

**OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS AND
WASTE LOCAL PLAN**

PART 2 – SITE ALLOCATIONS

ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

August 2018

RESPONSE FORM

Oxfordshire County Council is preparing the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, comprising two parts: Part 1 – Core Strategy; and Part 2 – Site Allocations. Together these will guide all future Minerals and Waste Development within Oxfordshire. The Core Strategy was adopted by the County Council on 12th September 2017.

This consultation is the first key stage in the preparation of Part 2 of the Plan – Site Allocations. It is the first formal stage of consultation.

This form contains all the questions in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 2 - Site Allocations Issues and Options consultation document, which should be read alongside it. The consultation document, this form and other related documents are available at:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/new-minerals-and-waste-local-plan>

Please use this form to make your comments and send them to

mineralsandwasteplanconsultation@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Alternatively, please print this form and send your completed forms by post to:

Minerals & Waste Sites Plan Consultation
Development Management Team
Strategic Infrastructure and Planning
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND

Paper copies of this form, if required, are available from the Minerals and Waste Policy Team (contact details below). If you are unable to use this form, we will accept comments by email or post.

Comments must be received by 4.00pm on Wednesday 3rd October 2018.

Alternative formats of this publication can be made available on request. These include other languages, large print, Braille, audio cassette, compute disk or e-mail. Please contact the Minerals and Waste Policy Team:

Direct Line: 07392318899 or 07741607726

Email: mineralandwasteplanconsultation@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Part 1 – Respondent Details

1(a) Personal details		
Title	Mr	
First Name	Stephen	
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Job Title (where relevant)	Clerk	
Organisation (where relevant)	Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council	
1(b) Agent details <i>Only complete if an agent has been appointed</i>		
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Are you writing as	<input type="checkbox"/> A resident <input type="checkbox"/> A local business <input type="checkbox"/> Minerals industry <input type="checkbox"/> Waste industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A parish council <input type="checkbox"/> A district council <input type="checkbox"/> A county council <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)

Please tick the appropriate boxes if you wish to be notified of any of the following and to show how you wish to be contacted:
(If you do not tick any of the boxes below, you will not be contacted again with regard to the preparation of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan)

	Contact by Email	Contact by Post
Publication of future consultations on the Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 2 Site Allocations Plan.	Yes	
Submission of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 2 - Site Allocations Plan.	Yes	
Examination of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 2 - Site Allocations Plan.	Yes	
Adoption of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 2 - Site Allocations Plan.	Yes	
Any other consultations on publications produced by Oxfordshire County Council Minerals and Waste Team	Yes	

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

Oxfordshire County Council is a data controller for the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council dated 27th April 2016). For more details on how the Council will handle your personal information, please use the link below to access our Privacy Notice. Hard copies of this can also be provided on request:

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/aboutyourcouncil/corporateovernance/GenericPrivacyNotice.pdf>

The information on this form is collected by Oxfordshire County Council as a data controller. The purposes for collecting this data are:

1. To assist in preparing the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations. The preparation of this plan is required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. To contact you, if necessary, regarding the responses given in relation to this consultation.

The above purposes may require public disclosure of any data received by Oxfordshire County Council, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (as amended).

By responding to this consultation, you agree that Oxfordshire County Council can hold contact details and related responses. These details will only be used in relation to preparation of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations. You also accept that responses cannot be treated as confidential and that any comments made, including information provided in support of a site nomination, will be made publicly available for viewing in paper form and/or on the Council website in due course. Relevant information may be passed to external parties where required for the purposes of preparation of this plan only.

By responding to the invitation to nominate a site for possible inclusion in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations you understand and accept that this is without prejudice to the decisions that will be taken by the County Council on the site allocations and related policies to be included in the Plan.

The information collected will be held and retained by Oxfordshire County Council in paper and/or electronic form for the duration of the preparation of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations and for a period following adoption of the Plan in accordance with the Council's retention schedule. Consultation responses will be removed from the Council website when the Plan has been adopted.

You have the right to contact the Information Commissioners Office if you are unhappy with anything to do with our use of your personal information. If you have any concerns regarding the processing of your data, please contact Minerals.WastePlan@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Please sign and date the form:

Please note that response forms that are not signed and dated will not be accepted (this can be typed in for electronic forms).

Signature:	Stephen Fraser	Date:	1 October 2018
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Questions on Site Options

Question 1 – selection of site options¹	
Taking into account the need for certainty about delivery of sites in order that the Sites Plan will meet the test of soundness that it is “effective”:	
A	Should site allocations in the Sites Plan be drawn only from those sites that have been nominated by landowners or mineral/waste operators?
or	
B	Should other sites, in addition to those nominated, be considered for possible allocation in the Sites Plan and, if so, how should they be selected?
Your response: No comment. Please give reasoning for your response	
n/a	

Question 2 – issues relating to nominated sites	
In respect of each nominated site: <i>Please copy and complete a separate page for each site commented on</i>	
A	What would be the impacts of the proposed minerals or waste development at this site (including environmental, economic and social impacts, both negative and positive)?
B	How could any negative impacts be mitigated to make the development acceptable?
C	Are there any other planning issues that affect this site?
D	What are the potential opportunities for restoration of the site? How should the site be restored and what benefits could be gained through restoration? <i>(this question is for mineral working and landfill sites only)</i>
Site no. & name	SS-17 Land north and south of A420 near Fyfield and Tubney
Your response: Please give reasoning for your comments	
A. There are no positive environment, economic and social impacts of the proposed minerals extraction of soft sand at SS-17, considering the proposed additions of sand-washing, concrete batching and aggregate crushing alongside the quarrying of soft sand. There are, however, significant negative impacts. We have used Oxfordshire County Council’s (OCC) draft Site Assessment Methodology document RAG analysis on some of the points	

¹ This question is particularly relevant to sites for recycled and secondary aggregate and waste management facilities, for which relatively few site nominations have been received.

below and we have reviewed the proposer's site nomination form to assist in informing the site's characteristics.

Previous studies have shown that the A420 is already at capacity, there are no pre-existing access points to the site and high levels of mitigation will be required – RED on sensitivity score.

- SS-17 straddles the busy key A420 with one section of the proposed site north of the A420 and another portion south of A420. Entirely new access points either side of the A420 will need to be built for the proposed site – either a roundabout or traffic lights – and there is only one likely location which is in close proximity to dwellings and commercial businesses.
- We note that the nomination form provided by the potential excavation company specifies that there will be a need for “*new access points onto A420. Study has been undertaken by highway consultants to demonstrate feasibility.*” (No further information on this matter is available to view).
- The A420 is a busy trunk road, already at capacity carrying cars, vans, buses and HGV traffic from M4 to A34 and M40 as well as for local services Swindon to Oxford. The HGV trucks (empty and full) each working day will significantly further compromise the safety and functionality of this key route. So far in 2018, two fatal accidents have occurred on the A420 in proximity to the proposed site SS-17.
- The acknowledged traffic capacity for the A420 is 1300 vehicles per hour (each direction). However, A420 is already over-capacity for several peak hours daily - eastwards in the mornings and westwards in the evenings - with current flows of 1400 to 1500 vehicles per hour. It is used by approximately 1,585 HGVs daily (figures from 7am-7pm during 2018), carrying goods between Oxford and Swindon, and from M4 to M40.
- It is estimated that there will be an additional 80-160 quarry lorries per day on an already over-loaded key road, already dubbed ‘the most dangerous road in the south-east’.
- Using the RAG methodology, a high level of mitigation will be required as there is no natural pre-existing access. Whilst the A420 is not nominated by OCC as being part of the official Oxfordshire lorry route network and is not shown as such on the OCC Lorry Route Map, it is used as a key trunk route for HGVs in preference to the suggested lorry route network and as a result should be assessed *as if it were* a key lorry route network. This scores RED on the sensitivity score – very substantial issues with access on a key HGV route, with very substantial effects on the road and with no suitable pre-existing available site access.

Close proximity of the proposed site to dwellings and businesses (in some cases within 20m and at maximum 100m) will have substantial negative effect on health and amenity, and no mitigation can eradicate these impacts – RED on sensitivity score.

The mitigation strategy for noise, dust and visual impact proposed by the potential quarry contractor firm is inadequate. It is noted that the following comments are

provided: *“overburden/soil bunds and planting to be used as visual screen...Bunds will also provide acoustic screening...A water bowser shall be available to damp down when required [and] best working practices shall be complied with”*. Sub-surface excavation is cited as a mitigation measure for noise pollution. Issues of health and amenities are casually downplayed and fail to mitigate on the following critical issues:

- Soil bunds will need to be created around all of the proposed site, not simply at the short sections of SS-17 that are alongside the A420. There will be a need to minimise health and amenity damage across the entire village of Tubney which is dispersed along Abingdon Road and on the A420, certain parts of which will be surrounded on all fronts by the proposed site. High levels of mitigation would be required for this and there is no indication that appropriate buffers will be built around the whole site.
- Bunds on either side of A420 for the 0.2km where the two sections of SS-17 meet will create a tunnel of noise, exacerbated by the additional traffic of sand and aggregate transportation arriving and departing.
- A newly-created access point (presumed to be a roundabout or traffic lights on A420) will create additional noise and exhaust pollution – both from local transportation to SS-17 and for all traffic on this busy A-road. This further compounds the already intolerable effect of this road on local residents and workers.
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that high levels of dust can be produced when concrete and cement is produced and handled. *“In the short term, exposure to high levels of cement dust irritates the nose and throat. Longer term exposure could lead to occupational asthma. Mortar can also contain respirable crystalline silica (RCS). RCS is also found in concrete and can lead to the development of silicosis or scarring of the lungs, which results in a loss of lung function and severe shortness of breath. Exposure to high concentrations can lead to death.”* At the Upwood Park quarry on A338, dust on the roads and dust in the air is evidence that the best practices in dust management are not working. Resultant respiratory issues and skin rashes to local residents have been reported.
- Personal exposure to dust from quarrying may have a lasting effect on residents with breathing difficulties as there would be an increase in airborne fine particulate silica; when the wind direction is from the northeast (a frequent occurrence) this would disperse the dust over all of Tubney. Homes and offices in close proximity are most at risk.
- It is promised that *“Full liaison with the local community shall be undertaken prior to submission of a planning application”*. By then, local concerns will be fruitless. Community engagement is essential to take place at Site Selection stage and throughout the process, not just at Planning Application stage.
- It is unlikely that opportunity of employment for hauliers and site operatives will benefit the local community, despite the potential contractor’s reasonable claims of socio-economic advantage.

- There are no suggested plans to measure or monitor such mitigants as are defined, and this does little to assuage local fears that the promises of mitigation measures will therefore be adequately policed. It is unclear what might happen if a quarry extraction firm reneges on promises of best practice.

The proposed quarry site has pre-existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Greenbelt protection, and mitigation of these issues seems highly unlikely – RED on sensitivity score.

There are two significant issues here which have been disregarded in the proposed site nomination form for SS-17: PRoW issues are noted as “N/A” and zero reference is made to the location of this site as Greenbelt land.

- An existing PRoW footpath crosses the proposed quarry site north of A420. It is regularly used by residents and employees locally. Without understanding the specific plans for site access, the pragmatic estimate is that a dual-access point will be created at the location of two public laybys on A420 where the north and south sites intersect. This means that the footpath cannot be moved to any other location except if it skirts the edge of the wood on the far side of a busy intersection. Relocation of this PRoW will require significant legislation, time and money.
- Greenbelt legislation is intended to protect and preserve open space, and construction of new buildings is deemed inappropriate except under certain exceptions. The proposed SS-17 site would be a substantial quarry which would require staff accommodation (mess room, washrooms and toilets), parking, offices, security at both access points and street lamps. The potential capacity of this quarry and the volume of production (2.0 Mt over 46 ha), estimated as 100,000tpa, promises 20 years of service – the long shelf-life and scale of this enterprise means that the quarry buildings will be a permanent fixture on the landscape. This contravenes Greenbelt policy and therefore scores RED or RED-AMBER using the RAG sensitivity scoring.
- Additionally, amongst the community, some of whom have lived here for many generations, it is said that tenant-farmers were prohibited from ploughing certain areas of the field north of A420 since the 1960s. It is unclear what the specific terms of the prohibition were, and the tenant-farmers in question are unable or unavailable to explain the origins of this ploughing ban. It is presupposed that Magdalen College could provide the historical facts, as these will still be on record. OCC is urged to investigate further, as this may unearth issues that may significantly impact on the quarry.

There is a nominated SSSI site adjacent to the quarry at its most south-easterly edge, and the proposed quarry abuts ancient woodland on all sides. The proposed quarry substantially threatens the biodiversity of protected species and ancient

woodland in the vicinity, and mitigation of these issues is impossible – RED on RAG sensitivity score.

The south-eastern portion of the proposed quarry site SS-17 is immediately adjacent to Frilford Heath, Ponds & Fens, a nominated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is itself open grassland. In summary, quarrying would have a devastating impact on this protected natural environment. This SSSI area is also categorized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) as Habitat/Species Management Area (Category IV) (CDDA – IUCN categories: Frilford Heath, Ponds and Fens, Site code 137609, Site name Frilford Heath, Ponds & Fens).

As well as anticipated damage to the existing SSSI land through negative impact on plants, wildlife and the fens, there are significant concerns about impacts on the water table. This proposed quarry could negatively affect the hydrology of Frilford Heath, Ponds & Fens SSSI, and there could also be an 'in combination' effect on Cothill Fen SAC of sand removal from what is currently mainly arable, but also grassland fields.

The proposed site SS-17 threatens the water courses, and animal and plant ecology of the locality in terms of ancient woodland and protected species. The proposed site fully encapsulates an existing pond on the north side of the A420, and is abutted on the south side by five ancient connected fish-ponds dating back to 14th century (they provided fish for the monks of Abingdon Abbey). Additionally a west-flowing stream caps the boundary in the northern most tip of the site - it is an important location for water voles. Additionally, a pre-existing drain cuts across the centre of the north proposed section of the site. We know the existence of bats (protected), badgers, deer and rare butterflies, and there is evidence of great crested newts.

Furthermore, Church Copse, Appleton Upper Common and Tubney Woods are protected as ancient woodland which would be threatened by the mass excavation and drainage of proposed site SS-17 to a depth of 5m, as proposed by the extractor. The SS-17 site itself is a wildlife corridor between the various woodlands and would totally isolate Church Copse, currently a safe habitat for deer, badgers, bats, voles and other mammals. Of note are abundant shows of bluebells each spring which are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as referenced by the Woodland Trust.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) offers useful advice on the preservation of biodiversity which is it hoped can be followed as part of the site allocation process (see NPPF paragraphs 109-125):

- *allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value* (paragraph 110)
- *re-use land that has been previously developed* (paragraph 111)
- *use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality* (paragraph 112)
- *if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or compensated for, then planning permission should be refused* (paragraph 118)

Natural England advises that *“development can affect ancient woodland and veteran trees, and the wildlife they support, when it takes place on the site, or nearby. Direct impacts of development on ancient woodland or veteran trees include polluting the ground around them, and changing the water table or drainage of woodland or individual trees. Nearby development can also have an indirect impact on ancient woodland or veteran trees and the species they support. These can include:*

- *breaking up or destroying connections between woodlands and veteran trees*
- *reducing the amount of semi-natural habitats next to ancient woodland*
- *increasing the amount of pollution, including dust*
- *increasing disturbance to wildlife from additional traffic and visitors*
- *increasing light pollution*
- *increasing damaging activities like fly-tipping and the impact of domestic pets*
- *changing the landscape character of the area”*

As stated in Natural England’s designation of the SSSI land:

- *“It is a unique habitat for Oxfordshire, designated for its acid grassland, heathland mosaic and rare calcareous fen habitat, alongside the invertebrates and fen plants that live there.”*
- *“The acid grassland, heathland and associated valley fens at Frilford Heath are unique in southern England. The site has an exceptionally diverse flora and fauna, with over 400 species of vascular plants recorded, including many national rarities, together with rare beetles, flies, bees and other insects.”*
- *“Frilford Heath is a famous entomological site. Ten rare species of beetle have been recorded and the heath has an exceptional ant, bee and wasp fauna with 51 species recorded.”*
- The land *“supports a series of small wetland communities ... and has a wide range of plants which are very uncommon in Oxfordshire.”*

This threat to biodiversity, internationally protected species, SSSI and irreplaceable ancient woodland is assessed as RED, and mitigation of these threats is deemed not possible.

Grade II listed church noted for historic interest and protected by Historic England, and Grade II listed barns, lie close to the boundary of the proposed site, with threat of harm due to low-lying foundations – RED on sensitivity score.

The Church of St Lawrence lies within 100 metres of the boundary of the proposed site SS-17, and is listed by Historic England (entry number: 1048405) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest. The church was designed by Augustus Pugin in 1840s and is the only Anglican church that he designed. It was initially brought to public notice by Sir John Betjeman and has been registered as protected by Historic England since 1972. Vibration from mining, especially on

soft sand where the foundations are not deep, will pose a significant risk to the integrity of this historic protected building.

Additionally, there are 29 listed buildings in the parish of Tubney and Fyfield all of which require careful preservation. Importantly, there is a Grade II listed barn owned by Oxford PharmaGenesis in immediate proximity to the south field to the proposed quarry. The proposed concrete batching in the opposite corner of the field (100 metres away) will cause significant damage to the building from pollutants and vibrations.

B. How could any negative impacts be mitigated to make the development acceptable?

There are no acceptable mitigants possible to make this proposed quarry site acceptable.

C. Are there any other planning issues that affect this site?

Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council has recently approved a planning permission request for a mobile mast to be erected in proximity to the layby on the south side of A420, in a position that is likely to be required for entrance/exit to the proposed site at SS-17. Despite being only 8 miles from the centre of Oxford, mobile reception in the vicinity is poor. Local businesses employ in the region of 350 people and an acceptable mobile network service is a primary requirement for them and residents of the whole area, which should not be compromised.

D. What are the potential opportunities for restoration of the site? How should the site be restored and what benefits could be gained through restoration?

A more detailed discussion of restoration is covered in Issue 4 – restoration of mineral working sites (see responses to questions 9 and 10).

In overview, the existing package of land allocated as SS-17 is considered Grade 2 BMV (best and most versatile) arable farm land situated on Greenbelt. It is used for grazing and for arable crops. The proposed site would border protected ancient woodland to the north, north-west, north-east and east, and would virtually engulf another area of protected ancient woodland to the south. The proposed plan is to remove 0.3m (one foot) of fertile topsoil to build soil-bunds, and then to remove soft sand (with potential limestone 'doggers') to a depth of 5m (15 feet). After which, it is understood that the site cavity will be filled with inert wastes and soils sourced from local construction projects. The soil from the bunds will be used partially or wholly to reinstate the formerly good top soil. There are significant concerns here:

1. Drainage from excavation will seriously threaten the protected woodland areas that abut the proposed quarry at the majority of its perimeter. After 20 years of drainage and excavation, there will be serious risk of permanent damage to these woodland areas which the proposed restoration strategy cannot make good.

2. Existing proposals for restoration promise nothing more than a “grab and go” strategy that takes from fertile land and leaves it with rubbish and waste. Nothing is restored. There is no guarantee that trees and hedgerow removed for the convenience of quarrying will be replaced.
3. Finally, there’s the potential threat of leaving a gaping gash in Greenbelt land as a “*flood storage space*” – an easy end-game for quarry site developers. It might be said that flood storage space is a polite synonym for ‘unable to fill so just leaving a hole in the ground’.

Question 3 – other potential sites

Are there any other sites that the County Council should consider and assess for possible allocation for minerals or waste development in the Sites Plan?

Please list any additional sites being nominated and for each site complete and attach a site nomination form – available on the Council’s website:

Sites for Mineral Working:

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/minerals-sites>

Sites for Recycled & Secondary Aggregates and Waste Management Facilities:

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/waste-sites>

No comment.

Questions on Other Issues about Allocation of Sites

Issue 1 – Level of provision and contingency for mineral working

Question 4 – level of mineral working site provision

A	Should the Sites Plan make only the arithmetic minimum provision in site allocations that is required to meet the additional requirements for mineral working in Annex 1?
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or

B	Should provision in allocations also take into account the need to ensure there is sufficient production capacity available throughout the plan period to enable an adequate level of supply (recognising that reserves are not equally distributed between quarries and quarries have differing levels of output)?
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Your response: No comment as this is an issue that OCC should already have covered if they have fully discharged their duties in a responsible manner.

Please give reasoning for your response

Question 5 – contingency provision for mineral working	
A	Should some contingency be added to the additional requirements for mineral working site provision to give flexibility in case sites cannot be brought forward or prove not able to deliver the expected yield?
and, if yes,	
B	What level of contingency provision would it be appropriate to add: 10%, 20%, 25%, other?
Your response: 0%	
Please give reasoning for your response	
<p>No contingency should be allowed. Contingency allows mineral extractors too much leeway once they have committed to a specific quarry which means they are at liberty to neglect a quarry part-way through an excavation and move on to an alternative site purely for commercial reasons. Flexibility means that excavators will be more liable to cherry-pick easy sections of an excavated site across several sites. Timescales will slip and promises become forgotten.</p> <p>Once a quarry site is allocated, there should be a fixed and limited time for promoters to extract natural resources and return the site to its pre-quarry standard. This will ensure that timescales and community promises will not be disregarded and the restoration of an excavated site cannot be delayed. OCC should have the power to hold excavators to account over their promises and, if managed correctly from the outset, there can be substantial by-product revenue generated from quarry contractors who fail to deliver effective restoration as per their commitments.</p>	

Issue 2 – Provision for soft sand and crushed rock

Question 6 – allocation of sites for soft sand and crushed rock	
A	Should specific sites be allocated for soft sand and crushed rock?
Please see our views at C below	
B	Should provision be made in some other way, such as by broader areas of search?
Please see our views at C below	
C	Which areas should be included as areas of search?
Your response: Please see our views below	
Please give reasoning for your response	
<p>The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Part 2 (paragraph 2.24) states that there is “<i>currently zero additional requirements for soft sand and crushed rock</i>” but also notes that “the position could change over time”; it considers that either</p>	

the supply or the demand might alter. In line with Core Strategy Policy M2, there is sufficient productive capacity of soft sand to be sourced from existing channels.

In the case of SS-17 (provision of soft sand), there is a pre-existing estimated requirement for 2.55Mt of soft sand in Oxfordshire for the period until 2031. This could more easily be sourced from the six pre-existing soft sand quarry sites where potential extensions promise to yield 8.2Mt of soft sand (information sourced from Annex 1 of “Issues and Options Consultation” page 33). Logic would suggest that there is no need for new quarry sites, and no further need to search or source new sites given that there is capacity in pre-existing sites.

Issue 3 – Site size and extensions or new sites for mineral working

Question 7 – size of sites for mineral working

A Should a minimum site size (by mineral yield) be applied in the allocation of sites for mineral working?

and, if so

B What size threshold or thresholds should be used?

Your response:

Please give reasoning for your response

No specific comment relating to questions 7A and 7B.

Question 8 – priority for extensions over new quarries

To what extent should the priority for extensions in Core Strategy policy M4 be applied in relation to other factors in the allocation of sites for: sharp sand and gravel; soft sand; and crushed rock?

Your response: It is logical and pragmatic to extend existing sites rather than engage in opening new quarries.

Please give reasoning for your response

As discussed in response to Question 6A (relating to soft sand), the pre-existing soft sand yield of 8.20Mt will comfortably provide an excess of the required resources for the existing demand of 2.55Mt for the period until 2031 in Oxfordshire, with plenty in reserve should supply or demand fluctuate.

There are significantly greater challenges in creating a new quarry than in extending an existing one. It is highly preferential in terms of effort, risk, reward and financial impact that priority should be made to extend existing quarries. Transportation and access routes are already built, processes are established, machinery is in place and amenities are already positioned for the workers. Communities have already been engaged with and planning permissions already obtained.

Using the Site Assessment Methodology process with its RAG sensitivity scoring and clear categorisation of issues, impacts and mitigants, it is obvious that pre-existing sites have already been short-listed, assessed and deemed as suitable sites to fulfil the requirements of the plan and success is therefore far more likely as a result.

Issue 4 – Restoration of mineral working sites

Question 9 – weight given to restoration objectives

What weight should be given to the achievement of the restoration objectives of the Core Strategy relative to other factors in the allocation of sites for mineral working?

Your response: Restoration objectives of the Core Strategy should be a high priority.

Please give reasoning for your response

From a prospector’s perspective, the restoration phase of quarrying is the least-attractive phase: it costs money to make good a site, and most quarries would prefer free licence to grab and go, without the constraints of restoration. This is the reason we strongly oppose the allowance of contingency and flexibility to mineral extractors (see response to Question 5A). It is crucial that there are clear policies and strategies in place to measure, monitor, police and enforce the restoration phase of quarrying. Without this, OCC risks being rendered powerless to ensure their electorate’s concerns are addressed.

From a commercial point of view, it is easy to promise a good restoration and yet easy to ignore. We would want to see contractual obligation included in any Development Agreement upfront, to ensure that quarries are reinstated to a pre-defined standard, which should be independently agreed and assessed. This is to prevent the anticipated inadequate quality of any reinstatement. Alternatively, OCC should require contractors to pay a levy or tax in advance that contributes towards the reinstatement in advance.

Question 10 – specification of restoration requirements

A **Should the Sites Plan specify how sites allocated for mineral working are to be restored?**

and, if yes

B **How detailed should the specified restoration requirements be?**

Your response: Yes. Highly-detailed restoration plans should be defined upfront
 Please give reasoning for your response

As part of its mandate, OCC should ensure that commercial businesses who are involved in this plan fulfil their commitments. It should be stressed that OCC should take its responsibility to its electorate seriously and not allow their responsibility to be biased by commercial interests. This needs to be demonstrated explicitly. A clearly-communicated restoration programme should be defined ahead of any potential inclusion in the plan. Any site promoters should sign up to their restoration commitments so that they can be held accountable for any failure or dereliction of duty. OCC should enforce a set of fair and consistent standards across the county. Issues of sustainable building and integrity of use means that it is no longer acceptable for land to be exploited whilst responsible parties obviate their responsibilities.

In terms of detailed requirements, a restoration programme should specify the following:

- fixed and inflexible timescales that take into account the phased nature of quarrying but which prevent quarry prospectors leaving half-dug pits
- a clear end-date for the closure of each project based on rigorous yield calculations
- standards and quality such that land is returned to its original use and status, like-for-like and fit for purpose.
- PRow footpaths should not be comprised at any time
- Any diverted drainage should be replaced and ponds and streams should not be compromised at any time
- stiff and enforceable penalties that are not only financial (because these are easy to budget for), but which curtail future quarrying opportunities for any minerals extractor organisation if it defaults at restoration stage

The potential mineral extractor’s nomination form for SS-17 offers a casual response to the questions of restoration. Having extracted 0.3m of BMV Grade 2 topsoil to make bunds and then having extracted 5m of prime soft sand, the intention is to fill it with inert wastes and soil sourced from local construction projects so that the site would then be restored to arable land. This sounds like an opportunist promise, not a restoration plan.

Issue 5 – Sites already permitted for mineral working

Question 11 – allocation of sites already permitted for mineral working

Should areas of land that already have planning permission for mineral working be included as site allocations in the Sites Plan?

Your response: Yes

Please give reasoning for your response

To avoid the duplication of effort and to maximise efficiency, the use of pre-existing minerals sites is advised. The required yield until 2031, with surplus for fluctuation of supply and demand, can be comfortably met by extending the pre-existing

quarry sites. The advantages of this are that it would be easier for a pre-existing quarry site to be granted an extension than for a new site to be approved; the latter would require planning permissions and consultations, community engagements and research, and with the whole rigmarole starting from a nil base.

Issue 6 – Provision for recycled & secondary aggregates & waste management facilities

Question 12 – size of sites for recycled & secondary aggregates and waste management facilities

A Should there be a size threshold for sites for recycling / secondary aggregates and waste management facilities allocated in the Sites Plan?

and

B Should the Sites Plan only allocate sites for strategic and non-strategic facilities?

Your response:
 Please give reasoning for your response

No comments specific to this question.

Question 13 – identification of other sites

Should the County Council seek to identify other sites for recycling / secondary aggregate and waste management facilities for assessment (in addition to those that have been nominated)?

Your response:
 Please give reasoning for your response

No comments specific to this question.

Question 14 – allocation of industrial estates and employment areas

A Should the Sites Plan allocate industrial estates and other broad areas of employment land where waste management facilities could potentially be located?

and, if yes

B Should this be as well as or instead of the allocation of specific sites?

Your response:
 Please give reasoning for your response

No comments specific to this question.

Issue 7 – Provision for inert waste deposit or disposal

Question 15 – sites for inert waste deposit or disposal	
A	Should the Sites Plan only allocate active or unrestored quarries as sites for deposit or disposal of inert waste?
or	
B	Should it also allocate other sites where deposit or disposal of inert waste on land would result in overall environmental benefit?
Your response: no to 15A and yes to 15B Please give reasoning for your response	
<p>Yes, inert waste such as is described below should be allocated to appropriate landfill sites. If the proposed quarry site is managed by the prospective excavation firm, the plan is to extract precious, much-valued minerals from this Grade 2 BMV fertile arable farming land and afterwards, to fill in the hole with rubbish.</p> <p>We have investigated the site promoter’s views on this issue. They state: <i>“the definition of inert waste according to Regulation 7(4) of the Landfill Regulations 2002 is waste that will not undergo any significant physical, chemical or biological transformations, will not dissolve, burn, physically or chemically react, adversely affect other matter with which it comes into contact in a way likely to give rise to environmental pollution or harm to human health or biodegrade. Additionally, it has insignificant total leachability and pollutant content and produces a leachate with an ecotoxicity that is insignificant (if it produces leachate).”</i></p> <p>It lists acceptable products as <i>“waste glass-based fibrous material (only without organic binder), glass packaging, concrete, bricks, tiles and ceramics, mixtures of concrete, bricks, tiles, ceramics, glass, soils and stones (excluding topsoil, peat, soil and stones from contaminated sites), glass (separately collected), and soil and stones (only from garden and parks waste, excluding topsoil, peat).”</i></p> <p>This strategy clearly does not constitute restoration to the previous virgin farmland.</p>	

Issue 8 – Mineral safeguarding

Question 16 – mineral safeguarding areas	
A	Should the mineral safeguarding areas be reviewed and, if appropriate, amended to include other areas of mineral resource?
and, if yes	
B	Which other areas of mineral resource should be included within mineral safeguarding areas?
Your response: please see below Please give reasoning for your response	

We do not disagree with the principal of safeguarding land for future potential mineral extraction. However, we do not believe that sites that are deemed inappropriate for site selection in the plan for mineral extraction should be safeguarded.

In the case of SS-17, if the arable land is safeguarded for mineral extraction, it will prevent OCC from re-allocating the land as a potential route for re-routeing and dual-ling the A420 – a strategic choice that OCC has previously considered and which it may need to re-open as a possible resolution to the continuing problem of over-congestion on the A420.

Whilst this consultation is concerned with mineral extraction, it is part of the OCC strategy for the county and as such, it should take account of county-wide issues. It is a universally acknowledged truth that the A420 is a dangerous, over-capacity key route in serious need of attention. This road and its attendant problems need to be considered. Please do not disregard the views of the electorate through which this road runs. We ask that OCC looks at serious discussion within its council on this key route. It clearly has not done so to date.

Question 17 – safeguarding mineral infrastructure

Which mineral infrastructure sites in Oxfordshire (in addition to the specified rail depot sites) should be defined in the Sites Plan to be safeguarded?

Your response:
 Please give reasoning for your response

No comment.

Issue 9 – Waste management site safeguarding

Question 18 – safeguarding waste management sites

A Are there any waste management sites in Appendix 2 of the Core Strategy that should not be safeguarded in the Sites Plan and, if so, why?

and

B Are there any waste management sites not included in Appendix 2 of the Core Strategy that should be safeguarded in the Sites Plan and, if so, why?

Your response:
 Please give reasoning for your response

No comment.

Issue 10 – Any other matters the plan should cover

Question 19 – any other matters the plan should cover

Is there anything else, not covered above in this consultation document, that the proposed Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Site Allocations Plan should contain?

Your response:

Please give reasoning for your response

Please see Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council response to the consultation on the Site Assessment Methodology