

J & D Skinner, 'White Mills Marina'

Pastures Farm

Grendon

Northampton

NN7 1JD

Planning Statement - for a Proposed Marina adjacent to the River Nene providing 141 Off Line Berths, associated Facilities Building, Car Parking, new Highways Access, associated Infrastructure and Landscaping with the ancillary extraction of minerals.

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SkinWM-DAS-Appendix A-Sequential Test Report Dec 2013

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement is submitted to accompany an application in full for the creation of a canal based marina adjacent to the River Nene including the creation of a marina basin providing 141 offline berths, facilities building, new highways access and associated infrastructure such as car parking, cycle storage, footpaths, access roads and landscaping. The development involves the ancillary extraction of minerals from the site to prevent their sterilisation.
- 1.2 The application site is agricultural land located to the north of the River Nene, almost equidistant between the village of Earls Barton and Grendon. This report is a supporting statement and provides information on the property, the applicants' farming business and the reasons why they are proposing development, policy considerations and framework, justification as to why planning permission should be granted and an assessment for the requirements of the development in the proposed location incorporating assessment of other potential sites via a separate sequential test.
- 1.3 The planning application is accompanied by a detailed Environmental Statement that has been prepared following the completion of an Environmental Impact Assessment.
- 1.4 Within this report the proposed location for the marina will be referred to as "the site".

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The site consists of a single agricultural field that is laid to permanent pasture. It is located immediately to the north of the River Nene, approximately 1.5km to the south of Earls Barton and approximately 2.5km to the north of Grendon.
- 2.2 The A45 Northampton to Wellingborough dual carriageway passes approximately 400 metres to the north of the site, the public highway (Station Road) passes immediately to the east of the site.
- 2.3 The River Nene located immediately to the south of the site travels in an east/west direction from Northampton in the west to Wellingborough in the east. The agricultural

land on which the marina and associated infrastructure will be constructed is permanent pasture. The land is not included within an environmental scheme.

- 2.4 The closest residential dwellings to the site are located to the east of Station Road just to the north of the site. There are a number of prefabricated dwellings forming part of a site that was previously used for the overwintering of a fairground operation.
- 2.5 Immediately to the north of the site is a large industrial compound which is occupied by a number of different commercial businesses.
- 2.6 Immediately to the east of the site on the opposite side of Station Road is a sports ground with a number of football pitches.
- 2.7 To the west of the site are further permanent pasture grass fields and to the east of the site is a large complex used for the processing of extracted minerals. The minerals have been extracted from active gravel and sand pits in the River Nene valley downstream of the site.
- 2.8 The applicant's farmyard is located approximately 800m to the south east and is accessed via Station Road.
- 2.9 The site forms part of the farming business operated by Messrs J & D Skinner (the applicants).
- 2.10 The farm extends to approximately 250 acres of land of which approximately 180 acres is arable, 40 acres grass and 35 acres grass/reed bed.
- 2.11 The land is all farmed in hand and the farm employs two full time workers and one part time worker during harvest.
- 2.12 35 acres of the farm is included within a Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme operated by Natural England. The scheme runs for ten years from November 2013 to October 2023. The reed bed is located approximately 600m to the south east of the site.
- 2.13 The site location can be found on drawing reference **SkinWM ES-Vol 3-001-Site Loc Plan** found in Volume 3 of the Environmental Statement.

3. The Proposal

3.1 The site area within the red line on drawing reference **SkinWM ES-Vol 3-6108-01E-Prop Site Plan** is 3.24 hectares. The marina basin totals 1.55 hectares.

3.2 The basin provides moorings for 141 boats. The breakdown of different uses between the moorings will be as follows:

- One residential berth for marina employee;
- 115 recreational berths;
- 25 hire boats.

3.3 The recreational berths are available for boat owners who wish to keep their boat permanently moored at a marina for recreational use.

3.4 The hire boat fleet will be operated by the owners of the marina and will provide holiday hire boats for cruising the river and canal networks.

3.5 A few hire boats will be available for hire by the hour, they are rechargeable electric boats that are unlikely to travel very far from the marina.

3.6 In addition to the marina basin and moorings there is a requirement for infrastructure associated with the operation of a successful marina. This includes the following:

- Facilities building including toilets, showers, laundry, marina office, store and plant rooms, small chandlery and cafe for users of the marina;
- Car parking;
- Access roads including highways access;
- Footpaths and walkways;
- Recycling store and cycle storage;
- A dedicated fuel, water and foul pump out (for onboard chemical toilets) located immediately adjacent to the marina basin for use by boaters;

- An allocated track/road will be marked around the north and east of the marina purely for the use by Environment Agency and emergency vehicles.

3.7 An entrance will be constructed from the marina basin onto the River Nene at the point identified on drawing reference **SkinWM ES-Vol 3-6108-01E-Prop Site Plan** in Volume 3 of the Environmental Statement (ES). The marina entrance will be designed to ensure that all boats including the maximum length narrow boats (21 metres) will be able to access the marina basin safely from the river without causing any navigational hazard.

3.8 The proposed layout of the development is detailed on drawing reference **SkinWM ES-Vol 3-6108-01E-Prop Site Plan** found in of Volume 3 of the ES.

3.9 The facilities building located to the north of the basin and immediately adjacent to the car park which accommodates 57 car parking spaces is built on two floors, the under storey which is within flood plain provides under storey car parking whilst the first floor which is located out of flood plain provides the following facilities:

- Male and female toilets and showers including disabled facilities for both;
- Elsan disposal point;
- Laundry;
- Office for the marina and boat hire business;
- Reception area incorporating chandlery;
- Small lounge area to be used as a cafe for boaters;
- Secure storage and plant room.

3.10 The facility building has an external gross floor area of 260m².

3.11 The building incorporates photovoltaic and thermal solar panels on the roof to provide renewable heat and electricity. The thermal solar panels on the building will not provide sufficient hot water during the winter months, a water source heat pump will also be installed to the facilities building which will ensure the building is self-sufficient in hot water. The coils for the water source heat pump will be laid within the marina basin.

- 3.12 A low impact lighting scheme which will include buildings/jetty/walkway illumination and low level bollard lighting to access/parking areas will provide a safe yet low glare lighting solution.
- 3.13 The building is finished in a combination of natural timber and stone with some brick detailing under a slate roof.
- 3.14 All surface water drainage will be SuDs systems incorporating oil/petrol interceptors as appropriate and using natural porous surface materials.
- 3.15 A secure storage area for cycles will also be provided, this will provide secure undercover storage for bikes and will be provided by the operator of the marina for all marina users as well as secure undercover storage for the marina user's own cycles.
- 3.16 A recycling compound will provide secure storage for the recycling bins, surface mounted fuel tank for refuelling the boats and gas and coal for sale to the marina users.
- 3.17 Foul water drainage will be processed via a "Condor" type unit or similar with the outfall draining into the existing diverted watercourse. The pump out unit serving the marina will have a separate 20,000 litre tank located underground adjacent to the facilities building.
- 3.18 The development also includes a number of ecological enhancements that are incorporated into the overall landscaping scheme. These issues are dealt with in more detail within the accompanying Environmental Statement.
- 3.19 The construction of the marina basin involves the excavation of a small amount of sand and gravel which has been identified via a site investigation survey.

4. Planning Policy Framework

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The proposed marina development involving the ancillary extraction of minerals should be considered in the context of its compliance with national and local planning policies.

4.1.2 The following policies and documents are relevant to this application.

4.2 **National Planning Policy**

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012
- Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework

4.3 **Regional Planning Policies**

- The Regional Spatial Strategies have been revoked and as such there are no regional planning policies that are relevant to this application.

4.4 **Local Policies**

- North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (Adopted June 2008)
 - Policy 1 – Strengthening the Network of Settlements
 - Policy 5 – Green Infrastructure
 - Policy 9 – Distribution and Location of Development
 - Policy 11 – Distribution of Jobs
 - Policy 13 – General Sustainable Development Principles
 - Policy 14 – Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Construction
- Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework – Core Strategy, Development Plan Document Adopted May 2010
 - Policy CS4 – Spatial Strategy for Mineral Extraction
 - Policy CS11 – Safeguarding Waste Management and Minerals related Development from Alternative Uses
 - Policy CS12 – Development in the Vicinity of Minerals and Waste Development

- Policy CS13 – Restoration and After Use of Minerals and Waste Development
- Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework – Location for Minerals Development Plan Document (Adopted March 2011)
- Nene Valley Strategic Plan – Published October 2010.

4.5 **Evaluation of Development in the Context of Planning Policy**

4.5.1 The following matters are relevant to the determination of this application:

- Principle of Development
- Visual Impact and Landscaping
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Highway Matters
- Rights of Way Matters
- Flooding
- Ecology
- Archaeology
- Neighbouring Amenity

4.5.2 The Environmental Statement forming part of the planning application assesses these issues in detail.

4.5.3 The Planning Statement will consider the principle of development in the context of national and local planning policies.

4.5.4 The proposal is to construct a recreational development that provides offline mooring for river craft using the River Nene and involves the ancillary extraction of minerals.

- 4.5.5 We will first consider the proposed development in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 4.5.6 The NPPF does not contain specific policies relating to waste or minerals; this guidance is contained within the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework also published in March 2012.
- 4.5.7 The central core policy to the NPPF is a presumption in the favour of sustainable development. When determining a planning application a Local Planning Authority should approve development proposals that accord with the Development Plan or, where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, grant permission unless the development would have adverse impacts that significantly outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole or specific policies in the Framework indicate the development should be restricted.
- 4.5.8 There are 12 core planning principles providing the foundation to the NPPF, some of which are relevant to this application, in particular
- *Not simply be about scrutiny but instead be about creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
 - *Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;*
 - *Always seek to provide high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
 - *Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage or food production);*

- *Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all and deliver a sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.*

4.5.9 Section 3 provides strategic policy guidance with regard to rural development. It encourages Local Planning Authorities to develop planning policies that support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. This includes

- *Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- *Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses;*
- *Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.*

4.5.10 The proposed recreational development complies entirely with the principles within section 3 of the NPPF. The development is located on farmland adjacent to the River Nene.

4.5.11 The land is of low agricultural value, the field is prone to water logging in the winter months and is not therefore suitable for arable cropping. The land forms part of Pastures Farm which is a family farm run by the applicants, it is an arable farm with no livestock. The field on which the proposal is located is rented out on an annual basis to a neighbouring farmer for grazing of livestock. The proposed development however will be a valuable diversification enterprise for the applicants who will run the marina alongside their existing farming business; the marina business will help to support the farm and will

provide the applicants with a valuable non farming diversification opportunity that is entirely compliant with the strategic policies within the NPPF.

- 4.5.12 Furthermore the development is providing tourist and leisure facilities in a rural location close to existing infrastructure and transport links. Once the users of the marina have arrived either by public transport or motor vehicle travel to and from the marina will largely be via boats on the River Nene. Users of the marina will be able to access facilities in nearby Northampton and Wellingborough via the river. The users of the marina will therefore not be solely reliant upon the motor vehicle in order to access local facilities.
- 4.5.13 The applicants will also provide cycles for users of the marina. These cycles will be provided free of charge and will be available for daily hire by marina users. They will therefore be able to access local tourist facilities such as Castle Ashby and its retail park and other local services such as shops, pubs, restaurants, etc in nearby villages such as Earls Barton, Great Doddington, Grendon and Cogenhoe.
- 4.5.14 Visitors will also be able to either walk or cycle to the Grendon Lakes complex with its facilities for watersports, fishing and walking.
- 4.5.15 The proposed marina will provide a very valuable addition to existing recreational facilities that exist in the River Nene Valley between Wellingborough and Northampton.
- 4.5.16 Section 7 of the NPPF provides policy guidance with regard to the design of a proposed development.
- 4.5.17 It advocates that new development should be well designed and in particular should add to the overall quality of the area, optimising the potential of the site to accommodate an appropriate mix of uses whilst responding to the local character and history, is visually attractive and minimises the potential for crime and disorder.
- 4.5.18 Issues relating to the potential impact of the development on the landscape and heritage assets are dealt with in detail in the relevant chapters in the Environmental Statement.
- 4.5.19 The marina is classified as water compatible development within the flood plain.

- 4.5.20 The marina itself has been carefully designed to ensure that it provides a safe mooring facility attached to the River Nene for 141 boats. The marina caters for both steel narrow boats and fibreglass cruisers; the walkways and jetties are floating and therefore rise and fall with the water level in the river. This ensures that the marina is able to open 365 days of the year whilst still providing safe moorings for its customers. The marina is located within flood plain however its design ensures that there is no net loss in volumetric flood plain, therefore the development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere in the river valley.
- 4.5.21 The facilities building is designed so that the accommodation, i.e. toilets, showers, offices and recreational area are located on the first floor out of potential flood plain.
- 4.5.22 The remaining area of the field that is not required for the marina basin will be managed for the benefit of wildlife and ecology. The majority of the area will be allowed to remain waterlogged and a reed bed will be developed using similar management guidelines and criteria to those already adopted by the applicants on a nearby field that is within a Higher Level Conservation Scheme operated by Natural England. A copy of the management agreement relating to this reed bed can be found in Vol 4 of the ES (**SkinWM ES-Vol 4. Pastures Farm. Reedbed HLS Agreement . 2013-2023**)
- 4.5.23 The marina has been designed to be complementary to the surrounding landscape, it is a water based development located immediately adjacent to the river and once the reed bed is established very little of the marina will be visible from the public highway and those views over the marina from higher ground will reveal a development that is entirely in keeping with the river and its associated uses.
- 4.5.24 Section 8 of the NPPF advises how the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy and inclusive communities.
- 4.5.25 The applicants have consulted the local Parish Council in Earls Barton to make them aware of the proposed development and also seek their views and thoughts with regard to its design to ensure that the local community are fully supportive of the development.

- 4.5.26 The applicants held an onsite meeting on 8 August with members of Earls Barton Parish Council. The general consensus of the Parish Council was that the development in principle was a good idea as it would provide a valuable facility for the local area and would encourage tourism which would be of benefit to local services such as shops, pubs and restaurants.
- 4.5.27 The recreational facility is a low impact use which does not conflict with other users within the area. Some concern was raised as to whether the increase in boat traffic would have a detrimental impact on fishing. However it was pointed out that the marina basin provides ideal habitat for fish to spawn and indeed the applicant's agents who have been involved in the development of many marinas were able to confirm that most marina basins contain a significant number of fish, particularly carp, bream, tench and roach who all breed within the marina basin.
- 4.5.28 Therefore although there may be some conflict between fishermen on the river and boaters this would not be a significant enough to warrant refusal of the development.
- 4.5.29 It is very important that the users of the marina feel safe and secure and onsite security will be an important feature.
- 4.5.30 As all of the walkways and jetties are floating they will be made secure through the installation of locked gates on the access walkway. This avoids the need for any other unsightly fencing around the marina itself.
- 4.5.31 There will be a locked gate on the ramp from the decking surrounding the facilities building down to the floating walkway. This single point of access will ensure that the remaining walkways and jetties and therefore boats are all secure as they will be surrounded by water/
- 4.5.32 Access for emergency services will be dealt with. The emergency services will be provided with a passcode that will enable them to access the boats in the event of an emergency.

- 4.5.33 Furthermore the marina will be manned 24 hours a day as there will be an onsite manager living on a boat moored immediately adjacent to the access.
- 4.5.34 The development complies with section 10 of the NPPF. The development incorporates renewable energy generation, the facilities building will be heated using a water source heat pump. The heat pump coils will be suspended below the floating walkways and jetties in the marina basin.
- 4.5.35 Furthermore the facilities building will include photovoltaic panels on the roof to provide renewable electricity.
- 4.5.36 The issue of flooding is dealt with in detail within the Flood Risk Assessment chapter in the accompanying Environmental Statement.
- 4.5.37 The Local Planning Authority must satisfy itself that the development complies with the Sequential and Exception Tests referred to in the NPPF and its accompanying technical guidance.
- 4.5.38 These tests are dealt with within the Flood Risk Assessment and the relevant chapter within the accompanying ES.
- 4.5.39 Section 11 is concerned with policies that relate to the natural and local environment and seeks to ensure that new developments contribute and enhance the natural and local environment.
- 4.5.40 The applicants have consulted widely with the Local Planning Authority and Natural England to ensure that the development takes fully into account the proximity of the Special Protection Area and the SSSI and have included a number of reports within the Environmental Statement that deal thoroughly with the potential impact of the development on ecology and biodiversity.
- 4.5.41 The applicants have also included an assessment of the impact of the development on the landscape and heritage assets.

- 4.5.42 The applicants are confident that the reports submitted within the ES confirm that the development fully complies with the policies and guidance contained within Section 11 of the NPPF.
- 4.5.43 The development will cause the loss of agricultural land. The land on which the development is located is designated Grade 4 land as identified within the Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales.
- 4.5.44 Grade 4 land is described as
- Land with severe limitations due to adverse soil, relief or climate or a combination of these. Adverse soil characteristics include unsuitable texture and structure, wetness, shallow depth, stoniness or low water holding capacity. The land is also likely to be prone to flooding and will be sown to grass rather than used for arable cropping.
- 4.5.45 The loss of approximately 3.4 Ha of grade 4 grass land that is prone to waterlogging is not deemed as a significant loss of productive agricultural land.
- 4.5.46 The site is located as within an area of identified mineral deposit. The mineral must be extracted prior to construction of the marina in order to prevent its sterilisation. The mineral extraction phase is likely to have the most significant, albeit temporary impact on the environment.
- 4.5.47 There is approximately 20,000 tonnes of minerals to be extracted from the site. The methodology for the extraction is straightforward. The topsoil and subsoil will be stripped and stockpiled for reuse. The minerals will be extracted using a 360° tracked excavator and the minerals loaded directly into 20 tonne lorries that will transport the unwashed mineral directly to a processing plant.
- 4.5.48 There are no permanent residential dwellings situated directly adjacent to the site and the unwashed material is likely to be taken directly to the Hanson Earls Barton processing site. The vehicles would not pass any residential dwellings other than those which are

situated immediately opposite the site entrance. The dwellings opposite the site entrance are located on a site previously used for the overwintering of a fairground operation.

- 4.5.49 The programme for extraction and construction is as detailed in section 3.3 of the ES. The extraction and construction phase will last for a maximum of 12-15 months, during this period appropriate measures will be undertaken in order to ensure that the works do not have an adverse impact on the residential dwellings on the opposite side of Station Road.
- 4.5.50 Although the marina will be lit at night the lighting will be low level down lighters located in the car park area and on the floating walkways and jetties.
- 4.5.51 It is proposed that a lighting scheme will be submitted and approved as a planning condition if planning permission is granted.
- 4.5.52 Section 12 of the NPPF is also relevant.
- 4.5.53 The applicants have prepared and submitted an assessment of the potential impact on archaeological and heritage assets. This assessment can be found in chapter 7 of the ES.

4.6 **North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy**

- 4.6.1 The North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy was adopted in June 2008 and is currently under review. The proposed development must be assessed in the context of the adopted core strategy.
- 4.6.2 For the purposes of this report the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy will be referred to as the CSS.
- 4.6.3 The CSS relates to an area covered by Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire Councils. Although the development lies within the district covered by the Borough Council of Wellingborough the application will be determined by

Northamptonshire County Council. The County Council determine planning applications that involve minerals or waste development. Although the application is for a recreational development and this would normally be determined by the Borough Council of Wellingborough, due to the fact that a small amount of mineral has to be extracted prior to construction of the marina, the application will be determined by the County Council.

- 4.6.4 The Borough Council of Wellingborough however will be a statutory consultee and the development should be assessed in the context of planning policies that relate to the area covered by the Borough Council of Wellingborough. These policies are enshrined in the CSS.
- 4.6.5 Those policies that relate to the minerals element of the development are contained within the Development Plan Documents produced by the County Council namely the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and the Minerals and Waste Development Framework Locations for Minerals Development. The development will also be assessed against these policies.
- 4.6.6 Section 4.4 above sets out those policies in the CSS that are relevant.
- 4.6.7 The CSS identifies that North Northamptonshire is bounded on the north by the River Welland and on the south by the River Nene, the Nene changes character as it moves from the urbanised west with a concentration of sand and gravel extraction to a more tranquil area in the north. A significant section of the river passes through the newly designated Nene Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site which have been designated due to their importance for migratory birds. These designations sterilise a significant part of the River Nene for further recreational development.
- 4.6.8 Objective 2 of the CSS relating to the environment is relevant to the proposed development. The objective sets out the intention to ensure that the built and natural resources of North Northamptonshire are enhanced and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner when seen in the context of major growth and challenges relating to climate change. The objective is to bring about a stepped change in biodiversity management and a net gain in green infrastructure; retaining and enhancing landscape

and townscape character and distinctiveness, through the opportunities afforded by development and investment.

- 4.6.9 A river based recreational development such as the marina is a good example of a development that is sympathetic to the landscape and environment, creates facilities that local people can use without the need to travel significant distances in the car and can also access via public transport if they so wish. At the same time the development enhances the local biodiversity and opportunities for wildlife and encourages an interaction between the human population and the living countryside.
- 4.6.10 Objective 8 is also relevant, this sets out the objectives to strengthen the quality of life throughout North Northamptonshire by supporting initiatives that build stable, safe, healthy and strong communities, respecting cultural diversity and distinctiveness and planning new development to help reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime whilst promoting wellbeing and health and ensuring the development is of local character and supporting area based renewal.
- 4.6.11 A marina which delivers safe secure moorings which are easily accessible by both road and river for local people to make use of and enjoy achieves many of the targets set out within this overall objective. Furthermore it allows a local farming family to diversify their farming business to provide more opportunities for employment for the family and others.
- 4.6.12 The CSS identifies that East Northamptonshire is a focus for rural recreation and tourism. Whilst the applicants do not disagree that East Northamptonshire being more rural in nature provides good opportunities for rural based recreation and tourism they also feel that it is important to develop facilities for rural based recreation in the southern part of the district particularly where sites are located close to large urban conurbations.
- 4.6.13 One of the advantages of the White Mills Marina site is that it is located very close to both Northampton and Wellingborough. Both of these towns are easily accessible via the existing road network, there is also an extensive network of public footpaths and whilst the site is not located immediately adjacent to a designated cycle network it is only a

short distance from the site on the public highway via Cogenhoe to access the Nene Valley Way, Sustrans route at Crow Lane.

- 4.6.14 This provides a safe traffic free cycle way into Northampton and beyond.
- 4.6.15 The need to improve green infrastructure and transport links within the Nene Valley has also been identified in the River Nene Regional Park – Nene Valley Strategic Plan October 2010. We consider the targets and objectives identified within this strategy later in the report.
- 4.6.16 It is also important to assess the potential development in the context of policies within the CSS that are relevant.
- 4.6.17 **Policy 1 – Strengthening the Network of Settlements**
- 4.6.18 The policy identifies that growth will be principally directed towards the urban core and focussed on three growth towns of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough. Smaller towns at Burton Latimer, Desborough, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Rothwell and Rushden will provide secondary focal points for development within the urban core.
- 4.6.19 The emphasis is on regenerating the town centres, this regeneration should incorporate not only new housing and commercial space but also include cultural activity and tourism facilities.
- 4.6.20 Development in the rural north east will be directed towards Oundle, Raunds and Thrapston whilst within the remaining rural area development will take place on sites within village boundaries.
- 4.6.21 Therefore the proposed site for the marina located adjacent to Station Road between the villages of Grendon and Earls Barton would appear contrary to this policy.
- 4.6.22 However although the CSS does not have policies that are specific to marina development in the region there is an established recognition that creating new marina facilities within the Nene Valley is a sensible objective if the region is to provide a comprehensive level of facilities that will service all levels of recreational demand.

- 4.6.23 The Nene Valley Strategic Plan (NVSP) referred to above was published following an extensive consultation process to which Northamptonshire County Council contributed. The plan provides an overarching leisure and environmental framework to help develop the Nene Valley's existing assets through conservation, enhancement and as an integral part of new development.
- 4.6.24 Although the plan is not a statutory document, the strategy set out within the plan takes account of the statutory policy guidance within the CSS and other agendas enshrined within other policy documents concerned with climate change, sustainable development and the waterways.
- 4.6.25 We will comment further on the strategy for waterways development identified within the plan later in this report.
- 4.6.26 In order to consider therefore whether the proposed development should be allowed as it appears contrary to Policy 1 we need to consider whether it would be possible to deliver the identified marina developments that are required in compliance with this policy.
- 4.6.27 Referring to Appendix E within the Nene Valley Strategic Plan we can see that the River Nene passes through Northampton and proceeds in a north easterly direction towards Peterborough. It passes close to Wellingborough on its south eastern boundary and close to both Thrapston and Oundle however it does not pass directly through either town.
- 4.6.28 Therefore we need to consider whether it is practically possible to create a marina facility connected to the river that could comply with Policy 1.
- 4.6.29 If the development were to comply fully with the policy the marina would need to be located within the towns or villages identified within the policy and not located within open countryside.
- 4.6.30 The Sequential Test found in Appendix A of the Design and Access Statement (**SkinWM-DAS-Appendix A-Sequential Test Report Dec 2013**) identifies a number of potential sites

within the Nene Valley and assesses those in the context of the criteria that must be satisfied if a marina is to be successfully developed.

4.6.31 The conclusion reached in the Sequential Test is that there are very few potential sites for new marinas or indeed the expansion of existing facilities.

4.6.32 Only two of these sites at Oundle Marina and Billing Aquadrome could potentially meet the criteria in Policy 1 in that they are situated in a semi urban location.

4.6.33 Therefore if the district is to develop offline marinas in order to provide the 1,000 berths that were identified by the River Nene Regional Park then these developments will have to be allowed in rural locations.

4.6.34 Therefore there is a strong argument to set aside Policy 1 when assessing this development.

4.6.35 **Policy 5 – Green Infrastructure**

4.6.36 The policy dictates that a net gain in green infrastructure will be sought through the protection and enhancement of assets and the creation of new multi-functional areas of green space that promote recreation and tourism, public access, green education, biodiversity, water management, the protection and enhancement of the local landscape and historic assets and mitigation of climate change along with green economic uses and sustainable land management.

4.6.37 Any proposals affecting the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area will need to satisfy the tests of the Habitats Regulations in order to determine site specific impacts of development and to be able to identify and avoid or mitigate against impact where identified. Access and recreation in this area will be managed in accordance with advice from Natural England.

4.6.38 The strategy identifies sub regional green infrastructure corridors. These broadly follow the principal river valleys or their tributaries and are priority areas for investment and a focus for further enhancements.

- 4.6.39 The Green Infrastructure policy identifies that the River Nene Regional Park will be a key mechanism for delivering green infrastructure by bringing together public and private stakeholders and investors in order to deliver the green infrastructure required.
- 4.6.40 The Nene Valley is identified as the principal sub regional corridor within the region and it is within this identified sub regional corridor that the proposed development is located.
- 4.6.41 The policy confirms that the sub regional green infrastructure corridors will be safeguarded through
- a) Not permitting development that compromises their integrity and therefore that of the overall green infrastructure framework;
 - b) Using development contributions to facilitate improvements to their quality and robustness;
 - c) Investing in enhancement and restoration where the opportunities exist and the creation of new resources where necessary.
- 4.6.42 Developments will contribute towards the establishment, enhancement or ongoing management of a series of local corridors linking with the sub regional corridors and priorities for investment will be those areas where net gains in the range of functions can be improved, particularly those that improve access to the urban core and rural service centres and remedy local deficiencies in open space provision and quality.
- 4.6.43 Therefore if the proposed development is to comply with the green infrastructure policy it must make a valuable contribution to the Nene Valley sub regional corridor, it should promote at least some of the uses identified as being important to the green infrastructure without causing an adverse impact on the local landscape, historic assets and most importantly the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area.
- 4.6.44 The development should not compromise the integrity of the Nene Valley or indeed the overall Green Infrastructure framework.

- 4.6.45 If possible the development should deliver some net benefits that would otherwise be difficult to achieve if the development were not to occur, some of these improvements may not be directly related to the development itself and therefore constitute a development contribution.
- 4.6.46 The policy therefore is very heavily weighted in favour of protecting the natural environment and a significant amount of work therefore has been undertaken by the applicants in designing the proposed marina to ensure that it fully complies with this policy.
- 4.6.47 The Environmental Impact Assessment that has been undertaken prior to the preparation and submission of this planning application thoroughly assesses the impact of the development on
- Ecology and biodiversity (and in particular the potential impact on the SPA);
 - Historic assets and archaeology;
 - Local landscape and visual impact;
 - Water management;
 - Impact on local environment through traffic movements, etc;
 - Positive impact and enhancement of recreation and tourism facilities.
- 4.6.48 It is important to clarify whether the proposed development has an adverse impact on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area. Although the site is not located within the designated statutory site it is 48 metres from the SPA. Therefore a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) was undertaken and a copy of the Statement to Inform an Appropriate Assessment can be found in Appendix 6.2 of the Ecological Assessment within the Environmental Statement (Chapter 6). The report concludes that the creation of the marina at the proposed site will not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA. The conclusion was based on the results of a wintering bird survey, information contained in the Environmental Statements for two neighbouring projects and the

information contained in two of Northamptonshire's Minerals and Waste Development Framework documents about local projects.

- 4.6.49 In addition to the appropriate assessment which includes details of the overwintering bird surveys the applicants have also prepared and submitted a detailed ecological impact assessment which can be found in Chapter 6 of the Environmental Statement.
- 4.6.50 The development therefore will not have an adverse impact on the SPA and complies with this particular part of the policy.
- 4.6.51 As the proposed development is located within the Nene Valley Sub Regional Green Infrastructure Corridor it must also comply with the part of the policy that confirms that the development should not compromise the integrity of Nene Valley or the overall Green Infrastructure framework.
- 4.6.52 The proposed marina is water based recreational development whose sole purpose is to provide modern facilities for recreational users of the River Nene. Its function is to primarily provide high quality offline berths for a variety of different river craft including cruisers and narrow boats.
- 4.6.53 The facility has been designed to ensure that the moorings provided are safe, secure and provide boaters with all of the modern facilities that they now expect to find within a marina, these include not only a safe berth but also connection to water, electricity and wi-fi and facilities that allow for the pump out of foul water from the boats and refuelling.
- 4.6.54 A facilities building will provide boaters with toilets, showers, laundry facilities and an Elsan disposal point. It also provides a lounge area for socialising with basic facilities for the provision of hot and cold drinks and snacks.
- 4.6.55 These facilities are only to be provided for users of the marina.
- 4.6.56 Although it is likely that most of the users will travel to and from the marina in motor vehicles the use of cycles will be encouraged by the operators of the marina. Bikes will be available free of charge to all marina users who will be able to use them to access local facilities.

- 4.6.57 The site is also only a short walk away from the village of Earls Barton.
- 4.6.58 The policy refers to developer contributions. We have examined the Supplementary Planning Documents relating to development contributions and note that there is no statutory requirement for the developer of a marina to make any pre-determined developer contributions.
- 4.6.59 Furthermore the development of a marina whilst economically viable does not generate the level of enhanced value that other forms of commercial development and residential development generate.
- 4.6.60 The applicants are however proposing to allow the launching of canoes from a jetty within the marina basin. This will help to ensure that canoe and kayak users have access to another purpose built launching facility on this section of River.
- 4.6.61 **Policy 9 – Distribution and Location of Development**
- 4.6.62 It is preferable if new development is located within or immediately adjacent to existing settlements and policy 9 sets out the criteria that will be used to assess the potential location of new development.
- 4.6.63 Priority is given to the reuse of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas known as Brownfield sites. These Brownfield sites should be the focal point for new development rather than Greenfield sites.
- 4.6.64 The proposed marina would be located within a Greenfield site.
- 4.6.65 An assessment of the proposed development in the context of Policy 1 is detailed earlier in this report. We do not therefore intend to go into any further detailed assessment as to why the proposed development needs to be located within a Greenfield site.
- 4.6.66 Policy 9 is primarily concerned with residential development and whilst consideration should be given as to the compliance of the proposed development with the policy the fact that it does not fully comply should not be sufficient reason to refuse permission.
- 4.6.67 **Policy 11 – Distribution of Jobs**

- 4.6.68 Policy 11 is primarily concerned within the development of employment sites within the region and seeks to ensure that they are located in areas that have previously been identified for commercial employment development.
- 4.6.69 Sustainability and access to transport links are extremely important when considering where to locate employment sites.
- 4.6.70 The proposed marina is not primarily an employment site; its primary purpose is to provide a facility for tourism and recreation. However it will also create rural jobs. Whilst the marina will be operated by the applicants, it is also proposed to create at least one full time job and two part time jobs associated with running the business.
- 4.6.71 The full time employee will live onsite on a boat moored within the marina basin and their primary duty is to provide 24 hour security and also be on hand in the event of any emergencies. The full time employee will not therefore need to travel every day to the site which ensures vehicle movements are kept to a minimum.
- 4.6.72 The two part time jobs created will provide much needed rural employment, the applicants live a short distance away from the marina site themselves and will seek part time employees from the villages of Grendon or Earls Barton.
- 4.6.73 The policy dictates that within the rural areas new employment development will be directed towards the rural and local service centres. We have identified, through the preparation of the sequential test that the marina has to be located in a site which meets certain criteria associated with the development of marinas adjacent to the river.
- 4.6.74 The sequential test concludes that there are virtually no sites in the River Nene Valley between Northampton and Oundle that satisfy the criteria within policy 11 that dictates new rural employment should be directed towards the rural and local service centres.
- 4.6.75 However the villages of Grendon and Earls Barton are both within cycling distance of the site. Therefore whilst the site is not within a rural and local service centre it is close enough to be accessed via a sustainable form of transport for those employees who may live locally.

- 4.6.76 The policy also refers to leisure, cultural and heritage provision and concludes that new developments will encompass a wide range of facilities and activities enabling people to participate in sport, recreation, arts and cultural and heritage activity. It does not specifically identify where these developments should be located, their location is heavily dependent upon the type of activity and in particular whether the activity itself must be based in a location for a specific reason.
- 4.6.77 For instance Castle Ashby will attract a great number of visitors to a rural location which could be deemed unsustainable. However it is not possible to plan where a facility such as Castle Ashby is located and therefore allowance must be made for the fact that transport to and from a site such as this is almost certainly going to include motor vehicles and buses.
- 4.6.78 Marinas have to be located adjacent to the river and the sequential test has already confirmed that there are very few sites within the Nene Valley that are suitable for marina development. The marina location at White Mills therefore strikes a balance between the need to locate new employment development in areas that have already been identified as sustainable with the fact that the development is site specific and it is not possible to locate it within an identified service centre.
- 4.6.79 **Policy 13 – General Sustainable Development Principles**
- 4.6.80 This policy contains criteria that apply to all forms of development.
- 4.6.81 The development has been designed to ensure that wherever possible it meets the policy criteria.
- 4.6.82 In particular it has taken account of the fact that it is water compatible development within the flood plain. The access, parking, facilities building and floating walkways and jetties have all been designed to ensure that it meets not only the criteria required by the Environment Agency to ensure that the development does not have an adverse impact on the flood plain or the river navigation but also ensures that access to the marina for all users is safe, fit for purpose and also secure.

- 4.6.83 The marina basin itself has been designed to ensure that all users have safe access and egress even during times of flooding. The floating walkways and jetties will allow safe access and egress even during a flood event although the applicants will operate a management policy whereby the early warnings issued by the Environment Agency in the event of a flood will result in all users of the marina vacating their boats until the flood either subsides or the Environment Agency deem it safe to return to their craft.
- 4.6.84 Security is of vital importance and we have already identified within this report that the site will be secure as the floating walkways and jetties can be isolated from the bank by the use of secure gates. This removes the need to construct security fencing around the site which would be unsightly and detract from its visual amenity.
- 4.6.85 The basin itself has been designed to a high standard and will blend in with the landscape. The land surrounding the basin will be managed as a reed bed for the benefit of ecology and wildlife and all of the hard surfacing on the site will be permeable and will blend in with the landscape.
- 4.6.86 The facility building has been architecturally designed as a feature building overlooking the marina. It will be constructed to modern high standards for energy efficiency and will use natural materials such as stone and timber to match the traditional vernacular of the area.
- 4.6.87 The development is easily accessible either via road or a network of footpaths running close to and within the site.
- 4.6.88 The footpath running along the river will be maintained over the marina entrance via the use of a swing bridge.
- 4.6.89 Swing bridges are common features on the river and canal network within the UK.
- 4.6.90 The timber swing bridge will remain closed across the entrance to the marina and will only be opened when boats either enter or leave the marina.

- 4.6.91 Boat movements into and out of the marina are likely to occur on a daily basis however they are likely to be infrequent between October and March and more frequent during the Spring and Summer.
- 4.6.92 However many boaters use a marina as a base before taking their boats cruising on the river and canal networks. The White Mills Marina site is located a short distance downstream from the Grand Union Canal just to the south west of Northampton.
- 4.6.93 Boaters can either access the Grand Union at Northampton and cruise the canal network or travel downstream towards Peterborough and The Wash where they can access the sea.
- 4.6.94 There will therefore be no disruption to the footpath. Indeed the swing bridge is likely to become a local feature and will add to the already existing interesting historical and engineering features associated with the management of the river network such as locks, bridges, weirs, etc.
- 4.6.95 The development will incorporate renewable energy through the installation of solar PV panels on the roof and a water source heat pump within the marina basin to heat the facilities building. The Environmental Statement accompanying the application contains thorough assessments with regard to the potential impact on ground water, surface water, flood risk, ecology, transport, heritage assets, archaeology and landscape.
- 4.6.96 The applicants are confident that the proposed development fully complies with the criteria contained within policy 13.
- 4.6.97 **Policy 14 – Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Construction**
- 4.6.98 The development as a whole and the facilities building in particular fully complies with the criteria contained within policy 14.
- 4.6.99 The building will be constructed to an extremely high standard with regard to energy efficiency and insulation and will be wholly compliant with the BREEAM/Eco-Building Assessment rating. The building will be heated via a water sourced heat pump the coils of which will be suspended under the floating walkways and jetties within the marina basin.

4.6.100 As much electricity as possible will be generated onsite through the use of solar voltaic panels on the roof of the building.

4.6.101 Rainwater will be recycled and will be stored in an underground tank for use within the boats for washing and showers and will be used within the facilities building for all non-potable water uses.

4.7 **Mineral Extraction**

4.7.1 The application is for the development of a marina that will provide a recreational facility for boaters and river users.

4.7.2 However the proposed development is located within an area that has been identified within the Locations for Minerals Development – Development Plan Document forming part of the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework and as such this element of the development must also be considered in the context of the aforementioned document and also the Core Strategy Development Plan Document also forming part of the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework.

4.7.3 The minerals extraction phase of the development will now be considered in the context of these policy documents.

4.7.4 The construction of the marina will involve two phases, firstly the extraction of minerals which forms part of the construction of the marina basin and secondly the piling of the embankment, installation of jetties and walkways and construction of the facilities building, car parking facilities, etc.

4.7.5 The minerals extraction phase involves the removal of approximately 20,000 tonnes of mineral. This is not a large amount when considered in the context of extant planning permissions that exist within the region for mineral extraction.

4.8 **Locations for Minerals Development – Development Plan Document**

- 4.8.1 The Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework which includes a number of documents including the two referred to above is primarily concerned with the commercial extraction of minerals and the importation and infilling of waste.
- 4.8.2 Although minerals are to be extracted from the site they are not being extracted as a commercial minerals operation, they are simply being extracted as the marina development must not sterilise identified minerals deposits.
- 4.8.3 However although the amount of mineral to be extracted is small it needs to be considered in the context of minerals development policies.
- 4.8.4 Objective 7 of the framework confirms that mineral resources must be safeguarded from sterilisation by other forms of development. Therefore their removal ensures the marina development complies with this objective.
- 4.8.5 All mineral extraction sites must also have a restoration plan and objective 11 of the framework sets out a policy to ensure that appropriate and beneficial after use from mineral development delivers a net gain in environmental capital. In this particular case there is no specific restoration plan as the sole purpose of the application is to construct and create a marina on the site which will replace the need for restoration.
- 4.8.6 However the construction of the marina will include significant ecological enhancement through the creation of a reed bed surrounding the marina basin which provides a habitat that will complement the nearby Special Protection Area.
- 4.8.7 Planning permission has already been granted for the extraction of 3.7 million tonnes at Earls Barton West. The site is located within MA5: Earls Barton West Extension. This extension to the existing Earls Barton West extraction site is estimated to deliver a further 3 million tonnes of mineral. The 20,000 tonnes to be extracted as part of the marina development form part of the identified tonnage.
- 4.8.8 The Earls Barton West extension (MA5) covers approximately 153 hectares with an anticipated extracted tonnage of 3 million tonnes.

4.8.9 This is a significant area which in time will become a major mineral extraction site in its own right.

4.8.10 The marina development site forms only a very small part of MA5 however the development of the marina and ancillary extraction of the mineral does comply with the criteria identified within the MWDF. In particular the mitigation and restoration should be carried out in line with a habitat risk assessment for the allocation and site specific HRAs should also be carried out at the planning application stage.

4.8.11 The Environmental Statement accompanying this application includes a detailed HRA for the site which was prepared following discussions with NCC and Natural England.

4.8.12 The minerals will all be transported off site in an as raised condition for processing at the existing processing plant operated by Hanson some 500 metres away.

4.9 **Minerals and Waste Core Strategy**

4.9.1 As we have already stated the mineral extraction phase of the development is ancillary to the primary reason for development.

4.9.2 Therefore extraction of the mineral should not be assessed as an independent development in its own right. However the fact that it is located within an identified mineral extraction allocation requires an assessment to be made as to whether the mineral extraction is largely compliant with the MWDF.

4.9.3 We have already considered whether the mineral extraction complies with the objectives within the MWDF and in particular have noted that it does comply with objective 7.

4.9.4 The site lies within an identified minerals deposit and the Spatial Strategy has identified that this deposit will be extracted in due course but not necessarily immediately. The extraction of 20,000 tonnes of mineral out of a total estimated deposit of 3 million tonnes however is extremely minimal and does not impact on the long term Spatial Strategy.

4.9.5 The mineral must not be sterilised and therefore cannot remain in situ if the marina is developed.

- 4.9.6 As the marina development only involves the extraction of a very small amount of mineral which is not scheduled for extraction until sometime in the future, its extraction at this stage and therefore deviation from the Spatial Strategy is insufficient reason to recommend refusal.
- 4.9.7 The net benefit through the creation of the marina at this site outweighs the potential adverse impact from extracting the mineral out of sequence with the Spatial Strategy.
- 4.9.8 Policies CS10-12 are relevant to this development.
- 4.9.9 These policies are designed to ensure that mineral extraction sites are not sterilised through other development either on the mineral site itself or immediately adjacent to it.
- 4.9.10 The minerals will be extracted from the marina site and therefore the site will not be sterilised.
- 4.9.11 The development therefore complies with policies CS10 and 11.
- 4.9.12 With regard to policy CS12 the development of the marina at this location does not prevent further extraction of minerals from land immediately adjacent to it.
- 4.9.13 The bulk of the land contained within site MA5 is located to the west of the development site just to the south of A45.
- 4.9.14 There is a small area of land immediately to the west of the marina site which is also likely to contain a source of minerals. These minerals can be extracted at a later date as access can be obtained directly from the main extraction site at MA5 to the west.
- 4.9.15 The development does not therefore sterilise any mineral deposits either within the development site itself or immediately adjacent to it. It therefore complies with the Core Strategy policies.
- 4.9.16 Restoration of mineral extraction sites is of fundamental importance and is dealt with in some detail within the Core Strategy.

- 4.9.17 Restoration should maximise public and environmental benefits but it's after use should be determined in relation to its land use context and surrounding environmental character.
- 4.9.18 The application, which is comprehensive, sets out in detail why the marina should be created at this location and why it offers a significant public and environmental benefit following its construction.
- 4.9.19 The development of a marina on this site therefore fully complies with policy CS13 as it will provide significant benefits to the local community and local economy whilst also enhancing biodiversity on the site itself.
- 4.9.20 There are very few sites that offer the potential for restoration in this form due to the presence of the Special Protection Area within the river valley.
- 4.9.21 The development also complies with policy CS14. A full Environmental Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the planning application process and concludes that the development is sustainable, safe and environmentally acceptable and would be of a net benefit to the region.
- 4.9.22 This concludes our assessment of statutory policy guidance that relates to the proposed development
- 4.9.23 There are a number of non-statutory documents that set out objectives that are relevant to the proposed development. The most important of these is the Nene Valley Strategic Plan published in October 2010 by the River Nene Regional Park.
- 4.9.24 The Nene Valley Strategic Plan is a culmination of a programme of extensive consultation and stakeholder engagement that brings together and deals in a comprehensive way with a wide variety of environmental, leisure, tourism, economic, planning and land use matters in a single document that relate specifically to the River Nene Valley running through Northamptonshire.

- 4.9.25 The applicant's agent was involved with the consultation process and the preparation of certain elements of the Strategy in particular those relating to water based recreational development.
- 4.9.26 The plan is extremely important in advising all bodies that are involved in any form of planning and development within the River Nene Valley.
- 4.9.27 It contains a wealth of information however we will focus specifically on the objectives that relate solely to boating and marina development.
- 4.9.28 An assessment of the Northamptonshire waterways identified the potential to significantly increase the economic and employment benefit to the county by realising the full visitor potential of the waterways. There is significant additional boat carrying capacity on the River Nene as the river is currently underused and it is estimated that an additional 1,000 boats could be registered/moored along the Nene between Northampton and Peterborough. The Environment Agency is very supportive of well managed additional recreation and tourism on the waterways and it recognises the economic and social benefits. The investment in green infrastructure and in particular recreation and tourism generates significant employment, health and wellbeing benefits.
- 4.9.29 The plan sets out nine objectives. Objective 5 states
- *Investing in waterways*

Stimulate appropriate waterside or waterways investment to ensure more access and enjoyment of the Nene.
- 4.9.30 The Environment Agency (EA) is the statutory navigable authority with responsibility for the River Nene between Northampton and Wisbech. It has an ongoing investment programme to improve locks, moorings and water points. Boat traffic has been gradually increasing on the River Nene but is still noticeably quieter than on nearby waterways such as the Grand Union Canal and the River Great Ouse. Around 1,000 boats are currently registered on the river between Northampton and Peterborough and the EA estimates that at least 1,000 additional boats could be comfortably accommodated without

detrimental environmental impacts. Indeed as no detailed assessment work has been undertaken this figure could be notably higher.

- 4.9.31 The sequential test identifies existing marina facilities and other potential sites.
- 4.9.32 The plan sets out development objectives that are required in order to derive the type of benefit from the River Nene that the county needs. This includes improved navigation and new and improved waterside facilities which deliver significant economic and social benefits. More importantly it states that appropriate investment promotes the use of the River Nene for waterways based and waterside activities will be encouraged and supported.
- 4.9.33 These facilities include
- Boat hire;
 - Better navigation facilities (locks, moorings, pump outs, water points, sewerage disposal, etc);
 - Moorings, berthings and marinas, i.e. offline moorings as well as online moorings;
 - Boating support services or chandlery;
 - Canoeing/kayaking, sailing, rowing and angling.
- 4.9.34 The plan identifies a number of sites that at the time of its publication were either operational or at the planning stages.
- 4.9.35 A number of these sites related to moorings and provisions for boaters and included
- Becketts Park which was under construction and is now completed;
 - Existing and new marina facilities at Willy Watt Marina and Blackthorn Lake;
 - Lilford Lodge Farm proposed marina;
 - Oundle Marina at Barnwell.

- 4.9.36 The plan therefore clearly identifies the need for additional boating facilities on the River Nene. The plan projects that there could be an additional 1,000 boats using the river between Peterborough and Northampton, these boats will require facilities.
- 4.9.37 The sequential test that has been submitted with this application concludes that it is extremely unlikely that 1,000 berths could be created on this stretch of river due to the significant number of constraints, in particular those relating to ecology and biodiversity and statutory protection and physical access.
- 4.9.38 Therefore any proposal to create berths on the River Nene in a manner which is both sustainable and of benefit to the local environment should be looked upon favourably.

5. Summary

- 5.1 The Planning Statement assesses the proposed development known as White Mills Marina in the context of policies contained within national and local planning policies that are relevant to this application.
- 5.2 At a national level both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Technical Guidance to the NPPF are relevant.
- 5.3 The Regional Spatial Strategies have been revoked and as such there are no regional planning policies that are relevant to the application.
- 5.4 At a local level the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework Core Strategy and the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework Location for Minerals Development Plan Document are all relevant.
- 5.5 Consideration should also be given to the non statutory Nene Valley Strategic Plan published by the River Nene Regional Park in October 2010.
- 5.6 The NPPF takes precedence over local policies. It is therefore important to clarify whether adopted policy documents are compliant with the NPPF. The statement assesses the development in the context of the NPPF and local policies.

- 5.7 The North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy which was adopted in June 2008 is now under review, however until such time as the revised Core Strategy is adopted the development must be assessed against the policies contained within the adopted Core Strategy.
- 5.8 The central core policy to the NPPF is a presumption in the favour of sustainable development. Local Planning Authorities are obliged to approve development proposals which accord with the development plan or where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date. They can however refuse permission if the development would have adverse impacts that significantly outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.
- 5.9 It is therefore important to consider all aspects of the development, in particular the benefits that it will deliver in terms of the provision of recreational facilities that have already been identified as required as they are either currently not provided for or the demand is sufficient to warrant further provision.
- 5.10 In order to construct the development it is necessary to extract a small tonnage of minerals from the site to prevent their sterilisation.
- 5.11 If the development complies with relevant policies contained within the local development documents identified above, planning permission should be granted.
- 5.12 The Core Spatial Strategy is the principal local policy document to provide guidance as to whether planning permission should be granted for this development. The Statement confirms that the marina complies with a number of objectives within the CSS.
- 5.13 The river based recreational development such as the marina is a good example of a development that is sympathetic to the landscape environment and yet creates facilities that local people can use without the need to travel significant distances in the car and can also access via public transport if they so wish. At the same time the development enhances the local biodiversity and opportunities for wildlife and encourages an interaction between the human population and the living countryside.

- 5.14 The development does not fully comply with all of the relevant policies, in particular it is not possible to locate the marina within an existing settlement. In order to assist with the assessment the applicants have prepared and submitted a Sequential Test with the application.
- 5.15 The Sequential Test clarifies that there are very few sites along the River Nene between Oundle and Northampton that are suitable for a marina development.
- 5.16 The development does however largely comply with policy 5 which relates to green infrastructure. When considered in the context of this policy along with the Nene Valley Strategic Plan the marina proposal can be seen to deliver a number of objectives that are identified within the policy and the Strategic Plan.
- 5.17 The application also recognises that the development must be thoroughly assessed in terms of its potential impact on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area. The Environmental Statement that accompanies the application includes a section on ecology and a thorough evaluation on the potential impact of the development on the SPA.
- 5.18 The ES confirms that the marina development will not have an adverse impact and therefore will comply with one of the most important criteria within policy 5.
- 5.19 The development does not just pay lip service to energy efficiency and climate change. The facilities building will be constructed to standards that comply with BREEAM and will be heated via a water source heat pump drawing heat energy from the marina basin itself. It will also be provided with renewable electricity from photo voltaic solar panels mounted on the roof.
- 5.20 Cycles will be provided to users of the marina as a sustainable means of transport to access local facilities.
- 5.21 The development involves the extraction of a small tonnage of minerals and therefore the development must be assessed in the context of the Mineral Development Plan Documents adopted by NCC.

- 5.22 The development will not sterilise any mineral deposits located within the site itself, furthermore once completed the development will not sterilise any adjacent mineral deposits.
- 5.23 The minerals can be extracted from the site and processed on an existing adjacent site and therefore the impact on the environment through the extraction of minerals is minimal.
- 5.24 The site is located within an identified mineral extraction area and although the mineral would be extracted sooner than the NMWDF has identified it is a small tonnage within the identified allocation and therefore as it is only being extracted to prevent its sterilisation this deviation from the WDF should be permitted.
- 5.25 The development would be carried out by the applicants who have farmed in the area for approximately 50 years. Their farming business has diversified and now includes commercial property lets within converted redundant farm buildings, a bed and breakfast operation at the farmhouse and the management of a reed bed for wildlife and conservation.
- 5.26 The applicants have a proven track record therefore of managing facilities on the farm for public access and the marina provides a further facility for a significant amount of public access on the farm.
- 5.27 The facilities offered at White Mills Marina will complement other water based recreational facilities in the Nene Valley and the development provides Northampton with an opportunity to create a unique marina on the outskirts of the town with good access to local amenities which will be complementary to the local environment and provide a much needed resource for both locals and tourists visiting the area.
- 5.28 We therefore believe that the proposed development largely complies with national and local planning policies and dutifully request that planning permission is granted for the development as proposed.