Reference Nos: P/FUL/2023/04753, P/VOC/2023/04760 & P/VOC/2023/04761			
Site Address: Woodsford Quarry, Woodsford, Dorchester, DT2 8AZ			
Proposal: P/FUL/2023/04753: Extension to Woodsford Quarry for the winning and working of sand and gravel with restoration to agriculture, waterbodies and wetlands for nature conservation; P/VOC/2023/04760: Mineral extraction and progressive restoration to agriculture and woodland including the erection of a processing plant, concrete batching plant, workshop, office and weighbridge (with variation of Condition Nos. 3, 4 and 15 of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 to revise the approved phasing of working, extend the duration of the development and allow importation of mineral and processing of mineral from extension site); & P/VOC/2023/04761: Formation of silt lagoons to serve existing processing plant at Woodsford Quarry with site restoration to agricultural use (Planning Permission Ref. WD/D/18/002648) as upheld at appeal for non-determination (appeal reference APP/D1265/W/19/3232596) (with variation of Condition Nos. 3, 5, 7 and 9 to extend the duration of the development and associated scheme submission dates).			
Address: Woodsford Quarry, Woodsford, Dorchester, DT2 8AZ			
Recommendation: Refuse Planning Permission (All three Applications)			
Case Officer: Andrew Sierakowski			
Ward Member(s): Cllr Tarr			
Publicity expiry date:	2nd December 2023	**Officer site visit dates:**	5th February 2024, 30th October 2024, and 17th March 2025
Decision due date:	30th September 2025	**Ext(s) of time:**	30th September 2025

1.0 The application is being considered by the Strategic and Technical Planning Committee as it is a major planning application.

2.0 **Summary of the Recommendation**

2.1 REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the following reasons**:**

Application Number: P/FUL/2023/04753

1. The Application has failed to demonstrate that it would not have an adverse impact the proposed development on the water environment

and in particular the River Frome Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Hurst Heath Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), and in turn that it would not have unacceptable impact on protected species of the River Frome as a Principal Salmon River, and the population of heath lobelia within the SNCI. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policies SS1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), DM1 (Key Criteria for Sustainable Minerals Development), Policies INT1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development),ENV2 (Wildlife and Habitats) and Policy ENV3 (Green Infrastructure Network) and ENV 9 (Pollution and Contaminated Land) of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015), Policies DM3 (Managing the Impact on Surface Water and Ground Water Resources) and DM5 (Biodiversity and Geological Interest) of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014). It is also contrary to the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Minerals Sites Plan (2019), Policy MS-1 and specifically Part C i insofar as it does not adequately address the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4 set out in Appendix A, and Part C ii in that the information submitted as part of the Environmental Statement does not demonstrate that any adverse impacts associated with the development and operation have been satisfactorily mitigated. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) paragraphs 187 and 193.

2. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, a Grade 1 Listed Building. In the absence of the approval of the application, there are no benefits to be weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF, and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015), and it cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension in the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Minerals Sites Plan (2019), Policy DM7 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014), and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

Application Number: P/VOC/2023/04760

1. In the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there is no reasoned justification for the approval of the proposed revision of the approved phasing of working, extension of the duration of the development and importation of mineral and processing of mineral from proposed north-eastern extension, and the consequential delay in the restoration and aftercare of the site, contrary to Policy RS1 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014), Policy RS1 and paragraph 224 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), which seek to ensure restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity.

2. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, a Grade 1 Listed Building. In the absence of the

approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there are no benefits to be weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF, and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015), and it cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy DM7 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014), and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

Application Number: P/VOC/2023/04761

1. In the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there is no reasoned justification for the approval of the proposed extension of the duration of the development and associated scheme submission dates, contrary to Policy RS1 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014), Policy RS1 and paragraph 224 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), which seek to ensure restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity.

2. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, a Grade 1 Listed Building. In the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there are no benefits to be weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF, and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015, and it cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy DM7 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014), and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

2.1 **Reason for the Recommendation**

2.2 As set out in the conclusions of this report, the reasons for this recommendation can be summarised as:

- The principle of mineral extraction on the site is supported by the allocation of the sites in the Minerals Sites Plan (MSP) (2019).
- The proposed north eastern extension to Woodsford Quarry would make a significant contribution to the supply of sand and gravel in the county, and in particular building sand. The approval of the proposal would increase the landbank of permitted sand and gravel reserves and would thus reduce the long-term need to permit extraction on other sites.
- The NPPF advises that "*great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy*."
- It is considered that the north eastern extension to Woodsford Quarry would not have an unacceptable impact on amenity, the landscape, or highway safety and capacity.

- The loss of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land is on balance acceptable, and the classification of the land was known at the time of the site's allocation.
- The site is proposed to be restored to waterbodies and agriculture, with notable increases in biodiversity.
- The Application for the north eastern extension to Woodsford Quarry has failed to demonstrate that the development would not have an adverse impact on the water environment and in particular the River Frome Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Hurst Heath Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), and in turn that it would not have an unacceptable impact on protected species of the River Frome as a Principal Salmon River, and the population of heath lobelia within the SNCI.
- The proposal for the north eastern extension to Woodsford Quarry is broadly compliant with the development guidelines for the allocation in the MSP, as well as the development management policies in the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (MS) (2014), with the exception of DM1 (Key Criteria for Sustainable Minerals Development), Policy DM3 (Managing the Impact on Surface Water and Ground Water Resources) and DM5 (Biodiversity and Geological Interest) of the MS , and the MSP, Policy MS-1 and specifically Part C i insofar as it does not adequately address the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4 set out in Appendix A, and Part C ii.
- The proposal for the north eastern extension to Woodsford Quarry would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, a Grade 1 Listed Building. In the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there are no benefits to be weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF, and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, and it cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension in the MSP, Policy DM7 of the MS, and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.
- There is no reasoned justification for the approval of the two s.73 applications that would seek to amend the permissions for the existing quarry to extend the duration of the development and associated scheme submission dates, contrary to Policy RS1 of the MS, Policy RS1 and paragraph 224 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), which seek to ensure restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity.
- Approval of the two s.73 applications would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, a Grade 1 Listed Building. In the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there are no benefits to be weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF, and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015, and they cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy DM7 of the MS, and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

3.0 Key Planning Issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of Development	The development of the north eastern extension (Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753) is acceptable in principle and is supported by the allocation of the sites in the MSP. Planning Application Refs. P/VOC/2023/04760 and P/VOC/2023/04761, are also acceptable in principle, but their acceptability in relation to the extension of the end dates of the two permission depends upon the acceptability of north eastern extension (Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753), both in terms of the principle and in relation to the environmental impacts of the proposal. If the proposal for the north eastern extension is not acceptable and is not approved then the justification for the approval of Planning Application Refs. P/VOC/2023/04760 and P/VOC/2023/04761 falls away, and all three applications should be refused.
Impact on the Water Environment	The main issue in relation to the impact of the development on the water environment relates to the proposed north eastern extension (Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753). The Environment Agency has advised that the information included as part of the Environmental Statement submitted with the planning application does not adequately demonstrate that the proposal is acceptable in terms of it impacts on the water environment, notably the River Frome SSSI, and the associated impacts on fisheries and biodiversity and also the adjacent Hurst Heath SNCI. Consequently it has to be considered not to be compliant with the MSP, Policy MS-1 as it does not meeting all the criteria set out in Part C an in particular Part C i insofar as it does not adequately address the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4 set out in Appendix A, and Part C ii in that the information submitted as part of the Environmental Statement does not demonstrate that any adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts, associated with the development and operation have been satisfactorily mitigated. The proposal can similarly and for the same reasons be considered to be contrary to West Dorset,

	Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Policy ENV9 and the MS, Policy DM3 and the NPPF, paragraph 187.
Loss of BMV Agricultural Land	The main issue, relates to the impact in terms of the loss BMV agricultural withing the proposed north-eastern extension (Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753). Whilst the development would result in the loss of 43.3 ha of BMV land, which would be large and significant, the proposed restoration of the site is consistent with the Development Guidelines for the site out in the MSP, which recognises that for restoration to agriculture without importation of inert wastes, limits the scope of the restoration to agriculture on the one hand, and on the other promotes a large scale wetland restoration scheme that is hydrologically connected to the River Frome. This being the case the application cannot be considered anything other than consistent with the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension in the MSP, Policies DM1 and RS1 of the MS, and paragraph 187 of the NPPF. Planning Application Refs. P/VOC/2023/04760 and P/VOC/2023/04761 would not result in additional loss of BMV land, although there would delay in the final restoration of parts of the existing of the existing quarry site.
Impacts on Heritage	The main issue in heritage concerns the impact on the setting of Woodsford Castle, which is a Grade 1 listed building. Both Historic England and the Landmark Trust, which owns the castle, have expressed concern, primarily about impact of the extension of the end date of the two existing consents sought by the two s.73 applications (Planning Application Refs. P/VOC/2023/04760 and P/VOC/2023/04761) for the existing quarry and proposed silt lagoons. If approved these would extend the end date of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 permissions from 1st October 2029 to 31st October 2046, i.e. an extension of the end date of seventeen years, and the end date of Planning Permission Ref. WD/D/18/002648 from 1st October 2028 to 30th June 2033, i.e. an extension of the end date of almost five years. The two applications if approved would result in a delay in the restoration of parts of the site by up to seventeen years, and particularly of the

	area where the plant and the silt lagoons are located, which include the areas closest to Woodsford Castle. Whilst this would not increase the adverse impact on the setting of the castle, it would nevertheless extend the duration of the impact which would amount to less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle. This harm, in accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF needs to weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The issue for the Committee is whether the less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Caste and the other nearby heritage assets, is outweighed by the public benefit of the proposal. The advice is that in the context of the need for the supply of mineral identified in the MS, the application would not only develop one of the seven allocated sites to meet the identified shortfall in permitted reserves required during the Plan period to the end of 2028, but that this development alone represents almost one-third the total additional amount of mineral required to meet the shortfall in sand and gravel identified in the MSP, i.e. just under 3 million tonnes of the identified shortfall of 9.36 Mt required over the plan period to 2028. This can be considered to amount to significant public benefit, and it can therefore be attributed sufficient weight that outweighs the less than substantial harm to the setting of the affected heritage assets, i.e. Woodsford Castle and the other nearby heritage assets. However, in the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, because the Application has failed to demonstrate that it would not have an adverse impact the proposed development on the water environment, there are no benefits to be weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF, and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015), and it cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension in the MSP, Policy DM7 of the MS, and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF. This also then applies in relation to the two s.73 applications.

Impact on Landscape including Restoration, Aftercare, and After-Use	The key issue, in relation to all three applications, in terms of the impacts on the landscape and landscape features is that the proposed working would involve the cessation of working within the existing quarry while the north eastern extension is worked, before working switches back to the existing quarry to enable the construction of the additional silt lagoon, and then temporarily back to the north-eastern extension, before final restoration takes place in the existing quarry. As result the phased restoration of the existing quarry would be held over until after the working of the north-eastern extension is completed. This approach has had to be adopted because it is proposed that the processing of the mineral from the north eastern extension is to be undertaken within the existing plant area at the western end of the existing quarry, and because as set out above the further extension of the quarry will necessitate the development of an additional silt lagoon to manage the additional amount of mineral that will be extracted. Whilst this will necessitate a not insignificant extension of the end date on the permission for the main existing quarry permission, Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742, of up to seventeen years, the advice to the Committee is that this would not have an unacceptable impact on landscape. Whilst the advice is that the proposed restoration and aftercare proposal are acceptable the application says relatively little about the afteruse of the site. Whilst some of the land is to be returned to agricultural use and much of it will developed as wetland, there are few details of how it would actually provide “significant recreational opportunities” and how these would be accessed and managed. Whilst this is not enough in itself to justify refusal of the application, it is certainly an aspect of the proposals that is somewhat lacking beyond the details set out above. Notwithstanding this shortcoming, the proposal can in overall terms be considered to be in accordance with the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension in the MSP, Policy DM4 of the MS (2014), and paragraphs 187 and 224 of the NPPF.

Traffic and Highway Safety	The key issues in relation to traffic and highway safety relate to whether the development of the proposed extension would give rise to any significant increases in traffic and any an consequential highway safety impacts including any capacity related considerations. The advice to the Committee is that with the extension of quarry, output from the quarry will continue at the existing rate resulting in no material increase in traffic flows on the adjacent highway network and that it will have no material impact on the safety or operation of the adjacent highway network and that the existing highway infrastructure is adequate for the forecast traffic flows. The development would therefore not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and capacity.
Amenity (Noise, Vibration, Air Quality, Dust, and Lighting)	The key issues in relation to amenity concern noise, dust and light, particularly in relation to the nearest residential properties, but also more widely in relation to the surrounding area because of the potential impact of off-site HGV movements. There are no reasons to consider that the proposed north eastern extension to Woodsford quarry or either of the two s.73 applications would be unacceptable. There is therefore no reason to consider that the proposal are not compliant with MSP Policy DM2 and the Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP, West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Policy ENV16, or paragraphs 198 an 201 and 224 of the NPPF.
Impacts on Protected Species, Habitats and Biodiversity including Trees	The impacts on protected species, habitats and biodiversity, as a result of the proposed north eastern extension to Woodford Quarry is a significant issue with Natural England raising concerns related to those expressed by the Environment Agency about the potential impact of the development impact on the water environment and in particular the potential impact on the River Frome Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Hurst Heath Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). As a result, the application raises significant issues in relation to the impact on protected species of the River Frome as a Principal Salmon River, and the population of heath lobelia within the SNCI. The Environment Agency has made clear despite additional submissions by the applicant

	that this issue has not been adequately assessed or addressed and as such they have maintained their objection to the application. Natural England and the Council's Natural Environment Team have also made clear that they share the Environment Agency's concerns. Accordingly, the advice is that the Application has failed to demonstrate that the development would not have an adverse impact on the water environment and in particular the River Frome Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Hurst Heath Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI),

4.0 **Description of Site**

4.1 This report deals with three concurrent applications at the existing Woodsford Quarry, at Woodsford, approximately 6km east of Dorchester. Of these, the main application is Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 for a north easterly extension to the existing quarry to allow for the winning and working of sand and gravel with restoration to agriculture, waterbodies and wetlands for nature conservation. In support of this, Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760 is for a variation of Condition Nos 3, 4 and 15 of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 and is for a revision the approved phasing of working within the existing quarry, and an extension of the duration of the permission and to allow the import and processing of mineral from the proposed extension site. In addition, Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04761 is for a variation of Conditions No. 3, 5, 7 and 9 of Planning Permission Ref. WD/D/18/002648 to extend the duration of the permission which was allowed the formation of the silt lagoons to serve the existing processing plant at Woodsford Quarry with restoration of the site to agriculture.

4.2 There are consequently three different application sites, which relate to three areas within and adjacent to the existing Woodsford Quarry as follows:

<u>Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753</u>

4.3 The Site comprises an irregular shaped area of 97.6ha located to the immediate north-east of the existing Woodsford Quarry, with the two nearest villages being Woodsford, approximately 350m west of the application site boundary and Crossways which is located approximately 1.25km south of the Site. Dorchester is located approximately 6km to the west.

4.4 Within the application site the area of extraction which would extend to 64.85ha is currently in agricultural arable use and divided into two parcels separated by Watery Lane. The area to the west of Watery Lane is largely a single field, with a small area of lower level land on its western boundary, which is surrounded by hedges which have been subject to recent supplementary planting.

4.5 The substantive part of the site to the east of Watery Lane comprises further agricultural land in irregular medium to large fields divided by hedgerows with a number of well-established trees. To the north and north east there is also

agricultural land which extends down to the River Frome. On the far bank of the River Frome to the north east there are a series of lakes which are former mineral workings. The lakes are in commercial use.

4.6 The eastern boundary of the application site has a narrow woodland strip, beyond which is further agricultural land, belonging to neighbouring landowner at Hurst Farm. The south-eastern boundary is marked by a substantial area of woodland, known as Hurst Heath. Along the length of the southern boundary a rural lane (the C33, West Gate Road) extends from the B3390 to Woodsford. The site is crossed by a 33kv overhead power line on pylons, one of which falls within the extraction area.

4.7 There are no Public Rights of Way within the site. A footpath does run outside the site from Woodsford Farm to the west along the northern boundary of the land to the west of Watery Lane, before reaching the public road at Frome Bridge. Additionally, the road on the southern boundary forms part of National Cycle Route 2.

4.8 Woodsford Lower Dairy, in the centre of the site, includes two residential properties and a collection of farm buildings. The properties are owned by the applicant, Woodsford Farms, on shorthold tenancies. Otherwise, the nearest residential properties are located at Woodsford Farm approximately 350m to the west. To the north, approximately 650m to 800m distant, beyond the River Frome there are residential properties on the road between Tincleton and Pallington. Crossways is the nearest village south of the site and beyond the Dorchester to Wareham railway line, approximately 1.2km away.

4.9 The application site comprises Allocated Site AG4 Woodsford Quarry Extension, Woodsford, in the MSP.

4.10 The land adjoining the eastern boundary of the Site comprises a further MSP Allocated Site, AG6, Hurst Farm, and to the south of this Allocated Site AG5, Station Road. Just prior to the submission of the three current applications, a planning application was submitted, by a different applicant, for the development of these two areas for the extraction of sand and gravel. The relative position of the existing Woodsford Quarry, the proposed north eastern extension and the Hurst Farm and Station Road sites is shown In Figures and 1 and 2 below.

Figure 1 Woodsford Quarry, the proposed north eastern extension and the Hurst Farm and Station Road sites.

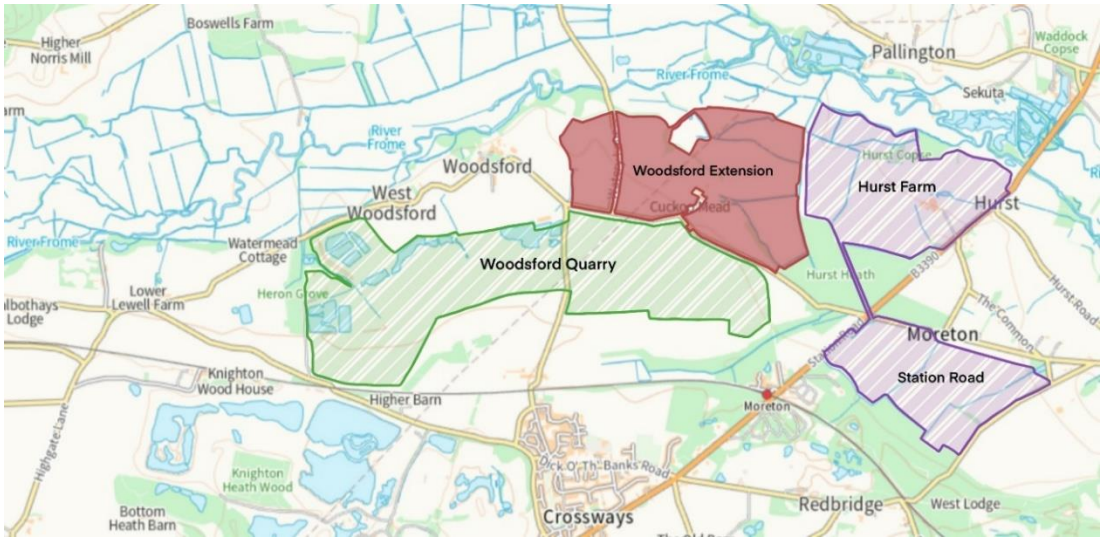
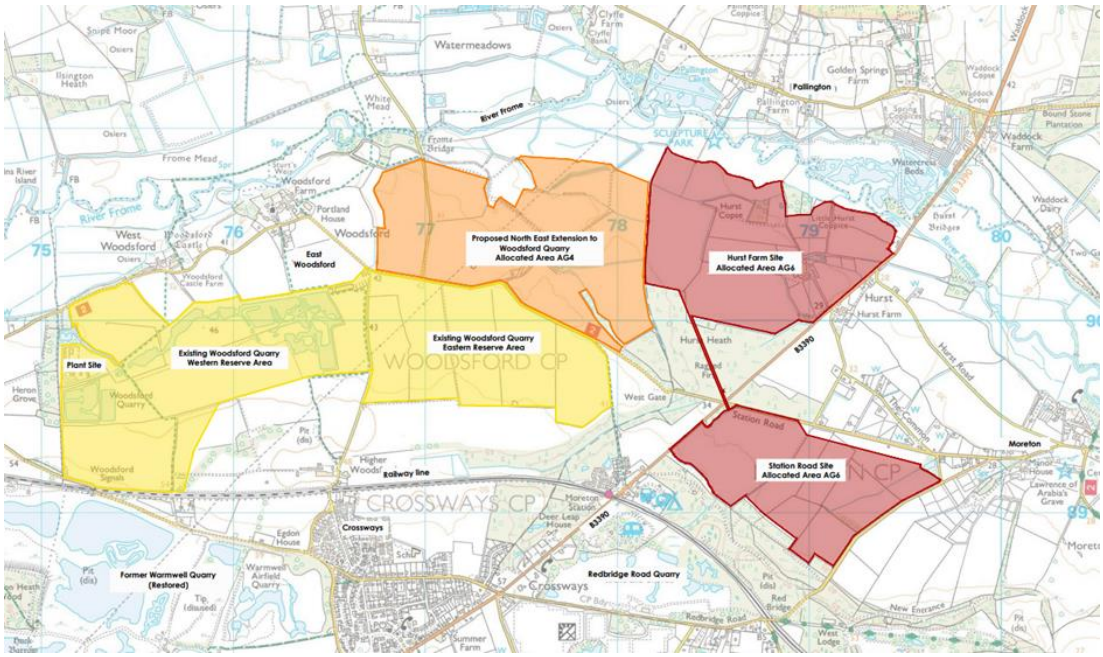


Figure 2 Woodsford Quarry, the proposed north eastern extension and the Hurst Farm and Station Road sites.



Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760

4.11 The site comprises what is broadly the 150ha of the existing Woodsford Quarry (other than the area included in Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04761 (detailed below)). It is located approximately 5km east of Dorchester, on the south side of the River Frome, the river itself being 600m north of the site, with Woodsford village being located 350m to the north and Crossways 600m to the south.

4.12 The Site extends over a distance of 2.85km east to west parallel to the river, and is about 500m wide. It is relatively flat and previously comprised agricultural land, in large fields with few 'internal' hedges and a limited number of trees.

4.13 On its southern edge the site is bounded by agricultural land and the Dorchester to Wareham railway line, whilst to the north the boundary is formed by the C33 West Stafford to Moreton road. The Woodsford to Crossways road runs north south through the site and effectively splits it into two equal parts.

4.14 The nearest dwellings are Watermead Cottage, 250m from the western boundary of the site, and properties in School Lane, Woodsford, the closest of which is 230m from the site. At the eastern end of the site, the isolated properties at Cuckoo Mead are approximately the same distance away but the closest are those properties on the south side of the site, at Higher Barn, which are 100m from the boundary, and separated from it by the railway line.

4.15 The site is located outside the Dorset National Landscape (formerly the Dorset AONB). There are no ecological designations within the site, although the River Frome and its banks are designated as an SSSI. The site was previously identified as a 'preferred area' for sand and gravel extraction in the former Dorset Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1999). There are two public footpaths crossing the site from north to south, Right of Way S60/4 and S60/6.

Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04761

4.16 The Site comprises a broadly square area extending to 11.62ha, located to the north of the existing Woodsford Quarry plant area, and forms part of Woodsford Farm. It is located approximately 800m south-west of Woodsford, and 1.3km north west of Crossways with Dorchester located 5 km to the west. It was previously a relatively flat agricultural field enclosed by hedgerows. In the south western corner there is a 6.5m high soil bund, constructed from materials from the adjacent quarry, which has been planted with trees. Following the grant of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742, on appeal in November 2019, it has been developed as a silt lagoon.

4.17 There is a mature hedgerow to the north of the lagoon, beyond which the land drops down towards the road (the C33) leading to Woodsford Village. There is agricultural land to the east, whilst Woodsford Quarry lies to the south and south-west. Herons Grove which is deciduous native woodland, lies to the west.

4.18 A Public Right of Way (Right of Way S60/6) lies to the south of the Planning Application Area. The site is not subject to any environmental or landscape designations.

4.19 A list of nearby constraints is set out in Section 7 below.

5. The Proposals

Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753

5.1 The proposal is to develop a north easterly extension to the existing Woodsford Quarry, extracting approximately 3 million tonnes of mineral over 12 years. The site would be restored to a mix of farmland, wetland, lakes and with areas of increased ecological interest and biodiversity.

5.2 The land that is subject to this planning application forms part of Woodsford Farms, as does the existing quarry, which is being extracted by Hills Quarry Products Ltd.

5.3 The proposed mineral extraction operation in the extension area will take approximately 12 years to complete after the initial site preparation work has been completed and Phase 1 started, at an average production rate of 250,000 tonnes per annum.

5.4 Working would take place in nine phases starting in the north east corner of the site and then moving to the south east corner before moving to the north west corner and western side of the site and finishing in Phase 9 in the central southern part of the site, with phased restoration.

5.5 By way of background, Planning Permission Ref: 1/E/2005/0742 for Woodsford Quarry, was granted to Woodsford Farms in 2007. The existing quarry, as set out above, comprises an area of approximately 161 ha that extends over a distance of 2.85km to the south west of the proposed extension area. The existing permission(s) allow for the extraction and processing of mineral, progressive restoration to agriculture and woodland; and ancillary facilities including the processing plant, a concrete batching plant, an office, workshop and a weighbridge. There have been a number of revisions to the permission to allow, amongst other things, for the provision of an additional silt management lagoon. A bagging plant has also been installed under Permitted Development rights.

5.6 The extension area lies immediately to the north east of the existing consented reserve and in accordance with the allocation of the site in the MSP, it will be worked as an intermediate phase, before the completion of the primary Woodsford Quarry site. It is proposed that following grant of planning permission (and after any subsequent discharge of pre-commencement conditions and any associated works), that extraction in the existing quarry, where extraction is currently taking place at the eastern end of the site in what is referred to as the eastern reserve, will be paused and the current extraction area restored as far as reasonable whilst extraction will commence in the north eastern extension.

5.7 The infrastructure, i.e. the mineral processing plant, within the existing quarry will be utilised for processing the mineral extracted from north eastern extension as well as that from the final stages of the existing quarry after extraction in the north east extension has been completed. The extension will be linked to the plant site by the existing conveyor and an extension to the existing conveyor, and would be an extension to the current area and method of extraction. This will allow the extraction of the north eastern extension to be undertaken with material dug and loaded onto the conveyor, without the need for the installation of any additional processing plant.

5.8 To do this, additionally requires the submission of the two other Planning Applications, submitted concurrently with this application, further details of which are set out below. It is not intended that these would change the intrinsic nature of what has already been granted planning consent at Woodsford Quarry only that they would allow for an extension of time necessary to complete mineral extraction at Woodsford Quarry as a result of the north east

extension being worked as an intermediate phase, as a result of the pausing of extraction in the eastern reserve within the existing consented quarry. This has the related effect of requiring the plant site (including access and all associated infrastructure) to be retained for longer than was originally consented.

5.9 This extension of time would apply to the area of the existing silt lagoon, which, as set out above, is subject to a separate planning consent. The lagoon will receive silt generated by the north eastern extension mineral, although it will in turn also necessitate a revision to the approved phasing drawing of the existing quarry to accommodate the additional silt that will arise by the time both the existing consented reserve and the north eastern extension mineral reserve have been processed through the plant site.

5.10 Although the extension site requires no fixed plant installation (other than an extension to the existing conveyor), it will be linked to the consented site by a tunnel under the public highway, the C33. This will replicate the approved arrangements between the western and eastern areas of the existing quarry. In linking the north eastern extension site to the existing conveyor system, the conveyor will cross the road in the same tunnel that will be established for drainage from the eastern area as part of that consented working. A service road will also have access to the north eastern extension at this point.

Overview of Working

5.11 As set out above it is proposed that the north eastern extension is worked and restored progressively in nine phases. Common to all phases of extraction, all temporary topsoil storage mounds will be constructed to a maximum height of 3 metres and subsoil mounds to 5 metres. A mineral extraction standoff will be provided in each phase, to protect the existing surrounding hedgerows and trees, with the distance between the hedges retained on the field boundaries and the edge of extraction generally proposed to be 15m-20m, with the minimum standoff being 5m either side of the hedge between extraction Phases 7 and 9a. Soil storage mound standoffs are 5 metres minimum from internal hedges and those without hedgerow trees but would predominantly be 6m.

5.12 A significant feature of the proposed method of working is that all extraction areas will be dewatered by pumping out the groundwater though a water discharge system. Phase 1a is proposed as the first area of extraction, to create the settlement areas for water pumped from the extraction area, before it is discharged to a water course. Environment Agency (EA) consent is required for this and it is proposed that flocculant be used to ensure the requirements of the EA discharge permit are met with respect to suspended solids. The methods of water management and discharge are the same as those utilised at the existing quarry.

5.13 Minerals will normally be dug and taken by loader to the conveyor hopper and screen over distances usually no greater than 200 metres, but exceptions may arise. In some instances a 360º excavator and a dump truck may be used to transport the extracted mineral to the conveyor, for instance where in a corner where it would be impractical to install a spur conveyor within 200m.

5.14 The initial works will involve the stripping of soils and their retention for later use in the restoration of each phase. Following this the archaeological work will be undertaken before extraction of the mineral.

5.15 The initial soil stripping work will create perimeter bunds, with top soil and subsoil being stored separately. The perimeter bunds include 3m high bunds around the two residences at Woodsford Lower Dairy, providing screening for the residents.

5.16 The soil bunds will be constructed using an excavator to provide stable side batters and a convex top to allow surface water run-off. The bunds will be seeded with a low maintenance grass seed mix immediately following their construction and maintained to prevent the invasion of noxious weeds where they are in place for more than six months.

5.17 Once the initial bunds have been created and working moves into the second and subsequent phases, the intention is that there will be direct placement of soils from the next area being prepared for extraction, to the previous one undergoing restoration. Where this is not possible, the soils will be stored. No soils will be exported from the site.

5.18 There is one tree that will require removal and hedges will only be removed where necessary to accommodate the conveyor passing through a hedge and even then, with the flexibility of the conveyor, less dense spots in a hedge line will be chosen The removal will be subject to ecological advice before work is to be undertaken and will avoid the bird breeding season unless an ecologist has reviewed the vegetation for nesting birds.

5.19 An Overhead Transmission Line crosses the site and there is a pylon supporting this within the development area. The existing quarry also has this feature and discussions with the utility provider (Asset Protection at the National Grid) are understood to have been undertaken to ensure appropriate working measures around the pylon, including a 1: 3 slope.

5.20 Once the conveyor tunnel into the site is completed and the site preparatory works are completed, the mineral in Phase 1a will be extracted and taken to the field screen. The screen will remove any clay or poor-quality mineral which will be returned to the quarry void for use in restoration, using the loading shovel.

5.21 The mineral will be transported to the existing plant site via the conveyor. The phased working of the site will progress as shown on the submitted phasing drawing, with the sequence of ecological investigation, soils stripping with archaeological input, mineral extraction and water management ahead of restoration work, followed by management of the restored land to ensure the aftercare of the planting and seeding.

<u>The Working Scheme</u>

5.22 Timings given below are broadly from the start date from preparatory works.

Phase 1a

5.23 As noted above, Phase 1a, will be extracted to create the water management area. Soils stripped from this phase will be used in perimeter bunding to the north east.

Phase 1b (estimated 11 months extraction)

5.24 A spur field conveyor will be constructed to the first extraction area starting with the northern edge of Phase1b and working broadly south. Soils and overburden stripped from this phase will be used in perimeter bunding to the north east and around Woodsford Lower Dairy, as well as on the north eastern edge of Phase 9.

5.25 Restoration of this phase to a Lowland Fen/Pasture with scrapes will utilise soils and over burden generated from working the next phases of the quarry when they are removed so that they can be directly placed onto Phase 1b.

Phase 2 (estimated 5 months extraction)

5.26 Mineral extraction will commence at the west of Phase 2 and move north eastwards. Soils from Phase 2 will be used to progress restoration of Phase 1b area.

Phase 3 (estimated 12 months extraction)

5.27 Phase 3, on the northern boundary of extraction will be worked broadly from north to south, with materials generated from soil stripping and overburden removal adding to the restoration of Phase 2.

Phase 4 (estimated 14 months extraction)

5.28 Excavations within Phase 4 will proceed from east to west to east, as well as in the north west corner working south. Substantive amounts of soils from this area are not required for its restoration as it will be restored to a lake. The top soils stripped from this phase will therefore be stored in a bund on part of the northern perimeter of Phase 9. Subsoils will be directly placed into Phase 2 and a small amount into Phase 3.

5.29 On completion of Phase 4 it is estimated that the capacity of the silt lagoon within the existing quarry will have been nearly used up and therefore, working in the north east extension will be paused whilst extraction moves to the south west of the plant site, to what were originally going to be the three final three phases of the existing quarry of what are referred to in the application as the “Permitted South West Reserves and future silt management area”.

5.30 The change of phasing to bring this area forward for extraction earlier and use it for silt is the subject of the accompanying Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760 which has been submitted under Section 73 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 in parallel with the planning application for the north eastern extension of the quarry. There will by necessity need to be some flexibility in the timing of the delivery of the additional silt pond capacity as the rate of production of silt varies across different parts of the mineral reserve and is impacted by improvements in plant site equipment. When the south west reserves are extracted, working will re-commence in the north eastern extension.

Phase 5 (estimated 12 months extraction)

5.31 Mineral extraction will be from the south to the north, and in the later stages, from east to west. The soils removed from this area will be temporarily stored within the excavated void of Phase 4. Approximately 50% of the material

removed will be used directly in Phase 3. This is part of the build-up of materials that is needed to achieve the agricultural restoration in the later phases, because, as with Phase 5, this phase will be restored using only small amounts of soil on lake margins.

Phase 6 (estimated 16 months extraction)

5.32 Phase 6 will be worked in a similar direction to Phase 5, commencing at the southern end and working north. The removed soils will be temporarily stored within the excavated void of Phase 5. Restoration of Phase 6 will be to an angling lake.

Phase 7 (estimated 15 months extraction)

5.33 With the development of Phase 7, extraction will move into the northern part of the site and with working being undertaken form north to the south. Topsoil and overburden will be stored on the northern edge of Phase 7, and subsoil on the southern edge. Restoration of Phase 7 will be to a wildlife lake.

Phase 8 (estimated 23 months extraction)

5.34 Phase 8 lies to the west of Watery Lane and will be worked, (although not simultaneously) from the south and from the north, with a crossing point back to the main part of the site being established, most likely using either the existing or new agricultural access to the land on the east side of Watery Lane. The application states that the relatively small amount of mineral in this area, does not make it feasible to install a further tunnel to carry a conveyor, but equally the mineral should not be left unworked and potentially therefore sterilised.

5.35 All of the soils and overburden stripped from Phase 8 will be stored within the phase, with the majority being stored on the western side of the site. The western boundary of Phase 8 has been subject to recent additional planting. The restoration of Phase 8 will only use materials from the original field in the phase and has been designed to be restored to agricultural land and a wildlife lake.

Phase 9 (estimated 36 months extraction)

5.36 Phase 9 has been divided into areas a and b. Phase 9a will be worked from the margins towards the central conveyor end location. Soils will be temporarily stored within Phase 7, with additional direct placement of some top soil and subsoil on the margins of Phase 7 beyond the margins of the lake that will make up its final landform.

5.37 On the assumption that extraction in the NE Extension would commence in 2026/27, Phase 9a extraction would not commence until 2037/38. It is anticipated that additional mitigation will be added to the screening bunds, or that the two properties at Woodsford Lower Dairy would be temporarily vacated for the estimated 18 months that would be needed to complete extraction in close proximity to them.

Final Restoration

5.38 When Phase 9 extraction is completed, the mineral extraction will revert to the eastern reserve within the already consented quarry and the final mineral in

this area will be excavated. The restoration of the north eastern extension will be completed within 12 months including any additional planting and landscaping identified during the development of the Landscape and Ecological Management Plans (LEMPs) for each phase.

5.39 The final restoration of the planning application area would comprise:

- Fields (mostly land defined as 'best & most versatile') will be created within the south-western parts of the site;
- Wildlife Lakes, including nesting islands;
- Water bodies suitable for angling;
- Lowland fen/pasture including scrapes which will be seasonally wet in the northern part of the site;
- Reed / fen margin, marsh and wet grassland on the shallow edges of waterbodies;
- Lowland meadow managed as a traditional hay-meadow, will be created on restoration slopes around the main water bodies and adjacent to the drainage channel south of Woodsford Lower Dairy; and
- Blocks and belts of mixed broadleaved woodland will be created to add to and connect existing woodland areas and on restoration slopes.

5.40 The materials to achieve the restoration profile will be accumulated through the working, from surplus soils and overburden in earlier phases. There is no proposal to import inert waste to restore the site.

Management of Groundwater

5.41 Because a proportion of the mineral within the north eastern extension area lies beneath the water table, dewatering will be required. Groundwater monitoring has been undertaken within the area of the north eastern extension. This has shown that there is a clear seasonal trend, with maximum elevations occurring in January-March, followed by a decline throughout the summer months. As a result the volume of the ingress in summer is extremely small, or none, and will increase in the winter months in proportion to the saturated thickness of the mineral.

5.42 The average saturated thickness of the mineral in each phase has been determined by comparing the long-term average groundwater elevations with the maximum proposed depth of mineral extraction. This indicates that the average saturated thickness of mineral across the site in each phase varies from 1.5m to 4.0m.

5.43 Groundwater will be manged on a phase by phase basis with groundwater inflow being managed by excavating ditches into the floor of the quarry void in each phase to convey water to a sump. Water ingress to the quarry void will comprise both groundwater and rainfall.

5.44 A maximum of three phases within the north eastern extension will require active water management at any one time.

5.45 Water will be pumped from the sump to silt settlement/flow balancing ponds, which will be established initially in Phase 1a. The application states that the ponds will ensure that the water quality is acceptable for discharge and that the flow rates are regulated prior to discharge, which the application initially

stated would be into existing ditches to the east of the north eastern extension, which outfall to the River Frome. Flocculant dosing will be undertaken to safeguard water quality.

5.46 In the course of the application, and in response to the consultation responses from the Environment Agency, the proposed discharge location has been amended so as to be located at the western end of the deep ditch to the north of the north eastern extension, so as to recharge water in the existing ditch located between the extraction area the river. The effect of this change is that discharged water will raise the ditch water level above that of the river, creating what is known as a recharge trench, with intention of reversing groundwater flows locally, so as to prevent any risk of flow of water from the river into the extraction area, that would otherwise result in a reduced water level in the river. Further information is this is set out in Sections 8 and 16 below.

5.47 After the completion of mineral extraction and restoration works active water management will cease. Levels within the waterbodies and fenland scrapes will be self-regulating and no further intervention will be required.

Employment

5.48 An estimated 27 people will continue to be directly employed at the site, in mineral extraction, restoration, processing, the office and as drivers of vehicles based at site. Indirectly there will, the application states, be many other jobs supported by the proposals. This development will assist in sustaining the local employment created by the site.

Working Hours

5.49 The extraction is planned to be operational 0700 – 1900 Monday to Friday and 0700 – 1300 on Saturdays. This reflects the hours currently consented and the plant site will continue to operate as currently permitted.

<u>Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760</u>

5.50 Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760 has been submitted under s.73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and seeks vary Condition Nos. 3, 4, and 15 of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 in order to tie in with the proposed working of the north eastern extension to Woodsford Quarry, the details of which are set out above as part of Planning Application Ref. Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753.

5.51 Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 is the substantive planning permission for the existing Woodsford Quarry that was approved on 14th December 2007. The permission was for mineral extraction and progressive restoration to agriculture and woodland including the erection of a processing plant, concrete batching plant, workshop, office and weighbridge at Woodsford Farm. A Bagging Plant has subsequently been added. Progressive low-level restoration of the site, which has been partly completed incorporates an improved drainage scheme, that will ultimately return the land back to agricultural use.

5.52 The permission was granted subject to 30 Conditions, including; Condition No. 3 which relates to the duration of the permission; Condition No.4 which refers to the development being undertaken in accordance with the approved plans

and details; and Condition No. 15 which states that no waste or other material shall be imported onto the site and that no material shall be processed at the site other than mineral extracted from within the site.

5.53 The reasons for the application is that it is proposed that working in the existing quarry will be paused, if and when extraction within the proposed north eastern extension commences. This is primarily because the existing plant area is to be retained and used to process the mineral from the north eastern extension and because the conveyor that will link the north eastern extension to the plant area, will have to be retained across the full length of the existing quarry, so that full restoration of the existing quarry will not be possible until working in the north eastern extension has been completed.

Background

5.54 Since the quarry commenced working minor changes to the phasing and restoration have been made and additional information on its operation has been submitted to the Council by way of planning condition discharge applications. Additionally in 2019, planning permission for a further silt lagoon to the north of the current plant site was granted on Appeal (Appeal Ref. APP/D1265/W/19/3232596). Construction of the silt lagoon is now complete and mineral extraction within the existing quarry has commenced at the eastern end of the site within the area identified on approved plans as Phase M in the eastern reserve. The installation of the conveyor under the Crossways to Woodsford road to take this mineral back to the plant site commenced in June 2023 and was completed in 2024.

5.55 The quarry will continue to extract in the eastern reserve until the north eastern extension is ready to be extracted. The mineral from the north eastern extension will be moved using the conveyor system, which would be extended into the north eastern extension via a tunnel under the Woodsford to Morton road which separates the two sites.

Variations of Condition being Sought

5.56 This application seeks to make changes to align the continued working of the existing quarry with the working of the north eastern extension, if this is approved. The intention is that there would continue to be only one area of extraction within the extended quarry, so that when extraction commences in the north eastern extension, extraction will be paused in the existing quarry, albeit that its restoration would continue. Whilst this does not require any variation to the existing approved restoration plans, it does necessitate extending the life of the existing quarry.

Variation of Condition No. 3 – Extension of the End Date for Working and Restoration

5.57 When Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 was approved it was anticipated that the quarry would take twenty years to extract and restore; this was dealt with in Condition No. 3 of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742. The effect of the condition is to require the existing quarry to be restored by 1st October 2029.

5.58 Condition No. 3 states:

"Unless with the prior approval of the Mineral Planning Authority to a variation, the development subject of this permission shall be limited to the period ending 20 years from the notified date of commencement of the development, by which time extraction and tipping operations shall have ceased and the site have been restored in accordance with the approved scheme and shall be the subject of aftercare".

5.59 The application seeks vary Condition to extend the end date for working and restoration of the existing quarry to 31st October 2046. It is requested that the working be amended to state:

"Unless with the prior approval of the Mineral Planning Authority to a variation, the development subject of this permission shall be limited to the period ending 31st October 2046 by which time extraction shall have ceased and the site will have been restored in accordance with the approved scheme and shall be the subject of aftercare".

5.60 The application states that this end date has been identified on the basis of the remaining reserves in the existing quarry, the expected reserves of the north eastern extension and the assumption of output from the plant site continuing at a rate of 250,000 tonnes per annum.

5.61 The applications makes clear that the mineral reserves are estimates based on boreholes and are subject to fluctuation and output rates varying depending on wider economic conditions and the availability of other materials in the wider market. Table 1 below sets out the assumptions regarding the reserve in the different parts of the extended quarry and how these would be worked.

Table 1: Assumptions regarding the reserve in the different parts of the extended quarry and how these would be worked.

Date	**Tonnes/ Time**	**Activity**
March 2026		North East Extension (NE Ext) site preparation work, soil stripping, re locating conveyors, road tunnel etc
March 2027		Extraction in NE Ext commences and pauses in Eastern Reserve
	980,000	Tonnes remaining in Eastern Reserve when extraction switches to NE Ext
	980,000	Tonnes in NE Ext that can be worked before existing silt lagoon space estimated to be completed.
	4 years	Extraction in NE Ext before need to pause and switch to south west reserve (SW) to provide silt space, estimated to be the end of Phase 4 of NE Ext
March 2031		Extraction pauses in NE Extension, switches to commence in SW of the existing quarry (540,000 tonnes)
March 2033		Extraction ceases in SW and moves back to NE Extension.

	2,020,000	Tonnes remaining to be extracted in NE Ext (3.0m tonnes- 0.98mtonnes), which is 8 years working@ 250ktpa
May 2041		Extraction complete in NE Ext
	4 years	To extract the remaining 0.98million tonnes in the Eastern Reserve
May 2045		Extraction completed in Eastern Reserve
October 2046		Restoration completed, plant site and ancillary infrastructure removed.

Variation of Condition No. 4 – Use of the South West Reserve Area

5.62 The existing quarry is currently being worked in Phase M within the eastern reserve, i.e. the area adjoining the proposed north eastern extension. No change is proposed to this as a result of the application for the north eastern extension, except that this would be paused to accommodate working in the north eastern extension.

5.63 The current approved phasing plan for the plant site, western reserve and south west area of the existing quarry is Drawing No. 91077/CO/W/1 Rev C, agreed under Discharge of Condition approval Ref. 1/E/2005/0742/AuC on 14th May 2018. The plan shows the south western area of the existing quarry as phases J,K & L, and the original intention of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 was that these would be worked as the final phases of the quarry. With the development of the north eastern extension, if approved, the application states that the areas within these phases will be needed to provide silt space for the additional mineral created by part of the north eastern extension and the final phases of the eastern reserve.

5.64 The silt space within the quarry has, as noted above, already been extended and that extension was sized to accommodate the already consented reserve. The silt generated from working the north eastern extension will require additional storage. The application states that there is no intention to change the restoration of the south western area and therefore no change to the approved restoration plan for the existing permitted quarry is required or sought.

5.65 However as working of the north eastern extension progresses and when monitoring of the remaining silt space indicates that further silt space will be required, the application states that working in the north eastern extension will be paused and extraction of the consented reserves in the south western area of the existing quarry will take place before re-commencing in the north eastern extension.

5.66 The application explains that the area proposed for the additional space within the south western area of the site had been discounted at the time of the Planning Appeal Ref. APP/D1265/W/19/3232596 for the current silt lagoon as the landowner had not agreed to the use of the area as a silt lagoon as they hoped it would be developed for housing following the completion of mineral extraction, which the use for silt storage would have precluded. The landowner, Woodsford Farms, the application states, has now changed their position on this and has agreed to silt being placed in this area to facilitate the working on

the north eastern extension. Silt management, the application states, is most sustainable when it is located close to the plant site that generates the silt and therefore the area is the optimum location within the quarry. Accordingly, it is now proposed that Condition 4 be varied as follows:

5.67 The existing Condition No. 4 states:

"Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority, no development shall be carried out other than in strict accordance with the plans and details hereby approved or the schemes approved under the requirements of these conditions. Operations on the application site shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, working scheme and details and no part of the operations specified therein shall be amended or omitted without the prior written approval of the Mineral Planning Authority".

5.68 The application seeks to vary Condition No. 4 so that it states:

"Unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority or required by the provisos of this approval, in so far as the submitted details relate to the red edged application site to which Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 relates, the authorised minerals development shall be undertaken in accordance with either the already authorised arrangements or the arrangements illustrated on:

(i) Drawing No. 14803 - 2500 - 001 Rev B dated Sept 2015 (Sheet 1);
(ii) Drawing No. 14803 – 2500 – 002 dated 28 March 2014 (Sheet 2);
(iii) Drawing No. 91077/c0/w/1. Rev D dated July 2023 and titled Western Area Phasing Plan; and
(iv) Drawing No. WOOD002.Rev C dated September 2015 and titled Revised Restoration Scheme".

5.69 Drawing No. 91077/c0/w/1 has been updated as revision D to note that the south west reserves, marked J,K & L on the plan will be used for silt management. This will be worked when necessary to provide additional silt management capacity. The application states that the exact extent of the south western reserve to be worked will be established based on operational information available at the time, including the silt content of the mineral being worked, which will vary over the life of the site.

5.70 The application states that the restoration of the southern western part of the site will be undertaken in accordance with previously approved plans and as referenced in the wording of the proposed amended condition.

5.71 The application also suggests that an additional condition is attached to the amended permission to including the same condition attached on appeal to Planning Permission Ref. P/VOC/2023/04761 which requires the submission of a scheme for the drainage and restoration of that silt lagoon area.

Variation of Condition No. 15 – Processing of Mineral from the North-East Extension

5.72 Condition No. 15 of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 states:

"No waste or other material shall be imported onto the site. No material shall be processed at the site other than mineral extracted from land, the subject of this planning permission".

5.73 The application seeks to vary this condition so as to a allow mineral from the north eastern extension to be processed through the existing plant site.

5.74 Variation of the condition is also sought to address the import of aggregates to the bagging plant, currently addressed by a stand-alone Planning Permission Ref. WD/D/18/001616, the end date for which is tied to the end date of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742. That permission could be allowed to lapse as it only has one planning condition requiring removal of the bagging plant but that requirement is covered by the Permitted Development Right which requires the removal of the bagging plant, and is therefore unnecessary.

5.75 It is accordingly proposed to vary Condition No. 15 to state:

"No waste shall be imported onto the site. No material shall be processed at the site other than mineral extracted from land, the subject of this Planning Permission and Planning Permission Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 for the North Eastern Extension of Woodsford Quarry, with the exception of mineral imported for the bagging plant".

Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04761

5.76 Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04761 has been submitted under s.73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and seeks vary Condition Nos. 3,5, 7 and 9 of Planning Permission Ref. WD/D/18/002648 in order to tie in the permission for the existing silt lagoon with the proposed working of the north eastern extension to Woodsford Quarry, the details of which are set out above as part of Planning Application Ref. Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753.

5.77 As set out Above Planning Permission Ref. WD/D/18/002648 was granted on appeal in 2019 for an additional silt lagoon to the north of the current plant site (Appeal Ref. APP/D1265/W/19/3232596). Construction of the silt storage area has been completed and extraction operations are on-going in Phase M, in the eastern reserve i.e. at the eastern end of the currently consented quarry.

5.78 The quarry will continue to extract in the eastern reserve until the north eastern extension, if approved, is ready for extraction there to commence. The mineral from the eastern reserve is moved using the existing conveyor system, which will be extended into the north eastern extension via a tunnel under the road separating the two sites.

5.79 The application explains that the silt lagoon space that is the subject to this application, when initially consented was sized to accommodate the anticipated remaining silt generated by processing the minerals consented under Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 from within the existing Woodsford Quarry. Based on the assumed tonnages of mineral to be extracted from the existing quarry, the existing silt lagoon would be able to accommodate the first four phases of the working of the north eastern extension and accommodate silt from the south western reserve being worked as its replacement. The current application explains that the sizing of silt lagoons is likely to need some adjustment once the precise nature of the mineral from the north eastern extension is known and in particular variances in its silt content are established.

5.80 Regardless of any changes to the working of the quarry or the source of the silt, restoration of the silt lagoon to the north of the Plant area will be to agriculture in accordance with the previously approved scheme.

Variations of Condition being Sought

5.81 This application seeks to make changes to align the continued working of the existing quarry with the working of the north eastern extension, if this is approved. The intention is that there would continue to be only one area of extraction at any one time within the extended quarry, so that when extraction commences in the north eastern extension, extraction will be paused in the existing quarry, albeit that its restoration would continue. Whilst this does not require any variation to the existing approved restoration plans, it does necessitate extending the life of the existing quarry.

Variation of Condition No. 3 – Extension of the End Date for Working and Restoration

5.82 The application explains that the working the north eastern extension as an interlude to completing the existing quarry has formed part of the proposals for Woodsford Quarry and its extension in making the allocations now incorporated in the MSP, and with this the need not only to extend the end date of the main permission for the quarry (i.e. by variation of Condition No. 3 of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742, as et out above), but also of the planning permission for the existing lagoon, i.e. Planning Permission Ref. WD/D/18/002648.

5.83 Condition No. 3 of Planning Permission Ref. WD/D/18/002648 states:

"The extraction of mineral and the depositing of mineral waste hereby permitted must cease not later than 01 October 2028".

5.84 A variation of Condition No. 3 is sought to extend the end date of the permission to 30th June 2033, i.e. so that it states:

"The extraction of mineral and the depositing of mineral waste hereby permitted must cease not later than 30th June 2033".

5.85 Table 1 above sets out approximate timescales for the completion of mineral extraction including that in the south western part of the site, which would be due in March 2033, with a short transition period during which the use of the silt lagoons would switch from that to the north of the plant area to the use of the lagoons in the south-western area.

5.86 The end date for use of the silt lagoon has been estimated based on its capacity to take all of the silt generated by the approved workings, which includes the full extent of the eastern reserve and the south west reserve. If the north eastern extension is approved, some of the additional silt lagoon capacity will be used for silt generated from mineral extracted from the north eastern extension.

Variation of Condition No. 5 – Alignment of the dates for a Submission of a Drainage, Restoration Scheme and Aftercare Schemes

5.87 Condition 5 of the consent for the silt lagoon states:

"Within 3 months of a permanent cessation of mineral working authorised by planning permission 1/E/2005/0742 and in any event no later than 1st March 2028, a scheme for the drainage of the silt lagoons hereby permitted and for the restoration of the application area edged red on the application Site Location Plan (Brunel Surveys Ltd Drawing No. 541E-01 dated May 2015) to a condition suitable for high quality agricultural use shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. The submitted scheme shall provide for the filling of the lagoons with material indigenous to the land edged red or blue on the application Site Location Plan (Brunel Surveys Ltd Drawing No. 541E-01 dated May 2015) and for the restoration of the application area through the placement of indigenous site soils only and for the completion of the site restoration no later than 01 October 2030. The approved drainage and restoration works must be completed and shall be undertaken in accordance with the details and arrangements approved pursuant to this condition".

5.88 The application seeks to vary this condition to reflect the end date for use of the site lagoon noted above so that it states:

"Within 3 months of a permanent cessation of mineral working authorised by planning permission 1/E/2005/0742 (as amended) and in any event no later than 31st December 2032, a scheme for the drainage of the silt lagoons hereby permitted and for the restoration of the application area edged red on the application Site Location Plan (Brunel Surveys Ltd Drawing No. 541E-01 dated May 2015) to a condition suitable for high quality agricultural use shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. The submitted scheme shall provide for the filling of the lagoons with material indigenous to the land edged red or blue on the application Site Location Plan (Brunel Surveys Ltd Drawing No. 541E-01 dated May 2015) and for the restoration of the application area through the placement of indigenous site soils only and for the completion of the site restoration no later than 30 June 2035. The approved drainage and restoration works must be completed and shall be undertaken in accordance with the details and arrangements approved pursuant to this condition".

Variation of Condition No. 7 – Alignment of the Date for Submission of an Aftercare Scheme

5.89 Condition 7 states:

"Within 3 months of a permanent cessation of mineral working authorised by planning permission 1/E/2005/0742 and no later than 1st March 2028 an aftercare scheme detailing a strategy of commitment to a five-year period of post-restoration aftercare land management for all parts of the application area edged red on the application Site Location Plan (Brunel Surveys Ltd Drawing No. 541E-01 dated May 2015) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted aftercare scheme shall include details of proposals for planting (timing and pattern of vegetation establishment), cultivating, fertilising, watering, draining, and/or otherwise treating the land as appropriate to its intended afteruse including measures for managing soil quality, structure and fertility and the control of weeds. The aftercare scheme shall make provision for the submission and approval of a detailed management programme setting out the steps to be undertaken for

each twelve-month period comprised in the aftercare period which shall specify the steps to be taken, the period during which the steps are to be undertaken and who will be responsible for undertaking each step. The aftercare strategy shall also make provision for an annual meeting to review the previous years' aftercare. The aftercare scheme and detailed programmes of management must be completed and shall be implemented as approved".

5.90 The applications seeks to vary this condition so that it states:

"Within 3 months of a permanent cessation of mineral working authorised by planning permission 1/E/2005/0742 as amended and no later than 31st December 2032 an aftercare scheme detailing a strategy of commitment to a five-year period of post-restoration aftercare land management for all parts of the application area edged red on the application Site Location Plan (Brunel Surveys Ltd Drawing No. 541E-01 dated May 2015) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted aftercare scheme shall include details of proposals for planting (timing and pattern of vegetation establishment), cultivating, fertilising, watering, draining, and/or otherwise treating the land as appropriate to its intended afteruse including measures for managing soil quality, structure and fertility and the control of weeds. The aftercare scheme shall make provision for the submission and approval of a detailed management programme setting out the steps to be undertaken for each twelve-month period comprised in the aftercare period which shall specify the steps to be taken, the period during which the steps are to be undertaken and who will be responsible for undertaking each step. The aftercare strategy shall also make provision for an annual meeting to review the previous years' aftercare. The aftercare scheme and detailed programmes of management must be completed and shall be implemented as approved".

5.91 In relation to the receipt of silt arising from processing mineral from the north east extension Condition 9 states:

"Save for the placement or deposit of any material approved under condition 5 of this planning permission and for mineral waste arising from development permitted by planning permission 1/E/2005/0742 no materials of any kind shall be imported to the application area site for the purpose of deposit as waste".

5.92 The application seeks to vary the condition so as to allow the import of material from the north east extension in the event that the application for the extension is approved, so the amended condition would state:

*"Save for the placement or deposit of any material approved under condition 5 of this planning permission and for mineral waste arising from development permitted by planning permission 1/E/2005/0742 as amended and permission ref ** for the north east extension of Woodsford Quarry, no materials of any kind shall be imported to the application area site for the purpose of deposit as waste".*

6 Planning History

6.1 Planning Permission Ref: 1/E/2005/0742 for Woodsford Quarry, was granted to Woodsford Farms in 14th December 2007 for the Mineral extraction and progressive restoration to agriculture and woodland including the erection of a

processing plant, concrete batching plant, workshop, office and weighbridge. This the main permission for the existing Woodsford Quarry, that Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760 now seeks to vary.

6.2 Application Ref. 1/E/2005/0742/AuC which was for the Approval under Condition No. 4 (Adherence to approved plans and details) and No. 20 (Limitation on erection of structure, fixed plant etc) of planning permission 1/E/2005/0742 comprising layout changes and extension to the processing area, minor changes to the restoration plan for the western part of the quarry and revised scheme of phasing, was approved on 14th May 2018.

6.3 Planning Permission Ref. WD/D/18/002648 which was for the Formation of silt lagoons to serve existing processing plant at Woodsford Quarry with site restoration to agricultural use, was granted on appeal against non-determination by Dorset County Council (Appeal Ref. APP/D1265/W/19/3232596) on 25th November 2019.

6.4 Application Ref. WD/D/18/002648/DoC which was for the Discharge of Condition No. 6 (Landscape and Ecology Management Plan), No. 11 (Archaeology), No. 18 (Surface Water Management and Drainage) and No. 20 (Reversing Alarms) of planning permission WD/D/18/002648, was approved on 12th February 2020.

6.5 The north eastern extension site as included as Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension, Woodsford in MSP which was adopted by Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council on 31 December 2019.

6.6 Planning Applications Refs. P/FUL/2023/04753, P/VOC/2023/04760 & P/VOC/2023/04761, i.e. the applications that are the subject of this report were submitted in August 2023.

7 Constraints and Relevant Designations

7.1 Relevant designations within or in the vicinity of the application site, and other features worthy of note, are listed below.

7.2 <u>Landscape Designations</u>

- National Character Areas (Natural England): Dorset Heaths
- Landscape Character Areas (Dorset Council): Valley Pasture

7.3 <u>Ecological Designations</u>

- Ramsar
    - Dorset Heathlands; approximately 2350m to the south-east, 2920m to the south west, 3150m to the north east and 3220 to the east;
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
    - Dorset Heathlands; approximately 2350m to the south-east, 2920m to the south west, 3150m to the north east and 3220 to the east;
    - Poole Harbour; approximately 14.8km to the east;
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

    - Dorset Heaths; approximately 2350m to the south-east, 2920m to the south west, 3150m to the north east and 3220 to the east;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
    - River Frome: approximately 30m to the north and 400m to the north east;
    - Winfrith Heath: approximately 820m to the south
    - Warmwell Heath: approximately 2350 to the south-east
    - Oakers Wood: approximately 2000m to the north-east
    - Oakers Bog: approximately 3220m to the north-east
    - Culp Peppers Dish: approximately 3700m to the north-east
    - Turner's Puddle Heath: approximately 4000m to the north-east
- Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)
    - Hurst Heath SNCI: Approximately 250m east of the application site:
    - Sheep's Walk Pit: Approximately 330m to the south of the application site.
    - Pallington Coppice SNCI: Approximately 1.8km northeast of the application site; and
    - Redbridge SNCI: Approximately 1.9km to the south of the application site; and

7.4 Heritage Assets

Listed buildings:

- Frome Bridge (Grade II): approximately 118m to the north
- Barn 20m east of Woodsford Manor (Grade II): approximately 400m to the west
- Coach House and Stable immediately east of Woodsford Manor (Grade II): approximately 417m to the west
- Unidentified Monument, in the churchyard, 15m east of the east wall of the Church of St John the Baptist (Grade II): approximately 454m to the west
- Church of Saint John The Baptist (Grade II): approximately 465m to the west
- Glebe Cottage (Grade II): approximately 486m to the west
- Woodsford House, including attached stable on north (Grade II): approximately 511m to the west
- Old School House (Grade II): approximately 493m to the west
- Woodsford Castle Grade I):approximately 921m to the west
- Bwthyn (Grade II): approximately 711m to the north-east
- Pallington Farm House: approximately 915m to the north-east

Conservation Areas:

- Morton Conservation Area: approximately 985m south-east

Non-Designated Heritage Assets:

- The north-eastern part of the site comprises an area of watermeadows that are thought to have been developed in the late 17thcentury;
- WWII pill-box on watery Lane which is identified as a non-designated heritage asset, adjacent to the site.

7.5 Tree Protection Orders

- TPO/2024/0013: Covers the whole of the application site of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, i.e. the north eastern extension area, plus and a small to the immediate north east of the site. The TPO was issued by Dorset Council on 6th March 2024.

7.6 Rights of Way

Most relevant:

- S60/2 Footpath: approximately 25m to the north
- S39/60 Footpath: approximately 50m to the north
- S60/1 Footpath: approximately 50m to the north-west
- S60/4 Footpath: approximately 50m to the south
- S60/3 Footpath: approximately 5m to the south

8 Consultation Responses

Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753

8.1 There have been three rounds of public consultation as a result of which no representations were received from individuals.

Consultees

Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753

Moreton Parish Council

8.2 Morton Parish Council has submitted a very lengthy (31 page) and detailed response to the application. A full copy of the of the response can be found at: https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=399129

8.3 In summary this response makes the following points:

- A survey undertaken at the time or preparation of the MSP found that over 80% of Moreton households were against the proposed Station Road and Hurst Farm quarries (although the development of Hurst Farm Station Road site does not form part of this application). The vote did not include the Woodsford Quarry Extension Quarry because it is sited on land within another Parish Council. Nevertheless, the “No” vote against the Hurst Farm quarry should also be taken as a ‘No’ vote against the Combined Hurst Farm and Woodsford Quarry Extension Quarry.
- Local Residents overwhelmingly consider that the area is already over-quarried, with quarries at Moreton Pit, Warmwell, Woodsford and an additional site at Summer Farm is also to be quarried with much of the resulting HGV traffic routed through Morton Station.
- The response makes a number of detailed comments and raises a number of questions on the adequacy of the information contained in the Environmental Statement submitted with the application.
- It raises concerns about the impact on the occupants of the two properties at Woodsford Lower Dairy in the centre of the site.
- The time for the working of the different phases is difficult to understand and is likely to give rise to conflict with the concurrent working on the

adjacent Hurst Farm site, which the MSP states should not happen. This needs to be given greater consideration;

- The working of the two sites simultaneously amounts to the working of s single very large quarry and the working of each site is likely to impact on the working of the other and given rise to significant cumulative effects;
- Concern that the planning applications for the two sites may not be considered together at the same committee;
- The operators at Woodsford Quarry have miscalculated the amount of silt that will need to be managed, resulting in the need to provide additional silt lagoon capacity;
- The operators at Woodsford Quarry have not understood the flow of groundwater across the site and the assessment does not adequately assess the impact on the water table of extraction to greater depth than the original Woodsford quarry, and the impact in conjunction with the proposed creation and dredging on of lakes on the adjacent Hurst Farm site;
- Neither operator of the proposed Woodsford extension or the Hurst Farm/Station Road site has indicated in its documentation that it has modelled the water table across the land which they intend to excavate;
- Neither has either operator has indicated in their documentation that they have modelled the River Frome basin without and with the lakes on their restored quarries, and consequently their claims that the lakes will aid the River Frome are not based upon detailed modelling investigation;
- The proposed dredging on the adjacent Hurst Farm site may result in changes in groundwater flow and this in turn could result in an increase the quantity of silt on the Woodsford Extension quarry;
- The Woodsford Extension quarry phases close to the Hurst Farm quarry may also be adversely affected by surface run off from the large flat Hurst Farm operating base.
- Woodsford Quarry found that the water flowing across their original land was greater and at a higher level than they had planned for and as a result it had to spend considerable time and money submitting a Planning Application (PA) to increase the size of their original silt lagoon.
- The Hurst Farm operation is likely by virtue of its dredging activity and creation of lakes to impact on the water balance on its land and part of the proposed Woodsford Quarry extension.
- The MSP requires the Hurst Farm quarry to operate after Station Road quarry has completed, but the applicant, has applied to develop the Hurst Farm side of the site first, followed by Station Road. The eastern area of the Woodsford Quarry Extension and the western area of Hurst Farm should preferably not be worked simultaneously.
- The Restoration Vision in the MSP states that the restoration must explore the opportunity to provide a large-scale wetland restoration scheme hydrologically connected to the River Frome, whereas the lakes on Phases 4, 5,6, and 9 would not be not be directly connected to the River Frome.
- The lakes will not provide flood relief for the River Frome as they are not connected to the River.
- The Woodsford Extension area is made of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, most of which will be lost.

- The lakes proposed will provide very little if any informal recreation/public open space.
- Moreton Parish Council fully supports the proposal to upgrade the proposed public footpath across the site during restoration to Public Bridleway status.

Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle Parish Council

8.4 Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle Parish Council objects the application on the grounds that there will be a potential loss of amenity value as a result of HGV vehicles travelling through the village of Affpuddle on the B3390.

8.5 It is concerned that there are no measures to ensure the agreed off-site HGV lorry road haulage routes are adhered to.

8.6 The Parish Council is concerned that there will be a significant negative impact on the amenity value for people living in the village of Affpuddle from more HGVs using this route. Any increase in large vehicles travelling through the village will have a significant detrimental impact on pedestrians, dog walkers, horse riders and cyclists. The Parish Council is keen to improve the physical links between Briantspuddle and Affpuddle but further intensification on the B3390 will make this more difficult.

8.7 It understands that the route from Waddock Cross to the A35 northwards cannot be restricted solely to HGVs visiting and leaving Woodsford Quarry and not to other HGV traffic. Given this, it considers that the only way of guaranteeing that the route will not be used by mineral traffic from the quarry is to restrict its use to all HGV traffic except for access, so mandating them to use the preferred northern route.

8.8 Should this not prove possible, the Parish Council would request that the Applicant submits further proposals for other measures including binding legal agreements that would prevent the potential negative impacts of increased HGV movements travelling through Affpuddle.

8.9 The Parish Council is concerned that the proposals do not lead to any unintended increase in the number of HGVs on the unsuitable narrow country lanes elsewhere in the Parish.

Knightsford Parish Council

8.10 Knightsford Parish Council has similarly submitted an initial lengthy and detailed response, focussing on the noise impacts of the development, and further response following the initial Regulation 25 consultation, which in summary make the following points:

- The conveyor road crossing and the landscaping of gateways and signage must be carefully considered and landscaped. These have been very unsightly in the existing quarry;
- Restoration must be completed in a timely manner and immediately after working in each phase;
- The submitted documents suggest restoration to fishing lakes but with providing any general public rights of access.
- Do not agree that the assessed visual impact will be minimal;
- Unsightly visual impact of stockpiles of white sand;

- It is proposed that a new footpath between the old mill leat bridge on Watery Lane and the existing footpath S60/3 is part of the restoration. This should be classified a cycle-path - gravelled and maintained;
- Footpath S60/1 has a missing public footpath bridge over the River Frome just upstream of the listed bridge. A new bridge should be installed to improve the amenity of residents who have to put up with the disruption of quarrying for a further 15 years.
- Simultaneous operations within the proposed extension and the proposed adjacent Hurst Farm site will have cumulative impacts from noise;
- The application should make reference to BS 4142 and BS 5228;
- There is no reference to 'Best Available Technology' (BAT) to minimise noise at source as required by BS 5228;
- The noise assessment fails to identify grader noise here - removing over size flint nodules – as a noise source. This will be the most dominant noise at the quarry face and will be particularly noticeable to residents and businesses downwind from the prevailing wind.
- The assessment of noise from dewatering pumps is inadequate;
- Smart white noise reverse alarms should be used. These adjust the alarm to 10db above the ambient noise level;
- The application refers to 3m high soil bunds. These need to be close to the source or receptor to be effective. The topography of the valley means any bunds either for visual or audible use may not be effective;
- In September and October 2023 work started without planning permission involving the removal of hedges and trees, to install culverts and haul road gateways. As a result, hedges that were grubbed up were simply placed on the ground and soil mounded around their roots. They were not trenched in and there is a concern that these will now not survive. Should they not do so, then there should be a requirement to replace them.

Active Travel England

8.11 Have advised that they have no comment.

National Grid Electricity Transmission

8.12 Has advised that it has no objection.

National Grid Gas Transmission

8.13 Has advised that it has no objection.

Environment Agency

8.14 Objects and recommends that the application should be refused: There have been four rounds of consultation to which the Environment Agency has responded as well additional correspondence.

8.15 The Environment Agency initially advised that there was insufficient information included in the ES Chapter, ES Chapter 10 on Water Management, and the accompanying Hydrogeological Impact Assessment (HIA) submitted with the north eastern extension planning application (Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753) to determine the risks to the water environment, and therefore that unless additional information was submitted which addressed its concerns, it recommend that planning permission should be refused in line with

paragraph 174 (now paragraph 187) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

8.16 It advised that to ensure development is sustainable, applicants must provide adequate information to demonstrate that the risks posed by development to the environment can be satisfactorily managed. It requested that additional evidence to enable it to make an informed decision on the acceptability of the proposals, be submitted.

8.17 It raised three specific concerns. The first of these was that the submitted ES Chapter and the accompanying HIA relied on the hydrogeological information from the existing Woodsford Quarry rather than assessing the impacts of the proposed extension and that this was not sufficient because there are significant differences between the two. In particular it was concerned that the evidence from the existing quarry shows that there have been changes to the normal pattern of groundwater behaviour since quarrying within the existing quarry first started. These impacts include the lowering of groundwater levels during low flow periods in summer and autumn, and that the groundwater flow regime has changed since quarrying commenced, with one of the Boreholes used for monitoring adjacent to the river now being dry, providing an indication that the groundwater level is at or below river level.

8.18 The Environment Agency therefore advised that the current operation has the potential to deprive the River Frome channel adjacent to the site of groundwater baseflow and potentially to reverse flow inducing drainage from the river. The concern is that the proposed north eastern extension would have a similar impact. It has also additionally expressed concerned about any potential impact on the two current water abstraction licences in proximity to the site, and that the assessment should include the quantification of the abstraction regimes in comparison with recharge and discharge to compare with the volume estimates presented for the extension area.

8.19 Second, and in addition to this, the Environment Agency was concerned that the proposed restoration of the north eastern extension differs from the current operations in that the workings will partly be restored as open water bodies, and in particular in those phases closest to the River Frome. The proposal comprises a succession of tiered lakes and water bodies at different water level elevations to replicate the groundwater gradient and movement towards the river. Whilst it states that this design is proposed to address the long term risk to the River Frome, it was concerned about the potential for the river to drain to the lower elevation water bodies within the workings, which would be lower than the river, and that this would have a potentially adverse impact on the river which is an Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It was particularly concerned that the restoration scheme will result in water level differences because the lakes that would be created would be unlined and located within the very permeable terrace gravels. As a result, it advised that it needed to be demonstrated that there would not be adverse impact, based on reasonable evidence of the resulting groundwater flow.

8.20 The third consequential concern was, because the River Frome is a Principal Salmon River, that it is not just the impact on low flows which are of concern but also that any changes to the flows could negatively impact on the available

habitat and could unacceptably impact on salmon at the population level. The Environment Agency expressed particular concern that a reduction in flow might extend throughout the year. It therefore required more information on the scale of the change to the flow of the river and possible mitigation for this impact with respect to fisheries, once a more detailed understanding of the hydrogeology of the site had been determined.

8.21 In addition, the consultation response from the Environment Agency expressed concern that the HIA had not considered the cumulative impact of the proposed north-eastern extension and the development of the Hurst Farm and Station Road sites proposed in Planning App No. P/FUL/2023/03982).

8.22 The applicant, in response to these points, submitted an Addendum to the HIA, which referred to annual groundwater monitoring reports produced for the existing quarry, and stated that there is an overall constancy of groundwater levels, which indicates that mineral extraction and associated operations have not impacted adversely on the water environment in the vicinity of the quarry, and that the similarities of the geology, water environment and operations of the current quarry to the proposed north eastern extension indicate that additional specific mitigation measures are not required.

8.23 The response additionally stated that because all of the areas of the proposed restoration scheme, to be undertaken on a phase-by-phase basis, would be physically separated from each other, there would be no surface water connections between them and they would each act hydraulically largely independently of one another. Further they stated that the maintenance of water levels within the restoration area will be ensured by the hydraulic continuity with its surroundings with the groundwater flow being maintained through the restored area, for the same reason. The response stated that comparison of the waterbody elevations and average groundwater levels demonstrated that the predicted restoration levels are accurate and represent anticipated conditions.

8.24 For these reasons the applicant stated that the configuration of the existing drainage network, would be unchanged, and that the groundwater flow regime is such that there would be no anticipated change to flow within the river. Groundwater derived from dewatering, which would be discharged into the existing drainage network, and would follow the same discharge route to the current discharge point to the east of the north eastern extension area. As a result, there would not be any change to the volume of flow within the local water environment, with all water derived from dewatering being retained within the water system.

8.25 As a result, the response document concludes that the cumulative impacts of the Woodford north eastern extension and the Hurst Farm, Station Road proposals upon water levels will be very restricted both laterally and temporally.

8.26 In response to the submission of the HIA Addendum the Environment Agency then advised, that the latter conclusion by the applicant was contradicted by the groundwater level data which shows significant changes in patterns of level and range during the operation of the quarry works and that this includes groundwater level lowering by between 1 and 2m during summer and autumn

low flow periods during the quarrying works post 2010. This was set out in the initially submitted ES Chapter and HIA and indicates that some of the low levels recorded within the proposed extension area are at not above river and ditch levels, and impacts in groundwater borehole levels are observed more than 800m from the operational development area.

8.27 These observations, the Environment Agency commented are significant for the extension development because the proposed workings will dewater the groundwater levels because the projected base of the excavations which will be below river and ditch levels during operation, and the working method. It therefore advised that impact on the River Frome SSSI water course due to dewatering needs more detailed assessment and that because the groundwater throughput is in the order of 1% of the low flow regime or less, whilst the projected dewatering rates are much greater and could be up to 20% of the low flow, with the concern being that the potential for influence on the SSSI flow regime is a significant.

8.28 In relation to the issue the relative levels of the water in the River Frome and the groundwater in the extension area, the Environment Agency further commented that the EIA Addendum confirms that the elevation of the drainage ditch across the northeastern extension area and that this is below the River Frome channel. However, whilst it agreed that the potential for surface waters in the River Frome to be influenced by quarry dewatering will be constrained by the ditch, it remained concerned that the projected depth of dewatering will also exceed the base elevation of the ditch system, so that the extent of influence of the dewatering would extend towards the Frome channel. Furthermore, it advised that upstream from the ditch, the Frome channel through Woodsford and Frome Bridge is in hydraulic continuity with the groundwater at the site, and there is the potential for impact on flows due to quarry operations, which consequently require further assessment.

8.29 In relation to the cumulative impact it advised that once the issues set out above have been resolved then the joint impacts on the Hurst Farm and Woodsford development can be reviewed including any implications for the Hurst Wood SNCI community and discharge of dewatering waters.

8.30 In response to this further consultation comment from the Environment Agency, the applicant then submitted a response document with details from a survey of the river, detailing the relationship between the elevations of the River Frome, historic ditches and base of mineral workings, and potential groundwater flows. This confirmed that the base on the mineral working closest to the river would be below the level of river (between 0.12 m and 3.13 m below the river water level in the closest phases), although the report states that the difference between the river and western phases, in Phases 7 and 8, would only be minimal.

8.31 Most significantly, and notwithstanding the above point, the response then sets out an amended proposal in relation to the proposed mitigation by use of the deep ditch to the north of the north eastern extension, with the proposed recharge of water to the existing deep ditch located between the northern limit of mineral extraction and the river. Specifically it proposed that in Phases 1a, 2 and 3 to discharge water from these phases, after settlement, to the western

extremity of the existing deep ditch, with water being pumped from the settlement lagoons that are to be created in Phase 1a. Water would be conveyed in a pipeline, which would be installed immediately to the south of the screening bunds. The quality of water would be assured by settlement and the use of a flocculant plant. The same method of water management would be maintained throughout the operational life of the quarry.

8.32 The effect of this change is that discharged water will raise the ditch water level, which will act as a recharge trench. The flow direction within the ditch is eastwards, with the result that the mitigating effects will occur across the whole width of extraction areas 2 and 1a/3, with the raising of the ditch water level above that of the river would reversing groundwater flows locally, thereby preventing any flow from the river into the extraction area.

8.33 In Phases 7 and 8, the response document stated, because of the minimal height difference between the river and base of Phases 7 and 8, that these mitigation measures are not considered to be necessary.

8.34 In separate correspondence with the Environment Agency the applicant additionally proposed mitigation measures in relation to the impact on the Hurst Heath SNCI. This advised that the effects of dewatering within Phase 5, the closest to the SNCI feature, will be temporary and reversible, and that once mineral extraction and restoration have been completed active water management will cease and groundwater levels will recover. As a result the response stated that residual impacts on features within Hurst Wood are not anticipated. Nevertheless, it also proposed that a perforated pipe system could be used to convey dewatering water from Phase 5 to irrigate the area in the short term, until groundwater levels had recovered.

8.35 Despite this submission, the Environment Agency, subsequently maintained their objection and repeated their previously stated concerns that the effects the proposed development at Woodsford Quarry would have on groundwater and the resulting impacts on the River Frome. They additionally expressed concerns about the likely adverse impacts on the SNCI community in Hurst Heath during operation and on completion, and that further, dewatering and diversion of flows would cause depleted groundwater movement on to the Hurst Farm site and could prevent the proposed 'wet working' development and the ability to maintain groundwater levels as proposed as part of the Hurst Farm scheme.

8.36 The Environment Agency advised that its preferred approach to working across the Woodsford Quarry extension area should be based on water level control across all extraction areas, at all times, using the premise that groundwater levels are maintained above the River Frome during medium and low flows to prevent river losses. It advised, whilst in principle therefore, that dewatering could still be undertaken in the higher River Terraces above the river level, that at the lower levels, the development would need to be worked wet. It also advised that due consideration needed to be given to the relative timing of operations in the Woodsford north eastern extension and on the adjacent Hurst Farm site (which comprises part of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/03982). It expressed particular concern that the parts of the Woodsford Quarry extension area have a potential to influence flows across

the Hurst farm development. They therefore requested that the applicant consider the possibility of a combined wet and dry working scheme.

8.37 Specifically in response to the amended proposals to uses the deep ditch to the north of the north eastern extension as a rechange trench, they also commented that this had thus far not been a feature of the Environmental Statement (ES) or supporting documents. Nor had there been any supporting evidence to demonstrate compensation is likely to be successful. They were also concerned that any system for re-introduction of compensation water to the groundwater implies that the ditch system will be used as a soakaway and for the settlement of fines. This they stated also raises several issues regarding the suitability of the ditch system as a de facto settlement lagoon; the ecological impact on the ditch system; the capacity of the system and to what extent water will remain in the ditch to generate a positive head; and potential impacts at high flows that exacerbate downstream flooding.

8.38 They also stated that the groundwater re-introduction needed to be able to demonstrate that elevated groundwater levels could be maintained and not dissipated so quickly that the net effect does not achieve the distribution either by area or in time.

8.39 In relation to the proposed mitigation of the potential impact on the Hurst Heath SNCI the Environment Agency advised that the proposals for operating in Phase 5 adjacent to the SNCI community are for dewatering to 29.6 mAOD from an average groundwater level in the order of 33 mAOD. The implication is, the commented is that groundwater levels could be significantly reduced in the SNCI community during the operations. Specifically in response to the proposal that groundwater from the dewatering could be introduced to the Hurst Heath area, to irrigate through pipework, they commented that without knowing the required conditions to support the community, it is unclear if this is likely to be effective or even detrimental if water quality and quantity is not appropriate, and consequently advised that a specific assessment is undertaken to identify the most appropriate course of action during operations.

8.40 On-going dialogue with the Environment Agency and the applicant has continued in an attempt to secure resolution of the outstanding issue. For the reasons set out above the Environment Agency's substantive advice remains unchanged and it recommends that the application for the north eastern extension be refused for the reasons set out above. It has in the meantime also advised in relation to Planning Application Ref. Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/03982 for the concurrent Hurst Farm and Station Road application, that it recommends approval of the application subject to a number of conditions. Its comments and recommendation in relation to that application are set out in the accompanying report on Planning Application Ref. Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/03982.

8.41 Since the last substantive consultation response from the Environment Agency, the applicant has submitted a Counsel's Opinion, setting out reasons why it is considered that the Environment has as a statutory consultee, taken an unlawful approach to the assessment of the cumulative impact of the development, contrary to settled caselaw, and that there is consequently a danger that the Dorset Council Mineral Planning Authority as decision maker

will be misled by the information presented, and may also reach an unlawful decision. A separate Counsel's Opinion has also been submitted by the applicant for the Hurst Farm – Station Road application , expressing a contrary view.

8.42 In response to this both Counsel's Opinions have been sent on to the Environment Agency, who have advised that their views on the two applications remain unchanged, and that the Hurst Farm - Station Road application (Planning Application Ref. Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/03982) can be approved subject to conditions, whilst they continue to recommend refusal of the Woods north eastern extension application, for the reasons set out above.

Natural England

8.43 Natural England in their response to the consultation on the three applications, which was submitted following receipt of the consultation responses from the Environment Agency, has advised that it shares the concerns expressed by Environment Agency about the potential effects on the River Frome SSSI and the Hurst Heath SNCI. It states that the River Frome SSSI is of national importance and as a chalk stream it is part of a wider international resource of which England hosts a significant proportion worldwide.

8.44 It has expressed concern about potential adverse effects of de-watering proposed as part of the development of the north eastern extension both from Woodsford north-eastern extension application alone and in-combination with possible effects resulting from the adjoining minerals application at Hurst Farm and Station Road (Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/03982) on the Hurst Heath SNCI, and in particular its population of nationally rare heath lobelia (Lobelia urens), an issue also raised by the Environment Agency.

8.45 In relation to the River Frome SSSI they note that the objection from Environment Agency is based on both water quality and flow concerns and it comments that both water quality and flow regimes are critical in supporting the features of the SSSI.

8.46 The further note that the risk to the SSSI from the de-watering increases with proximity to the river valley due to increasingly porous gravels which could result in significantly greater drawdown effect than in those phases furthest away from the river valley. It is also concerned that the adverse effects of drawdown are likely to be exacerbated during periods of low flow such as the summer months compared to the winter. Consequently they advise that significant changes to elements of the application are likely to be necessary, as the Environment Agency has advised, to resolve these issues.

8.47 It also comments that the location of water discharged into the SSSI from dewatering activities needs to be in an appropriate location to mitigate for any flow reduction which is caused and be of equivalent quality (silt content/turbidity/chemical composition and pH etc) to that in the river.

8.48 Natural England states that it is also concerned about the use of chemicals flocculants which it advises, should be avoided.

8.49 It also offers comments in relation to the nearby Hurst Heath SNCI, which supports the only original population of heath lobelia remaining in Dorset and

its particular concern is that this is dependent on a hydrological regime that maintains wet conditions, and that it would be vulnerable to drying if groundwater supply from higher in the catchment is curtailed by de-watering. It is also concerned that the potential hydrological effects from the Hurst Farm application could act in combination and would complicate the understanding of any adverse impacts.

8.50 Natural England notes that whilst the Hurst Farm application includes plans to manage Hurst Heath for heath lobelia and secure the expansion of its population as well as to benefit other ecological interests the evidence from the Woodford north eastern extension application provides little certainty that the groundwater levels fundamental to the species survival will not be compromised at the existing population (c.120m away from the application boundary) but also at the locations where expansion is planned. Thus it would not only affect the existing small heath lobelia site but also other sites over a wider area.

8.51 It is concerned that although the proposed de-watering would be temporary, that the application plans show that 3 phases (4, 5 and 6) would be open at the same time. It considers that it is hard to predict the long-term significance for the SNCI of a temporary effect. It is also concerned that with the final restoration, to an angling lake the end use of the nearest Phase 5, would not be without potential effects as any easterly surface flows towards Hurst Heath and the SNCI would be permanently interrupted.

8.52 It also states that with the potential mitigation for effects of de-watering on the SNCI, it would also not be in favour of maintaining wetness by artificial pumping of water because there would be a risk of more major alterations to hydrology that might be damaging. Instead, it suggest that consideration be given to infilling the drain within Hurst Heath (the southward extension of the drain that forms the boundary between phase 5 and Hurst Heath) which could serve to mitigate too dry conditions in summer. This, it states, could be combined with management of the western part of Hurst Heath not within the control of the Hurst Farm applicants where some removal of secondary woodland and if present, rhododendron, would also benefit the hydrology. Any rhododendron within this part of Hurst Heath it states, also presents a threat to successful elimination of this invasive species within the remainder of the site which would be a key aim associated with the Hurst Farm planning application. Thus it states that securing management of this small western part of Hurst Heath would have significant benefits.

8.53 Natural England further states that the effective monitoring of the SNCI and its hydrogeological regime is critical to establishing both an existing baseline and a context through which any nearby dewatering can be controlled to avoid harm. It advises that the monitoring scheme between both application sites needs to be complementary and evidence shared. At present it states that it is concerned that there is not adequate information on the scope of the monitoring for Natural England to comment on of for the Council to consider.

8.54 In the event that some elements of the application are revised Natural England advises that changes to the restoration plan are also considered. It questions whether the large areas given over to angling lakes is consistent with the vision

in the approved MSP. Moreover, it states that the management of any angling lakes needs to be addressed because, if stocked with carp, this would compromise not only the ecological condition of the angling lakes themselves but could also pose a risk of accidental introduction to neighbouring wildlife lakes which would be harmful. They also comment that the wildlife lakes would benefit from a larger zone of shallows around their margins. In our view, this is more important than having islands. It would also, they advise, be advantageous if there was a significant terrestrial buffer zone between Hurst Heath and the adjacent lake.

Historic England

8.55 Historic England has returned a response that relates to all three applications for Woodsford Quarry.

Historic England's Advice

8.56 Historic England states that its interest in the applications stems from the proximity of existing and proposed quarrying operations to Woodsford Castle, which is a Grade I listed building now owned by the Landmark Trust.

Significance of Woodsford Castle

8.57 It advises that Woodsford Castle is a highly unusual historic building. It is a high status medieval house that was built with defensive capabilities but then subsequently declined in importance, to be used as a farmhouse It comments that the way that Woodsford Castle appears in its surroundings now is very different from the way that it was experienced in late medieval times when the curtilage of the fortified house would have been far more extensive. At that time, the building would have had a very different appearance and significance to those who encountered it. However, its imposing presence stands as a reminder of its past feudal history, as well as providing evidence of the decline that such buildings could suffer in later times.

8.58 It advises that one of the ways in which the setting of a listed building can be experienced is through a visual appreciation of it within its surroundings. This can be done from views both towards and from the heritage asset. However, it advises that there is also a more intangible aspect to setting, which is the context of the wider environs in which that asset is encountered. This, it advises, is particularly applicable to rural historic sites, where awareness of a heritage asset is from within a wider landscape.

8.59 It also comments that the historic purpose and status of a manor or country house is reflected in the land holding over which it held domain and that unsympathetic development or use in that land can affect the appreciation of that building's status and its historic relationship with its environs, as well as its aesthetic qualities. Such changes of character to the surrounding landscape may be harmful to the asset's significance.

8.60 Although situated in a relatively out of the way location in the Dorset countryside, Historic England advises in this case that the proximity of the Castle to the highway and a number of rights of way makes its exterior very publicly visible. Whilst the definition of land as 'setting' does not rely on public access to it being available, it advises that this is a relevant consideration when assessing the impact of a development on the surroundings from which the heritage asset can be viewed.

8.61 It further advises that the open and rural landscape around Woodsford Castle contributes to its setting, and thus its significance.

Historic England advice on the Planning Applications

8.62 Historic England's comments on the three applications is as follows:

8.63 Planning permission is being sought for an extension of the existing quarry into an allocated site and in association with this, three changes are required to the conditions of the planning permission that covers the existing Woodsford Quarry. Those changes are to extend the life of the quarry and its plant site to accommodate working of the extension, to allow for provision of silt space necessary to accommodate silt from the extension site and to update wording to allow the plant site to process the material from the extension site.

8.64 Planning Application P/FUL/2023/04753 seeks to revise the approved phasing of working, extend the duration of the development and allow importation of mineral and processing of mineral from the extension site. It is an amendment of an approved 2005 application for a quarry to be worked for 20 years and then restored.

8.65 Planning Application P/FUL/2023/4760 is for a revised method of working at the quarry to use existing processing facilities for gravels extracted from the area of the proposed quarry extension, and application P/FUL/2023/4761 seeks to extend the timescale of the existing silt lagoon. The lagoon was granted consent on appeal in 2018.

8.66 Historic England advised on the determined at appeal relating to the construction of the new silt lagoon in 2018. It stated that it was satisfied that the proposed mitigation measures had been designed to minimise the harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle but advised the plans would still have an impact on the open nature of the landscape which contributes to the setting of the Castle. It explained the importance of adhering to the development's time limit in order to restore the Castle's setting.

8.67 It states that the Inspector agreed with Historic England's views on the impact of the proposals on the setting of the castle. He stated that the lagoon would have a 'harmful impact on the rural and open character of the area, which is important to the setting of the listed building and appreciation of its historic setting.' However, because major change to the landscape had already been

brought about by the existing workings, the additional impact of the proposed lagoon would be at the lower end of ‘less than substantial harm’.

8.68 Historic England advised at the time of the original application that it would be concerned at future applications to prolong the life of the quarry or further extend it in areas that are in closer proximity to Woodsford Castle. It states that the Inspector also put considerable weight on the temporary nature of the quarry and the consequent impact on the setting of the Castle.

8.69 It comments that the silt lagoon which is the subject of application sits in relatively close proximity to the Grade I listed castle. We will regret its continued presence beyond the original timescale for its removal but acknowledge that its visual impact from public viewpoints is limited.

8.70 Historic England states that it is its understanding of Planning Application P/FUL/2023/04753 that this now seeks to change the lifespan of the approved quarry from 2029 - 2046 - a considerable extension, linked to the projected lifespan of the north eastern extension to the quarry

8.71 It is proposed to ‘pause’ the working of the approved quarry area, in order to extend into the north eastern extension, but at a certain stage work on that extension will be paused to re-activate workings in the original quarry. This plan, Historic England comment, could lead to a situation where the quarry workings will exist across both the originally approved site and the north eastern extension site at the same time, albeit that active quarrying will not occur on both sites concurrently, and this plan results from the need to accommodate more silt storage required as a result of the development of the north eastern extension.

8.72 It observes that the proposals now include an additional area of land for silt storage in the south west corner of the quarry site which it had previously advised (and the Planning Inspector at the appeal agreed) would be a far more preferable location for a silt lagoon, since it was further away from Woodsford Castle. This suggestion, it comments was rejected by the applicant as unfeasible since the landowner could not release it. Historic England expresses disappointment, now the existing silt lagoon has almost been completed, that this land has now been made available.

8.73 Historic England advise that the Planning Inspector, on his decision on the silt lagoon appeal, made a clear judgement on the harm caused to the significance of Woodsford Castle by the original quarry consent, which seems relevant to the extension of the approval for it, stating that:

“Whether or not any harm/balance was considered in the original application, the existing quarry clearly has a major harmful impact on the character of the land that forms an important part of the setting of the listed building that must be taken into account when considering what is proposed for the appeal site. To my mind the harm would, in terms of the National Policy Framework, be categorised as ‘substantial harm”.

The harm is important, as identified by the Parish Council, because the change to the character of the land caused by the quarry spoils the approach to the listed building from the south. It does not matter whether or not the listed building can be seen from the footpaths or land generally, the industrial nature of the character of the quarry is in one's mind after passing through the quarry workings and causes considerable harm to the rural character of the approach to the listed building across fields.

The appeal site, with further quarry workings, bunds and silt lagoons, will clearly make a further negative contribution in terms of the character of the area. However, this is where I disagree a little with Historic England, as to my mind the great and harmful change to the character of the setting of the listed building has already occurred.

Clearly the fact that the quarry is temporary and will return to agricultural land in a fairly short period is a major consideration and greatly mitigates against the harm that is occurring."

8.74 Historic England now comments that the proposed 17-year extension of time to quarry operations will mean a continued harmful impact on the setting of Woodsford Castle. It will also require the processing plant and silt lagoon, which have already been constructed within the existing quarry.

8.75 Historic England comments that there are complex inter-relationships between the three current planning applications and that the Inspector's previous appeal decision is relevant to all three applications. It considers that the concurrent existence of the existing quarry and its north eastern extension is the most harmful cumulative aspect of the proposal, and one which the Council will need to carefully consider given the Inspector's findings on the overall harmful heritage impact of the quarry.

Policy

8.76 Historic England advises that Woodsford Castle is a Grade I listed building, and that the National Planning Policy Framework advises under paragraph 199 (now paragraph 212) that the more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that should be given to its conservation.

8.77 It comments that the Inspector in the 2018 appeal considered that the 2005 consent for quarrying operations resulted in substantial harm to the setting of the castle and it considers that the proposals to extend the lifespan of the quarry will perpetuate those harmful effects, but the impact will be limited and firmly within the bracket of less than substantial harm.

8.78 It advises that the Council will therefore need to carefully consider, under the terms of NPPF paragraph 202 (now paragraph 215), whether there are wider benefits associated with the proposals that outweigh the harm to the significance of Woodsford Castle that Historic and others, have identified.

Recommendation

8.79 Historic England states that it has concerns regarding the application(s) on heritage grounds.

8.80 In determining this application it advises that the Council should have regard to the statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Additional Comments following Reg. 25 Submission

8.81 Historic England has subsequently offered further comments on the applications. It referred to it previous comments set out above.

8.82 It notes that the applicant in their Regulation 25 submission clarified that the western end of existing quarry has been restored to agricultural land. It advises that it therefore presumes that there will be no further extraction in this area. It also notes that the applicant has confirmed that the excavation of the eastern reserves will not take place concurrently with the proposed north eastern extension of the quarry.

8.83 Whilst it welcomes these clarifications, it advises that it continues to be of the view that the processing plant and conveyor and silt lagoon will cause a degree of harm to the setting of the castle, but that the harm is less than substantial.

8.84 It refers to comments from the applicant stating their opinion that the north eastern and eastern reserves are too far from the castle to harm its setting. It confirms that it agrees that there would be no direct visual impact, with the setting is defined as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced. It does however note that the surroundings of Woodsford Castle would change, from open rural fields to quarry operations, albeit for a fixed period of time. Consequently, it considers that the continued operations of the quarry will have a modest, adverse, impact on how Woodsford Castle is experienced, i.e. that there will be minor harm to the setting of the Grade I listed building.

8.85 It advises again that paragraph 205 (now paragraph 212) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that the more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that should be given to its conservation and that Woodsford Castle is a heritage asset of the very highest significance.

8.86 It further advises that the Council must therefore give considerable weight to the conservation ("The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance") of Woodsford Castle when carrying out NPPF paragraph 208's 'balancing exercise' of weighing the harm we have identified against any wider public benefit associated with the proposals, now set out in paragraph 215.

Recommendation

8.87 Historic England still has concerns regarding the application(s) on heritage grounds. In determining the application it again advises that the Council must have regard to the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Landmark Trust

8.88 The Landmark Trust has objected to all three planning applications, i.e. Planning Application Refs. P/FUL/2023/04753,P/VOC/2023/04760 and P/VOC/2023/04761.

8.89 The Landmark Trust is a historic buildings preservation charity which rescues and restores historically or architecturally important buildings which it lets for short stay holidays. It owns the Grade 1 Woodsford Castle which, it states, even amongst Landmark's portfolio, is a highly unusual property. It states that this is in part due to its surroundings where its presence is an impressive reminder of what an important building it once was and still is.

8.90 It states that any changes to the immediate surrounding land use can hugely impact the historical context of the building. For Woodsford Castle, it states that this is even more important due to its proximity to the highway. This allows many more people the opportunity to see the building when driving, walking or riding by. This hugely contributes to its significance within the open rural landscape.

8.91 It comments that at the planning appeal in 2018 the Planning Inspector recognised the harm caused to the significance of Woodsford Castle by the original quarry consent. The comments made at the time are relevant to the current applications. The Inspector commented that:

"Whether or not any harm/balance was considered in the original application, the existing quarry clearly has a major harmful impact on the character of the land that forms an important part of the setting of the listed building that must be taken into account when considering what is proposed for the appeal site. To my mind the harm would, in terms of the National Policy Framework, be categorised as 'substantial harm".

8.92 The harm is important the Landmark Trust state, because the change to the character of the land caused by the quarry spoils the approach to the listed building from the south. They contend that it does not matter whether or not the listed building can be seen from the footpaths or land generally, because it is the industrial nature of the character of the quarry that is in one's mind after passing through the quarry workings, which causes considerable harm to the rural character of the approach to the listed building across fields.

8.93 They comment that additional quarry workings, bunds and silt lagoons, will make a further negative contribution in terms of the character of the area.

8.94 They state that the Planning Inspector in 2018, considered that the 2005 consent for quarrying operations caused substantial damage to the setting of the castle and they comment that it will continue to suffer the harmful effects of quarrying activities for many years to come. The Trust requests that all the land to the south of the castle should be restored with bunds removed, top soil replaced and planted, footpaths and hedges reinstated with any visible quarrying evidence removed. They also request that regular noise monitoring be undertaken with results published monthly. They states that currently, due to the poor maintenance of conveyer belts the quarry operations result in an audible friction-related sound, characterized by a consistent and high-pitched squeaking noise which, when combined with the very audible reversing warnings of vehicles, further destroys the rural setting.

Ramblers Association/Dorset Ramblers

8.95 Dorset Ramblers have commented that Footpath S60/2 runs immediately to the north of the site west of Watery Lane. They have concerns that the works in the vicinity will impact on the visual and aural amenity of users of that path. They note that the Planning Application Supporting Statement mentions this path and states (at paragraph 3.14) that

"A public rights of way statement is not included as no significant adverse impacts on the transient users of any footpath have been identified. There are no rights of way within the extension site."

8.96 They ask that, should planning permission be granted that adequate screening be provided, as they consider that the bunds on the site do not contribute to the quality of the landscape, and that further mitigation is needed in the form of tree and hedge planting. The footpath they comment forms part of a useful circular route from Frome Bridge, taking in Woodsford Castle. They share the concerns raised by the Landmark Trust about the impact on the setting of the caste of the combined quarry works in the vicinity.

8.97 They also the comment that the Planning Application Supporting Statement (paragraph 3.15) also mentions that the restoration proposals include the provision of a right of way running broadly north to south over land to the east of Watery Lane, linking two existing public footpaths. They welcome this proposal that will improve access. They note that the British Horse Society (BHS) in its comments (see below) has suggested that this route should be a bridleway rather than a footpath so that it is available to horse riders and cyclists as well as pedestrians. They support this suggestion provided that a sufficient width is provided to support such shared use and that the surface is suitable for all users.

8.98 Dorset Ramblers also concur with the point made by Knightsford Parish Council that the opportunity should be taken to resolve the problem of the "missing" path, S60/1, which appears on the definitive map but is not useable on the ground since there is no bridge over the River Frome to the west of Frome Bridge. This they comment is outside the application site but could be paid for by a section 106 contribution in the event that the application is approved.

British Horse Society

8.99 The British Horse Society has asked whether the proposed footpath across the reinstated site to the east of Watery Lane could be upgraded to Public Bridleway status. This would significantly enhance offroad riding opportunities in an area which has a large horse population and very few bridleways.

8.100 They comment, to put this request in to context, that according to the DEFRA Horse Passport figures, there are 2,090 horses registered to addresses in the DT2 postcode, and evidence suggest that horse passports are registered close to where they are kept so that their owners can ride and care for them. Thet further comment that as roads get busier the number of incidents between cars and horses has also risen with 11 incidents in 2020, 36 in 2021, and 62 in 2022 and they believe that these recorded figures only represent 10% of the actual number of incidents.

8.101 They additionally comment that if upgrade the proposed footpath, and any other footpaths on the site, to bridleway status, it would allow not only horse riders but in addition cyclists to make use of the route.

Network Rail

8.102 Network Rail have advised that because the site is accessed via the Woodsford (No.38) level crossing, they are concerned that it is likely to increase the number of HGVs using the crossing. It is also concerned about damage caused to the level crossing decking due to sand dropped from lorries as the site exit is located within a short distance.

8.103 They otherwise have no concerns in relation to mining and surface extraction works.

Bournemouth Water Ltd

8.104 Have advised that they have no comment to make on the application.

Additional Comments following Reg 25 Consultation

8.105 Bournemouth Water have again advised that they have no comment to make on the application.

Dorset Council - Landscape Officer

8.106 The Landscape Officer has commented in relation to all three applications that when combined, their cumulative impacts will spread over all three areas of land at the same time. In total these three areas would become a very

substantial and continuous area, that will expand the physical area of the impacts as well as the duration over which Woodsford Quarry is experienced.

8.107 They further comment that it will include areas of land that are actively being worked as well as parcels of land where works have been started and then paused whilst work moves to another area, sometimes for a period of years.

8.108 They note that this approach was promoted during the site allocation process at the time the MSP were being prepared. They comment, despite this, that it remains important to ensure that the visual and landscape impacts of the sites are reduced as far as possible in order to ensure that they can be limited to an acceptable level.

8.109 In order to reduce the landscape impacts of these proposals to an acceptable level, they advise that it will be essential that effective phased restoration is undertaken on as much of the sites and as soon as possible.

8.110 In relation to the extension application they comment that the site is an allocated site (Site AG4) within the MSP and they make the following detailed comments.

8.111 With regard to the overall layout of the site it is to be worked and restored within the division of the existing defined parcels of land resulting in a series of water bodies at the restoration stage. The overall scheme has been designed in a sympathetic and appropriate manner and that the principles shown in the proposed overall site layout respect and retain the historic field boundary pattern. The retention of these boundaries will help to visually 'break up' the expanses of new water bodies created both from the views along the valley floor and from more elevated, distant views over the site.

8.112 There are nevertheless some concerns over the details of the proposed scheme. In relation to the restoration proposals, more boundary planting is required in certain areas to help break up, soften and screen views of the large new waterbodies. The requirement for enhancement of boundary planting and appropriate new hedgerow and woodland screen planting is also specifically raised in the Policy relating to allocation AG4 in the MSP.

8.113 There are long lengths of Watery Lane (on both sides of the road), where mitigation planting is solely limited to relying on the existing roadside hedgerows. In winter, when not in leaf, the views through these hedgerows can often be quite open.

8.114 Mixed native deciduous 'copse' type planting should be extended along these stretches of road to the back of the existing hedgerows to create appropriate new landscape features and help bolster the effectiveness of these boundaries. These additional new planting areas should comprise of a mix of appropriate native tree and shrub planting. Full details of the proposed planting will be required for approval by the local authority.

8.115 The additional planting does not necessarily need to be just one long continuous and uniform belt of new woodland. It would be acceptable to allow some breaks in the new woodland behind the hedgerow, however it does need to be far more substantial than is currently shown on the concept restoration plans. The best design would be to allow some reduction and lessening of the

additional woodland cover behind areas where the existing roadside hedges are at their strongest and thickest.

8.116 Additional screen planting is not required on the southern sections of Watery Lane where the road runs adjacent to field parcels that are intended to be returned to agricultural use as part of the restoration scheme. Here they advise that the retention of the existing roadside hedgerows alone is sufficient. This is likely to still permit glimpsed winter views across the adjacent fields. This is acceptable as the restored adjacent agricultural fields will continue to reinforce and respect the existing, pre-development, landscape character of the site.

8.117 The reasons for softening and partially screening views across proposed new lakes is that the large new water bodies will create a significant change in the landscape character of this site which is not fully acknowledged by the submitted LVIA.

8.118 Within the Landscape Character Assessment, large scale lakes are not identified as a natural (or culturally historic) features of this landscape.

Woodsford to Moreton Road Boundary

8.119 The eastern part of the Woodsford to Moreton Road adjacent to the proposed new angling lake near Cuckoo Mead is heavily reliant on the existing roadside hedgerow for mitigation. This boundary should be bolstered with additional appropriate woodland, copse, and tree belt planting as part of the final restoration scheme for the site.

New Conveyor Belt Road Tunnel

8.120 It is proposed to construct a tunnel beneath the Woodsford to Moreton Road in order to allow the new conveyor to operate between the two sites on either side of this road. This conveyor will be in place for the entire duration of the north eastern extension workings and therefore needs to be carefully designed.

8.121 Full details are required for the design of this new element, including details of any hedgerow removal of the existing roadside hedges and the proposals for future restoration.

Northern Boundary Treatment

8.122 The ‘Sculpture by the Lakes’ tourist attraction is located in close proximity to the northeast boundary of the extension site. This is one of the highly sensitive receptors that are specifically identified in the Policy AG4 relating to this allocated site in The Minerals Plan.

8.123 Additional boundary planting should be added along the northeast boundary of the site in order to help screen and soften views into the site from the north, with additional native copse planting with appropriate native tree and shrub planting.

Site Vehicle Access Points and Haul Roads

8.124 On final restoration it should be ensured, by condition that the site access junction is broken up and removed, with all verges and hedgerows re-instated. If future access points are to be kept these should be scaled down and designed as ‘low key’ agricultural or Conservation maintenance standard scale

access points. Again, this should form part of the Condition and final detailed restoration plans.

Detailed Design

8.125 The restoration scheme plan is at a concept level. Full details are required for the proposed restoration schemes, planting and maintenance.

8.126 The proposed screening bunds are not dimensioned or slope gradients shown, but there is reference to these being maintained at a height not exceeding 3m. These details should be confirmed and it may be that a Condition is required to limit the height of perimeter and storage bunds.

8.127 The creation of a new footpath link to join the existing PRoWs that currently end just adjacent to the northwest and southeast 'red line' boundaries of the site will be a significant benefit in enhancing public access along this specific part of the Frome Valley.

Additional Comments following Reg. 25 Submission

8.128 Following the formal submission of additional information as an Addendum to the original LVIA the Landscape officer has submitted the following additional comments.

8.129 The June 2024 LVIA Addendum gives a full assessment of the likely cumulative impacts of the three adjacent allocated Minerals sites;- AG4, AG5 and AG6. The Cumulative assessment has given regard to the scheme details for all three sites, based on the most recent information that was available for each of the respective recent planning applications covering each site.

8.130 The June 2024 Addendum information also gives greater detail and understanding of the changes associated with this specific Woodsford Northeast extension proposal. The Consultants have directly responded to the points raised the previous Landscape Officer comments and provided additional information requested in those comments.

ES Ch11 LVIA Second Addendum April 2024

8.131 With regard to the LVIA Second Addendum which focusses on the cumulative Impacts of the adjacent sites the Landscape Officer has submitted the following comments.

8.132 They agree with the findings of the Second LVIA Addendum in that the various cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of the above combination of active sites would not lead to a significant overall further increase in the level of adverse impacts experienced by the relevant receptors.

8.133 Some additional measures, such as enhanced restoration planting, have also been undertaken in the updated Addendum proposals that will also help to reduce localised and Cumulative Impacts of the development.

ES Ch11 LVIA Third Addendum April 2024

8.134 With regard to the LVIA Third Addendum the Landscape Officer advises as follows:

8.135 The site a large-scale site that will impact on the existing landscape character. However, as an allocated site within the Minerals Plan, the principle of this type

of development here is accepted and with the appropriate mitigation measures in place it will be possible to reduce the overall landscape and visual impacts of the development to an acceptable level.

8.136 Some of the points raised in their previous comments have been addressed as part of the LVIA Third Addendum, although there are still several outstanding points of design detail that will require further clarification and agreement upon.

Revised Restoration Plan dwg. No. W26_LAN_008 Rev A

8.137 With regards to their previous comments requesting additional structural landscape planting along the Watery Lane and 'Woodsford to Moreton' Road boundaries, they advise that this has now been added to the revised restoration plan.

8.138 The LVIA Third Addendum gives several reasons why the northeast boundary to the minerals site will not receive additional planting. The arguments put forward are accepted and they are satisfied that there would not be undue extra impacts during the operational or restoration periods with the latest revised planting proposals.

Tunnel and restoration landform, stream beneath the Woodsford to Moreton Road

8.139 There are still no specific details for this element of the scheme. Further, detailed drawings for both the temporary conveyor crossing and the final restoration culvert/bridge will be required. The approach that has been used on the previous phase would not be appropriate or acceptable here. The previously installed culvert includes temporary concrete barriers, replacement hedge planted too close to road, exposed concrete culvert edges, small sections of very tight radius full face kerbing etc. Unlike the previous tunnel, the proposed new tunnel beneath the Woodsford to Moreton Road will ultimately form a permanent feature.

8.140 From a review of the Composite Restoration Plan it appears that the existing culvert beneath the Woodsford to Higher Woodsford Road would not be required to be retained within the final restoration scheme and would therefore not form a permanent feature.

Restoration Scheme Access points and tracks

8.141 The LVIA Third Addendum provides some useful additional information on where the site access points and site tracks/haul roads are likely to be located. The details of the proposed new access points including the full extent of hedgerow removal are required.

8.142 As proposed in the LVIA Third Addendum the submission of this additional information can be addressed by condition.

8.143 Of greatest concern, in terms of long-term Landscape Impacts, is that it can be ensured that the access points are fully restored, including full and appropriate hedgerow reinstatement on final completion of the restoration scheme. Access points and all associated hardstanding, kerbs etc. should be removed entirely on completion of the restoration scheme.

8.144 If there is a justified need for the retention of any access points, then the 'HGV/Quarry scale' accesses that will have been constructed as part of the mineral workings phases should be removed and replaced with smaller scale, low key designs and surfacing, fencing, gates etc. more appropriate to this rural setting. This can be addressed by condition.

Detailed Planting Plans, schedules etc. for Restoration schemes

8.145 With regards to previous comment regarding the requirement for full details for each phase of the restoration; the response within the LVIA Third Addendum LVIA states that the LEMP is a live document that will be revised at each annual restoration review meeting as the development progresses. Individual landscape detailed drawings and specifications will be drawn up for agreement with the MPA and other stakeholders prior to the restoration of each phase of working.

8.146 This is acceptable and the requirement to provide the annual LEMP restoration reviews, and relevant full restoration landscape details as each restoration phase becomes imminent should be secured by Condition. Each detailed restoration phase would need to be in accordance with the general restoration principles shown on the revised Restoration Plan.

Topsoil and Subsoil bunds

8.147 The t LVIA Third Addendum has provided further information and dimensions, slope gradients etc for the topsoil and subsoil bunds. These are appropriate and the requirement to accord with these can be covered by a condition.

<u>Dorset Council – Tree Officer</u>

8.148 The Tree Officer initially advised that no arboricultural information has been supplied with Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, although they also noted that the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment suggests only one tree, an Oak (Tree T1 Oak in the centre of Field F5) is scheduled for removal, and that whilst the submitted plans indicate a buffer between the mineral extraction area and existing tree/hedgerow features, detailed arboricultural information, including a tree survey, arboricultural impact assessment, tree protection plan and arboricultural method statement should be supplied to support the planning application.

8.149 They advised that field boundary hedgerows support a relatively high number of veteran trees, and consequently that a Provisional Tree Preservation Order TPO/2024/0013 has been served covering the proposed extension area.

Additional Comments following Reg 25 Consultation

8.150 They advised following a site meeting with the planning agent and arboricultural consultant it was agreed that an initial scoping survey of the site would be undertaken focusing on constraints posed by mature and veteran trees with a diameter of 500mm or more. Detailed assessments covering all trees could then be conditioned and tied into each phase if consent is granted.

8.151 They advised that the preliminary survey identified a number of trees which would be impacted by the present submitted proposals:

- 2x A1 category trees - excavation within RPA of tree. Survey recommends movement of excavation location or tree removed and compensated;
- 1x B1 category tree – remove;
- 1x C1 category tree – remove;
- 10x B1 category tree- excavation within RPA of tree. Survey recommends movement of excavation location or tree removed and compensated; and
- 2x B1 category trees & 1x B1 category Group – potential harm from placement of bunds within RPA.

8.152 This did not include the potential impact to trees smaller than the 500mm that were not surveyed.

8.153 They further advised that four veteran trees have been identified on site and that it appeared they have been provided with the maximum root protection area detailed within BS 5837:2012 of 15m. However, they have advised is not sufficient and must be increased to accommodate an extended buffer zone in line with government standing advice, "Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions" which states that:

"For ancient or veteran trees (including those on the woodland boundary), the buffer zone should be at least 15 times larger than the diameter of the tree. The buffer zone should be 5 metres from the edge of the tree's canopy if that area is larger than 15 times the tree's diameter. This will create a minimum root protection area.

8.154 They therefore advised that where the assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, the proposal is likely to need a larger buffer zone. Where possible, a buffer zone should contribute to wider ecological networks, and should be part of the green infrastructure of the area.

8.155 They advised that the placement of bunds within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) is not acceptable and that the Storage of spoil must be placed outside of root protection areas and buffer zones to prevent long term damage through soil compaction.

8.156 They recommended that a revised set of plans be provided demonstrating the constraints identified have been considered and appropriately mitigated.

Additional Comments following 2nd Reg 25 Consultation

8.157 The requested arboricultural information was subsequently submitted and the Tree Officer has advised is acceptable, subject to the inclusion of conditions in relating to the submission for approval of a scheme for the protection of the retained trees in each phase, including phase specific tree protection plan(s) (TPP) and a phased detailed arboricultural method statement (AMS) as part of the detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

<u>Dorset Council – Archaeology</u>

8.158 The Archaeology Officer advises that the submitted Archaeological Impact Assessment is acceptable and includes acceptable . They consequently advise, if consent is granted, that the mitigation measures should be secured by condition to include arrangements for archaeological observation and

recording to take place during groundworks, including fieldwork and publication of the details of any findings.

Additional Comments following Reg 25 Consultation

8.159 They have advised that their previous comments still apply.

Dorset Council – Minerals & Waste Policy

8.160 The Minerals and Waste Policy Team have advised as follows:

Aggregate Supply and Demand

8.161 The MS (Policy AS1) commits to maintaining a sand and gravel landbank of at least 7 years, based on the "current agreed local annual supply requirement" - this is derived from the annually produced Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA).

8.162 The most recent LAA is the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset 13th Local Aggregate Assessment 2013 - 2023. It records that the average of the last 10 years of sales of land-won sand and gravel (from 2013 to 2023) is 1.30 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) a decrease from the 2022 figure of 1.36 mtpa.

8.163 At the end of 2023, there were approximately 11.5 million tonnes of permitted sand and gravel reserves in Dorset. (The term 'sand and gravel' refers to the total reserve, including both Poole Formation (soft) sand and River Terrace (sharp) sand and gravel.)

8.164 Using the most recent available 10-year average of sales (i.e. recorded production in Dorset and BCP) (1.30 mtpa) this would last 8.9 years if no further permissions were granted:

8.165 As required by Policy AS2 of the MS the Mineral Planning Authority also monitors separate landbanks for Poole Formation and River Terrace aggregate. This is done through monitoring sales from quarries which produce primarily one type of aggregate or the other.

8.166 At the end of 2024 reserves of Poole Formation were 5.3 mt and River Terrace were 4.2 mt. Approximately 0.72 mt of Poole Formation sand (71% of total sales), and approximately 0.3 mt of River Terrace (29% of total sales) aggregate, were sold in 2024.

8.167 The ten year average sales figures from 2015 to 2024 are 0.79 mtpa for Poole Formation and 0.45 mtpa for River Terrace. If these sales figures are applied to the reserve figures, they indicate that while the River Terrace landbank remains well above 7 years, the Poole Formation landbank has slipped below 7 years.

Poole Formation: 5.32 mt (reserves) / 0.79 mt (10 year average to 2022) = 6.73 years

River Terrace: 4.20 mt (reserves) / 0.45 mt (10 year average to 2022) = 9.35 years

8.168 Based on expected sales projected from the previous year's sales. the current landbank for sand and gravel (as of 9th June 2025) is estimated to be 7.3 years:

8.169 The Poole Formation landbank alone is estimated to be 6.3 years and the River Terrace landbank alone is estimated to be 9.1 years:

With Additional Permissions

8.170 The Woodsford proposal, if permitted, is estimated to yield some 3.0 million tonnes (mt) of River Terrace sand and gravel. The adjacent proposed quarries at Hurst Farm and Station Road on the Moreton Estate are estimated to yield some 11.5 mt of aggregate, comprising approximately 4.0 mt of River Terrace sand and gravel and 7.5 mt of Poole Formation sand.

8.171 If both applications are permitted, an indication of the effect on the landbank would be that the Landbank with Hurst Farm and Station Road, and Woodsford permissions would be 19.4 years. For Poole Formation alone it would be 16.2 years and for the River Terrace alone it would be 24.9 years.

Comments

8.172 The fact that the sites are allocated establishes the principle of mineral extraction. It is expected that, as shown above, should both applications be permitted the landbank for both River Terrace and Poole Formation will be well in excess of 7 years. Planning Policy Guidance on minerals makes it clear that there is no maximum landbank level and each application for minerals extraction must be considered on its own merits regardless of the length of the landbank. However, where a landbank is below the minimum level as is estimated for Poole Formation sand, this may be seen as a strong indicator of urgent need.

8.173 It is noted also that other Poole Formation quarries on the Puddletown Road have limited reserves remaining, strengthening the need for new sources of Poole Formation sand. With the closure of sites such as Chard Junction Quarry in the west, Woodsford is currently providing much of Dorset's River Terrace supply. This is likely to be an ongoing trend into the future.

8.174 It is accepted that there is a need in terms of aggregate supply, particularly for Poole Formation sand, subject to clearly demonstrating that the level of extraction can be justified and any impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated.

8.175 The Minerals and Waste Policy Team have subsequently provided further updated landbank figures, details of which are set out in paragraphs 16.2 to 16.8 below.

<u>Dorset Council – Natural Environment Team</u>

8.176 The Natural Environment Team note that the Environment Agency uphold their objection and recommend refusal. They comment that this is in part based on the underlying uncertainty about impacts on the River Frome SSSI and Hurst Heath SNCI and the associated ecological interests of these designated sites, from the Woodsford Quarry north eastern extension application and the adjacent Hurst Farm and Station Road application (Ref. P/FUL/2023/03982).

8.177 They highlight that the potential impact to the rare heath lobelia community arises from the proposed groundwater management proposals, and in particular the proposed dewatering. They advise that heath lobelia occurs at only seven sites confined to southern England, and that its proximity to the site in this case is within the zone of influence of the application site and should

therefore be given consideration in the ecological assessment. They further advise that given the vulnerable state of the species, it is important to demonstrate that the success of any proposed mitigation, but that this is currently uncertain as set out in the comments from the Environment Agency and Natural England.

8.178 The Natural Environment Team further comments that the ecological surveys undertaken have recorded a range of ecological receptors associated with the site. The hedgerow network is identified as supporting European Protected Species, namely Hazel dormice and a wide assemblage of bats including some of the rarest species. Whilst the hedgerow network will be retained, there is some uncertainty that as the phasing progresses, access will need to be created involving the removal of sections of hedgerow. This may necessitate a mitigation licence, where this is not required, it is proposed that Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) will be put in place.

8.179 They comment that the list of RAMs included in the Environmental Statement ecology chapter are examples and not an exhaustive list, and consequently that it would be advisable to secure a more detailed mitigation strategy for dormice and all relevant protected wildlife for the authority to approve prior to each phase commencing. For dormice, they advise that this should include a careful search for nests, hand removal of vegetation overseen by an Ecological Clerk of Works, even for hedgerows where the survey did not confirm the presence of dormice. Additionally, they advise that more detail regarding the protection of veteran trees within the hedgerows will also be needed. Whilst it is understood that gaps created in hedgerows will eventually be replanted, they advises that it would be desirable to see the recorded sections of gappy hedges planted up well in advance of any removal. In addition, they advise that protecting identified smaller class specimens such as oaks against hedge cutting would permit their growth to mature trees and this measure should be incorporated into a final Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

8.180 With regard to the hedgerows, they additionally comment that their creation and management should be specifically designed for dormice and bats with management and monitoring set out in the LEMP. Planting for dormice should include honeysuckle to provide favoured nesting material. For bats and Greater horseshoe in particular, they recommend that new hedges should be broad (3-6m across) with an average height of 3m. Hedgerow trees should be dotted along the length of hedges which should be managed to create tall, bushy structures, ideally with a broad base of between 3 and 6 metres to provide sheltered flight paths for bats, and encouraging young saplings to grow on into hedgerow trees will provide shelter and feeding perches.

8.181 The Natural Environment Team welcomes the proposals in the submitted Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to retain approximately 2m of uncut margin to hedgerows, but that in the final version of the LEMP it would be desirable to see this as a minimum given the farmland birds recorded during surveys and the benefits this would provide for birds (seed, invertebrates, structure for nesting), small mammals (e.g., hibernating dormice) and under-recorded brown hares.

8.182 They also welcome the intention to seed the bunds although they advise that this does not appear to have been carried forward from the Ecological Impact Assessment into the LEMP, and they comment that seeding on low fertility soil would create more open swards with barer areas.

8.183 Finally, they the Natural Environment Team expresses concern about the inclusion of fishing lakes within the restoration plan which also includes wildlife waterbodies. They express support for potential recreational after-uses such as walking, bird watching and possibly wild swimming, but they advise that the proposed angling and wildlife lakes are not complementary and introduce concerns regarding biosecurity and ecological integrity of wildlife lakes, and they advise that this aspect of the application should be reconsidered.

Dorset Council – Highways Officer

8.184 Have confirmed that they have no objection. They comment that there is no identifiable increase in traffic generation as a result of the proposal and the transport assessment demonstrates that it will result in no material harm to the transport network or to highway safety.

8.185 There also comment that no new access will be constructed and that the original site access has been functioning since 2007 and the existing quarry site access infrastructure will be used. The Highway Authority therefore has no objection subject to conditions requiring the continuation of road sweeping and the checking on a regular basis for any type of damage in and around the entrance to the site, and for any defects to be repaired caused by vehicle movements coming to and from the site.

Additional Comments following Reg 25 Consultation

8.186 As the amended plans do not have any detrimental impact to the transport network or to highway safety, the Highway Authority has No Objection.

Dorset Council – Public Rights of Way

8.187 The Public Rights of Way team have confirmed that the proposed works are located in the vicinity of the Public Right of Way set in paragraph 7.6 above .

8.188 They advise that they have no objection to the proposed development. They further advise that throughout the duration of the development the full width of the public bridleway must remain open and available to the public, with no materials or vehicles stored on the route.

8.189 Any temporary closures will need to be agreed with Public Rights of Way team before any works commence. The applicants must ensure that any required consent are first obtained.

Dorset Council – Conservation Officer

8.190 Have advised that the proposed scheme has been assessed, in relation to perceived impacts on encompassing heritage assets, considered of special architectural/ historical significance, and their associated settings to which, from a conservation perspective, impact is considered unlikely and, therefore, in principle, no concern is raised.

8.191 They have expressed concern about any increase in HGV movements (although none is proposed) and the impact this might have on the future structural integrity of both Frome Bridge and Hurst (South) Bridge.

8.192 They advise that a conclusion of less than substantial harm might be considered appropriate with regard the scheme's impact on identified designated heritage assets. They further advise that their conclusion is reliant on an understanding that there will be provision of a suitable planting scheme, as intimated on supporting indicative plans. They state that the area exhibiting most concern is identified as the Phase 8 extent of the proposed scheme to which the natural boundary treatment proposed, to the west, is described as comprising 'well established and proposed tree, hedge and woodland planting'. They comment that further detail of the planting is required in terms species, scale and density, but that these should be native and of a matching type consistent with the existing species on the site.

8.193 They comment that reference is made to the evidential lack of surviving water meadow earthworks in the submitted Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment which is a welcome inclusion based on the sensitivity of such early water meadow systems.

Additional Comments following Reg 25 Consultation

8.194 They have advised that their previous comments still apply.

Dorset Council – Environmental Health

8.195 The Noise and Vibration report states that the noise limits, in line with mineral planning guidance, as set out in table 9 of the report, should be attached to any planning permission and controlled by condition. I would recommend that this is done.

Noise Management Plan

8.196 Para 1.1 of this document states that it will be continually adapted and updated, by a competent and appropriately trained person. Any changes to this document must be approved by the local authority.

8.197 Para 5.2 states that, on receipt of a valid complaint, noise monitoring may be undertaken to establish if operational noise limits have been exceeded.

8.198 This monitoring must be taken by a suitably experienced or qualified operative.

Dorset Council – Flood Risk

Flood Risk to the Development

8.199 Advised that the applicant's flood risk assessment details the various sources of flood risk to the site and that the flood risk to the site is considered to be acceptable.

Flood Risk from the Development

8.200 They advised that the flood risk assessment describes how surface water runoff and groundwater will be managed on site. It states that water will be collected and directed for use on site to assist with the settlement ponds and other extraction processes. Because of the managed nature of the site with regards to surface water and groundwater, after use it will be pumped off site

to the river Frome (main river). They advised that a licence is required from the Environment Agency to dewater and discharge water from the settling ponds and that the pumping/discharge rates will need to be agreed with the Environment Agency based on current flow rates in the River Frome.

8.201 They considered that the future restoration of the area to incorporate lakes and standing water areas is also acceptable. They comment that the discharge of excess water from the lakes (or due to some form of failure) will be conveyed to the River Frome by gravity and that there does not appear to be any development between the future lakes and the River Frome. They advised that incorporating new lakes and standing water areas generally reduces the rate and volume of surface water runoff from an area, and thereby reduces flood risk.

8.202 The commented that the proposed plans do not appear to indicate any new buildings or significant hardstanding areas that would have the potential for an increase in peak surface water discharge rates (and that may require a specific surface water management strategy for those aspects of the development).

8.203 Overall, they advised that the flood risk from the development appears to be very low.

8.204 Consequently, they did not object to the proposed development. I did not consider that flood, or surface water drainage, conditions set by the LLFA are relevant or required, although they advised that the Environment Agency is likely to impose license conditions regarding pumping/discharge rates from the site to the River Frome.

8.205 They recommended the inclusion of an Informative relating to the requirement for land Drainage Consent and possibly also an Environmental Permit.

Additional Comments following Reg 25 Consultation

8.206 The Flood Risk Team restated their previous comments.

Additional Comments following 2nd Reg 25 Consultation

8.207 The Flood Risk Team have again restated their previous comments.

Councillor Roland Tarr (Winterborne and Broadmayne Ward)

8.208 Has not commented on the application.

Councillor Laura Beddow (West Purbeck Ward)

8.209 Has commented that whilst recognising the need for minerals, the results of the cumulative impact work is crucial to these applications. The increase in both housing and quarrying across crossways and Moreton is considerable and must be considered together.

8.210 The main concern from local residents, Councillor Beddows states is that the road network, particularly the small bridge to the east of Moreton. This road has a 60mph speed limit which relies on driver goodwill to stop and let incoming traffic across the single lane bridge.

8.211 The crossroads at Waddock Cross is also already risky and has seen several serious accidents. Tree loss is a concern particularly around the conveyer system, and its impact on the woods around the crossroads. Residents are keen for there to be footpath provision from the station road site to the Avenue to mitigate the risks of walking the main road (already dangerous) which will be increased by the increase in Lorries.

Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760

Public Consultation

8.212 There have been three rounds of public consultation as a result of which no representations were received from individuals.

Consultees

Moreton Parish Council

8.213 Has commented that the application documents are very convoluted and make reading about the existing and future Woodsford Quarries and working out whether more silt lagoons will be required very difficult.

8.214 It states that the majority of the documents are copies of the attachments to north eastern extension application and that it is difficult to find any reference to Hurst Farm quarry application in the submitted documents, and that proposals for housing development in the area have not been considered.

8.215 It considers that the proposals from the applicants for the Woodford Quarry planning applications and the adjacent Hurst Farm and Station Road planning application need to better coordinate their approach to the applications.

8.216 The consider that the application should be refused.

Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle Parish Council

8.217 Has not commented on the application, but has commented on Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753. See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 set out above.

Knightsford Parish Council

8.218 Has commented that the application does not adequately describe how the area south of Woodsford Castle, which is Grade 1 listed, i.e. it's historical setting, will be restored in the immediate future and in particular that it does not describe when; stockpiles will be removed; footpaths reinstated; hedgerows planted; bunds south of the Castle removed and topsoil re-instated; how the ramps on the conveyor system will be disguised; and the provision of bunds to hide the processing area built. It also comments that the operator is not managing noise and that they have failed to properly maintain the conveyor which makes a persistent squeaking noise, which has a serious detrimental effect on the amenity of residents of Woodsford.

Active Travel England

8.219 Has advised that it has no comment on the application.

National Grid Electricity Transmission

8.220 Has advised that that they have no objection.

National Grid Gas Transmission

8.221 Has advised that they have are no assets that would be affected by the development and consequently they have no objection.

Environment Agency

8.222 Has not commented on the application.

Natural England

8.223 Has not commented on the application.

Historic England

8.224 See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 set out above, but additionally comment that the proposed 17-year extension of time to the existing quarry operations proposed, by P/VOC/2023/04760 would mean a continued harmful impact on the setting of Woodsford Castle, which is a Grade 1 listed building.

8.225 It considers that the concurrent existence of the existing quarry and the proposed north eastern extension would be result in a harmful cumulative impact.

8.226 It comments that the applicant has clarified that the existing quarry (the Western Reserves) has been restored to agricultural land, and it therefore assumes that there will be no further extraction in within the existing quarry area.

8.227 It considers that the continuing presence of the processing plant and conveyor and silt lagoon will cause a degree of harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, but that the harm would be less than substantial.

8.228 It considers that there would be no direct visual impact as a result of the north eastern extension to the setting of Woodsford Castle, although it comments that the surroundings of Woodsford Castle would change, from open rural fields to quarry operations, albeit for a fixed period of time. It considers that the continued operations of the quarry will have a modest, adverse, impact on how Woodsford Castle is experienced and that there would be minor harm to the setting of the Grade I listed building.

8.229 It states that paragraph 205, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that the more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that should be given to its conservation and that Woodsford Castle is a heritage asset of the very highest significance. The Council should therefore give considerable weight to the conservation of Woodsford Castle when carrying out NPPF paragraph 208's 'balancing exercise' of weighing the harm against any wider public benefit associated with the proposals.

8.230 Historic England accordingly has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds. In determining the application it advises that the Council should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed

Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Landmark Trust

8.231 See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 set out above.

Ramblers Association/Dorset Ramblers

8.232 Have commented that it is difficult to understand the implications for footpaths S60/4 and S60/6 of the two s.73 applications, but that should permission be granted to extend the duration of works on these sites then there will be a delay in the restoration works. They are concerned that there are two outstanding problem reports on FP S60/4 which reads as follows:

- That footpath (60/4) has been closed for well over a year, seemingly due to a dangerous wall. There has been no attempt during this time to do any remedial work to the wall and now a trench with a conveyor belt has been built over it. Accordingly ask whether there are there any plans to reinstate this path which connects with the path to Woodsford?
- That the existing pathway has been closed, with the intention that it will be re-routed. However, no new path has been provided. They quarry operator has failed to provide this.

8.233 Accordingly the Dorset Ramblers object to the two s.73 applications.

British Horse Society

8.234 Has not commented on the application, but has commented on Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753. Its comments in relation to that application are set out above.

Network Rail

8.235 Has advised that it has no objection to the application.

Bournemouth Water Ltd

8.236 Has advised that it has no comment to make on the application.

Dorset Council - Landscape Officer

8.237 Comment that in order to make the time extension of the previously approved mineral workings areas acceptable in landscape terms there will need to be an effective programme of phased restoration works.

8.238 Providing the phased restoration of the existing site is completed as soon as possible for each section then they have no objection to the application.

Dorset Council – Tree Officer

8.239 No objection.

Dorset Council – Archaeology

8.240 Have not commented on the application.

Dorset Council – Minerals & Waste Policy

8.241 See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 set out above.

Dorset Council – Natural Environment Team

8.242 Have not commented on the application.

Dorset Council – Highways Officer

8.243 Advise that the application would not give rise to any changes that would have any detrimental impact on the highway network. They therefore have no objection subject to the imposition of conditions relating to ensuring that the highway is kept clear of any loose materials, is checked on a regular basis for any type of damage in and around the entrance to the site, and ensure that any defects are repaired caused by vehicles accessing the site.

Dorset Council – Public Rights of Way

8.244 No objection, subject the full width of the footpaths remaining open and available to the public, with no materials or vehicles stored on the route.

Dorset Council – Conservation Officer

8.245 No objection.

Dorset Council – Environmental Health

8.246 Have not commented on the application.

Dorset Council – Flood Risk

8.247 No objection, subject to the retention of any existing conditions relating to flood and drainage being retained.

Councillor Roland Tarr (Winterborne and Broadmayne Ward)

8.248 Has not commented on the application.

Councillor Laura Beddow (West Purbeck Ward)

8.249 See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 set out above.

Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04761

8.250 There have been three rounds of public consultation as a result of which no representations were received from individuals.

Consultees

Moreton Parish Council

8.251 Has commented that the timeline about the revised timescale for the retention and reinstatement of the silt lagoon is unclear and that the quarry operator should provide the calculations upon which they base their statements about

silt production and silt lagoon requirements, and that this take into account the operation of the adjacent Hurst Farm operation, if approved.

8.252 It considers that the application should be refused.

Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle Parish Council

8.253 Has not commented on the application, but has commented on Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753. See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 set out above.

Knightsford Parish Council

8.254 Has commented that the 2019 appeal decision that granted approval for the lagoons, and the associated planning conditions, was based on them being hidden from view by 2m high bunds and to ensure that there were no stockpiles over 2m in height. Despite this the bunds in the south east corner of the site have not been constructed and the stockpiles exceed the permitted height.

8.255 It has also commented that the Planning Inspector in the 218 appeal was clear that the use of the silt lagoon should cease and the site reinstated by 2028.

Active Travel England

8.256 Has advised that it has no comment.

National Grid Electricity Transmission

8.257 Has advised that that they have no objection.

National Grid Gas Transmission

8.258 Have not commented on the application.

Environment Agency

8.259 Has not commented on the application.

Natural England

8.260 Have not commented on the application.

Historic England

8.261 See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 set out above. Historic England has additionally commented in relation to Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04761 that the existing silt lagoon was granted consent on appeal in 2018, and that it advised on the determined appeal. At that time, it states that they it was satisfied that the proposed mitigation measures had been designed to minimise the harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle but advised the plans would still have an impact on the open nature of the landscape which contributes to the setting of the Castle. It commented further that the importance of adhering to the development's time limit in order to restore the Castle's setting.

8.262 It further comments that the Inspector who determined the appeal agreed with their views on the impact of the proposals on the setting of the castle, and stated that the lagoon would have a 'harmful impact on the rural and open

character of the area, which is important to the setting of the listed building and the appreciation of its historic setting.' However, because major change to the landscape had already been brought about by the existing workings, the additional impact of the proposed lagoon would be at the lower end of 'less than substantial harm'.

8.263 Historic England has further commented that it advised at the time of the appeal that it would be concerned about any future applications to prolong the life of the quarry or further extend it in areas that are in closer proximity to Woodsford Castle, and that the Inspector also put considerable weight on the temporary nature of the quarry and the consequent impact on the setting of the Castle.

8.264 It remains concerned that the silt lagoon which is the subject of this application is located in relatively close proximity to the Grade I listed castle, and it considers its continued presence beyond the original timescale to be regrettable but acknowledges that its visual impact from public viewpoints is limited.

8.265 As set out above, in its comments submitted in response to Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, it considers that the continuing presence of the processing plant and conveyor and silt lagoon will cause a degree of harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, but that the harm is less than substantial.

8.266 It considers that the continued operations of the quarry will have a modest, adverse, impact on how Woodsford Castle is experienced and that there would be minor harm to the setting of the Grade I listed building.

8.267 It advises that paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that the more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that should be given to its conservation and that Woodsford Castle is a heritage asset of the very highest significance. The Council should therefore give considerable weight to the conservation of Woodsford Castle when carrying out NPPF paragraph 208's 'balancing exercise' of weighing the harm against any wider public benefit associated with the proposals.

8.268 Historic England accordingly has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds. In determining the application it advises that the Council should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Landmark Trust

8.269 See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 set out above.

Ramblers Association/Dorset Ramblers

8.270 See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760 set out above. The Dorset Ramblers object to the application.

British Horse Society

8.271 Has not commented on the application, but has commented on Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753. Its comments in relation to that application are set out above.

Network Rail

8.272 Have advised that they have no objection to the application.

Bournemouth Water Ltd

8.273 Have advised that they have no comment to make on the application.

Dorset Council - Landscape Officer

8.274 Comments that the development does have some significant adverse landscape and visual impacts from short sections of Footpath FP60/06. However, once the viewer is away from these specific sections of the footpath, there is mitigation of the visual impact of the silt lagoon due to hedgerows and the relatively flat nature of the immediately surrounding topography.

8.275 They additionally comment that there appears to be some discrepancy between the temporary perimeter bunding that has been constructed on site and what was proposed in the approved 2018 Landscaping scheme.

8.276 They advise that on-site, the temporary bunding along the southern edge of the silt lagoons works well, that it is relatively discrete in height and that the vegetation cover is established. They comment that eastern corner has a new bund section, but that due to this being set further into the site than the adjacent bunds its falls in height quite significantly to the north before joining the other, established, bund. This they advise appears awkward in close-up views from Footpath S60/6 and allows views over the water and silt ponds area within the site. They comment that it is not clear whether the new bund section is intended as the finished bund or whether this was still under further construction.

8.277 With the exception of small sections of footpath where there are glimpsed views into the silt ponds, and any operations or machinery in the area of the silt pond, they advise that the perimeter screening bunds create the most significant impacts on users of the public footpath and road to the north. Once the viewer moves away from the field containing the silt pond development other field boundaries and hedgerows do help to further soften and screen the silt pond development.

8.278 They further advises that the proposed extension of the operational time period for the lagoons will extend the duration of their associated adverse landscape impacts. However, they consider that the impacts will eventually be removed as this part of the development will finally be restored back to an agricultural field similar in nature and ground levels to the original land use.

8.279 They therefore advise that they have no objection to the application on landscape grounds, providing the perimeter bunding, particularly on the east corner, is reprofiled to better reflect the approved landscaping scheme.

Dorset Council – Tree Officer

8.280 No objection.

Dorset Council – Archaeology

8.281 Have not commented on the application.

Dorset Council – Minerals & Waste Policy

8.282 See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 set out above.

Dorset Council – Natural Environment Team

8.283 Have not commented on the application.

Dorset Council – Highways Officer

8.284 Advises that there that the application would not give rise to any changes that would have any detrimental impact on the highway network. They therefore have no objection subject to the imposition of conditions relating to ensuring that the highway is kept clear of any loose materials, is checked on a regular basis for any type of damage in and around the entrance to the site, and ensure that any defects are repaired caused by vehicles accessing the site.

Dorset Council – Public Rights of Way

8.285 No objection, subject the full width of Footpaths remaining open and available to the public, with no materials or vehicles stored on the route.

Dorset Council – Conservation Officer

8.286 No objection.

Dorset Council – Environmental Protection

8.287 Have advised that they have no comment on the application.

Dorset Council – Flood Risk

8.288 No objection, subject to the retention of any existing conditions relating to If there are existing flood and drainage.

Councillor Roland Tarr (Winterborne and Broadmayne Ward)

8.289 Has not commented on the application.

Councillor Laura Beddow (West Purbeck Ward)

8.290 See Comments for Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 set out above.

9 Policy

9.1 Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The term ‘other material considerations’ is broad in scope, encompassing all matters outside the development plan that should be considered in making a

planning decision. Whether a consideration is material in any given case depends on the circumstances and should be relevant to planning and to the making of the planning decision in question. National policies, such as those contained within the NPPF, are material considerations in planning decisions.

Development Plan

9.2 The 'Development Plan' for the site comprises:

- Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (MS) (adopted May 2014)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole, and Dorset Minerals Sites Plan (MSP) (adopted December 2019)
- West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (Adopted October 2015)

9.3 The relevant policies from these plan are:

9.4 Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014)

- Policy SS1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy SS2 – Identification of Sites in the Minerals Sites Plan
- Policy CC1 – Preparation of Climate Change Assessments
- Policy AS1 – Provision of Sand and Gravel
- Policy AS2 – Landbank Provision
- Policy RS1 – Restoration, Aftercare and Afteruse of Minerals Development
- Policy RS2 – Retention of Plant, Machinery, and other Ancillary Development
- Policy DM1 – Key Criteria for Sustainable Minerals Development
- Policy DM2 – Managing the Impacts on Amenity
- Policy DM3 – Managing the Impact on Surface Water and Ground Water Resources
- Policy DM4 – Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character and the Countryside
- Policy DM5 – Biodiversity and geological interest
- Policy DM6 – Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site
- Policy DM7 – Historic Environment
- Policy DM8 – Transport and Minerals Development
- Policy DM10 – Planning Obligations

9.5 Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Minerals Sites Plan (2019)

- Policy MS-1: Production of Sand and Gravel
- Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension, Woodsford
- Allocation AG5: Station Road, Moreton
- Allocation AG6: Hurst Farm, Moreton

9.6 West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)

- Policy INT1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy ENV1 – Landscape, Seascape and Sites of Geological Interest
- Policy ENV2 – Wildlife And Habitats
- Policy ENV3 – Green Infrastructure Network
- Policy ENV4 – Heritage Assets
- Policy ENV5 – Flood Risk
- Policy ENV9 – Pollution And Contaminated Land
- Policy ENV10 – The Landscape And Townscape Setting
- Policy ENV15 – Efficient And Appropriate Use Of Land
- Policy ENV16 – Amenity
- Policy COM7 – Creating A Safe And Efficient Transport Network

Relevant Material Considerations

9.7 In addition to the above adopted development plans, there is an emerging plan that, if adopted, would apply to the area.

9.8 The Dorset Council Local Plan is not expected to be adopted until 2026. This Plan will supersede the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan when it is eventually adopted. Although it is a material consideration, little weight should be given as it is in draft and has not passed examination or been adopted.

9.9 In addition to the statutory development plans, there are other policies that are material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024), and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) issued by both Dorset Council and the former West Dorset District Council, and Guidance documents prepared by Dorset Council and the former West Dorset District Council.

9.10 SPDs and Guidance of relevance include:

- Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-2025 (Dorset Council)
- Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour, 2017 (West Dorset District Council)
- Planning for Climate Change, 2023 (Dorset Council)

9.11 The NPPF[1] sets out the governments national planning policies and is an important material consideration in decision-making. Below is a list of the most relevant paragraphs, but is not exhaustive:

- Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development: Paragraph 11
- Decision-Making: Paragraph 38, 47, 54, 55, 56, and 57
- Building a strong and competitive economy: Paragraphs 85, and 87
- Promoting healthy and safe communities: Paragraph 104

[1] Version dated December 2024

- Promoting sustainable transport: Paragraph 115
- Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment: Paragraphs 180, 186, 191 (a, b, and c), and 194
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment: Paragraphs 205 and 208
- Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals: Paragraphs 215, 217 (d and e), and 219 (h and i)

10 Public Sector Equalities Duty (also applies in relation to Planning Application Refs. P/VOC/2023/04760 & P/VOC/2023/04761)

10.1 As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have "due regard" to this duty. There are 3 main aims:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

10.2 In considering the merits of this planning application, officers have taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. We do not consider that there will be any material impact on anyone with protected characteristics.

11 Human Rights(also applies in relation to Planning Application Refs. P/VOC/2023/04760 & P/VOC/2023/04761)

11.1 The provisions of the Human Rights Act and principles contained in the Convention of Human Rights have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report. The articles and protocols of particular relevance are:

- Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.
- Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.
- The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property.

11.2 This recommendation is based on adopted Development Plan policies and material planning considerations, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

12 EIA Development (also applies in relation to Planning Application Refs. P/VOC/2023/04760 & P/VOC/2023/04761)

12.1 The proposal is EIA Development and has been assessed under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. An Environmental Statement has been submitted as part of the application and any likely significant effects of the development on the local environment have been assessed. This is discussed in Section 14 below.

13 Habitats Regulations (also applies in relation to Planning Application Refs. P/VOC/2023/04760 & P/VOC/2023/04761)

13.1 Because the proposals have not yet been demonstrated to be acceptable in relation to the impacts on the water environment and protected species, habitats and biodiversity it is not yet possible to complete the Appropriate Assessment of the proposals and conclude that the development would not have a likely significant effect on a European site in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive and or that sufficient due regard has been had to the Council's duties under Section 40(1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

13.2 If the Committee is minded not to accept the Recommendation, then it would be necessary defer determination until the Appropriate Assessment has been completed, although at this stage it is unlikely that that it would be possible to do so and reach a conclusion that the impacts of the development would not have a likely significant effect that would allow it to go ahead.

14 Planning Assessment

14.1 The main issues arising in relation to the determination of each of the three application is as follows:

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- Whether the development is acceptable in principle, i.e. the principle of the development;
- Impact on the water environment (groundwater, flooding, the River Frome, and Moreton Stream, etc);
- Loss of BMV Agricultural Land
- Impact on Heritage;
- Impact on Landscape including Restoration, Aftercare, and After-Use;
- Impact on Highway Safety and Capacity
- Impact on Amenity and the Local Community (Noise, Dust, Traffic, etc);
- Impact on Ecology and the Environment;
- Restoration, Aftercare, and After-use.
- Planning Balance

Principle of the Development

14.2 The application site comprises one of the allocations in the MSP: AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension, Woodsford which is identified as containing approximately 2,100,000 tonnes of primarily River Terrace sand and gravel. The allocation was made, in accordance with Policy MS-1, to maintain an adequate and steady supply of sand and gravel.

14.3 The Mineral Planning Authority (MPA) is required to plan for the adequate and steady supply of minerals in accordance with paragraph 222 of the NPPF which states that "*it is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to*

provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy, and goods that the country needs."

14.4 The NPPF, in paragraph 226, advises that MPAs should maintain a landbank of at least 7 years for sand and gravel, and to maintain separate landbanks for any distinct and separate markets or types of minerals. In this case, that means one landbank for Poole Formation sand, one landbank for River Terrace sand and gravel, and one landbank for both combined. The need to maintain an adequate landbank is also recognised in Policy AS1 of the MS, which states that "*an adequate and steady supply of locally extracted sand and gravel will be provided by maintaining a landbank of permitted sand and gravel reserves equivalent to at last 7 years' worth of supply*…" A landbank only considers reserves with planning permission for extraction, and not reserves within allocations.

14.5 At the end of 2024, the landbank for sand and gravel (River Terrace and Poole Formation combined) was 9.5 mt or 7.68 years, based on the ten year sales average of 1.24 million tonnes. The landbank for River Terrace was 4.2 mt or 9.35 years and the landbank for Poole Formation was 5.3 mt or 6.73 years

14.6 Whilst this indicates that there is currently more than the minimum landbanks for River Terrace and Poole Formation combined, and for River Terrace, the Poole Formation landbank has fallen under the required 7 years.

14.7 Based on the expected sales projected from the previous year's sales, the current overall landbank for sand and gravel (as of 27th August 2025) is estimated to be 7.1 years, with the River Terrace landbank alone estimated to be 8.9 years and the Poole Formation landbank alone is estimated to be 6.1 years.

14.8 Set against this is the fact that as there have been no new sand and gravel permissions approved so far in 2024/25 so that the estimated landbanks will have fallen. It is also known that Poole Formation sales have been declining since 2020, although they increased between 2023 and 2024. River Terrace sales have been declining since 2022.

14.9 Until further planning permissions are granted for extraction of further sand and gravel mineral sites, both landbanks will continue to fall and overall the position is that Dorset Council needs to consider consenting further reserves.

14.10 The Woodsford north-eastern extension proposal, if permitted, is estimated to yield 3.0 million tonnes (mt) of River Terrace sand and gravel. The adjacent proposed quarries at Hurst Farm and Station Road on the Moreton Estate are estimated to yield 11.5 mt of aggregate, comprising approximately 4.0 mt of River Terrace sand and gravel and 7.5 mt of Poole Formation sand.

14.11 The fact that the sites are allocated establishes the principle of mineral extraction. It is expected, as shown above, should the applications for both sites be approved, that the landbank for both River Terrace and Poole Formation will be in excess of 7 years. It should be noted that Paragraph: 084 of the Planning Policy Guidance on Minerals makes it clear that there is no maximum landbank level and each application for minerals extraction is to be considered on its own merits regardless of the length of the landbank.

However, where a landbank is below the minimum level, this may be seen as a strong indicator of urgent need.

14.12 It should also be noted that other Poole Formation quarries on the Puddletown Road have limited reserves remaining, strengthening the need for new sources of Poole Formation sand. With the closure of sites such as Chard Junction Quarry in West Dorset, Woodsford is currently providing much of Dorset's River Terrace supply. This is likely to be an ongoing trend into the future.

14.13 There is therefore a need for both sites in terms of aggregate supply, particularly for Poole Formation sand, subject to clearly demonstrating that the level of extraction can be justified and any impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated.

Context with other mineral sites in Dorset

14.14 There are three existing mineral sites which have produced River Terrace sands and gravels, including: the existing Woodsford Quarry; Chard Junction Quarry which is now finished and in restoration and Hurn Court Farm Quarry, which is currently the subject of an application to Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council for an extension.

14.15 In addition to the current application site, there is one other allocation in the MSP 2019 for River Terrace sand and gravel; Site AG2: Roeshot, Christchurch with an estimated 3,500,000 tonnes of sand and gravel. Roeshot is in the far south east of BCP and straddles the BCP/Hampshire county boundary. The Hampshire side of the Roeshot site has been permitted and is currently being worked. The BCP part of the Roeshot site is allocated in the MSP but is not expected to be brought forward for development for at least 10 years.

14.16 There is also an additional site at Avon Common just off the A338 in BCP which is consented and being worked although not for River Terrace sand and gravel.

Estimated Reserves

14.17 Within the MSP 2019, each allocation was given an "*estimated mineral resource*" figure. Woodsford north-eastern extension was estimated to have a reserve of 2,100,000 tonnes of River Terrace sand and gravel, while the application proposes the extraction of 3 million tonnes of mineral.

14.18 Hurst Farm on the adjacent site, which is also an allocated site, Site AG6 was estimated to have "*approximately 3,300,000 tonnes*" of sand and gravel and Station Road, Site AG5 was estimated to have "*approximately 3,100,000 tonnes*" of sand and gravel. Therefore, the total estimated mineral resource figure for the two sites (Woodsford, Hurst Farm and Station Road) within the MSP is 8.5 million tonnes.

14.19 This estimate of 8.5 million tonnes is significantly lower than the 14.5 million tonnes which are proposed to be extracted in the current planning applications. While it should be recognised that the figures in the MSP allocations are explicitly referred to as estimates, and not as upper limits. The difference in the estimated reserve on the Woodsford north-eastern extension is 900,000 tonnes.

14.20 It should also be noted there is no policy requirement for the quantity of sand and gravel extracted from the application site to be limited to the estimates in

the allocations. There are benefits from extracting a greater quantity of aggregate than originally estimated, as for each given area being dug there will be a greater yield, which means less (or delayed) impacts on other areas of Dorset. Ultimately, any sterilised mineral deliberately left in the ground, would eventually result in more mineral needing to be extracted elsewhere. Therefore, the principle of extraction of 3.0 million tonnes can be supported, provided there are no unacceptable environmental impacts.

Policy MS-1

14.21 Policy MS-1 of the MSP 2019 requires that proposals within allocated sites meet three criteria in order to be permitted. In short, these are:

- that applications address the Development Guidelines set out for each site in Appendix A of the MSP;
- that they demonstrate that any adverse impacts from the development, including cumulative impacts, associated their development and operation, will be mitigated to the satisfaction of the authority; and
- that proposals demonstrate, through a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), that the development would not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites.

14.22 Appendix A contains Development Guidelines for each of the allocated minerals sites, setting out the key site-specific information relating to potential constraints, opportunities and issues to be addressed at the planning application stage. The Guidelines are intended to be guidelines, so on the one hand are not intended to be exhaustive, but equally and on the other are not intended to impose absolute criteria, but as the supporting text states, “need to be taken into account”.

14.23 The supporting text also makes clear, as a result of the issues set out in the Development Guidelines, and depending on the precise nature of the development proposed, that mitigation measures are likely to be required in order to prevent adverse impacts occurring. If adverse impacts are unavoidable and it is considered that they are an acceptable part of the development proposed, compensation measures may be required.

14.24 Key element of the Development Guidelines for the Site AG4 include the following:

- Full assessment of all ecological impacts particularly on River Frome SSSI which is in close proximity, with appropriate mitigation identified and implemented;
- An assessment of the impacts on heritage, including designated and undesignated heritage assets on and around the site;
- That the development of this site must ensure that the historic nature of the system of field boundaries within and around the Site is maintained as far as possible through employing parcel by parcel extraction of the mineral, and leaving the hedgerow and tree boundaries intact as far as possible;
- This is because the site is partly within Flood Zones 2 and 3, and is adjacent to the River Frome, a Main, River, hydrological/hydrogeological assessment must be undertaken, identifying any required mitigation. This must include assessment of potential impacts on fisheries in the Frome.

- That mineral from the extension should continue to be processed at the existing plant site, with no intensification of production or simultaneous working of the current site and extension;
- Mineral should be transported from the point of extraction to the processing site via internal routes within the quarry and no external roads should be used for transport to the processing site;
- Access to the site will be via the existing access;
- Potential impacts on the footpath that runs adjacent to the site's north-west boundary to be assessed;
- Consider opportunities to increase informal recreation/public open space in the Frome Valley and to create links to existing public rights of way to be included in restoration;
- The site is BMV agricultural land and protection and appropriate management of soils is required to enable the land to retain its longer term capability;
- Potential impacts on residential amenity to be assessed, with mitigation identified where appropriate.
- The extension must take into consideration the adjacent and nearby sensitive receptors and proposals for working the sites, particularly the northern parts of the sites, must demonstrate how noise and visual impacts will be minimised to an acceptable level considered acceptable; and
- In relation to cumulative impacts resulting from the development of the site including the existing Woodsford Quarry, together with sites AG5 Station Road and AG6 Hurst Farm, including any opportunities for minimising any cumulative impacts, must be taken into consideration in any decision-making affecting this site.

14.25 In relation to the latter the Development Guideline sets out the following requirements in order to minimise cumulative impacts, particularly between AG4 Woodsford Quarry Extension and AG6 Hurst Farm:

a. Although both sites AG5 Station Road and AG6 Hurst Farm are allocated for development, AG5 Station Road should preferably be worked before AG6 Hurst Farm. This will allow AG4 Woodsford Quarry Extension to be worked while AG5 Station Road is being worked;
b. The eastern area of AG4 Woodsford Quarry Extension and the western area of AG6 Hurst Farm should preferably not be worked simultaneously; and
c. When AG4 Woodsford Quarry Extension is worked, the northern and eastern parts of the site should preferably be worked before the southern/western areas to ensure that by the time work begins on AG6 Hurst Farm, then even if AG4 Woodsford Quarry Extension is not finished, the adjacent parts of the two sites would not be worked simultaneously.

14.26 In relation to the restoration of the site the Development Guideline states that as the site is within the Valley Pasture Landscape Type of the Frome River Valley, a predominantly flat landform creating a multi functional landscape where nature conservation, flood water management and agriculture combine with recreation and amenity. Post mineral working restoration must explore the opportunity to provide a large scale wetland restoration scheme hydrologically connected to the River Frome. This it states will significantly reduce phosphate,

nitrogen and sediment load in the lower reaches of the River Frome SSSI and Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar sites, and create habitat for the conservation of protected species such as otter and water vole as well as many species of wetland bird. A scheme of this scale would also contribute to flood alleviation and provide significant recreational opportunities in a largely agricultural landscape.

Conclusion

14.27 Paragraph 224 of the NPPF informs MPAs that "*when determining planning applications, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy*."

14.28 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications "*must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise*." In this case, the application site is allocated in the MSP 2019, and therefore the principle of mineral extraction on the site has been recognised.

14.29 The landbank for sand and gravel, and particularly for the River Terrace, whilst above 7 years is not significantly so. There is evidenced need for greater reserves of sand and gravel to be permitted locally in order to provide for the continued demand for aggregate in the plan area.

14.30 Overall, the principle of a sand and gravel quarry on the application site is supported: by its allocation in the MSP 2019; by the need to maintain a steady and adequate supply of sand and gravel; and by the great weight that the NPPF places on the benefits of mineral development in paragraphs 222 and 224.

Water Environment

14.31 Turning to the environmental impacts of the development by far the most important consideration is the impact on the water environment. As set out of the Development Guidelines set out in Appendix A linked to Policy MS-1 of the MSP 2019 assessment of the impact on the River Frome and the hydrological and hydrogeological impacts is a key consideration, including the impacts on fisheries in the River Frome. As also set out above significant issues have been raised by the Environment Agency and Natural England in relation to the impacts on the water environment and in particular the River Frome and the Hurst Heath SNCI.

14.32 In terms of policy, Policy DM3 of the MS includes the requirement to ensure the protection and maintenance of the quality, direction and rate of flow; and volume of flow of groundwater, watercourses, and all other surface water. The policy also requires that proposals at risk of causing flooding include measures to avoid or mitigate that risk.

14.33 West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Policy ENV9 states that development will not be permitted which would result in an unacceptable risk of pollution to ground water, surface water-bodies and tidal water and Policy ENV5 seeks to ensure that new development or the intensification of existing uses avoid the risk of flooding (from surface water run-off, groundwater, fluvial and coastal sources) where possible and do not generate flooding through surface water runoff and/or exacerbate flooding elsewhere.

14.34 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF advises that "*development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality*…" and paragraph 181 of the NPPF advises that "*when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere*."

14.35 The Environmental Statement submitted with the application, includes a chapter on Water Management, which is supported by a separate Flood Risk Assessment and a separate Hydrogeological Impact Assessment.

14.36 The assessment identifies that there is a similarity with the mineral, water environment and topography within the north eastern extension area, to the existing operations at Woodsford Quarry, and consequently that current working methods would be applied within the extension area, so that the proposals essentially represents a continuation of the current activities.

14.37 It identifies that groundwater levels within the application area, and its immediate vicinity, have been determined from sixteen monitoring boreholes, which have been monitored since their installation in March 1995 and that the saturated thickness of the River Terrace deposits varies temporally due to seasonal water table fluctuations. The relationship between the groundwater elevation and geology is such that in summer months the saturated mineral thickness will be less than in winter (i.e. that the groundwater levels are lower in the summer). This situation also prevails across the majority of the north eastern extension area.

14.38 It further identifies that the elevation of groundwater and mineral depth are such that sub-watertable working will be required and that this will achieved by de-watering. Water within the quarry void will be managed by excavating ditches into its floor, in which it will be conveyed towards sumps, prior to discharge off-site. As detailed above, the proposals for how this will be undertaken have been amended in the course of the application to utilise the deep ditch to the north of the north eastern extension to create a recharge trench to prevent any the flow from the river into the extraction area.

14.39 Potential impacts upon the water environment have been identified and mitigation measures proposed. The assessment identifies that impacts could potentially occur in relation to both water quality and quantity. In the case of the former, it states that robust preventative measures and a documented spill response procedure will ensure that impacts on water quality are managed effectively. Suspended solids will be removed within the existing quarry by the use of flocculant and a discharge consent will be obtained from the Environment Agency to permit the water discharge.

14.40 The proposed phasing of mineral extraction, the assessment states will assist in reducing the potential for impact of the development on the external water environment. It will be worked in a series of 'self-contained' voids and restoration undertaken progressively. The creation of unlined waterbodies in the northern phases will ensure that any effects of site water management on the local water environment will be minimised.

14.41 The site will be restored to a combination of waterbodies, fenland and agriculture. Waterbodies and fenland will predominate on the northern half of the site with agriculture on the southern side.

14.42 The assessment identifies that the north eastern extension area is located wholly within Flood Zone 1 and is considered to be at low risk of flooding from all sources.

14.43 During mineral extraction in Phase 1b, excess water will be directed to a temporary settlement lagoon. Excess water will be discharged into the deep ditch to the north of the north eastern extension. Once Phase 1a has been completed, the resultant void will be used as a settlement lagoon serving all remaining phases.

14.44 The assessment concludes that the risk of surface water flooding to the north eastern extension area is low and that the proposals will not increase flood risk elsewhere. It therefore concludes that the proposed development will be compliant with flood-related policy, both during mineral extraction and post-restoration.

14.45 The Hydrogeological Impact Assessment (HIA) submitted with the application provides a detailed assessment of water environment in the north eastern extension area. It anticipates the magnitudes of all the identified potential impacts assessed as being small and that consequently mitigation measures, other than the adoption of standard good working practices, including those successfully adopted at the existing Woodsford Quarry, are not required.

14.46 As set above, the LLFA have advised that the applicant's assessment of flood risk is considered to be acceptable and they consequently have no objection to the application and have not recommended the inclusion of any conditions in the event that the application is approved.

14.47 By contrast the Environment Agency has, as set out above, made extensive comment on the application spread over four rounds of consultation. It has not changed its position and has maintained an objection due to the risk to the water environment, notably the River Frome SSSI, and the associated impacts on fisheries and biodiversity and also because of the risk to the adjacent Hurst Heath SNCI. The additional information and proposed mitigation outlined in the most recent submissions from the applicant do not overcome the Agency's initially stated objections and it recommends that planning permission should therefore be refused in line with paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

14.48 In their initial response, the applicant sought to provide the additional information requested by the Environment Agency in an Addendum to the Hydrogeological Impact Assessment comprising the following:

- A review of the impacts of the current operation to demonstrate the acceptability of the current operation and hence clarify the impacts of the current extension;
- Monitoring flow and level within the River Frome SSSI channel adjacent to the site and evaluation of impacts now and in the future, particularly at low flows;

- Demonstration that the restoration design provides an effective, achievable long term water management strategy; and
- Consideration of how any change to flow might negatively impact on the available habitat;
- An assessment of the cumulative impacts of the Woodsford north eastern extension with the Hurst Farm and Station Road submitted application (Planning Application ref P/FUL/2023/03982).

14.49 In summary the Addendum concludes that the configuration of the historical, deep and well-developed ditch network on the application site has had a strong influence on the development proposals for the north eastern extension area at Woodsford. It states that mineral extraction will be undertaken in relatively small, discrete phases and that based upon a topographic survey undertaken since the submission of both the Woodsford north east extension and Hurst Farm Planning Applications, the relationship between water levels in the River Frome and the ditch network has been established.

14.50 Water levels it identifies within a broadly east-west, deep ditch, which broadly parallels the northern boundary of the Application Area are lower than those of the river. It states that it can be inferred that groundwater from both Application Areas is intercepted by the ditch, ultimately discharging to the river approximately 1.2 km downstream of the eastern boundary of Woodsford north eastern extension application Area. The feature it states effectively acts as a cut-off ditch, thereby precluding groundwater baseflow to the river from the application area. Consequently, there are not anticipated to be any changes to flow within the River Frome resulting from the Woodsford north eastern extension, or the two sites in combination.

14.51 Mineral extraction, with associated dewatering, the Addendum states has been undertaken successfully at the existing Woodsford Quarry for a prolonged period. An extensive database of groundwater level records exists from which the effects of mineral extraction and restoration have been assessed. The data, the Addendum further states demonstrates that drawdown effects are very similar to those predicted within the submitted Woodsford north eastern extension HIA and that, after the completion of restoration, groundwater level recovery will occur.

14.52 The method of ensuring that water discharged off-site is of acceptable quality is by the adoption of similar methods to those adopted successfully at the current site; i.e. by use of settlement lagoons and a flocculating dosing system.

14.53 In relation to the cumulative impacts the Addendum concludes that in absence of dewatering at Hurst Farm and the small and compartmentalised nature of the Woodsford north eastern extension extraction phases are such that the potential impacts of each proposal on the water environment will be small both during the mineral extraction and post-restoration phases.

14.54 As set out above, the Environment Agency in response to the submission of the Addendum remained concerned that there will still be variability in the groundwater level data which shows significant changes in the patterns of the level and range during the operation of the quarry works. They advised that further evaluation of the potential influence on river flows during operation is necessary and that they require a clearer understanding of the groundwater

observations for the current Woodsford Quarry operational abstraction and discharge regime associated with the current use and dewatering operation.

14.55 In response to these comments the applicant submitted a response document with details from a survey of the river, detailing the relationship between the elevations of the River Frome, historic ditches and base of mineral workings, and potential groundwater flows. This confirmed that the base on the mineral working closest to the river would be below the level of river (between 0.12 m and 3.13 m below the river water level in the closest phases), although the report states that the difference between the river and western phases, in Phases 7 and 8, would only be minimal.

14.56 Most significantly, and notwithstanding the above point, the response then sets out an amended proposal in relation to the proposed mitigation by use of the deep ditch to the north of the north eastern extension, with the proposed recharge of water to the existing deep ditch located between the northern limit of mineral extraction and the river. Specifically it proposed that in Phases 1a, 2 and 3 to discharge water from these phases, after settlement, to the western extremity of the existing deep ditch, with water being pumped from the settlement lagoons that are to be created in Phase 1a. Water would be conveyed in a pipeline, which would be installed immediately to the south of the screening bunds. The quality of water would be assured by settlement and the use of a flocculant plant. The same method of water management would be maintained throughout the operational life of the quarry.

14.57 The effect of this change is that discharged water will raise the ditch water level, which will act as a recharge trench. The flow direction within the ditch is eastwards, with the result that the mitigating effects will occur across the whole width of extraction areas 2 and 1a/3, with the raising of the ditch water level above that of the river would reversing groundwater flows locally, thereby preventing any flow from the river into the extraction area.

14.58 In Phases 7 and 8, the response document stated, because of the minimal height difference between the river and base of Phases 7 and 8, that these mitigation measures are not considered to be necessary.

14.59 In separate correspondence with the Environment Agency the applicant additionally proposed mitigation measures in relation to the impact on the Hurst Heath SNCI. This advised that the effects of dewatering within Phase 5, the closest to the SNCI feature, will be temporary and reversible, and that once mineral extraction and restoration have been completed active water management will cease and groundwater levels will recover. As a result the response stated that residual impacts on features within Hurst Wood are not anticipated. Nevertheless, it also proposed that a perforated pipe system could be used to convey dewatering water from Phase 5 to irrigate the area in the short term, until groundwater levels had recovered.

14.60 Despite this, the Agency has not changed its position and has maintained an objection due to the risk to the water environment, notably the River Frome SSSI, and the associated impacts on fisheries and biodiversity and also because of the risk to the adjacent Hurst Heath SNCI. It advises that the additional information and proposed mitigation outlined in the additional submissions from the applicant does not overcome the Agency's initially stated

objections and it recommends that planning permission should therefore be refused in line with paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

14.61 Overall, the advice from the Environment Agency is that the information submitted as part of the Environmental Statement does not adequately demonstrate that the proposal is acceptable in terms of it impacts on the water environment, notably the River Frome SSSI, and the associated impacts on fisheries and biodiversity and also the adjacent Hurst Heath SNCI. Consequently it has to be considered not to be compliant with the MSP, Policy MS-1 as it does not meet all the criteria set out in Part C an in particular Part C i insofar as it does not adequately address the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4 set out in Appendix A, and Part C ii in that the information submitted as part of the Environmental Statement does not demonstrate that any adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts, associated with the development and operation have been satisfactorily mitigated. The proposal can similarly and for the same reasons be considered to be contrary to the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, Policy ENV9, the MS, Policy DM3 and the NPPF, paragraph 187.

14.62 It should be noted that the applicant has asked for more time to address the objection from the Environment Agency, but advised that this was likely to take in order of six months, with no certainty that a acceptable forward could be agreed with the Environment Agency. They were consequently advised to withdraw the application with a view to resubmitting it at a later date, but declined to do so and have advised that the likely timescale would mean that any submission from them is unlikely before early 2026.

Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land and Soil

14.63 The key issue relating to soils, as the site is almost entirely made up of agricultural land, is as set out above, that a substantial part of the application site, i.e. 79 percent, (approximately 77.6 ha), is made up of Grade 2 Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. Consequently, the development of the site would have a significant effect on this, given that only a proportion of the disturbed land would subsequently be returned to agricultural use following restoration. The key issue then is whether that loss of BMV agricultural land is acceptable in terms of relevant development plan and national planning policy.

14.64 Relevant policy includes Policy DM1 of the MS which recognises the importance of appropriate management of soils and of steering development towards areas of poorer agricultural land quality. It states, in part, that minerals development must address satisfactorily the "*protection of soil resources throughout the life of the development and where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary and there is a choice of location, giving preference to the development of poorer quality land over higher quality or best and most versatile land*." Policy RS1 similarly states, in part, that soil quality should be protected for use in restoration during "*stripping, storage, and management of soils, subsoils, and overburden arising as a result of site operations*."

14.65 The NPPF similarly highlights the importance of BMV agricultural land, stating in paragraph 187 that the "*economic and other benefits of the best and most*

versatile agricultural land" should be recognised in planning decisions. In relation to the allocation of land for development in a development plan, the NPPF advises in footnote 65 that:

Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality."

14.66 The application site in this case is allocated in the MSP (2019), and in accordance with the footnote above, alternative sites were considered as part of the plan-making process. It is recognised in the development guidelines for the application site in the MSP (2019) that "*The site is BMV agricultural land and protection and appropriate management of soils is required to enable the land to retain its longer term capability.*."

14.67 The Agricultural Land Classification system divides agricultural land into give grades (Grade 1 'Excellent' to Grade 5 'Very Poor'), with Grade 3 subdivided into Subgrade 3a 'Good' and Subgrade 3b 'Moderate. Grades 1 to 3a are considered to be 'Best and Most Versatile' (BMV). Approximately 40% of farmland in England is BMV, and approximately 20% of farmland in England (i.e. half of BMV land) is Grade 1 or 2. Within Dorset, approximately 4% of land is Grade 1 or 2.

14.68 Chapter 11 of the submitted Environmental Statement is concerned with Soil Resources and Agricultural Land Quality, and is supported by a Soils And Agricultural Quality of Land report and a Soil Management Plan.

14.69 The assessment identifies that 79% of the application site comprises Grade 2 BMV agricultural land, and that the development of the site would result in ta net loss of 43.3 ha with 13.6 ha of land returned to BMV agricultural land. The loss would be permanent, as the majority of the land would be restored to water bodies, with only relatively small proportion being returned to agricultural use following restoration.

14.70 The loss of 43.3 ha of BMV land would be large and significant. However, it is also the case that the MSP has endorsed the principle of the use of the land changing from agriculture to mineral extraction, with the Development Guidelines, indicating that that the restoration of the site should explore the opportunity to provide a large scale wetland restoration scheme hydrologically connected to the River Frome.

14.71 This is what the restoration scheme seeks to achieve, and the assessment identifies that there is need to retain the soil resource within this context. It identifies as mitigation that the soil resources on the site will be stripped and stored in stockpiles in accordance with the Soil Management Plan.

14.72 The Soil Management Plan is intended to ensure that the soil resources remain in a suitable condition to provide a functional planting medium to support the desired habitats in the restoration plan, and they intended to provide carbon storage in the fenland and lowland meadow habitats.

14.73 The assessment also identifies that the high groundwater levels within the site limits the area that is viable for restoration to agriculture without importation of inert wastes to do so. For this reason, the restoration to large scale wetland is considered the appropriate approach to the restoration of the site, as set out

in the Development Guidelines included in the MSP, and is intended to facilitate the creation of bio-diverse habitats in addition to some productive agricultural land. No significant cumulative effects are identified.

14.74 Whist Natural England have as set out above raised significant concerns about the impact of the development of the north eastern extension on water environment and the resulting impact on habitats, they do not object to the proposed working and restoration insofar as these relate to the retention and use of the soil resource on the site.

14.75 To ensure that soils resource is protected for use in restoration during stripping, and storage, it is recommended that the implementation of the Soil Management Plan be conditioned.

14.76 On this basis, whilst the loss of 43.3 ha of BMV land would be large and significant, the proposed restoration of the site is consistent with the Development Guidelines for the site out in the MSP, which recognises that for restoration to agriculture without importation of inert wastes, limits the scope of the restoration to agriculture on the one hand, and on the other promotes a large scale wetland restoration scheme that is hydrologically connected to the River Frome. This being the case the application is consistent with the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension in the MSP, Policies DM1 and RS1 of the MS, and paragraph 187 of the NPPF.

Impacts on Heritage

14.77 In relation to the impact of heritage there are broadly two considerations; firstly, whether there are any impacts on, or on the setting of, any built heritage asset including Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments; and secondly whether there is any potential for buried archaeology on the site, and how this is addressed.

14.78 Relevant policy includes Policy DM7 of the MS which states that proposals for mineral development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated through an authoritative process of assessment and evaluation that heritage assets and their settings will be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, and that adverse impacts should be avoided or mitigated to an acceptable level.

14.79 West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, Policy ENV4 states that any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset must be justified and that applications will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It also states that where harm can be justified, appropriate provision will be required to capture and record features, followed by analysis and where appropriate making findings publicly available.

14.80 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss of or less than substantial harm to its significance.

14.81 Paragraph 213 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, should require clear and convincing justification.

14.82 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

14.83 The Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP (2019), identify that there are designated and undesignated heritage assets on and around the site, including the Frome Bridge and its setting, other listed buildings and other historic features and below-ground archaeology. They identify that heritage and archaeology matters are important considerations, and that the significance of any affected heritage assets and their setting must be understood to ensure their significance is safeguarded. Archaeological assessment and evaluation, including a full Heritage and Setting Assessment, will be required as part of the development of the site.

14.84 The Council also has a statutory duty under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have: "*special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*".

14.85 The Environmental Statement included with the application includes a chapter, Chapter 7 which presents a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and a further chapter, Chapter 8, which presents an Archaeological Impact Assessment. The latter is supported by a number of additional reports including a Historic Environment Assessment, a Geophysical Survey Report, and Desktop Geoarchaeological Assessment.

14.86 The Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment identifies that there are no designated heritage assets located within the application site, but that there are a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets within the wider area, including the Grade II listed Frome Bridge to the north of the site, the listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Woodsford Castle, located in Woodsford village to the west, and a WWII pill-box which is identified as a non-designated heritage asset, adjacent to the site.

14.87 The assessment of the impact of the proposal on the listed buildings concludes that the proposals will have no impact on the heritage value of the Grade I and II* listed buildings. It does identify negligible adverse effects to five listed buildings and one non-designated heritage assets by virtue of the change to the use of the land and the wider setting effects during the operational stage of the quarry extension. These effects are identified to grade II listed Woodsford Manor and its associated grade II listed outbuildings, as well as grade II listed Frome Bridge, grade II listed Clyffe House East and the non-designated WWII pill box. These impacts would however be temporary, lasting for the lifetime of the development, and would be reversible. For the post-restoration stage, the assessment identifies that there would be no effects on any of the designated heritage assets.

14.88 The assessment also considers the potential effect on the historic watermeadows within the site boundary. It identifies that the watermeadows were probably first developed in the late 17th century and comprise three main channels followed irregular and probably largely natural courses through the meadows. The watermeadows fell out of use in the mid 19th century, earlier

than watermeadows elsewhere. The main channels are now hedge and field boundaries, dividing an arable landscape. The assessment identifies that the minor channels have been ploughed out or have been entirely eradicated by the arable cultivation and that none of the sluices survive. As a result, it concludes that the remains of the watermeadows therefore have limited heritage value as historic landscape features, and are not designated. It nevertheless concludes that the proposed north-eastern extension would have a direct adverse effect on the watermeadow system, although the hedges and water channels will be retained and as result the assessment concludes that there would be a minor adverse effect, which is not significant in EIA terms, on cultural heritage as a result of the impact on the watermeadow system during the operational stage of the development. It also identifies minor adverse effect (which is not significant in EIA terms) on the watermeadow system at the post-restoration stage.

14.89 The Archaeological Impact Assessment identifies the application site as being located within an area of moderate-high archaeological potential, based upon evidence in the Dorset Historic Environment Record (HER and work within the current quarry and in the surrounding landscape. It identifies that the results of the evaluation have confirmed that potential, although there is a clear distinction between the western part of the application area, where multi-period archaeology is present, and the eastern part where only limited evidence for post-medieval archaeology is present.

14.90 The archaeology within the application area is considered to be of local-regional importance, but this is enhanced to regional importance as it forms part of an extensive landscape that has been archaeologically examined in the current quarry.

14.91 It identifies the need for the loss of archaeology to be offset by a programme of mitigation, comprising three areas that would be the focus of archaeological excavation on the western part of the application site, but none on the eastern part.

14.92 In relation to the potential for palaeolithic archaeology, it is proposed that prior to any gravel extraction taking place additional information on the nature, age and likely archaeological potential of the gravel bodies would be obtained, and that a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) would be submitted to Dorset Council prior to development commencing.

14.93 In terms of indirect impacts the assessment identifies that the nearest scheduled monuments – prehistoric barrows - are located over 1.6km north and north-east of the site and that there would be no effects on their setting.

14.94 The overall conclusion of the assessment is that with mitigation in place, the proposed development would have no significant adverse effects on archaeological assets, and those adverse effects that would occur would be more than offset by the proposed mitigation in the form of the archaeological investigation proposed.

14.95 Dorset Council Conservation have advised that, with some qualifications that they agree with the conclusions of the assessment in relation to the above ground heritage assets and that there are no significant impacts. They do raise

concern that if there is any increase in traffic, this could have a an adverse on the structural integrity of both Frome Bridge and Hurst (South) Bridge, but detailed in the section above on Traffic and Highway Safety, there is no proposed increase in HGV movements associated with the development of the proposed north eastern extension.

14.96 They also make reference to the adequacy of the plant along the western boundary of Phase 8, which the boundary closes to Woodsford. As detailed above, Dorset Council – Landscape, whilst not expressing any explicit concerns about the planting along western boundary of Phase 8, have recommended that detailed landscape drawings and specifications for each phase should be reserved by condition with these being drawn up in consultation with the Mineral Planning Authority prior to the restoration of each phase of working. Each detailed restoration phase should be undertaken in accordance with the general restoration principles illustrated by the recently submitted revised Restoration Plan Drawing (Drawing No. W26_LAN_008 Rev A.), and then annual Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) reviews can be used to monitor their implementation.

14.97 Finally, they also note the acknowledgement in the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment of the significance of the water meadow systems on the site.

14.98 Turning to the consultation response from Historic England, they have, as set out above, offered lengthy and detailed comment on all three of the current applications, although its main concern is with the extension of the end date sought by the two accompanying s.73 applications for the existing quarry and silt lagoons. In relation to the north east extension application it states that it does not disagree with the applicant's opinion that the north eastern extension is too far from the castle to have any direct visual impact. However, it is nevertheless concerned that there would still be an impact on its setting and it is concerned that the surroundings of Woodsford Castle would change, from open rural fields to quarry operations, albeit for a limited period of time. It considers that the continued operations of the quarry will have a modest, adverse, impact on how Woodsford Castle is experienced and that as a result there would be minor harm to the setting of the Grade I listed building.

14.99 Historic England advises that paragraph 212 (previously paragraph 205) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that should be given to its conservation and that Woodsford Castle is a heritage asset of the very highest significance.

14.100 Accordingly Historic England advises that the Council must give considerable weight to the conservation of Woodsford Castle when carrying out NPPF paragraph 215's 'balancing exercise' of weighing the harm against any wider public benefit associated with the proposal. It also advises that the Council must have regard to its statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

14.101 As is set out above the Landmark Trust, which owns Woodford Castle has also submitted a strongly worded objection to all three applications on the ground

of the adverse impact on the setting of Woodsford caste as Grade I listed building.

14.102 In relation to archaeology, Dorset Council archaeology have advised that they agree with the conclusions of the Archaeological Impact Assessment, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission for approval a programme of archaeological works.

14.103 In terms of the overall impacts, whilst neither Dorset Council Conservation nor Historic England object to the north eastern extension application, Historic England do consider that across the three current applications as whole and with the retention of the processing plant and conveyor and silt lagoon, there will be a degree of harm to the significance of Woodsford Castle and that the degree of harm will be "less than substantial". This is not an unreasonable conclusion, albeit the Committee should note that the response from the Landmark Trust which owns Woodsford Castle, which suggests that the level of harm should be considered to be substantial.

14.104 Less than substantial harm is not intended to mean that the harm is minor or inconsequential; it is the terminology used in the NPPF to categorise the level harm to the significance of heritage assets. It covers a wide spectrum of harm from very minor harm through to a level of harm stopping short of "substantial harm", so has a wide meaning. If harm is identified, this requires that considerable importance and significant weight must be afforded in the balance, regardless of the degree of harm.

14.105 In considering the impact on the setting Woodsford Castle and other heritage assets the substantive issue, is not necessarily about the visual impact on the Castle and other heritage assets, as plant area at the quarry is located some way from the castle (approximately 800m south west of the castle). The impact instead arises from the harm caused to the setting of the Castle (and other heritage assets), which as the Landmark Trust comments, is about the industrial nature of the character of the quarry and the impact on the rural character of the approach to the listed building across fields.

14.106 In this context the advice from Historic England, is that the level of harm should appropriately be assessed as less than substantial. Although it attaches most weight to the impacts of the two extension of time applications, it also suggests that the north eastern extension will give rise to some harm, which it describes as "minor". Even at this level the harm would amount to less than substantial harm, albeit at the end of scale of less than substantial harm.

14.107 This being the case the requirement of the NPPF, paragraph 215 and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, applies and corresponds with the duty in section 66(1), and this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

14.108 On the one hand, paragraph 212 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be) and paragraph 213 states that any harm to, or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, should require clear and convincing justification. On the other hand, paragraph

224 of the NPPF also states that when determining planning applications, great weight should also be given to the benefits of mineral extraction. It does then also go on to say inter alia that that in considering proposals for mineral extraction, minerals planning authorities should ensure that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the historic environment.

14.109 When the different paragraphs of the NPPF are read together, it is clear in the circumstances that apply in this instance, that the issue is whether the less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle and the other nearby heritage assets, is outweighed by the public benefit of the proposal. In the context of the need for the supply of mineral identified in the MS, the application would not only develop one of the seven allocated sites to meet the identified shortfall in permitted reserves required during the Plan period to the end of 2028, but that this development alone represents almost one-third the total additional amount of mineral required to meet the shortfall in sand and gravel identified in the MSP (2014), i.e. just under 3 million tonnes of the identified shortfall of 9.36 Mt required over the plan period to 2028.

14.110 Furthermore, as set out above, this also has to be considered in the context of the current landbank, which cannot be considered to be significantly in excess of the required seven-year minimum. At a time when the anticipated need for aggregate and associated processing of soils and inert waste for planned major construction projects in the county is likely to increase significantly, this can be considered to amount to significant public benefit, with sufficient weight to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the setting of the affected heritage assets, i.e. Woodsford Castle and the other nearby heritage assets given the harm is at the lower end of the “scale”.

14.111 However, if the Committee is minded to the refuse the application in accordance with the recommendation, because it has failed to demonstrate that it would not have an adverse impact the proposed development on the water environment, then there are no benefits to weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, and consequently there is no basis upon which it can be recommended that the application can be approved, and accordingly there is consequential and additional reason for refusal, as set out in the recommendation.

14.112 On this basis the application can, when considered the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, a Grade 1 Listed Building. In the absence of the approval of the application, because it has failed to demonstrate that it would not have an adverse impact the proposed development on the water environment, there are no benefits to be weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF, and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015), and it cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension in the MSP, Policy DM7 of the MS, and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

Landscape including Restoration, Aftercare, and After-Use

14.113 The key issue in terms of the impacts on the landscape and landscape features arising from the proposed extension of the quarry is that the proposed phasing would involve the cessation of working within the existing quarry while the north eastern extension is worked, before working switches back to the existing quarry to enable the construction of the additional silt lagoon, and then temporary back to the north-eastern extension, before final restoration takes place in the existing quarry. As result the phased restoration of the existing quarry would be held over until after the working of the north-eastern extension is completed. This approach has had to be adopted because it is proposed that the processing of the mineral from the north eastern extension is to be undertaken within the existing plant area at the western end of the existing quarry, and because as set out above the further extension of the quarry will necessitate the development of an additional silt lagoon to manage the additional amount of mineral that will be extracted.

14.114 Relevant planning policy include Policy DM4 of the MS which states, in part, that development which affects the landscape will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that any adverse impacts can be avoided; or, if avoidance is not possible, adequately mitigated; or, if avoidance or mitigation is not possible, compensatory enhancements secured to offset the impact.

14.115 Policy DM4 further requires that proposals include provisions to protect and/or enhance the quality, character, and amenity value of the countryside and landscape.

14.116 West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Policy ENV1 seeks to protect the plan area's exceptional landscapes and to ensure that development is located and designed so that it does not detract from and, where reasonable, enhances the local landscape character. It requires that appropriate measures will be required to moderate the adverse effects of development on the landscape and it states that development that significantly adversely affects the character or visual quality of the local landscape or will not be permitted.

14.117 Policy ENV3 additional seeks to ensure that development does not cause harm to the green infrastructure network or undermine the reasons for an area's inclusion within the network and it states that development proposals that provide improved access and recreational use (where appropriate) will be supported.

14.118 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, while paragraph 224 states that when considering proposals for mineral extraction, minerals planning authorities should ensure that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural environment and should provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity, to be carried out to high environmental standards.

14.119 The Restoration Vision contained in the Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP (2019) identifies that the site as being located within the Valley Pasture Landscape Type of the Frome River Valley, which is described as a predominantly flat landform creating a multi-functional landscape where

nature conservation, flood water management and agriculture combine with recreation and amenity. For this reason it states that post mineral working, restoration must explore the opportunity to provide a large scale wetland restoration scheme hydrologically connected to the River Frome. This it states will significantly reduce phosphate, nitrogen and sediment load in the lower reaches of the River Frome SSSI and Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar sites, and create habitat for the conservation of protected species such as otter and water vole as well as many species of wetland bird. The scheme of this scale should also contribute to flood alleviation and provide significant recreational opportunities in a largely agricultural landscape.

14.120 The Environmental Statement submitted with the application includes a chapter, Chapter 12, that sets the landscape and visual impact assessment of the proposed north eastern extension and the associated variations of condition applications relating to the existing quarry.

14.121 The Environmental Statement includes a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and two Addendums, a supporting Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) and a Restoration Proposals Plan for the north eastern extension area and Composite Restoration Plan which extends across the whole of the quarry including the extension area.

14.122 The LVIA includes 12 viewpoints as part of the visual analysis. The first Addendum to the LVIA includes an assessment of the cumulative landscape and visual effects with the adjacent Hurst Farm and Station Road, while the second Addendum provides additional information in response to the comments from the Dorset Council Landscape Officer (see above).

14.123 The assessment covers both the proposed north eastern extension and the extended duration of operation and delay in the completion of restoration of the existing consented operations.

14.124 The landscape effects have been assessed for the north eastern extension during operation, at completion of full restoration and at 15 years after completion of restoration for the Valley Pasture Landscape Type, the Heath and Farmland Mosaic Landscape Type, the topography of the site, the vegetation of the site, the remnants of the water meadows agricultural system of the North East Extension and the approved landscape restoration scheme of the Permitted Eastern and Western Reserves and the Additional Silt Lagoon area.

14.125 The effects are predicted to range from No change to Moderate/Minor adverse during the operational stage. No adverse effects are predicted at completion or completion +15 years, with all effects at completion +15 years being either neutral or beneficial (up to Moderate beneficial) as a result the assessment concludes that the restoration scheme which will add a characteristic matrix of agriculture, woodland, grassland and water bodies.

14.126 The assessment identifies that the landscape effects for the already consented eastern and western reserves, plant site and the additional silt lagoon were considered using the assessments undertaken in 2005 and 2018 for these developments, and it assess that the effects for the extended period of operation will be moderate/minor adverse.

14.127 The visual effects of the North East Extension are assessed by considering the 12 viewpoints from a range of distances, orientations and receptor types. Of these, the assessment identifies that three had no view of the site and that of the 9 that had visibility of the site, minor adverse visual effects were predicted for 4, 1 would be subject to negligible adverse effects and 4 would be subject to neutral effects during the operational phase. As with landscape effects, all adverse effects are predicted to cease at completion of restoration.

14.128 At completion + 15 years, the assessment predicts two minor beneficial effects, with the remainder being neutral or no change. The adverse effects predicted during the operational stage are restricted to locations directly adjacent to the site and at a single location on elevated land to the north of the site.

14.129 The visual effects for the consented eastern and western reserves and the additional silt lagoon were considered using the assessments undertaken in 2005 and 2018 for these developments, and it is predicted that the extended period of operation will lead to effects consistent with those previously identified for the operational stage.

14.130 Overall, the assessment concludes that no effects are predicted to be significant.

14.131 The Cumulative Impact Assessment including the second LVIA Addendum identifies in assessment of the impacts on landscape that the Hurst Farm and Station Road application judges the component parts of the assessment for the site character differently to the Woodsford application, recording a major adverse scale of effects, based on a judgement of effects on the site features only, whereas the assessment for Woodsford north east extension identifies a minor adverse effects based on a judgement of effects on the character of the wider landscape.

14.132 It comments that the significant adverse effects recorded on the Hurst Farm and Station Road site features are an unavoidable fact of mineral development on any site. This, the assessment states reflects the inevitable scale of change to the immediate landform and landcover during progressive working and restoration operations. It further comments that the east side of the Woodsford Farm North East extension abuts the west side of the Hurst Farm site, but they are divided by a woodland belt either side of a ditch and are not intervisible or considered together within the wider setting. It does however acknowledge that the cumulative effect of working both sites concurrently is likely to reinforce this significant adverse effect.

14.133 It then goes on to identify that both assessments judge the effects on the wider landscape character as minor adverse during the operational period and both recognise beneficial effects post restoration.

14.134 The assessments overall conclusion is therefore that significant cumulative adverse effects would occur on the landform and landcover of the valley floor if both sites are worked concurrently, but that this would not be perceived from the wider landscape. However, cumulative effects on the landscape character of the setting would not be significant adverse.

14.135 In terms of visual impacts the assessment concludes that cumulative visual effects could arise from the combination of proposed development of the

Woodsford north eastern extension and Hurst Farm on various receptors located on rising ground around Tincleton, Clyffe House and Pallington Heath to the north and residents on the upper floors of Woodsford Lower Dairy. However, it also concludes that the cumulative magnitude of change during working operations from these long distance and mostly filtered viewpoints is such that that the level of effect is not likely to exceed low/medium.

14.136 The sensitivity of the visual receptors potentially common to both developments is identified as ranging from low to high. None of the visual receptors potentially common to both developments are judged to receive greater than minor/moderate adverse effects over any timescale. The cumulative, combined or in-sequence effects for any receptors are assessed as not reaching a level of significant (major or major/moderate adverse).

14.137 In relation to the cumulative long-term effects of the restoration schemes on the wider landscape, the assessment identifies that the adverse effects on the landscape during the operational period of both quarries diminish to a range of slight adverse to minor beneficial on completion of the restoration proposals.

14.138 The assessment additionally identifies that the baseline landscape setting of both sites, contains at least four other active or restored sand and gravel workings (Woodsford, Moreton, Pallington and Warmwell Airfield) and that leisure and recreational land uses resulting from former sand and gravel workings are inherent to the changing baseline environment. It concludes that the range of long-term effects on landscape receptors common to both developments is between neutral and major beneficial. The cumulative effects of these are beneficial, particularly in relation to biodiversity by providing a variety of lowland wetland habitats and increase green infrastructure provision.

14.139 The Dorset Council Landscape Officer has returned lengthy and detailed comments, which are set out in full above. They advise that the overall layout of the proposed extension area in terms of the division of distinct parcels of land to be worked and the resulting series of water bodies at restoration stage, has been designed in a sympathetic and appropriate manner. The principles shown in the proposed overall site layout respect and retain the historic field boundary pattern. They advise that the retention of these boundaries will help to visually ‘break up’ the expanses of new water bodies created both from the views along the valley floor and from more elevated, distant views over the site.

14.140 Whilst they state that they have outstanding concerns about some of the details of the proposed scheme, they are content for these to be addressed by condition.

14.141 In particular they have commented that more boundary planting is required in certain areas to help break up, soften and screen views of the larger new waterbodies; and they are also advised that further details of the conveyor crossing and the final restoration culvert are required and in particular they note that the previously installed culvert on the crossing between the western reserve and the existing eastern extension includes temporary concrete barriers, replacement hedge planted too close to the road, exposed concrete culvert edges, small sections of very tight radius full face kerbing etc, which has not has not been well executed.

Phasing

14.142 A particular point to note on phasing is that it is proposed that working within the existing consented quarry would be suspended whilst the north eastern extension is worked and as a result working and restoration of the existing quarry would not be completed before working the extension area is commenced. This on the face of it does not seem an ideal approach, and not consistent with the principle of phased working and restoration at the earliest opportunity, as set out in paragraph 224 of the NPPF. The reason for it is that it is proposed to retain the existing plant area where the extracted mineral from the extension would be processed. This is a point that has been recognised in the Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP, which states that mineral from the extension should continue to be processed at the existing plant site. This does offer the benefit of minimising disturbance from processing in the extension area and allowing its relatively prompt restoration, but it enables the management of the volume and routeing of HGV traffic from site, without any resulting increase.

14.143 As such, while the phasing may appear not be ideal, it is consistent with the Development Guidelines for the site in terms of the reasons why it has been proposed.

Restoration Proposals

14.144 In relation to the restoration proposals, it is clear that these do seek to provide a large-scale wetland restoration scheme that is hydrologically connected to the River Frome, with the overall aims being to retain the landscape features associated with the former watermeadow network. Whilst the Environment Agency, as set out above, has raised an objection to the way the site is to be worked, due to the risk of adverse impacts on the hydrogeology of the site and the River Frome, the restoration scheme in itself is consistent with the Restoration Vision set out Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP.

14.145 In relation to the restoration scheme plan, The Landscape Officer, whilst in principle content with the proposals has commented that this is at this stage at a concept level and that further full details will be required of the proposed restoration, planting and maintenance. They advise that the second Addendum LVIA identifies that the LEMP is intended to be a live document that will be revised at each annual restoration review meeting as the development progresses and that individual detailed landscape drawings and specifications will be prepared for agreement with the MPA and other stakeholders prior to the restoration of each phase of working. This would need to be secured by condition.

14.146 They are also content with the conclusions of the cumulative impact assessment.

Aftercare

14.147 In relation to aftercare, paragraph 224 of the NPPF states that proposals for minerals development must provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity, to be carried out to high environmental standards, through the application of appropriate conditions. Similarly, Policy RS1 of the MS sets out

the requirement that any aftercare scheme should incorporate an aftercare period of at least five years or where appropriate, voluntary longer periods for certain uses will be sought through agreement.

14.148 The application in this case notes that historically mineral restoration or reclamation schemes and outline aftercare schemes were submitted as separate and disconnected schemes. This application, in this instance, includes an outline Landscape & Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), which addresses the principles of restoration of each of the types of area to be created and provides an outline level of information on how they will be managed post restoration.

14.149 It proposes that prior to the restoration of each phase being commenced a phase specific LEMP will be produced that relates to the specific details of that phase and adapts to the specific conditions relevant at the time. This it states is particularly pertinent in this instance where there are a number of different types of restoration ranging from agricultural land to wildlife lakes. In effect a LEMP will wrap up the same information as a restoration scheme and an aftercare scheme, but, because of the scale and nature of the extension, the fine detail will be confirmed during the life of the quarry extension.

14.150 As set out above the Landscape Officer has advised that they are content to accept such an approach subject to the imposition of a condition to secure the submission of a phased LEMP.

Afteruse

14.151 One additional matter that Committee's attention is drawn to is that whilst the application includes a concept Restoration Plan, which as set out above, the Landscape Officer advises is acceptable, the application says relatively little about the afteruse of the site. It states that the Restoration Plan (as shown on Drawing No W26_LAN_ 008) will see the restoration of Phases 1 and 2 to lowland fen/pasture, containing seasonally flooded shallow scrapes to enhance the range of wildlife habitats and increase biodiversity and that groundwater monitoring information from the extension site and the knowledge gained from working the existing quarry has informed the design of the restoration. Phases 3 to 6 it states will be restored to open lakes, some for angling and others for wildlife with substantial reed/fen margins, and Phases 7 to 9 will be restored partly to agriculture, at a slightly lower level than existing and partly to wildlife lakes.

14.152 Although the intention is, as set out above that there will be an annually reviewed LEMP, based on the submitted Outline LEMP, its purpose, as it states is to provide an appropriate level of information on the intended restoration of the land, habitat creation, habitat establishment and aftercare of the restored land and habitats within the site. This is intended to provide the framework for appropriate management of the land to ensure a fully functioning landscape that protects and enhances landscape features and biodiversity within the site.

14.153 Whilst some of the land is to be returned to agricultural use and much of it will developed as wetland, details of how it would actually provide "significant recreational opportunities" and how these would be accessed and managed,

in accordance with the LEMP are not provided. Whilst this is not enough in itself to justify refusal of the application, its certainly an aspect of the proposals that is somewhat lacking beyond the details set out above.

14.154 Notwithstanding this shortcoming, the proposal can in overall terms be considered to be in accordance with the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension in the MSP, Policy ENV1 and ENV3 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, Policy DM4 of the MS, and paragraphs 187 and 224 of the NPPF.

Traffic and Highway Safety

14.155 The key issues in relation to traffic and highway safety relate to whether the development of the proposed extension would give rise to any significant increases in traffic any an consequential highway safety impacts including any capacity related considerations.

14.156 Relevant planning policy includes Policy DM8 of the MS which states that "Minerals development which could have an adverse impact as a consequence of the traffic generated by it will only be permitted where it is demonstrated, through a Transport Assessment, that a safe access to the proposed site will be provided, that there will be no adverse impact on the Strategic, Primary and/or Local road network, that developers will provide funding for any highway, that any transport network improvements necessary to mitigate or compensate for any adverse impacts are undertaken, and that proposals should as far as possible have direct access or suitable links with the Dorset strategic highway network or primary route network.

14.157 Policy DM8 also states that sustainable transportation should be used where possible and practical, including through minimising distance travelled by road and maximising the use of transport means such as rail, water, pipelines, or conveyor belts to transport minerals where practicable and environmentally acceptable.

14.158 West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, Policy COM7 seeks to ensure that development is located where the volume of traffic likely to be generated can be accommodated on the local highway network without exacerbating community severance and states that development will not be permitted where the residual cumulative impacts on the efficiency of the transport network are likely to be severe.

14.159 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

14.160 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF advises, that it should be ensured that… a safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users and paragraph 116 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

14.161 The Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP state that mineral from the extension should continue to be processed at the existing plant site, with no intensification of production or simultaneous working of the current site

and extension and that mineral should be transported from the point of extraction to the processing site via internal routes within the quarry. They further state that no external roads are to be used for transport to the processing site and that access to the site will be via the existing access.

14.162 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment as a separate document from the Environmental Statement. The assessment considers the suitability of the site access and adjacent highway network to accommodate the level of traffic expected to be generated by the allocated extension to the mineral workings, beyond those considered when consent was originally granted.

14.163 This identifies that, other than occasional localised access for plant during the development of the individual phases, all vehicular access will be via the existing quarry access on to the D13 between West Stafford and Crossways, with mineral from the North Eastern Extension to be transported to the existing quarry plant area for processing by an extension to the existing conveyor.

14.164 The assessment further identifies that the D13 to the east of the existing site access provides local access to Crossways and to the B3390 and that it is generally of a good standard although immediately to the east it crosses the Dorchester to Wareham railway line at a level crossing at an angle and as a result horizontal alignment over the crossing is poor. The route to the B3390 passes directly through Crossways.

14.165 To the west the D13 provides access to the A35 and A352 to the east of Dorchester. Whilst this route is predominately rural, it provides access to other previous mineral extraction sites in the area to the south of the D13. As a result of these quarries the assessment identifies that the route has been upgraded in the past and widened to accommodate HGV traffic. The road is generally around 6.5m – 7m and is subject to the national speed limit.

14.166 The assessment identifies, that the existing consent for the quarry has no limitations on the tonnage of mineral or product that can be exported or on HGV movements. It nevertheless identifies existing quarry traffic comprising an average of 25 two-way movements in the AM Peak and 17 movements in the PM Peak, with a daily average of 57 HGV movement in and out of the site, resulting in a daily average of 114 HGV movements. The peak loads per day were 75 loads resulting in a total of 150 peak daily trips which includes trips related to the existing bagging plant on the site.

14.167 If the north eastern extension is approved it identifies that extraction will continue at the established rate of 250,000 tonnes per year of material extracted, and that with the assumption of 275 working days (5-day week plus half day Saturday) and 20 tonne loads, the forecast assumes a required average of 45 loads per day resulting in a total of 90 average daily trips. This is an average and peaks will be higher. Nevertheless, on this basis it concludes that there would no increase in traffic generated by the site and that there would be no material impact on the local road network

14.168 The assessment identifies, from a review of the personal injury collision data for the last five-year period, that there are no significant highways safety issues that need to be addressed.

14.169 The assessment also considers the cumulative impacts of the development in conjunction with the proposal for the development of the adjacent Hurst Farm and Station Road site. It identifies that the assessment for that site indicates that the expected traffic generation will be no more than 100 loads (200 two-way HGV movements) per operational day, and that around 10 movements per day are expected to use the route past the Woodsford Quarry. It concludes that at this level of traffic, there would be no material impact on the conclusions of the assessment set out above.

14.170 The overall conclusions of the assessment are that with the extension output from the quarry will continue at the existing rate resulting in no material increase in traffic flows on the adjacent highway network and that the proposed development will have no material impact on the safety or operation of the adjacent highway network and that the existing highway infrastructure is adequate the forecast traffic flows.

14.171 As set out above the Highway Authority has advised that it has no objection to the proposal subject to conditions requiring the continuation of road sweeping and the checking on a regular basis for any type of damage in and around the entrance to the site, and for any defects to be repaired caused by vehicle movements coming to and from the site.

14.172 The concerns expressed by Network Rail about damage caused to the level crossing decking, at the Woodsford (No.38) level crossing, can if the application is approved be addressed by condition, to ensure that HGVs leaving the quarry are free from any sand that could be dropped on the public highway, including the level crossing.

14.173 On this basis it can be considered that the proposal complies with MSP Policy DM8 and West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Policy COM7 and is in accordance with paragraph 116 of the NPPF. It can also be considered to be compliant with the Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP.

Amenity (Noise, Vibration, Air Quality, Dust, and Lighting)

14.174 The key issues in relation to amenity concern noise, dust and light, particularly in relation to the nearest residential properties, but also more widely in relation to the surrounding area because of the potential impact of off-site HGV movements.

14.175 Relevant planning policy includes Policy DM2 of the MS which seeks to ensure that proposals demonstrate that any potential adverse impacts associated with dust, emissions to air, lighting, and vibration, ae avoided or adequately mitigated. In addition, Policy ENV16 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan seeks to ensure that proposals for new development are designed to minimize their impact on the amenity and quiet enjoyment of nearby existing and future residents as a result of noise, pollution, vibration odours or other detrimental emissions including light pollution from artificial light.

14.176 In addition, paragraphs 198, 201 and 224 of the NPPF, seek to ensure that new development, including mineral development, does not give rise to any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any vibration impacts on nearby sensitive properties.

14.177 The Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP, refer to the need to identify potential impacts on residential amenity, which they state need to be assessed and mitigation identified where appropriate.

14.178 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for Minerals provides detailed guidance for how to assess minerals application in regard to impacts on amenity and nearby properties, including appropriate noise levels.

Noise

14.179 The PPG on Minerals advises that planning authorities should aim to establish a noise limit, through a planning condition, at the noise-sensitive property that does not exceed the background noise level (LA90,1h) by more than 10dB(A) during normal working hours (0700-1900). However, it further states that where it will be difficult not to exceed the background level by more than 10dB(A) without imposing unreasonable burdens on the mineral operator, the limit set should be as near that level as practicable. In any event, the total noise from the operations should not exceed 55dB(A) LAeq, 1h (free field).

14.180 The PPG sets different noise limits for temporary operations (defined as up to 8 weeks), such as soil-stripping, and the construction and removal of bunds. It allows for increased temporary daytime noise limits of up to 70dB(A) LAeq 1h (free field) for periods of up to 8 weeks in a year at specified noise-sensitive properties.

14.181 The Environmental Statement submitted with the application includes a chapter that addresses the potential noise and vibration effects of the proposed north-east extension including site preparation, operation, and restoration phases.

14.182 Noise levels are predicted for soil stripping and bund formation works, and also for a number of operational scenarios during extraction and restoration, and identifies the potential for noise impacts on the two properties in the centre of the extension site at Cuckoo Mead and Lower Dairy, and the need for noise mitigation in the form of acoustic bunds around the properties that would be constructed to a height of at least 3m.

14.183 With this built in mitigation the assessment identifies that the predicted noise levels from soil stripping and bund formation will fall below the maximum recommended noise level of 70 dB LAeq,1h for such activities, resulting in a negligible significance of effect, whilst the extraction and restoration, noise levels are predicted to fall below the maximum recommended noise level of 55 dB LAeq,1h for such activities, also resulting in a negligible significance of effect, with a noise management plan to be put in place and mitigation also provided by bunds on the boundaries.

14.184 An addendum to the noise and vibration assessment has additionally been submitted as part of the Regulation 25 Further Information, to provide consideration of the cumulative impacts of the development of the site gather with the development of the adjacent proposed development at Hurst Farm and Station Road. This identifies the need for additional noise mitigation at Cuckoo Mead/Lower Dairy, i.e. the properties in the centre of the site. To achieve an acceptable noise level the height of the proposed bunds to the east of the two properties needs to increased to 4m from 3m). With this amendment

the combined impact of the proposed extension to Woodsford Quarry and the proposed quarry at Hurst Farm and Station Road would result in a potential noise impact no greater than 10dB above the background

14.185 As set out above the Environmental Health team have not offered any objection to the development on noise grounds subject to the inclusion of conditions setting out the permitted noise limits, the implementation of the noise management plan and the undertaking of the noise monitoring in the event of a valid complaint about noise.

Dust and Air Quality

14.186 The potential to cause dust is generally a concern with proposals for sand and gravel extraction.

14.187 The PPG on Minerals advises that where dust emissions are likely to arise, mineral operators are expected to prepare a dust assessment study, which should be undertaken by a competent person/organisation with acknowledged experience of undertaking this type of work, and set out details of a key stages for undertaking a dust study. In relation to air quality the key concerns in relation to minerals sites, as set out in the PPG on air quality relate to emissions from processing but also emissions from vehicles and plant including particulates and greenhouse gases.

14.188 The Environmental Statement includes a chapter that addresses the impacts on air quality and is supported by a Draft Dust Management and Mitigation Scheme. The assessment considers the potential impacts and their effect on air quality resulting from the operations associated with the north eastern extension and specifically any potential significant air quality and dust effects that the extraction, restoration and associated activities would have on the baseline environment together with a review of the air quality and dust mitigation measures required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effect.

14.189 The assessment considers the amenity and health of local receptors due to changes in the level and location of dust generation. Impacts (and effects) at both human and ecological receptors are considered, including the closest residential receptors to the proposed quarry including Lower Dairy Farmhouse and Cuckoo Mead and the ‘Sculpture by the Lakes’.

14.190 The assessment relates to ‘suspended particulate matter’ with diameters below 10µm (PM10 and PM2.5), and ‘deposited dust’ which is responsible for disamenity impacts (which may lead to complaints) generally with diameters between 10µm and 75µm.

14.191 The potential for emissions resulting from any increase in vehicle movements on the local road network to have a significant effect on air quality is also considered in the assessment. The potential for in-combination air quality and dust effects has also been considered.

14.192 The assessment concludes that there is a low likelihood of an exceedance of the PM10 and PM2.5 air quality limits given the low background concentrations and the coarse and damp nature of the sand and gravel being worked. This also means that the risk of silicosis is negligible both for site workers and also

receptors in the area. It also concludes that the dust assessment indicates that the likely effects would be 'not significant' at all receptor locations.

14.193 It advises that the applicant, Woodsford Farms, has proposed that a condition be applied and enforced which does not allow Phase 9a to be worked whilst the closest properties at Woodsford Lower Dairy are occupied by residents potentially sensitive to dust and amenity impacts.

14.194 It concludes that the assessment of vehicular emissions has not identified any adverse impacts associated with the proposed development on the basis that there would not be additional heavy vehicle movements above the relevant screening threshold when compared with the existing quarry traffic.

14.195 Finally, it advises that the implementation of good standard practice mitigation measures would be continued into the new quarry extension and overall, taking into account the proposed dust control measures, that the likelihood of any adverse effects on surrounding receptors is considered to be 'Not Significant'.

14.196 An addendum to the air quality assessment has additionally been submitted as part of the Regulation 25 Further Information, to update to the air quality assessment in order to fully consider the potential in-combination effects with the Hurst Farm and Station Road development, including the in-combination assessment of dust impacts and resulting effects on human health, disamenity and ecological receptors; and further in-combination assessment of off-site traffic emissions. It concludes that the findings remain unchanged from those in the Environmental Statement chapter and that they are also consistent with the air quality and dust assessments for the Hurst Farm and Station Road planning application.

14.197 The Environmental Health team have not offered any objection to the development on air quality grounds.

Lighting

14.198 The main concerns in relation to lighting relate to the amenity impacts and also to the impacts on protected species, and especially bats.

14.199 In addition to Policy DM2 of the MS, Policy ENV16 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan seeks to minimize potential pollution from glare or spillage of light.

14.200 Paragraph 198 of the NPPF similarly states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

14.201 In this instance, the application states that no lighting assessment has been submitted for the north-eastern extension area as there will be no fixed lighting, and only occasional mobile lighting for safety when operating.

14.202 The applications do not make reference to the continuing impact of the extension of the end dates of the two permissions for the existing Woodsford

Quarry, being sought through Planning Application Refs. P/VOC/2023/04760 and P/VOC/2023/04761.

Conclusions in Relation to Amenity Impacts

14.203 For the reasons set out above there are no reasons to consider that the proposed north eastern extension to Woodsford Quarry or either of the two s.73 applications would be unacceptable. There is therefore no reason to consider that the proposal is not compliant with MSP Policy DM2 and the Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP, West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Policy ENV16, or paragraphs 198 and 201 and 224 of the NPPF.

Impacts on Protected Species, Habitats and Biodiversity including Trees

14.204 The impacts on protected species, habitats and biodiversity, is a significant issue with Natural England raising concerns related to those expressed by the Environment Agency about the potential impact of the development impact on the water environment and in particular the potential impact on the River Frome Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Hurst Heath Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). As a result, the application raises significant issues in relation to the impact on protected species of the River Frome as a Principal Salmon River, and the population of heath lobelia within the SNCI, as detailed above.

14.205 Relevant planning policy includes Policy DM5 of the MS which seeks to ensure that proposals for minerals development must be accompanied by an objective assessment of the potential effects of the development on features of biodiversity and taking into account cumulative impacts with other development and the potential impacts of climate change. In addition they must have particular regard to the need to protect, maintain and/or enhance sites and species of international and national importance, in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and consider the potential for existing habitats on the site to be restored to higher quality habitats, during and after mineral working.

14.206 Policy MS-1 of the MSP and the Development Guidelines for the site require full assessment of all ecological impacts to be undertaken, particularly in relation to those on the River Frome SSSI which is in close proximity, with appropriate mitigation identified and implemented.

14.207 Policy ENV2 of West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan seeks to ensure that new development does not adversely impact on protected species and supports proposals that conserve or enhance biodiversity and states that the development of major sites should take opportunities to help connect and improve the wider ecological networks. It also states that; internationally designated wildlife sites will be safeguarded from development that could adversely affect them, unless there are reasons of overriding public interest why the development should proceed and there is no alternative acceptable solution; that development that is likely to have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Poole Harbour and Dorset Heaths International designations will only be permitted where there is provision to avoid, or secure effective mitigation; that development that is likely to have an adverse effect upon

nationally designated wildlife sites will not be permitted unless the benefits, in terms of other objectives, clearly outweigh the impacts on the special features of the site and broader nature conservation interests and there is no alternative acceptable solution; that in other locations, including locally identified wildlife sites and water-bodies, where significant harm to nature conservation interests cannot be avoided, it should be mitigated and that where it cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, compensation will result in the maintenance or enhancement of biodiversity; that features of nature conservation interest should be safeguarded by development; and that proposals that would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodlands and veteran trees, will be refused unless the need for and public benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss.

14.208 Policy ENV3 also seeks to ensure that development does not cause harm to the green infrastructure network or undermine the reasons for an area's inclusion within the network and it states that development proposals that promote geodiversity and biodiversity within this network of spaces will be supported.

14.209 In addition, Policy MS-1 of the MSP makes clear that any proposals for the development of the allocated sites in the plan must demonstrate that possible effects (including those related to hydrology, displacement of recreation, species, proximity, land management and restoration) that might arise would not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and if necessary implementation of mitigation measures as identified through Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening.

14.210 In addition, paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF, seek to ensure that new development, including mineral development contributes to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting sites of biodiversity and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.

14.211 They additionally state that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

14.212 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) has been submitted as part of the Environmental Statement. This identifies that there are a number of species that are present or likely to be present on and around the application site and includes an assessment of the impacts on protected/notable sites, habitats and species, and predicted impacts are addressed through proposals for mitigation/compensation as well as enhancement.

14.213 It also includes information to support a Habitats Regulations Assessment of relevant European sites, required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

14.214 The species surveys undertaken between 2021 and 2023 included surveys of botany, hedgerows, bats, great crested newts, dormice and breeding and overwintering birds. It identifies that there are other species/communities that are either not present within the study area and/or are not impacted by the proposals.

14.215 The assessment concludes that the north eastern extension would have no likely significant effect on European designated sites and is intended to allow the Local Planning Authority to undertake a 'Test of Likely Significance' as part of an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations 2017.

14.216 The assessment further concludes that appropriate mitigation has been established to protect the River Frome SSSI, the nearby SNCI, other notable habitats (most species-rich hedgerow and ditch corridors), protected/notable wildlife (otter, dormice, badger, brown hare, hedgehog and nesting birds). The mitigation it states, addresses and nullifies any potential significant adverse effects.

14.217 It identifies that within the application area there are no significant semi-natural habitats (just 4.39ha modified grassland field headlands and 0.051ha other neutral grassland around Pond 1) and that there is c. 9.1km of hedgerow and trees, of which 7.5km is species-rich.

14.218 It states that the restoration scheme will provide a total of ca. 54.93ha of high quality semi-natural habitats (species-rich grassland, fen, hedgerow, woodland scrub, wildlife and angling lakes) with 1.16km of species-rich hedgerow being provided through new planting.

14.219 These habitats and associated wildlife, the assessment states, will be managed and monitored in the long-term. It states that the quarry restoration will provide significant biodiversity gain, which adequately covers the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, which came into effect in early 2024.

14.220 The assessment concludes that the proposed development and restoration will not alter the functioning of the retained habitats on-site and will significantly increase the overall habitat and structural diversity found within the application site, which will contribute to UK and local biodiversity targets, and will benefit a range of wildlife.

14.221 The assessment concludes that the residual ecological effect of the north eastern extension is considered to be positive in a District–County context in the medium to long-term as habitats develop and mature and that it will not contribute to or compound, and may provide an opportunity to off-set, any existing or future adverse ecological impacts that may be manifest within the local landscape.

14.222 An addendum to the EcIA was submitted in response to the Regulation 25 request for Further Information. This presented the results of bat and dormouse surveys that were undertaken to update the ecological baseline and it provides a revised cumulative impact assessment to take account of the in combination effects of working in proximity to extraction at the adjacent Hurst Farm site. In relation the latter, it concludes that the only working areas on the quarry boundaries that would potentially coincide are Phase 1a at Woodsford Quarry Extension and Phase 1b at Hurst Farm Quarry, which combined have an approximate working area of 3.5ha. It identifies that the mineral processing plant and stockyard to be implemented at Stage 1 of Hurst Farm Quarry is also adjacent to the boundary with Woodsford Quarry Extension and covers an approximate area of 7.2ha. As such, the assessment identifies that there will be an in-combination effect when the working area in Phase 4 of the Woodsford Quarry north eastern extension (which is approximately 6.6 ha) is operational because it is on the boundary with Hurst Farm Quarry. It also identifies that the proposed Hurst Farm Quarry's mineral processing plant and stockyard would be a permanent feature during the entire operational period of the quarry.

14.223 Despite this it concludes that the proposed Hurst Farm Quarry would not however, remove any important connecting habitat to the Woodsford north eastern extension that would support or facilitate the movement of notable wildlife into, or out of the application site.

14.224 The assessment identifies that both proposals have a phasing plan that staggers the habitat loss from the farmland and retains key habitats and linkages. It states that they would minimise agricultural habitat loss within their site at any one time and control abiotic factors, including hydrogeology and hydrology effects on the River Frome, dust management, sensitive lighting and noise/ vibration management to protect retained habitats from being impacted or damaged.

14.225 The assessment concludes that concurrent operation and restoration of the two quarries could maintain and enhance biodiversity and that concurrent operation of the two quarries would not contribute to or compound any existing or future adverse ecological impacts that may occur in the local landscape.

14.226 Natural England in their response to the consultation on the three applications, which was returned following receipt of the consultation responses from the Environment Agency, has advised that they share the concerns expressed by Environment Agency about the potential effects on the River Frome SSSI. They state that the River Frome SSSI is of national importance and as a chalk stream it is part of a wider international resource of which England hosts a significant proportion worldwide.

14.227 As set out above they have also expressed concern about potential adverse effects of de-watering proposed as part of the development of the north eastern extension both from Woodsford north-eastern extension application on the SNCI, which is adjacent to the eastern boundary of the application site, and in

particular its population of nationally rare heath lobelia (Lobelia urens), an issue also raised by the Environment Agency.

14.228 Natural England notes that whilst the Hurst Farm application includes plans to manage Hurst Heath for heath lobelia and secure the expansion of its population as well as to benefit other ecological interests the evidence from the Woodsford north eastern extension application provides little certainty that the groundwater levels fundamental to the species survival will not be compromised at the existing population (c.120m away from the application boundary) but also at the locations where expansion is planned. Thus it would not only affect the existing small heath lobelia site but also other sites over a wider area.

14.229 As set out above the Natural Environment Team have also drawn attention to the comments from the Environment Agency and Natural England in relation to the impacts on the River Frome SSSI and Hurst Heath SNCI, and identify that heath lobelia occurs at only seven sites confined to southern England, and the importance ensuring that the impact on it of the Woodsford north eastern extension are properly assessed and that appropriate mitigation is identified and implemented.

14.230 Thay have also commented on the impacts on protected species including Hazel Dormice as set out above and the details for inclusion of the finalised Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), and as set out above have expressed concern that the inclusion of fishing lakes as part of the restoration plan that also includes wildlife waterbodies is not complementary and presents a biosecurity risk to the ecological integrity of the proposed wildlife lakes.

14.231 The substantive issue, as such clearly remains, as the Environment Agency and Natural England have set out in their consultation responses that the north eastern extension application has failed to demonstrate that it would not have an adverse impact the proposed development on the water environment and in particular the River Frome Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Hurst Heath Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), and in turn that it would not have an unacceptable impact on protected species of the River Frome as a Principal Salmon River, and the population of heath lobelia within the SNCI. The Environment Agency has made clear, despite the additional submissions by the applicant, that this issue has not been adequately assessed or addressed and as such they have maintained their objection to the application. Natural England and the Council's Natural Environment Team have made clear that they share the Environment Agency's concerns.

14.232 As such the proposal has to be considered to be contrary to Policies SS1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development), DM1 (Key Criteria for Sustainable Minerals Development), Policy DM3 (Managing the Impact on Surface Water and Ground Water Resources) and DM5 (Biodiversity and Geological Interest) of the MS) and Policy ENV2 and Policy ENV3 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan. It also contrary to the MSP, Policy

MS-1 and specifically Part C i insofar as it does not adequately address the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4 set out in Appendix A, and Part C ii in that the information submitted as part of the Environmental Statement does not demonstrate that any adverse impacts associated with the development and operation have been satisfactorily mitigated. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) paragraphs 187 and 193.

14.233 It should additionally be noted, as is set out in Section 13 above, that because the proposals have not yet been demonstrated to be acceptable in relation to the impacts on the water environment and protected species, habitats and biodiversity, it is not yet possible to complete the Appropriate Assessment of the proposals and conclude that the development would not have a likely significant effect on a European site in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

14.234 Paragraph 222 of the NPPF states that since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation. The proposal is located in an area of Dorset that has reserves of river terrace gravel and Poole formation sand, which are important minerals for the building industry. As house building is predicted to increase, looking ahead, the supply of suitable mineral becomes more and more important. The site is also an allocated site in the MSP.

14.235 The principle of sand and gravel extraction is therefore considered acceptable in this location. Paragraph 224 of the NPPF states that when determining planning applications, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the predicted expansion of house building looking ahead. The NPPF also states that mineral planning authorities should provide for the maintenance of landbanks of non-energy minerals from outside protected areas (e.g. National Landscapes), which this proposal complies with.

14.236 The NPPF also requires that proposals need to ensure that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment and human health, as well as taking into account the cumulative effect of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or from a number of sites in a locality.

14.237 Although the proposed north eastern extension to the existing Woodsford Quarry is proposed on the allocated Site AG4, in the MSP, any proposal still has to be acceptable in terms of its environmental impacts, and if this is not the case then an application can still be refused.

14.238 The north eastern extension site in this case, is a sensitive one insofar as it is located immediately adjacent to the River Frome Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and also in close proximity to the Hurst Heath Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The existing Woodsford Quarry site also lies within the setting of the Woodsford Castle, a Grade 1 listed building.

14.239 As result Policy MS-1 and the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4 set out in the MSP identify a number of key criteria that must be addressed for

proposals to be considered to be acceptable. These include the undertaken of a hydrological/hydrogeological assessment including assessment of potential impacts on fisheries in the River Frome, and any mitigation required, and full assessment of all ecological impacts on the River Frome SSSI with appropriate mitigation identified.

14.240 In this instance the Environment Agency has raised a significant objection to Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 which is the substantive application for the proposed north eastern extension to Woodsford Quarry on the basis that the application has failed to demonstrate that it would not have an adverse impact the proposed development on the water environment and in particular the River Frome Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and also on the Hurst Heath Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), and in turn that it would not have an unacceptable impact on protected species of the River Frome as a Principal Salmon River, and the population of heath lobelia within the SNCI. The Environment Agency has made clear despite the additional submissions by the applicant that this issue has not been adequately assessed or addressed and as such they have maintained their objection to the application. Natural England and the Council's Natural Environment Team have made clear that they share the Environment Agency's concerns.

14.241 As such the proposal has to be considered to be contrary to Policies SS1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), DM1 (Key Criteria for Sustainable Minerals Development), Policy DM3 (Managing the Impact on Surface Water and Ground Water Resources) and DM5 (Biodiversity and Geological Interest) of the MS and Policies INT1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), ENV2 (Wildlife And Habitats), ENV3 (Green Infrastructure Network) and ENV9 (Pollution And Contaminated Land) of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan. It is also contrary to the MSP, Policy MS-1 and specifically Part C i insofar as it does not adequately address the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4 set out in Appendix A, and Part C ii in that the information submitted as part of the Environmental Statement does not demonstrate that any adverse impacts associated with the development and operation have been satisfactorily mitigated. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) paragraphs 187 and 193.

14.242 As a result, the proposal does not comply with the Development Plan as a whole and there are no material considerations which indicate that planning permission should be granted.

14.243 In the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there is no reasoned justification for the approval of Planning Application Refs. P/VOC/2023/04760 & P/VOC/2023/04761 whose purpose is to facilitate its implementation.

<u>Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760</u>

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle, i.e. the principle of the development;

- Impacts on Heritage;
- Impact on Landscape including Restoration, Aftercare, and After-Use;
- Traffic and Highway Safety;
- Impacts on Amenity and the local community (Noise, Dust, Traffic, etc);
- Impacts on Ecology and the Environment;
- Planning Balance

Principle of the Development

14.244 As an established and working mineral working the principle of mineral extraction and processing is already established on the site. The substantive issue instead is concerned with whether the principle of the proposed extension of the end date of the permissions is acceptable and whether the associated changes in the phasing of the works are acceptable in terms of their environmental impacts.

14.245 There is no explicit development plan policy relating to the extension of the end date of mineral extraction and processing operations, only policies that relate to the completion of mineral working and restoration at the earliest opportunity; the MS, Policy RS1 – which is concerned with the Restoration, Aftercare and Afteruse of Minerals Development states makes clear in sub-paragraph (f) that restoration should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity and that proposals should set out what the proposed timescales for restoration will be; and similarly paragraph 224 of the NPPF states that restoration and aftercare should take place at the earliest opportunity and be carried out to high environmental standards.

14.246 There is therefore no policy presumption against proposals for extensions of the end date of mineral planning permissions, but to the extent that the policy requirement is for earliest opportunity and that proposals should set out what the proposed timescales for restoration will be, then it is implicit that if there is to be an extension of the end date for restoration that there must be a rationale or justification for allowing this. In this case, the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4 make clear that mineral from the north eastern extension should be processed at the existing plant site, with no intensification of production or simultaneous working of the current site and extension, and also that the mineral should be transported from the point of extraction to the processing site via internal routes within the quarry, which in this case means via the existing conveyor system. For the reasons set out in the application, as explained above these requirements, mean by definition that the existing site cannot be restored until the proposed north eastern extension has been worked, and it is therefore implicit that in complying with the Development Guidelines that the amendments to the existing permission will be required, in the event that the Committee determines that Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 for the proposed north eastern extension should be approved.

14.247 Accordingly, the proposed variations of the Condition Nos. 3, 4 and 15 of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742 to revise the approved phasing of working, extend the duration of the development and allow importation of mineral and processing of mineral from extension site), should, in principle be considered to be acceptable and approved. Conversely if the Committee is

minded to refuse Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, and that is the officer's recommendation, then there cannot be considered to be any justification to approve Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760 for the proposed variations of the Condition Nos. 3, 4 and 15 of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742.

Impacts on Heritage

14.248 The substantive discussion in relation to the impacts on heritage arising from the development, is as set out above in relation to Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753. The specific issue in relation to Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760 concerns the impacts on heritage as a result the extension of the proposed end date of the permission and whether the consequential impact of the setting of Woodsford Castle can be considered to be acceptable.

14.249 As set out above, Historic England in their consultation response to the application has advised that the proposed 17-year extension of time to the existing quarry operations, by Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760 would mean a continued harmful impact on the setting of Woodsford Castle, as a Grade 1 listed building and also that there would be a cumulative impact arising from the concurrent operation of the existing quarry, and the proposed north eastern extension

14.250 They consider that the degree of harm to the significance of Woodsford Castle will be "less than substantial", and that being the case, as Paragraph 213 (previously paragraph 206) of the NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification. In turn paragraph 215 states that where development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This requirement is restated in Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan

14.251 The basic issue in this case is that if Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, is refused, then there are no benefits to weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, and consequently there is no basis upon which it can be recommended that the application can be approved, and accordingly it is recommended that the application be refused.

14.252 On this basis the application can, when considered in the context of the development plan as a whole, cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy DM7 of the MS, Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

Impact on Landscape including Restoration, Aftercare, and After-Use;

14.253 The issues, including detail of the relevant policy in relation to the impacts on landscape are set out in the discussion on Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/0475. As set out above the Landscape Officer, does not object to Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760 as along as the phased restoration of the existing site is completed as soon as possible in each phase.

14.254 On this basis the advice is that the proposal can it be considered to be in accordance with the relevant Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension in the MSP, Policy DM4 of the MS, Policy ENV1 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, and paragraphs 187 and 224 of the NPPF.

Traffic and Highway Safety

14.255 The issues, including detail of the relevant policy in relation to the impacts on traffic and highway safety are set out in the discussion on Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/0475.

14.256 The advice is that the application complies with MSP Policy DM8 and West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Policy COM7, that in accordance with paragraph 116 of the NPPF, there are no highway grounds for refusal of the application, and that the proposal is otherwise compliant with the Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP.

Amenity (Noise, Vibration, Air Quality, Dust, and Lighting)

14.257 The issues, including detail of the relevant policy in relation to Amenity (Noise, Vibration, Air Quality, Dust, and Lighting) are set out in the discussion on Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/0475.

14.258 The advice is that there are no reasons to consider that the proposed north eastern extension to Woodsford quarry or either of the two s.73 applications would be unacceptable. The proposal is thus compliant with MSP Policy DM2 and the Development Guidelines for the site set out in the MSP, West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Policy ENV16 and paragraphs 198, 201 and 224 of the NPPF.

Impacts on Ecology and the Environment

14.259 The issues, including detail of the relevant policy in relation to the impacts on Ecology and the Environment are set out in the discussion on Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/0475.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

14.260 As the recommendation is to refuse Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 because of the impacts in the water environment as set out above, then there cannot be considered to be any need or justification to approve Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760 for the proposed variations of the Condition Nos. 3, 4 and 15 of Planning Permission Ref. 1/E/2005/0742.

14.261 Further, in terms of the impacts on heritage, and particularly Woodsford Castle, there cannot be considered to be any benefits to weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, and consequently there is no basis upon which it can be recommended that can be approved, and accordingly it is recommended that the application be refused.

Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04761

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle, i.e. the principle of the development;
- Impacts on Heritage;
- Impact on Landscape including Restoration, Aftercare, and After-Use;
- Traffic and Highway Safety;
- Impacts on Amenity and the local community (Noise, Dust, Traffic, etc);
- Impacts on Ecology and the Environment;
- Planning Balance

14.262 The key issues and conclusions in relation to each of these headings are the same as set out above in relation to Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04760.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

14.263 As the recommendation is to refuse Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753 because of the impacts in the water environment as set out above, then there cannot be considered to be any need or justification to approve Planning Application Ref. P/VOC/2023/04761 for the proposed variations of the Condition Nos. 3, 5, 7 and 9 of Planning Permission Ref. WD/D/18/002648.

14.264 Further, in terms of the impacts on heritage, and particularly Woodsford Castle, there cannot be considered to be any benefits to weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, and consequently there is no basis upon which it can be recommended that can be approved, and accordingly it is recommended that the application be refused.

15 Recommendation

REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the following reasons**:**

Application Number: P/FUL/2023/04753

1. The Application has failed to demonstrate that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the water environment and in particular the River Frome Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Hurst Heath Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), and in turn that it would not have unacceptable impact on protected species of the River Frome as a Principal Salmon River, and the population of heath lobelia within the SNCI. Therefore the proposal is contrary to Policies SS1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development), DM1 (Key Criteria for Sustainable Minerals Development), Policies INT1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), ENV2 (Wildlife and Habitats) and Policy ENV3 (Green Infrastructure Network) and ENV 9 (Pollution and Contaminated Land)

of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015), Policies DM3 (Managing the Impact on Surface Water and Ground Water Resources) and DM5 (Biodiversity and Geological Interest) of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014). It is also contrary to the MSP, Policy MS-1 and specifically Part C i insofar as it does not adequately address the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4 set out in Appendix A, and Part C ii in that the information submitted as part of the Environmental Statement does not demonstrate that any adverse impacts associated with the development and operation have been satisfactorily mitigated. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) paragraphs 187 and 193.

2. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, a Grade 1 Listed Building. In the absence of the approval of the application, there are no benefits to be weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF, and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015), and it cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the Development Guidelines for Allocation AG4: Woodsford Quarry Extension in the MSP, Policy DM7 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014), and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

Application Number: P/VOC/2023/04760

1. In the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there is no reasoned justification for the approval of the proposed revision of the approved phasing of working, extension of the duration of the development and importation of mineral and processing of mineral from proposed north-eastern extension, and the consequential delay in the restoration and aftercare of the site, contrary to Policy RS1 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014), Policy RS1 and paragraph 224 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), which seek to ensure restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity.

2. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, a Grade 1 Listed Building. In the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there are no benefits to be weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF, and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, and it cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy DM7 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014), and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

Application Number: P/VOC/2023/04761

1. In the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there is no reasoned justification for the approval of

the proposed extension of the duration of the development and associated scheme submission dates, contrary to Policy RS1 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014), Policy RS1 and paragraph 224 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), which seek to ensure restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity.

2. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodsford Castle, a Grade 1 Listed Building. In the absence of the approval of Planning Application Ref. P/FUL/2023/04753, there are no benefits to be weighed in the balancing exercise required by paragraph 215 of the NPPF, and Policy ENV4 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, and it cannot be considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy DM7 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014), and paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.