's landbank of permitted reserves will have dropped further below the 7 year landbank figure which indicates that additional provision that needs to be made for new aggregate extraction.
- 4.45. As the six unitary authorities that make up the former county area of Berkshire are no longer working jointly on minerals and waste planning matters it is necessary to also consider the position solely for West Berkshire.
- 4.46. West Berkshire Council has commenced with the production of a Minerals and Waste Local Plan for West Berkshire and, to date, much of the work has been concentrated on working on collecting evidence and assessing the volume of aggregates West Berkshire should be aiming to plan for. Whilst this work remains ongoing and no formal publications have been made officers can confirm that over the past 10 years the approximate tonnage of primary aggregates (sharp sand and gravel and soft sand) sold from sites within West Berkshire are as follows:

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Sales (t)	650,000	510,000	530,000	490,000	520,000	670,000	490,000	390,000	320,000	210,000
Reserves	4.3mt	3.9mt	3.6mt	3.1mt	3.0mt	2.4mt	2.1mt	1.8mt	1.5mt	1.3mt
Sites	9	8	8	7	8	9	9	9	6	4

- 4.47. In addition to approximate annual sales this table also shows the number of active mineral sites producing primary aggregates in each of the years and the approximate total volume of permitted reserves (in millions of tonnes (mt)) in West Berkshire.
- 4.48. As can be seen the level of sales of aggregates from sites within West Berkshire has, overall, declined over the past decade from 650,000 tonnes in 2002 down to 210,000 tonnes in 2011. The number of active sites producing aggregates has also declined from 10 down to 4 and the total level of permitted reserves has declined from 4.3 million tonnes in 2002 to 1.3mt in 2011.
- 4.49. The average level of sales over the past 10 years stands at around 480,000 tonnes per annum. Looking into the future it is known that one of the sites that was operating in 2011 have now closed and one of the sites currently operating (which currently supplies minerals to the Marley tile factory) is almost exhausted and will soon close. As such there will soon be only two sites in West Berkshire producing any significant volume of primary aggregates.
- 4.50. The NPPF confirms that to maintain a steady and adequate supply of primary aggregates mineral planning authorities should make provision for the maintenance of landbanks of at least 7 years for sand and gravel. As explained above historically the expected annual level of demand for minerals was provided to the individual mineral planning authorities by the regional planning bodies, however it is now derived by a bottom up approach and the NPPF confirms that the principal way to determine the local aggregates requirement is by calculating the average 10 years sales data.
- 4.51. Therefore in making such calculations the total level of permitted reserves in West Berkshire at the end of 2011 stood at 1,300,000 tonnes divided by the average level of sales of primary aggregates of 480,000 tonne gives a figure of 2.7 years.
- 4.52. As stated above one site has closed since 2011, officers estimate that in 2012 the level of sales was around 275,000 tonnes, and as no new permissions were granted in 2012 the level of permitted reserves would have declined to around 1.1 million tonnes. If this level of sales is

factored in to the calculations then the average level of sales over the past 10 years equates to 446,000 tonnes per annum.

- 4.53. If the 10 years average level of sales is to be maintained in West Berkshire then the remaining permitted reserves in West Berkshire (1.1 million tonnes at the end of 2012) will be exhausted in approximately 2.5 years from the end of 2012 (the summer of 2015, i.e. 2 years time)
- 4.54. It is well recognised that just because the landbank stands below the 7 year figure, as set out in the NPPF, this does not mean that applications for mineral extraction will automatically be granted and vice versa a landbank of reserves greater than 7 years does not necessarily equate to an automatic refusal of permission. However a landbank figure of only around 2 years does demonstrate that there is an acute need for new mineral extraction sites in West Berkshire. The proposed development, if approved, would increase the level of permitted reserves in West Berkshire by 2.4 million tonnes which would increase the total permitted reserves to somewhere in the region of 3 to 3.5 million tonnes and provide West Berkshire with a landbank of around 8 years (assuming that the average level of production remains at 446,000 tonnes per year) and the proposals would also enable an output from sites in West Berkshire to return to around 400,000 tonnes per annum (which is around the average level of sales seen over the past 10 years).
- 4.55. Members are asked to note that these calculations have been undertaken by officers on the basis of the best information available at this time. Whilst it is possible that minor alterations to the figures are likely to take place as the production of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan takes place and more evidence is collated and tested via examination officers are satisfied that, at present, there is a very real need for new minerals site to be permitted in West Berkshire to ensure that there is a maintenance of a steady and adequate supply of minerals, both to the construction industry and the nearby tile factory in line with the policies in the RMLP and the NPPF.
- 4.56. Members are also asked to note that the figures that have been used in this section of the report to undertake these calculations are combined figures for both sharp sand and gravel sites and soft sand sites. Both sharp sand and gravel sites and soft sand deposits exist in West Berkshire and whilst the sales and reserves of sharp sand and gravel always exceed those of soft sand it is necessary for the Authority to produce combined figures because the Minerals Industry will only provide accurate sales and reserves data to the Authority on the basis that no figures are published that identify individual sites, to protect commercial confidentiality. Therefore due to the small number of soft sand sites in West Berkshire the sales and reserves figures are always combined.

Given that both sharp sand and gravel sites and soft sand contribute towards the landbank calculations this is not considered to be an issue in respect of this application and should the soft sand sales and reserves be removed from the calculations there would be no overall change to the calculations in that the landbank would remain at well below 7 years.

- 4.57. It is also recognised that West Berkshire has, for many years, been a net exporter of sand and gravel, in that the level of aggregate production is greater than the level of demand in West Berkshire. However, as previously stated, minerals can only be won where they occur and as a consequence West Berkshire also imports significant volumes of other minerals, such as hard rock (which does not naturally occur in West Berkshire) from other authority areas to ensure that local demand can be met.
- 4.58. In addition it is proposed that approximately half of the minerals to be extraction from the application site will be used in the manufacturing of roofing tiles at the existing factory at Beenham. This tile factory is a strategically important facility for the UK. Whilst the majority of the products produced at this factory inevitably end up being exported out of the district, West Berkshire clearly benefits from the employment opportunities that come with such a manufacturing facility. It is understood that the Beenham tile factory is a regionally significant facility, in that it is the largest concrete tile factory in the Country and it supplies roofing tiles to the construction industry all across the South East and the factory requires circa 100,000 tonnes of aggregates per year to meet the demand for concrete tile production.
- 4.59. The RMLP was first adopted in 1995 and when adopted it was estimated that the plan would cover the period to 2006, although the aim of the plan was to also ensure that there was sufficient minerals permissions to allow an adequate level of mineral permission for 7 years beyond the projected end date of 2006 (to the end of 2013).
- 4.60. In order to deliver the necessary number of sites to achieve the apportionment levels over the plan period Policy 8 of the RMLP provided for a preferred area approach to set a presumption in favour of allowing the extraction of sharp sand and gravel from the allocated preferred areas (subject to other policies in the plan being met). Of the 14 preferred areas that were identified in the RMLP envisaged to deliver in excess of 12 million tonnes of sharp sand and gravel over the life of the plan, 7 were located in West Berkshire.
- 4.61. Of the 7 preferred sites identified in West Berkshire only 2 have not been worked. The first of these is preferred area 1, Chamberhouse farm (south of Colthrop). Since the adoption of the plan in 1995 no planning

application has been forthcoming for the working of this preferred area. In addition the site was only allocated as a preferred area on the basis that it would be worked as an extension to the adjacent Lower Farm site. However the Lower Farm site has now ceased operating, the plant site has been removed and the operator is in the process of restoring this site. As such there is now no way that the mineral reserves at Chamberhouse Farm can be easily accessed to enable them to be worked. Furthermore land to the north of this preferred area has been allocated as a Special Area of Conservation (European designation) and clearly any extraction operations would have to consider the potential impact of the extraction on this European designated site. It is considered by Officers that there is no certainty that the minerals at this site will be worked and the site has effectively become sterilised.

- 4.62. Preferred area 4, south of Theale, was also allocated as a preferred area for mineral extraction, however again no application has been received in the 17 years since the initial adoption of the RMLP, and it is understood that the owner of the land (who purchased the site after the adoption of the RMLP) has no interest in seeing this land worked for minerals. In addition even planning applications for the extraction of minerals from preferred areas 1 and 4 were to be forthcoming, and subsequently granted, the estimated yield from these sites would be circa 1.6 million tonnes of minerals. The need for sharp sand and gravel sites in West Berkshire, as set out above, is such that even the granting of 1.6 million tonnes would be insufficient facilitate the maintenance of a 7 year landbank in West Berkshire without further permissions being granted.
- 4.63. It also has to be recognised that the Planning Authority can only allocate a site for extraction through a development plan process; the authority has no power to require an application to be submitted or a development to take place. However the Authority does have a statutory duty to determine all valid planning applications that are submitted to it.
- 4.64. Notwithstanding the clear need argument in favour of the development proposals there are many other policies in the RMLP that are relevant to these proposals and should be given due weight under paragraph 215 of the NPPF.
- 4.65. Policy 6 of the RMLP confirms that the balance between a need for an extraction site and environmental concerns are fundamental to the decision on any application. The RMLP clearly specifies that the consideration of the acceptability of a development proposal applies equally to the acceptability of what happens after extraction as to the details and works required to be carried out prior to the commencement of development or what happens during the actual extraction itself. As discussed in some detail above officers consider that there is a very real

and urgent need for new mineral sites to be permitted in West Berkshire to meet the demands of both the construction industry and the Beenham Tile Factory, whilst the proposals will generate limited adverse impacts (which can be mitigated to a degree) this need forms part of the balancing of the proposals along with the adverse impacts of the development proposals that would be generated whilst the site is operational.

- 4.66. The proposed restoration scheme is considered to be acceptable and, in the long term, will bring long term biodiversity and landscape benefits together with improvements to the public rights of way network. Planning conditions and a legal agreement are proposed to ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site (to maintain the agricultural standard of the site) and to secure these benefits.
- 4.67. Policy 7 of the RMLP sets out the general framework of likely adverse impacts of sand and gravel extraction as part of the balancing act required by policy 6. This policy highlights the importance of the consideration of adverse amenity impacts, the need to protect ecologically important areas and the need to minimise the disturbance of extraction sites by encouraging orderly working and restoration. These matters are covered in more detail elsewhere in this report, however officers are of the view that there will be adverse impacts generated during the time that the site is worked and restored, however such impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated and upon the completion of the restoration operations the proposals will provide long term benefits.
- 4.68. Policies 10 to 13 of the RMLP set out the framework for considering proposals for the extraction of minerals outside the preferred areas. The application site is not allocated as a preferred area in the RMLP and therefore these policies are particularly applicable to this proposal.
- 4.69. Policy 10 confirms that for proposals outside the Preferred Areas it will be necessary to show that there is a need to disturb land outside the identified preferred areas in order to maintain the necessary levels of production, that the need for a extraction site cannot be more acceptably met elsewhere, and that the proposals overcome all the constraints set out in policy 7.
- 4.70. As stated above at 4.54 it is considered by officers that there is a clear and acute need for mineral extraction sites in West Berkshire to supply sand and gravel both to the general construction industry and also to the Beenham Tile Factory. There are only 2 unworked preferred areas identified in the RMLP in West Berkshire and as explained above there have been no applications to work these areas in the last 17 years and no immediate prospect of either being worked. Whilst there are clearly

other locations in West Berkshire where minerals exist and where exaction could take place the applicant has undertaken a review of the remaining deposits in the Kennet Valley and officers agree that there is no better alternative to the application site likely to come forward in the immediate future, which would be necessary to meet the current acute need for minerals in West Berkshire.

- 4.71. Paragraph 5.25 of the RMLP makes it clear that when proposing to extract minerals outside preferred areas the policies provide a general steer that potential extraction sites should first be sought in areas subject to local constraints, if no suitable sites can be located then the applicant should look to areas subject to county wide constraints and then, only as a last resort (and then only in very special circumstances, as identified in government guidance) in areas which are subject to national or international constraints.
- 4.72. Policy 11 sets out the policy presumption against development of land subject to National and international wide designations and constraints. Policy 12 details the policy presumption against development of land subject to County wide designations and constraints and confirms that there will be a strong presumption against allowing extraction from local wildlife sites (amongst others). Policy 13 provides a policy presumption against development of land subject to local level designations and constraints and sets a strong presumption against allowing extraction from land outside any of the areas specified in Policies 11 and 12 but which would adversely affect any of those areas.
- 4.73. The matters set out in policies 11 to 13 are key considerations for any mineral extraction proposal within the specified areas. The application site is not sited within in any relevant international or national designations, and whilst limited parts of the application site may be visible from within the AONB, to the north, and also from Wasing Park to the South, officers are satisfied that the limited impacts on these designations can be satisfactorily mitigated and, in the long term, the proposals will deliver landscape benefits.
- 4.74. In respect of the county and local level designations the site abuts a local wildlife site (to the north east) however again officers are satisfied that the limited impacts on this wildlife site can be satisfactorily mitigated and, in the long term, the proposals will deliver biodiversity and ecological benefits.
- 4.75. Policy 6 of the RMLP (referred to above) cross refers to a number of other policies, namely policies 8 (relates to proposals for mineral extraction inside preferred areas), 9 (this policy has been deleted), 14 (relates to borrow pits), 16 (relates to chalk and clay extraction), 17

(relates to oil and gas), 18 (relating to restoration), 19 (relating to restoration) , 20 (relating to the restoration of preferred areas), 21 (sets out the content of applications), 22 (this policy is no longer saved), 23 (this policy is no longer saved) and 24 (this policy is no longer saved).

- 4.76. Of these policies the only relevant ones are policies 18 and 19 relating to restoration and these two policies provide the framework for ensuring that the restoration of all mineral workings (regardless of location) take place in a progressive manner, within a reasonable timescale and to an acceptable standard as well as providing environmental benefits. One of the issues relevant to mineral extraction relates to the need to protect high quality agricultural land. Approximately 42% of the application site is classed as best and most versatile agricultural land and therefore falls under the definition of best and most versatile agricultural land (grade 1, 2 and 3a). Policy 7 of the RMLP (referred to above) confirms that the desirability to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land is a material planning consideration. Officers and Natural England (who provide the Authority with specialist advice on such matters) are satisfied that modern restoration practices, together with aftercare requirements, can secure the return of high quality agricultural land upon the completion of mineral extraction. The application site is a mix of grade 2, 3a, 3b and 4 agricultural land and therefore it is not the highest classification (grade 1). In addition the applicant has suggested that it may be possible to enhance the overall area of higher quality agricultural land through the restoration of the site. Whilst officers consider that such a long term enhancement may be deliverable it is clear that the proposals will only result in the temporary loss of agricultural land as the site is worked and upon the completion of restoration and aftercare officers are satisfied that there will be no net loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. Due to the proposed phasing of the operations the majority of phase A of the site will be restored to agriculture and be in after-care prior to the commencement (and therefore reduce the net loss of agricultural land) in phase C. Officers are satisfied that that the development proposals will comply with the objectives of policies 18 and 19.
- 4.77. The presence of the Beenham Tile factory and the specialist products that it produces, which serve markets that are substantially wider than those of general aggregate suppliers, is recognised in paragraphs 3.36 to 3.39 of the RMLP. These paragraphs in the RMLP acknowledge the existence of the factory and the significant investment that the applicant has made in the development and maintenance of the factory; the level of employment that it generates; the specialist nature of the products that are produced; and that the need for the maintenance of a supply of minerals that fall within a defined quality control specification is a matter of importance to the factory. However notwithstanding this recognition the RMLP goes on to note that any application for mineral extraction to

meet the needs of the Factory will still need to be acceptable in environmental terms and be in accordance with the local plan.

- 4.78. At the time of the adoption of the RMLP there were 8 mineral extraction sites that were working the Kennet Valley deposits that are found between Newbury and the M4 at Theale. The RMLP acknowledged that this was an intensive level of operations in a relatively confined area and due to the issues and constraints identified in the Kennet Valley, between Newbury and Reading, the cumulative impacts of mineral working was a relevant consideration in this area. It was also recognised that at the time the RMLP was adopted approximately 20% of total valley gravel resource in Berkshire was located in this area. Therefore to avoid an unnecessary proliferation of mineral related activities in the valley the RMLP therefore suggested that the identified preferred areas identified in the Kennet Valley should be worked progressively and that the total number of processing plants in the Kennet Valley should not exceed six.
- 4.79. In respect of these matters there are now only 2 mineral extraction sites working the Kennet Valley deposits between Newbury and Thatcham (Midgham Quarry and Kennetholme Farm) with a further site that is operating as a processing plant (Aldermaston Quarry) that processes some of the material excavated from the Harts Hill site. The application site would only be worked following the completion of the Midgham Quarry Extraction operations and thus, if approved, would not increase the total number of mineral extraction sites in the Kennet Valley. In respect of the number of mineral processing plants in the Kennet Valley there are now only 3 processing plants (Colthrop, Aldermaston Quarry and the plant at the Beenham Tile Factory). The proposal would not increase the total number of processing plants as the minerals proposed to be extracted would be processed at existing plant located at the tile factory where the minerals will be sold / used.
- 4.80. It is clear that since the adoption of the RMLP in 2001 the extent, intensity and impact of mineral working in the wider Kennet Valley (between Newbury and Reading) has decreased considerably, and the volume of gravel reserves has declined as a result of the extraction operations that have taken place. However the Kennet Valley remains the most significant resource area in West Berkshire and as minerals can only be worked from where they are found the remaining reserves will always remain under pressure for extraction.
- 4.81. It is considered by officers that the proposals would not result in an unacceptable level of mineral extraction in the Kennet valley that would generate unacceptable levels of cumulative impacts.

The Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (adopted 1998) (WLPB)

- 4.82. The Waste Local Plan for Berkshire sets out the policy framework for the consideration of waste management developments across Berkshire. The most relevant policy in this plan relates to the infilling of sites with inert waste to ensure the reclamation of the site.
- 4.83. Policy WLP25 relating to disposal of inert waste via infilling confirms that the disposal of inert waste by landfilling will only be permitted in preferred areas for mineral extraction and other minerals sites where the disposal of waste forms an appropriate and necessary part of a scheme to achieve satisfactory restoration of the mineral site. It is apparent that the proposed development generally accords with the second of the above two criteria as it is considered that the infilling of the site with inert waste will enable the operator to return the site to original levels resulting in no significant change to the landform in this area once the site has been completed and restored.
- 4.84. The WLPB also sets out a number of criteria for considering proposals for waste management development. Policy WLP27 sets out a requirement for waste proposals to demonstrate a need. It is recognised that the landfilling of waste is at the bottom of the waste management hierarchy, however it is considered that there will always be a need for inert waste landfill sites as there will always be components of the inert (CDE) waste stream that cannot be re-used and will have to be disposed of to land.
- 4.85. In respect of the need for further inert waste landfill across Berkshire it is understood that there is a significant amount of void space available across Berkshire, however much of this capacity is towards the eastern end of Berkshire and there is only limited inert waste landfill capacity in the locality of West Berkshire, which is delivered by the limited remaining existing extraction sites in West Berkshire. It is therefore considered that, on a general level, the proposal complies with the first criterion of policy WLP27.

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) (NPPF)

- 4.86. As set out above at 4.3 parts of the development plan for West Berkshire is dated, particularly the RMLP and the WLPB which were adopted in 2001 and 1998 respectively. Despite their age the RMLP and WLPB remain part of the adopted development plan and set out the policy context for both Minerals and Waste Developments in West Berkshire (and the wider Berkshire area).

- 4.87. As such whilst some of the policies are within development plan documents are dated, they remain extant. Where the adopted policies in the RMLP and WLPB are out of kilter with more recent policy documents, such as the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF), then policies in such documents take precedence. However where the policies in the development plan are aligned with the NPPF, (or PPS10 in respect of the waste policies) then due weight can still be afforded to these policies.
- 4.88. The NPPF has introduced a “presumption in favour of sustainable development” and paragraph 14 of the NPPF clarifies what is meant by this “golden thread” which should run through plan making and decision taking. The NPPF is clear that the planning system should support sustainable economic growth and that this should attract significant weight in planning decisions. The NPPF states that planning authorities must approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless: any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.
- 4.89. In respect of the presumption set out in paragraph 14 officers consider that the development plan, whilst being dated, is not “out of date” and due weight can still be afforded as set out in paragraph 215 of the NPPF. Whilst the application site is not a “preferred area” identified in the RMLP it is considered by officers to be in line with the policies in the RMLP and also inline with the rest of the development plan. Officers are of the opinion that the adverse impacts of the proposals do not outweigh the benefits that the proposals would deliver, which are in alignment with the development plan and the NPPF. Officers consider that there are no specific policies in the NPPF that indicate that the development should be restricted and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF applies to this proposal.
- 4.90. The NPPF has replaced the majority of the old mineral planning guidance notes and mineral planning policy statements with a number of paragraphs that set out the national planning policy position in respect of minerals. These matters are discussed in more detail below, following a wider consideration of the NPPF.
- 4.91. There are twelve core planning principles. Many are not directly relevant to this application, but the following are:

- 3 – Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the development that the Country needs;
- 4 – Always seek to secure high quality design and good standards of amenity for existing and future occupants of land;
- 5 - Take into account the different roles and character of different areas ... recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting rural communities within it;
- 6 - Support the transition to a low carbon future taking full account of flood risk;
- 7 - Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 10 – Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriateso they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life; and
- 11 - Actively manage patterns of growth to make best use of public transport walking and cycling and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

4.92. Following the identification of the twelve core planning principles at paragraph 17, the NPPF contains 13 detailed chapters outlining specific policies which set out, at a national level, how sustainable development will be achieved. Again, not all the chapters are relevant to the current proposal, but those that are applicable are discussed below.

NPPF Section 1 - 'Building a strong, competitive economy'.

4.93. The proposal would have clear economic benefits by providing a source of aggregates to support the nearby tile factory and to the construction industry.

NPPF Section 3 - 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy'.

4.94. Whilst the application site is located within a rural area, it does not support the rural economy. However minerals can only be won where they are found and the development will generate a limited number of jobs.

NPPF Section 4 – 'Promoting sustainable transport'.

4.95. The application is supported by a transport assessment that has considered alternative transportation methodologies before determining that a road based approach is the most sustainable. The access to the site is directly onto the strategic road network and junction improvements will ensure the access to the site is safe and suitable. Improvements to the wider network are also included and the residual cumulative impacts of the proposals are considered acceptable.

NPPF Section 7 – 'Requiring good design'.

- 4.96. Prior to submitting the application the applicant undertook consultation with the local community to enable the views of the community to be considered, and where appropriate, incorporated views into the development proposals.

NPPF Section 8 – ‘Promoting healthy communities’.

- 4.97. Section 8 of the NPPF recognises the role that the planning system can have in creating healthy, inclusive communities. In order to do so the NPPF identifies access to open space and recreational facilities and, specifically, the need to protect the public rights of way network. Officers acknowledge that the proposals will have an adverse impact on the rights of way network throughout the duration of operations. However upon the conclusion of operations the network will be enhanced.

NPPF Section 10 ‘Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change’.

- 4.98. The proposals are considered to constitute “water compatible development”. Throughout the life of the development (operational phase and through to restoration and beyond) the proposals will result in a net increase the volume of surface water flood storage capacity within the application site. The sequential test undertaken for the site has concluded that there are no foreseeable reasonably available sites in areas with a lower probability of flooding that would meet the same functional need as the proposed development at the application site.

NPPF Section 11 - ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’.

- 4.99. The development proposals are outside any nationally designated landscape areas and whilst they will generate limited landscape impacts, those impacts are considered acceptable given the mitigation proposed and the long term landscape benefits of the proposals.
- 4.100. The proposals will ensure that there is no net loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and provide net gains to biodiversity together with ecological enhancements.
- 4.101. The adverse effects of the proposed development in terms of pollution on health, the natural environment and general amenity impacts are considered acceptable given the proposed mitigation measures and proximity to sensitive receptors.

NPPF Section 12 – ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’.

- 4.102. The application site, has the potential to include archaeological assets, however the proposed method of working and assessments undertaken to date confirm that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on such archaeological assets.
- 4.103. The application site, whilst being remote from heritage assets has the potential to impact upon the setting of Wasing Place and the vehicular traffic associated with the site has the potential to impact upon the Aldermaston conservation area together with other listed buildings in the locality. However the impacts of the proposal are temporary and the proposal will not result in the loss, alteration or destruction of any heritage assets.

NPPF Section 13 – ‘ Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals’.

- 4.104. Paragraph 142 of the Framework confirms that “Minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life. It is therefore important that there is a sufficient supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. However, since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, it is important to make best use of them to secure their long-term conservation”.
- 4.105. Paragraph 144 of the Framework relates to the determination of planning applications and confirms that local planning authorities should:
- give great weight to the benefits of the mineral extraction, including to the economy;
 - ensure, in granting planning permission for mineral development, that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment, human health or aviation safety, and take into account the cumulative effect of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or from a number of sites in a locality;”
 - Ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any blasting vibrations are controlled, mitigated or removed at source and establish appropriate noise limits for extraction in proximity to noise sensitive properties;
 - provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity to be carried out to high environmental standards, through the application of appropriate conditions, where necessary.
- 4.106. Paragraph 144 of the Framework relates to the need to 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)

- 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.

4.107. When considering the proposals (and the policies of the RMLP and WLPB) against the NPPF it is considered that the policies in the RMLP and WLPB that have been referred to above are generally aligned with these national policy objectives and that the proposals generally accord with the NPPF and PPS10. Therefore officers are satisfied that due weight can still be applied to the policies in accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

4.108. Although West Berkshire has not, at this stage, adopted a local aggregate assessment for West Berkshire, as required by paragraph 144 of the NPPF, as part of this report officers have carried out an assessment of the need for primary minerals in West Berkshire based upon the approach detailed in the NPPF and the subsequent guidance published on this matter. As detailed above officers are of the view that there is a very real need for new mineral extraction sites in West Berkshire to maintain a steady and adequate supply.

4.109. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF explains that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Officers consider that the proposed development will generate clear economic benefits though the steady and adequate supply of locally sourced aggregates to the nearby tile factory and to the wider construction industry. Whilst only generating a limited number of jobs on the application site the proposals will provide essential support to the sustainable economic growth that the NPPF identifies as being critical. Should this application be refused then it is possible that the tile factory could close resulting in the loss of up to 75 jobs, there is no certainty that the factory would close should consent be refused but if consent is granted is considered reasonable to assume that these jobs would be "safe". The NPPF confirms that great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction proposals.

- 4.110. In terms of the social benefits the proposals will provide a supply of raw materials that are needed to provide the supply of housing that is needed to meet the needs of the present and future generations.
- 4.111. In respect of the environmental aspects of the proposals it is recognised by officers that the proposals will generate limited adverse impacts (such as traffic, noise, dust, visual, ecological) throughout the life of the site. However mitigation measure are proposed to minimise the level of these impacts and in the long term the proposal will provide agricultural, landscape, ecological and amenity benefits through the restoration of the site. The site will also provide additional surface flood water storage capacity both during the operational stage of the development and upon the completion of restoration.
- 4.112. Officers conclude that the proposals constitute sustainable development, in the terms of the NPPF, and therefore the NPPF, which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, confirms that the proposals should be approved.

Planning Policy Conclusions

- 4.113. Having considered the development proposals against the development plan, as well as the NPPF, it is considered by officers that the proposals are in accordance with the development plan and the NPPF. Therefore it is considered that the proposals are acceptable development.
- 4.114. Despite this “in-principle” view it remains necessary for the proposal to overcome various other policy considerations outlined in the relevant policies to demonstrate that the proposal is acceptable. Therefore there is a need to consider a wide range of other planning issues in determining a planning application and those issues relevant in this case are considered below along with the assessment of other matters that have been raised.

5.0. MAIN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Traffic and highways matters

- 5.1. Considerable concern has been raised in respect of the highway implications of the proposed development. As set out above Highways officers are satisfied that the predicted 60 HGV’s serving the site per day will not generate an unacceptable highways impact in terms of overall

additional traffic or generate a highways safety issue. Whilst the overall increase in traffic on the A340 is considered very minor (1% or less) many parties making representations have referred to the fact that the proposal will only generate HGV movements, the impacts of which are different to cars.

- 5.2. Having considered this point Highways officers are satisfied with the projected traffic proposals and agree that the proposals are predicted to generate a 6.4% increase in HGV traffic on the A340 to the north of the access in the morning peak and an 11.7% increase in HGV traffic in the afternoon peak.
- 5.3. The proposals are predicted to generate a 3.2% increase in HGV traffic on the A340 to the south of the access in the morning peak and 5.8 % increase in HGV traffic in the afternoon peak.
- 5.4. The applicant has agreed to adhere to a traffic management scheme that will detail the haul route between the application site and the tile factory. This route will principally involve vehicles travelling along the A340 and A4, but the scheme also requires the identification of diversionary routes to be used should the primary route be inaccessible, such as when the lifting bridge in Aldermaston is not operating. The applicant has also agreed to employ measures that ensure that HGV's are not released from the application site onto the public highway during the morning peak therefore reducing the impact of the proposals during this period. These provisions can be secured by proposed conditions as found below.
- 5.5. The proposed conditions also include the provision of scheme that secures wheel cleaning facilities to be provided as necessary to prevent the deposition of deleterious material on the highway together with the sheeting of hgv's leaving the site to prevent any spillage and the provision, and maintenance of, suitable visibility splays at the site entrance.
- 5.6. Highways officers are satisfied that the proposed new access arrangements, that include a ghost lane for traffic travelling south bound along the A340 to safely enter the site to be acceptable. The applicant has also agreed to enter into a legal agreement that secures the payment of £60,000 to provide measures to acceptably mitigate the impact of the proposals on the local highway network, together with a requirement for the applicant to resurface the A340 outside the site entrance should the proposals result in the polishing of the road surface to the point that it generates a highway safety issue.
- 5.7. Concern has been raised over the potential for the additional traffic associated with the development to impact on the Aldermaston Conservation area and the listed buildings within Aldermaston. It is

recognised that a proportion of the traffic associated with the proposals will be likely to travel to/from the south along the A340 through the village of Aldermaston. However as set out above the percentage increase in traffic associated with the proposals is considered minor when compared to the existing traffic (including HGV's) already using this route. It also has to be acknowledged that the A340 through Aldermaston is part of the primary road network and identified as part of the Districts Freight Route Network. Therefore a strategic decision has already been made to direct traffic, particularly HGV's, along this route though the village of Aldermaston.

- 5.8. The Council's Conservation officers have confirmed that they do not object to the use of the A340 through Aldermaston as a potential route for restoration material to be imported to the site as they are of the view that the additional HGV movements would be unlikely to cause any harm to the significance of the heritage assets in Aldermaston adjacent to the road.
- 5.9. If this application is refused, and the Beenham tile factory remains operational, then the factory will need to find an alternative supply of minerals to continue production. In addition the demand generated by the general construction industry would still have to be met. It is clearly not known where such supplies would be found or how this material would travel on the road network, but it is possible that HGV's importing minerals to the factory would still need to travel along the A340 through Aldermaston to the factory site. Thus if this application were to be refused this may not result in an overall reduction of HGV's on the local road network.
- 5.10. A request has been made for a limit to be imposed upon the vehicle movements from the site, to a maximum of 3,300 movements per 4 week period as well as the use of automatic speed monitoring and reporting systems to be installed on vehicles. Officers do not consider either of these requests to be appropriate. In respect of a 4 weekly limit on vehicle movements officers understand that the rationale behind this request would be to ensure that the impact of the proposals are evenly spread over a period of time to minimise adverse impacts. However such a restriction would not prevent an operator from generating 3,300 movement in one week, generating a large impact, and then mothballing the site for 3 weeks.
- 5.11. In respect of the issue of vehicles associated with the site speeding on the road network, this is an issue outside the planning process. The planning system operates on the basis that other legislation will continue to operate alongside the planning process. Therefore if vehicles transporting material to or from the site do speed or drive dangerously this is a matter for the police to address and not a matter to be dealt with as part of the planning process.

- 5.12. It is clear that the proposal will generate additional traffic on the local road network and these vehicle movements will clearly generate adverse impacts. However the location of the site access, on a main road that forms part of the Districts freight network, together with the level of traffic movements and the planning conditions that are proposed to minimise any impacts are such that officers are satisfied that the impacts of the traffic associated with the proposals are acceptable and the application proposals do not conflict with the relevant planning policies relating to such matters described above.

Need and supply and site location

- 5.13. The need for minerals in West Berkshire has been discussed at some length in section 4 of the report. However a number of parties making representations have raised concerns over this particular issue that it is considered prudent to address.
- 5.14. Reference has been made to the fact that there is currently no minerals local plan for West Berkshire and therefore it would be premature to consider this application at this stage. As detailed above in section 4 the RMLP is dated but it is under paragraph 215 of the NPPF policies within the RMLP can still be given due weight and the closer the policies in the RMLP are to the policies in the NPPF the greater the weight that may be given. Government policy is clear that prematurity is seldom a reason for the refusal of a planning application. The adoption of a minerals local plan for West Berkshire remains several years away and if the consideration of applications for mineral extraction were to be deferred until such a time as a plan has been prepared, submitted, examined and adopted the need for aggregates in West Berkshire would be even greater than today.
- 5.15. The NPPF is also clear that the need to maintain a steady and adequate supply of minerals is a key planning consideration discussed and that great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction and that decisions on planning applications should be made without delay.
- 5.16. As discussed above officers have concluded that there is a very real acute need for mineral extraction in West Berkshire to meet the needs of both the construction industry and the nearby tile factory. It is clear that the level of consented reserves in West Berkshire is currently at the lowest level seen in decades and new permissions are required to maintain a steady and adequate supply.
- 5.17. Officers accept that the locality has, historically, seen a significant level of mineral extraction as such operations have been undertaken in the Kennet Valley for decades. However aggregates are a key component fundamental

to the construction industry, and like all minerals aggregates can only be worked where they occur. Reference has been made to there being aggregates being available elsewhere, and whilst this is recognised by officers the proposals will enable a locally won source of aggregates to meet local requirements, which is considered to be a more sustainable option than to import a remote source to meet local needs.

- 5.18. Reference has been made to the Mortimer Quarry site, located off Welshman's Road in Mortimer being able to meet the demand of the local construction industry and the tile factory. Officers can confirm that this site is actually located in Hampshire and whilst all vehicles serving that site do so via roads in West Berkshire the reserves and output from this site cannot be taken into account in respect of the calculation for the need to maintain a steady and adequate supply of minerals in West Berkshire.
- 5.19. It is a well known fact that aggregates do cross administrative boundaries, and also that the Mortimer Quarry site has been operational for many years (well in excess of a decade). As such officers consider that whilst there will be minerals from the Mortimer quarry that meet construction demand in West Berkshire this is not a "new" factor and as such this pattern of transportation has been ongoing for many years and would therefore have been taken into account in the average sales data used to assess the need for this site as set out above at 4.46.
- 5.20. Reference has been made to the application site being within the "3 km exclusion zone" around AWE Aldermaston. For the sake of clarity part of the site is in the "inner zone" with part (phase B) being in the "middle zone". However these zones around AWE are not "exclusion zones" in that development in such areas is not prohibited they are merely consultation zones (primarily for residential development) that ensure that the appropriate parties are consulted on planning applications to consider the implications in respect of AWE.

Amenity and Landscape

- 5.21. Considerable concern has been raised in respect of the amenity impacts of the proposed extraction operations, the infilling of the site and the traffic associated with the proposals. Reference has been made to the noise and dust impacts that may be generated by the operations, together with the fumes associated with the plant operating on site and vehicles associated with the extractive and infilling operations. These are key planning considerations and have been clearly been taken into account by officers and the technical statutory and non-statutory consultees when considering the development proposals.

- 5.22. As detailed above the proposals have been fully considered against the planning policy context that relate to the amenity impacts of development proposals. The Council's Environmental Health officers, who provide technical advice on the amenity impacts of development are satisfied that, subject to the imposition of conditions, the amenity impacts likely to be generated by the various elements of the proposals are considered acceptable.
- 5.23. The proposals include a number of mitigation measures to minimise the impacts of the proposals on the locality. Soils stripped from the site to enable the extraction operations are proposed to be stored in soil bunds that have been located such that they will provide both visual and acoustic screening to the nearby sensitive receptors. The site will be worked on a phased basis and a number of conditions are recommended that will assist in mitigating any adverse amenity impacts of the development to an acceptable level. Thus the level of amenity impacts of the proposals on the nearby receptors, such as residential properties, the nearby school and the users of the public rights of way network are considered acceptable.
- 5.24. Officers recognise that the amenity bunds are themselves alien features in the landscape, but the visual and acoustic benefits of such temporary bunds are considered to outweigh the landscape character impacts. In addition the proposals, which include new hedgerow and copse planting together with the proposal to restore the site to create smaller scale fields than found at present, are also considered by officers to be landscape benefits that accord with the development plan.
- 5.25. Reference has been made to the impact of light pollution from the proposals. Officers can confirm that the development proposals do not include the provision of flood lighting, however a condition is proposed that would ensure that if floodlighting is to be provided then details of the floodlights and a lighting scheme would be required to ensure that the Authority retains control over any adverse impacts that may be generated.

Rights of way impacts

- 5.26. Concern has been raised in respect of the impacts of the proposals on the rights of way network, as discussed above the Council's Public Rights of way officers are satisfied that, throughout the duration of the operations the level of impacts experienced by users of the rights of way network, whilst being adverse, is not of sufficient a level to warrant the refusal of permission. In addition the loss of enjoyment to users is only temporary, albeit for many years, and upon the completion of the operations the

proposals will provide an additional permitted link bringing with it benefits to the local network.

Hydrology and flooding

- 5.27. Concern has been raised over the hydrological impacts of the proposals and the potential for the proposals to exacerbate the likelihood of flooding in the locality as a consequence of the proposals. As detailed above these matters have been considered at some length by the Planning Authority, the Environment Agency, the Councils Sustainable Drainage Officers and the applicant.
- 5.28. Particular concern has been raised over the proposal to backfill the mineral void with inert fill and the potential impacts of this alteration to groundwater flows that could result in the exacerbation of flooding issues.
- 5.29. The Environment Agency have confirmed that they do not consider this to be a significant issue as the inert fill will, in the main, be placed in the saturated zone and therefore the ground will be saturated and because of this there will only be limited groundwater flow implications. As such the Environment Agency has confirmed that they do not consider that the extraction of minerals and replacement with inert fill will not have a significant groundwater impacts.
- 5.30. The Council's sustainable drainage team have raised similar concerns over the backfilling of the voidspace created by mineral extraction with the inert fill which will have a lower permeability. However having considered the proposals and the information that has been provided the sustainable drainage team have confirmed that, subject to the imposition of conditions, including the provision of a scheme of infilling to ensure that groundwater flows across the site are maintained there are no objections to the proposals.
- 5.31. In terms of surface water flooding the proposals will result in a net increase in surface flood water storage capacity throughout the life of the extraction and infilling operations. Upon the completion of restoration the applicant has confirmed that the proposals will deliver at least 15,000m³ of additional surface water storage capacity. As stated above at 4.13 officers consider this additional capacity to be very much a conservative estimate and suggest that the actual additional capacity that could be delivered could be significantly greater.

Restoration proposals

- 5.32. Concern has been raised over whether sufficient inert infill material will be available to facilitate the proposed restoration of the application site to a land based after use of agriculture and nature conservation. Whilst this concern is understood it is not considered by officers to be a significant an issue to warrant a delay in the determination of the application or the refusal of the proposals. The RMLP, which recognises the pressures for mineral extraction in the Kennet Valley, sets out an overall restoration strategy for the Kennet Valley that seeks to ensure that the Kennet valley should be maintained and enhanced and generally see extraction areas restored to land based afteruse. The proposals clearly seek to meet these overarching objectives.
- 5.33. The applicant has put forward the proposals on the basis of the best available information at this time and there is no evidence to suggest that what has been proposed is not achievable. Should, when the site is operating, it become apparent that there is a lack of infill material available then it is possible that the applicant may have to revise the restoration scheme. Such a revision would be likely to form a revised planning application when the merits and implications of such a proposed variation of the restoration could be fully considered.

Extent of adverse impacts

- 5.34. A number of parties making representations have made reference to the length of time that the site will be operational. Officers accept that the proposed life of the site of 17-18 years is a long period of time and that some people would not consider such a time scale to constitute a “temporary” development. However the proposals are of a temporary nature, in that in the future the mineral extraction operations and restoration of the site using inert waste materials will cease and the site restored to a mix of agriculture and nature conservation uses.
- 5.35. Generally speaking there is always a balance to be made in respect of mineral sites with regard to the level of impacts generated, and the time the impacts are experienced. This is because there is a finite volume of material being extracted and a finite volume of material being infilled. In most cases it is amenity impacts of the extraction operations themselves and the associated traffic that generate the greatest level of concerns. A site can be worked at a low level of intensity, for a long period generating a low level of impacts over a long period of time, or conversely a site could be worked very intensively generating a high level of impacts for a short period of time. Officers consider that this application is actually well balanced and that the level of impacts generated are acceptable.

Cumulative impacts

- 5.36. As detailed above officers are of the view that the proposals will generate adverse impacts however when considered individually the impacts of the proposals are not considered to be unacceptable. However it is also necessary to consider the adverse impacts cumulatively when balancing the adverse impacts of the development against the positive aspects of the proposals.
- 5.37. Having considered the adverse impacts of the proposals in a cumulative way officers remain satisfied that the combined adverse impacts of these proposals do not outweigh the matters that weigh in favour of the proposals, namely the acute need for minerals in West Berkshire, the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development and the long term benefits that will be realised upon the completed of the mineral workings.

6.0. STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 6.1. In considering this proposal officers have taken into account the Environmental Statement which was submitted under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (as amended). Officers are content that the Environmental Statement complies with the above regulations and that sufficient information has been provided to assess the environmental impact of the application.

7.0. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. The number of sites producing aggregates in West Berkshire has been in decline over the last decade with the total number of sites having declined from 10 in 2002, down to 3 today. The total volume of permitted reserves has also declined from 4.3 million tonnes in 2002 down to less than 1 million tonnes. If the average level of sales seen in West Berkshire over the last 10 years were to be maintained then the remaining permitted sand and gravel reserves would be exhausted in around 2 years time.
- 7.2. In light of this position officers are satisfied that there is, at present, a very real and acute need for new minerals sites in West Berkshire to maintain the steady and adequate supply of aggregates, as required by National policy, to ensure local developments can source locally won raw materials. These proposals would facilitate the provision of 200,000 tonnes of

aggregates per year for a 12-13 year period to assist in satisfying the demand from the local construction industry along with supplying the nearby Marley Tile Factory, that is a regionally important tile manufacturing facility, with sufficient material to maintain the supply of concrete roofing tiles across the South east of England.

- 7.3. The application site is not constrained by any international or national level constraints, lying outside the AONB, and it is relatively remote from nearby residential properties and other sensitive receptors. The proposed access would be directly onto the A340, part of the primary road network and a route designated as part of West Berkshire's freight network. The proposed S106 agreement and conditions would minimise the impacts of the proposals and secure funding to mitigate the impact of the traffic on the local highway network.
- 7.4. Officers recognise that the proposals will generate adverse amenity impacts, both through the physical operations involved with the extraction and restoration using inert fill and through the traffic that would be generated by the proposals to facilitate the transportation of minerals away from the site and the transportation of inert materials to infill and restore the site to a mix of agriculture and nature conservation. However the proposed conditions and mitigation measures proposed are considered sufficient to mitigate the impacts of the development to an acceptable level.
- 7.5. Considerable concern has been raised over the potential flooding related impacts of the proposals, having considered these issues at length the Environment Agency and the Council's Sustainable Drainage Officers (the Planning Authority's expert advisors on such matters) are satisfied that the proposals will not generate an unacceptable level of impact. The proposals will provide a minimum of 15,000 m³ of additional flood storage capacity through the lowering of the land across large areas of the site upon the completion of restoration.
- 7.6. The proposals will, in the long term, deliver a number of benefits, including enhancement of the Public Rights of Way Network, improvements to the landscape character of the area, ecological and biodiversity enhancements.
- 7.7. Having considered and balanced all these issues, and considered the proposals against the development plan, Officers consider that there are strong reasons to support the proposal. Therefore the development proposed is considered to be acceptable and a conditional approval is justifiable for the reasons set out in this report.

8.0. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1. It is recommended that authority be DELEGATED to the Head of Planning and Countryside to GRANT CONDITIONAL PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement by the 12th August 2013 covering the heads of terms set out below.

OR in the absence of a completed legal agreement by the 12th August 2013, and where it is expedient to do so, to DELEGATE to the Head of Planning and Countryside to REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the following reason:

The development fails to provide an appropriate scheme of works or off site mitigation measures to accommodate the impact of development on local infrastructure, services or amenities or provide an appropriate mitigation measure such as a planning obligation. The proposal is therefore contrary to government advice Policy CS5 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (adopted July 2012) as well as West Berkshire District Council's adopted SPG4/04 – Delivering Investment from Sustainable Development.

Proposed Heads of Terms for S106:

1. A contribution of £60,000 to mitigate the highways impacts generated by the proposal which will contribute towards: improvements in Aldermaston wharf, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities along the A340, improved pedestrian crossings in Aldermaston wharf and /or improvements to the A340/A4 roundabout.
2. A scheme of road condition monitoring around the access of the site, throughout the life of the site, to include provision for re-surfacing of a stretch of road (approximately 100m) if the monitoring reveals that re-surfacing with a new 50mm wearing course is required.
3. An obligation to create and maintain an 8 metre wide strip either side of the River Enborne, Smithereens field and the three conservation ponds and surrounding grassland for nature conservation purposes for the life of the Woolhampton Quarry Trust Nature Reserve (WQNRT), creating a wildlife corridor between Shalford Bridge and the River Kennet.
4. An obligation to extend the life of the WQTNR to cover a period of 30 years to 31st December 2044 (this will need to be linked to the existing agreements in place that relate to the WQTNR).
5. The provision of 4 contributions of £5,000 to be made to the WQTNR. The first

payment being one year after the commencement of development, and then every five years there after until all contributions have been made.

Proposed Conditions

1. Commencement of development

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission. Written notification of the date of commencement shall be sent to the Local Planning Authority within seven days of such commencement.

Reason: To comply with Section 91(1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and having regard to the protection of the AONB and to enable the Local Planning Authority to review the desirability of the development against up to date planning policies at a National, Regional and local level should it not be started within a reasonable time.

2 Temporary Permission

The extraction of minerals shall cease not later than the 13 years from the date upon which extraction operations commence. The deposit of reclamation material shall cease not later than 15 years upon which extraction operations commenced. All buildings, plant, machinery, site infrastructure, floodlighting, foundations, hardstandings and haul roads shall be removed not later than 16 years from the date upon which mineral extraction operations commenced. All restoration operations to agriculture shall be completed not later than 16 years from the date upon which extraction operations commenced.

Reason: To restrict the period of operations in accordance with the planning application and in the interest of amenity in accordance with policy 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy WLP31 of Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

3 Approved Plans and Details

The development hereby shall be carried out in complete accordance with the following submitted documents and plans:

- Application plan 0702/W/A dated 27/03/12
- Application forms dated the 18/05/12

- Location plan 0707/W/L dated 19/04/11
- Proposed Site Access Plan 13106-05 dated November 2011
- Environmental Statement dated May 2012
- Environmental Statement Volume 2, consultants report, dated May 2012
- Additional information document dated December 2012 including Appendix 1: Materials Schedule, Appendix 2: Supplementary Landscape Report, Appendix 3: Hydrology and Hydrogeology Report, Appendix 4: Flood Risk Assessment and Appendix 5: Sequential Test Report
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 1, 0702/W/PO/Y1 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 2, 0702/W/PO/Y2 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 3, 0702/W/PO/Y3 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 4, 0702/W/PO/Y4 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 5, 0702/W/PO/Y5 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 6, 0702/W/PO/Y6 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 7, 0702/W/PO/Y7 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 8, 0702/W/PO/Y8 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 9, 0702/W/PO/Y9 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 10, 0702/W/PO/Y10 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 11, 0702/W/PO/Y11 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 12, 0702/W/PO/Y12 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 13, 0702/W/PO/Y13 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 14, 0702/W/PO/Y14 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 15, 0702/W/PO/Y15 dated 04/12/12
- Illustrative progressive operations plan Yr 16, 0702/W/PO/Y16 dated 04/12/12
- Bund location plan 0702/W/BL/a dated 19/11/12
- Planting details plan 0702/W/PD/1 dated 05/12/12
- Illustrative restoration plan 0702/W/R/2 dated 04/12/12
- Figure 1 to the submitted Noise assessment completed by ANV Acoustic Noise and Vibration dated November 2011
- Letters From Hafren Water to the Environment Agency dated the 27/02/13 and 14/03/13 including attachments

the details of which are approved except as amended by the following conditions

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to adequately control the development, to minimise its impact on the amenities of the local area in accordance with policy 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001

and policy WLP31 of Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

4

Phasing of the works

No extraction operations shall take place;

- in phase A2 until the completion of extraction in phase A1;
- in phase A3 until the completion of extraction in phase A2;
- in phase B1 until the completion of reclamation in phase A1 and the completion of extraction in phase A2;
- in phase B2 until the completion of extraction in phase B1 and the completion of reclamation in phase A2 and the reinstatement of phase A1;
- in phase B3 until the completion of extraction in phase B2 and the completion of reclamation in phase B1 and the reinstatement of phase A2;
- in phase C1 until the completion of extraction in phase B3 and the completion of reclamation in phase B2 and the reinstatement of phase B1;
- in phase C2 until the completion of extraction in phase C1 and the completion of reclamation in phase B3 and the reinstatement of phase B2;
- in phase C3 until the completion of extraction in phase C2 and the completion of reclamation in phase C1 and the reinstatement of phase B3;

Reason: To ensure the progressive working of the site in accordance with the application and the interests of local amenity in accordance with policy WLP30 the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

5.

Access

No mineral extraction operations shall take place until the full details of the proposed highway works, including the associated engineering operations and landscape planting, following the principles as set out on plans 13106-05 dated Nov 2011 have been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works forming part of the approved details shall be completed before any of mineral extraction operations take place and shall thereafter be maintained as effective during all times that the site is operational.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and to accord with policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and policies CS 13 and CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

6.

Notification of commencement of development

The developer shall notify the Local Planning Authority in writing within 14 days of the dates of the following:

- i) commencement of each phase of mineral extraction;
- ii) completion of each phase of mineral extraction;
- iii) commencement of each phase of reclamation operations;
- iv) completion of each phase of reclamation;
- v) completion of re-instatement following the completion of reclamation;
- vi) completion of final restoration under this planning permission.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development and to monitor the site to ensure compliance with the planning permission in the interests of local amenity in accordance with policy WLP30 the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

7

Materials permitted in restoration and storage on site

The materials hereby permitted to be deposited at the site for use in restoration shall be restricted to inert construction, demolition and excavation wastes and soils. No processing, or storage of minerals or reclamation materials, other than soil and overburden storage, shall take place at the site.

Reason: To accord with the application, in the interests of amenity in accordance with policies 7 and 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

8

Display of conditions

A copy the planning permission including all documents and plans showing the method and direction of mineral working, reclamation, reinstatement and restoration hereby permitted and any documents and amendments subsequently approved shall be available at the site office during working hours during the period the site office is permitted, and shall be made known to any person(s) given responsibility for the management and control of operations.

Reason: To ensure that all employees may readily make themselves aware of the requirements of this permission so as to ensure the orderly operation of the site in accordance with policy WLP30 of Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006.

9

Permitted Development

Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 19, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) or any order amending, replacing or re-enacting that Order -

- (i) No fixed plant or machinery, buildings, structures and erections shall be erected, extended, installed, rearranged, replaced, repaired, altered or placed at the site.

without prior planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To accord with the application, in the interests of amenity in accordance with policies 7 and 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026..

10

Skips for storage

Without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority no more than 4 skips, for use solely for the storage of imported material unsuitable for use in the reclamation operations, shall be located at the site.

Reason: To accord with the application, in the interests of amenity in accordance with policies 7 and 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

11

Production limits

The total output of mineral from the site shall not exceed a level of 200,000 tonnes per rolling 12 month period. From the date of this permission the operator shall maintain records of the monthly exportations of mineral and receipt of reclamation

material and shall make them available to the Local Planning Authority at any time upon request. All records shall be kept for at least 12 months.

Reason: To accord with the application and in the interests of rural amenity and highway safety in accordance with policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and policies CS 13 and CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

12

Record of Vehicle Movements

A written record shall be maintained at the site office of all movements into and out of the site by HGV's. Such records shall contain the vehicles registration and operating company's identity, time/date of movement and details of load. The records shall be made available for inspection by the Local Planning Authority if requested and retained for a period of not less than 12 months.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to monitor operations in accordance with policy 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 Incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

13

Hours of working

Except in emergencies to maintain safe quarry working (which shall be notified to the Local Planning Authority as soon as practicable):-

Other than pumping required for authorised dewatering no operations or activities authorised by this permission including the receipt, movement and dispatch of goods vehicles shall be carried out at the site except between the following times:

0700 - 1800 Mondays to Fridays

0700 - 1300 Saturdays

and no such work shall be carried out on Sundays, Public Holidays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the local area in accordance with policy 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

14

Progress Plan

A progress plan at a scale of 1:2500 showing details of the progress of extraction, reclamation, re-instatement and restoration operations, together with quantities of topsoil, subsoil in each heap on 1 October during each year of the life of the site shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the 1st November of that same year.

Reasons: To ensure the orderly development of the site and to ensure the protection of all soils for restoration purposes in accordance with policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

15

Archaeology

No soil stripping shall take place within the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved programme.

Reason: To secure the recording of any archaeological interest in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and policy CS 19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

16

Sheeting of Heavy Goods Vehicles

No loaded (heavy) goods vehicles shall leave the site unsheeted except those only carrying loads that are made up solely of material in excess of 500mm.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and safeguarding the local environment in accordance policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001, policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and policies CS 13 and CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

17

Traffic management scheme

No mineral extraction operations shall take place development until a Traffic management scheme has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The traffic management scheme shall include:

- Details of the proposed haul route between the extraction site and the Beenham Tile Factory, including potential diversions or measures to be employed should the primary haul route be inaccessible.
- The measures to be employed to make sure all HGV drivers are aware of the proposed haul route and adhere to it.
- The measures to be employed to ensure that HGV's are not released from the site onto the public highway between the hours of 0830 and 0900 Monday to Friday during school term times.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and safeguarding the local environment in accordance policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006, policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and policies CS 13 and CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

18

Visibility splays

No mineral extraction operations shall take place until the visibility splays of 2.4m by 160m shown on the approved drawing 13106-05 have been provided. These areas shall thereafter be kept free of all obstructions to visibility over a height of 0.6 metres above carriageway level throughout the life of the site.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and safeguarding the local environment in accordance policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006, policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and policies CS 13 and CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

19

Extraction and reclamation boundaries

No extraction or placement of reclamation material shall take place within the margins indicated on the approved plans and in particular no extraction whatsoever shall take place:

- within 15m of any public highway
- within 20m of any identified badger sett
- within 5m of any other site boundary
- within 3m of any soil mound
- within 20m of the River Enborne
- within 25m of the Kennet and Avon Canal
- within 10m of the 'ditch to North of Phase B' with recharge ditch on the 'working' side

and the slopes from these margins into the excavations shall not exceed one vertical to two horizontal unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No operations shall commence in any phase until the margins of the extraction area referred to on the approved plans have been pegged out and the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority has been received to the pegged out margins. The pegs shall be maintained in the approved positions for the duration of operations in each phase. The margin to the watercourses shall be measured from the top of bank, defined as the point at which the bank meets the level of the surrounding land and shall be applied on both sides where a watercourse crosses the development area.

Reason: To resist the operations in the interests of rural amenity in accordance with policies 6, 7 and 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy WLP30 and WLP31 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies CS 14 and CS 17 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

20

Scheme of reclamation

No reclamation operations shall take place in any phase (phase A, B or C) until a scheme of reclamation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for that phase. The scheme shall include the steps to be taken to ensure that groundwater flow within the site is maintained to reflect the existing groundwater movement that reflects the regional pattern. The scheme shall also include details of a monitoring strategy to assess groundwater levels and movement for each phase of reclamation. The reclamation of each phase of the site shall thereafter be carried out in complete accordance with the approved scheme of reclamation for that phase.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents in accordance with policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and policies 6 and 7 of the

Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

21

Flood risk

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) dated April 2012 by Halfren Water including letters by Halfren Water dated 27 February 2013 and 14 March 2013 and the following mitigation measures detailed shall be implemented in full and subsequently maintained in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the approved details , or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority. The approved development shall:

- Limit the surface water run-off generated by the 1 in 100 year critical storm so that it will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site and not increase the risk of flooding off-site.
- Where temporary bunds are located within the floodplain they should be aligned parallel to flow.
- Ground levels of restored land are not to be raised above pre-development ground levels.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents in accordance with policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policies CS 14 and CS 16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

22

Flood storage

Compensatory flood storage, as detailed in Plan references 0702/W/FC/1 (Bund 6) and 0702/W/FC/2 (Bund 7-10) dated 14 March 2013, must be provided prior to the construction of the corresponding bund/s.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents in accordance with policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policies CS 14 and CS 16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026

23

Surface water management scheme during extraction

No mineral extraction shall take place in any phase until a surface water drainage scheme for the phase of the site as it is worked, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in full accordance with the approved details as the mineral extraction operations take place. The scheme shall demonstrate that the proposed drainage strategy is able to cope with up to the 1 in 100 year plus suitable allowance for climate change storm event and detail the maintenance and general management of the proposed drainage strategy.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents in accordance with policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policies CS 14 and CS 16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

24

Surface water management scheme during reclamation

No reclamation operations shall take place in any phase until a surface water drainage scheme for the phase of the site as it is restored, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details as part of the reclamation operations.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents in accordance with policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policies CS 14 and CS 16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

25

River Enborne

No development shall take place in phase B until the full details of improvements to, or replacement of the existing bridge over the River Enborne, including design and specification, have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The improvements or replacement shall be carried out as approved prior to the commencement of mineral extraction in Phase B and any subsequent variations must be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents in accordance with policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

26

Scheme of Groundwater Monitoring

No mineral extraction operations shall take place until a scheme of groundwater monitoring has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:

- The location of boreholes to be monitored
- The method and frequency of monitoring
- The reporting methods

The approved scheme shall be implemented in full and carried out until the completion of all restoration activities.

Reason: To protect groundwater resources in accordance with policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policies CS 14 and CS 16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

27

Daytime noise levels

The noise levels arising from the development shall not exceed 55dB (LAeq) (1 hour) freefield at any noise sensitive locations identified as S1, S2, S3, S4, U1, U2 and U3 on Figure 1 to the submitted Noise assessment completed by ANV Acoustic Noise and Vibration dated November 2011 between the hours of 07.00 and 18.00 on Mondays to Fridays and 07.00 and 13.00 on Saturdays, excluding Bank and Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents in accordance with policy OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007) and policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

28

Reversing alarms

The use of reversing alarms on any vehicles permanently stationed at the site shall be restricted to white noise or silent types.

Reason: To ensure minimum disturbance from the operations and avoidance of nuisance to the local community in accordance with policy OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 and in accordance with policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

29

De-watering Noise

Noise from all dewatering operations carried out during the night-time period, 18:00-07:00 hours, shall not exceed 42dB(A) LAeq,1h (free field) when measured at noise sensitive locations identified as S1, S2, S3, S4, U1, U2 and U3 on Figure 1 to the submitted Noise assessment completed by ANV Acoustic Noise and Vibration dated November 2011

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents in accordance with policy OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007) and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

30

Temporary operations

Notwithstanding condition (27) above, the noise levels arising from temporary operations shall not exceed 70dB (LAeq) (1 hour) freefield at the specified noise sensitive locations identified as S1, S2, S3, S4, U1, U2 and U3 on Figure 1 to the submitted Noise assessment completed by ANV Acoustic Noise and Vibration dated November 2011. Temporary operations shall not exceed a total of 8 weeks in any calendar year period. Temporary operations involve soil stripping, soil bund formation and removal, and soil replacement operations only.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents in accordance with policy OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007) and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-

2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

31

Welfare facilities

No development, other than site preparation works, shall take place development until the full details of the office and welfare facilities have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details to be submitted shall include:

- Details of site office to be provided, and the measures to be employed to maintain the floor level of the building above 56.69 aod
- Details of the proposed voids for the site office to allow the free ingress and egress of floodwaters
- Details of the weighbridge and any associated office
- Layout of car parking areas to include spaces for vehicle parking and turning
- Details of any storage compounds or associated structures

This development shall take place in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details until the completion of mineral extraction and reclamation operations.

Reason: To ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities and to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking which would be a danger to other road users; also, to ensure vehicles enter and leave the highway in forward gear in accordance with policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and policies CS 13 and CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

32

Floodlighting scheme

Details of any floodlighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the erection of any floodlighting. These details shall include: the height of the floodlighting posts, intensity of the lights (specified in lux levels), spread of light including approximate light spillage to the rear of floodlighting posts (in metres), any measures proposed to minimise the impact of the floodlighting or disturbance through glare (such as shrouding/and the times when such lights will be illuminated (and shall be so designed to minimise the

potential nuisance of light spillage on adjoining properties and highways). The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of local amenity in accordance with policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

33

Wheel cleaning facilities

No mineral extraction shall take place until a scheme detailing the installation of wheel cleaning facilities has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include

- Details for monitoring the highway to assess the need for installation of wheel cleaning facilities.
- Time scale for the implementation of the approved scheme if it is agreed between the Local Planning Authority and Highway Authority that wheel cleaning facilities are required.
- The location for the siting of any facilities required.
- Details of the surfacing of areas between the highway and the wheel cleaning facilities.
- The full details of the wheel cleaning facilities, including maintenance procedures.

The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved scheme. Any wheel cleaning facilities that are installed shall be maintained and retained until the completion of all soil replacement operations and be suitable for use in all weather conditions. All heavy goods vehicles exiting the site shall pass through and use any wheel washing/cleaning equipment provided.

Reason: In the interests of road safety to avoid spillage of loose material onto the carriageway in the interests of road safety and in the interests of amenity in accordance with policies WLP27 and WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001, policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and policies CS 13 and CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

34

Dust Scheme

No soil stripping shall take place until a scheme and programme of the measures for the monitoring and suppression of dust, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The scheme shall include, amongst other matters:

- (a) the suppression of dust caused by the moving and storage of soil and overburden, minerals and other materials within the site;
- (b) dust suppression on haul roads;
- (c) the suppression of dust caused by the deposit of reclamation materials.

The approved scheme shall be implemented in full and complied with at all times throughout the duration of the development.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the locality from the effects of dust and mud arising from the development in accordance with policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

35

Minerals stockpile height

No mineral stockpiles at the site shall exceed 4 metres in height, above original ground level.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the locality from the effects of dust and mud arising from the development in accordance with policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

36

Impact of wildlife site

Prior to commencement of development details of a cut off trench (including other measures that will be used if this is not enough to prevent draw down) to be constructed to prevent de-watering of the adjacent Local wildlife Site will be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. These details will include the locations of bore holes and their monitoring. Such approved cut-off ditch to be maintained until the adjacent mineral void has been filled and restored. The

development shall take place in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details until the completion of mineral extraction operations

Reason: In the interests of wildlife in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, policies 7 and 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001, policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy CS 17 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

37

Badger Mitigation

During the period of April to October preceding the intended commencement of extraction within phase B a systematic badger survey shall be undertaken of the relevant phase. The results of the badger survey, along with mitigation measures proposed to minimise the impacts of the development on the badgers in the locality shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of extraction in each phase. The development shall take place in accordance with the approved details and mitigation measures implemented and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details until the completion of mineral extraction and reclamation operations

Reason: In the interests of wildlife in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, policies 7 and 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001, policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy CS 17 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

38

Conservation pond details

No development shall take place in phase B until the details of the 4 new ponds to be created upon the completion of extraction have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The details to be provided shall include the proposed cross sections, planting details and long term use, maintenance and management of the ponds.

The scheme shall include the following features:

- shallow margins to the ponds capable of supporting marginal vegetation
- varied outline shape to the ponds to maximise the ecologically valuable

- edge habitat
- locally native plant species of UK genetic provenance.

The development shall take place in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details until the completion of mineral extraction and reclamation operations.

Reason: In the interests of wildlife in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, policies 7 and 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001, policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy CS 17 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

39

Early planting

No development shall take place until a detailed scheme of early landscape planting for the site in alignment with the principals set out on plan 0702/W/PD/1 dated 05/12/12 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities, an implementation programme and details of written specifications including cultivation, other operations involving tree, shrub and grass establishment. The scheme shall ensure;

- Completion of the approved landscape scheme within the first planting season and following completion of each respective stage of the development.
- Any trees shrubs or plants that die or become seriously damaged within five years of this development shall be replaced in the following year by plants of the same size and species.

The Planting areas identified 1-6 on approved plan 0702/W/PD/1 shall be completed in, or prior to, the first planting season after the commencement of mineral extraction or the first planting season following grant of permission, whichever is the earliest.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of early landscaping in accordance with policies 7 and 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001, policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

40

Phased Restoration Landscaping

Prior to the completion of reclamation operations in any one phase (phase A, B or C) a detailed scheme of landscaping for the phase, in alignment with the principals set out on 0702/W/R/2 dated 4/12/12, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities, an implementation programme and details of written specifications including cultivation, other operations involving tree, shrub and grass establishment. The scheme shall ensure;

- a) Completion of the approved landscape scheme within the first planting season following completion of each respective stage of the development.
- b) Details of soil preparation, plant protection, watering and weeding.
- c) Any trees shrubs or plants that die or become seriously damaged within five years of this development shall be replaced in the following year by plants of the same size and species.

The development shall take place in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of early landscaping in accordance with policies 7 and 18 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001, policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

41

Landscape Management Plan

No mineral extraction shall take place until a landscape and ecological management plan for the site including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for a minimum period of 10 years has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The management plan shall cover any areas of existing landscaping including woodlands within the application site, and land under the applicant's control, as identified on the approved plan 0702/W/A dated 27/03/12 and also include any areas of proposed landscaping. The landscape management plan should form part of a combined package in association with the Estate and Conservation

management proposals and should be for both the short term and long term and include the following landscape and ecological elements:

- a. Overall landscape objectives
- b. Detailed objectives for each landscape element
- c. Advanced planting
- d. Phasing of planting
- e. Establishment
- f. Thinning and pruning
- g. Ongoing management and maintenance.
- h. Details of the long term ecological aims and objectives for the site, particularly with regard to the River Enborne corridor and the ponds/wetlands
- i. Details of the extent and type of new planting (NB all planting to use locally native species of UK genetic provenance)
- j. Details of any new habitat created on site
- k. Details of treatment of site boundaries and/or buffers around water bodies
- l. Details of enhancements to the River Enborne and its banks, including the potential use of large woody debris to enhance diversity within the channel.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved landscape and ecological management plan.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of early landscaping in accordance with policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

42

Tree protection scheme

No development (including site clearance and any other preparatory works) shall commence on site until a scheme for the protection of trees to be retained is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such a scheme shall include a plan showing the location of the protective fencing, and shall specify the type of protective fencing or delineation. Such fencing or delineation shall be erected prior to any development works taking place and at least 2 working days notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority that it has been erected. It shall be maintained and retained for the full duration of works or until such time as agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. No activities or storage of materials whatsoever shall take place within the protected areas without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of early landscaping in accordance with policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

43

Haul route crossing of public footpath

No mineral extraction operations shall commence until details of requisite crossings of public rights of way by the haul route, and the separation arrangements where rights of way are adjacent to the haul route, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The haul route crossings and separation arrangements shall be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to the extraction of minerals and shall be maintained at all times. The submitted details shall ensure that public footpaths shall be kept clear of mud and detritus, generated by the mineral extraction and reclamation operations, at all times.

Reason: In the interests of rural amenity and the safety of footpath users in accordance with policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

44

Timing and Notice of soil stripping

The stripping of topsoil and subsoil shall only take between the months of September to October or February to March and at least 7 days notice but not more than 21 days notice shall be given in writing to the Local Planning Authority before each phase or sub-phase of soil stripping is to commence. If it is intended to undertake soil stripping operations outside the months permitted by this condition then, prior to the commencement of soil stripping in any relevant area a scheme of soil stripping shall be submitted to and be approved by the Local Planning Authority. Such a scheme shall detail the reasoning behind the need to strip soils outside the months permitted by these conditions and the steps to be taken and measures to be employed to ensure the protection of nesting birds and the protection of the soil resource.

Reason: In order to mitigate the impacts of soils stripping on nesting birds and to protect the soils and ensure the satisfactory restoration of the land in accordance with policies 18, 20 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy CS 17 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

45

Scheme of soil management

Prior to the stripping of topsoils or subsoils in each phase (phase A, B or C) a Scheme of Soil Movement for that phase shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such scheme shall:

- Be submitted at least 2 months prior to the expected commencement of soil stripping.
- Include a detailed Agricultural Land Classification and soil resources survey to describe the soil resources available on the site to a depth of 120cm and to describe the impact on agricultural land quality of the proposed restoration scheme.
- Where subsoils are not to be retained, identify those soils and soil substitutes intended to be used in their place.
- Identify clearly the origin, intermediate and final locations of soils for use in the agricultural restoration, as defined by soil units, together with details balancing the quantities, depths and textures of topsoil and subsoil/subsoil substitute horizons, and areas involved.

The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In order to protect the soils and ensure the satisfactory restoration of the land in accordance with policies 18, 20 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

46

Soil stripping and placement methods

The stripping and handling of topsoil and subsoil shall only take place in fine, dry weather and when the soil is in a dry and friable condition. Except for the excavators and dump trucks engaged in soil stripping operations the movement of all plant, machinery and vehicles shall be controlled to ensure that no such plant, machinery and vehicles traverse land prior to the stripping of topsoil and subsoil. The dump trucks and backactors involved in the stripping operations shall be controlled, to minimise compaction of the soil.

For soils containing more than 18% clay the criteria for determining dry and friable may be based on a field assessment of the soils wetness in relation to its lower plastic limit according to the following test. "An assessment shall be made by attempting to roll a ball of soil into a thread on the surface of a clean plain glazed tile (or plate glass square) using light pressure from the flat of the hand. If a long thread of less than 3mm diameter can be formed, the soil is wetter than the lower plastic limit and soil moving should not take place until the soils have dried out. If the soil crumbles before a long thread of 3mm diameter can be formed, then the soil is dry enough to move. This assessment shall be carried out on representative samples on each major soil type". For all soil types (including sandy loams, loamy

sands and sands) no soil handling should proceed during and shortly after significant rainfall, and/or when there are any puddles on the soil surface.

Reason: In order to protect the soils and ensure the satisfactory restoration of the land in accordance with policies 18, 20 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

47

Storage of topsoil, subsoil and overburden

All topsoil, subsoil, overburden and soil-making material shall be retained on site and none shall be sold off or removed. The stripped topsoil, subsoil and overburden shall be stored separately in positions shown on the approved plans or used in the restoration of the phase as indicated on the approved plans. Soil mounds shall be sown with grass seed within three months of their construction and shall be so maintained until the soils are required for use in the restoration of the site. Weeds shall be controlled by cutting or by the use of herbicides. The soil mounds will have a 3 metre margin to the extraction and reclamation phases. Different soil types shall be stored separately. No subsoil or overburden shall be stored in any stockpile unless the topsoil has first been stripped from the storage area. No overburden shall be stored in any stockpile unless the topsoil and subsoil has first been stripped from the storage area. The seed mixture and the application rates are to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in writing no less than one month before it is expected to complete the formation of the storage bunds.

Reason: In order to protect soils and ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site in accordance with policies 18, 20 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

48

Soil mound heights

All topsoil, subsoil, overburden and soil-making material shall be retained on site and none shall be sold off or removed. Topsoil shall not be stored to a height greater than 3m and subsoil shall not be stored to a height greater than 5m.

Reason: In order to protect the soils and ensure the satisfactory restoration of the land in accordance with policies 18, 20 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

49

Oil tanks/fuel/chemical storage

Any chemical, oil, fuel, lubricant and other potential pollutants shall be stored in containers which shall be sited on an impervious surface and surrounded by a suitable liquid tight bunded compound. The bunded areas shall be capable of containing 110% of the container's total volume and shall enclose within their curtilage all fill and draw pipes, vents, gauges and sight glasses. The vent pipe should be directed downwards into the bund. There must be no drain through the bund floor or walls.

Reason: To minimise the risk of pollution of the water environment and soils in accordance with policy WLP30 of the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire 1998-2006 and policies 6 and 7 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007) and policy CS 14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

50

Reclamation operations

The Reclamation operations shall be undertaken so that no rocks/large stones or other material exceeding 150mm in any dimension or other deleterious material likely to cause physical obstruction to cultivation and maintenance of the surface to be restored, are placed within one metre of the surface of the deposited reclamation material.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site in accordance with policies 18 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

51

Timing of soil replacement

At least 7 days notice but not more than 21 days notice shall be given in writing to the Local Planning Authority before each phase or sub-phase of soil spreading is to commence. No soil shall be replaced until the re-graded reclamation areas have been inspected by the Local Planning Authority and agreement has been reached between the operator and the Local Planning Authority regarding the need for any treatment or re-grading of the areas to be reclaimed. Soil placement operations shall only take place in fine, dry weather and when the soil and ground are in a dry and friable condition (the definition of dry and friable condition set out in condition 46 applies to this condition).

Reason: In order to protect the soils and ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site in accordance with policies 6, 7, 18, 20 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

52

Replacement of subsoil

No subsoils shall be placed until a scheme of subsoil placement, following the principles set out in the Defra guidance for successful reclamation of minerals and waste sites, has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsoil placement shall thereafter be carried out in complete accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site in accordance with policies 18 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

53

Replacement of topsoil

Unless undertaken in complete accordance with a scheme of topsoil placement, to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the placement of topsoils Following the replacement and ripping of the subsoil, the topsoil shall then be evenly spread over the subsoil to a minimum depth of 200mm. The full depth of the topsoil and the top 150mm of the subsoil together with areas upon which topsoil has been stored shall be subsoiled with an agricultural wing tine implement at a spacing not exceeding 1 ½ times the working depth. All stones/rocks exceeding 100mm in any dimension and other deleterious materials shall be removed from the surface and disposed of off site.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site in accordance with policies 18 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

54

Restoration scheme

At least 12 months prior to the commencement of the first phase of subsoil spreading an aftercare scheme detailing those such steps as may be necessary to

bring the land to the required standard for agriculture shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall provide for:

- i) The physical characteristics of the land to be restored, as far as it is practical to do so, to what they were when the land was last used for agriculture as satisfies the requirements of paragraph 3(1) of the 1990 Act;
- ii) A five year period of aftercare in accordance with the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework, specifying the steps to be taken and the period during which they are to be taken, and who will be responsible for taking these steps. The aftercare steps shall include soil testing, the cropping pattern, cultivation practices, remedial treatments including fertiliser application and weed control, water supply, the provision of an efficient field drainage system, seed mixes and shelter belts and hedges.
- iii) An annual aftercare meeting; and
- iv) A detailed annual programme, in accordance with the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority not later than two months prior to the annual aftercare meeting.

The restoration of the site shall take place in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory aftercare of the site in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, policies 18 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and 5 May 2001.

55

Annual aftercare report

Before 31 January of every year during the aftercare period, a report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and the landowner/occupier which shall include:

- i) proposals for managing the land in accordance with the rules of good husbandry including planting, cultivation, seeding, fertilising, draining, watering or otherwise treating the land for the forthcoming 12 months; and
- ii) a record of aftercare operations carried out on the land during the previous 12 months

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory aftercare of the site in accordance with policies 18 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

56

Annual site meeting

Every year during the aftercare period the developer shall arrange a site meeting to be held before 30 May to discuss the detailed annual aftercare programme/annual report prepared in accordance with Condition 56, to which the following parties shall be invited: (a) the Local Planning Authority; (b) the owners of the land within the site; (c) all occupiers of land within the site and (d) the person responsible for undertaking the aftercare steps.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory aftercare of the site in accordance with policies 18 and 21 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 1991-2006 incorporating the alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001.

INFORMATIVES

Definitions used in Conditions

Reclamation materials – Inert construction, demolition and excavation waste and soils

Reclamation operations – Placement of restoration materials in the void created by mineral extraction

Reinstatement operations – Placement of overburden, sub soils and top soils

Restoration operations – The carrying out of seeding and planting operations

Reason for Decision

The number of sites producing aggregates in West Berkshire has been in decline over the last decade with the total number of sites having declined from 10 in 2002, down to 4 in 2012. The total volume of permitted reserves has also declined from 4.3 million tonnes in 2002 down to less than 1 million tonnes. If the average level of sales seen in West Berkshire over the last 10 years were to be maintained then the remaining reserves would be exhausted in around 2 years time.

In light of this position officers are satisfied that there is, at present, and very real and acute need for new minerals sites in West Berkshire to maintain the steady and adequate supply of aggregates, as required by National policy, to ensure local developments can source locally won raw materials. These proposals would facilitate the provision of 200,000 tonnes of aggregates per year for a 12-13 year period to assist in satisfying the demand from the local construction industry along with supplying the nearby Marley Tile Factory, that is a regionally important tile manufacturing facility, with material to maintain the supply of concrete roofing tiles across the South east of England.

The application site is not constrained by any international or national level constraints, lying outside the AONB, and it is relatively remote from nearby residential properties and other sensitive receptors. The proposed access would be directly onto the A340, part of the primary road network and a route designated as part of West Berkshire's freight network. The proposed S106 agreement and conditions would minimise the impacts of the proposals and secure funding to mitigate the impact of the traffic on the local highway network.

Officers recognise that the proposals will generate adverse amenity impacts, both through the physical operations involved with the extraction and restoration using inert fill and through the traffic that would be generated by the proposals to facilitate the transportation of minerals away from the site and the transportation of inert materials to infill and restore the site. However the proposed conditions and mitigation measures proposed are considered sufficient to mitigate the impacts of the development to an acceptable level.

Considerable concern has been raised over the potential flooding related impacts of the proposals, having considered these issues at length the Environment Agency and the Council's Sustainable Drainage Officers (the Planning Authority's expert advisors on such matters) are satisfied that the proposals will not generate an unacceptable level of impact. The proposals will provide an additional 15,000 m³ of flood storage capacity through the lowering of the land across large areas of the site upon the completion of restoration.

The proposals will, in the long term, deliver a number of benefits, including enhancement of the Public Rights of Way Network, improvements to the landscape character of the area, ecological and biodiversity enhancements.

Having considered and balanced all these issues Officers consider that there are strong reasons to support the proposal. Therefore the development proposed is considered to be acceptable and a conditional approval is justifiable for the reasons set out in this report.

This informative is only intended as a summary of the reason for the grant of planning permission. For further details on the decision please see the application report which is available from the Planning Service or the Council website.

NPPF

This decision has been made in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to secure high quality appropriate development. In this application whilst there has been a need to balance conflicting considerations, the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure and accept what is considered to be a development which improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

S106 Agreement

This Decision Notice must be read in conjunction with the terms of a Legal Agreement.