

# Wakerley Quarry Northamptonshire

## Planning Statement

Proposals for the  
revised restoration utilising the  
importation  
of suitable inert material  
to achieve a beneficial afteruse  
of the site



August 2019

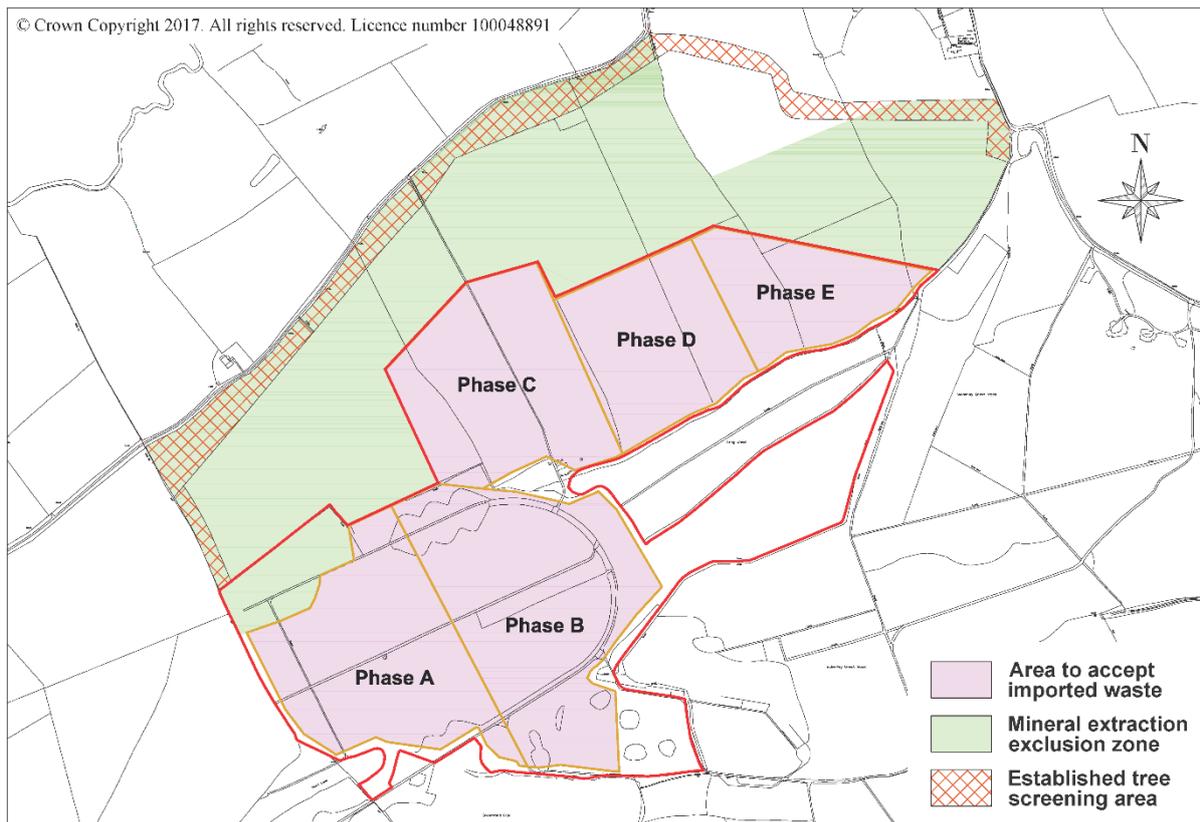
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## **P1. INTRODUCTION**

- P 1.1. Planning consent exists at the Wakerley Quarry site to extract limestone over a 45 year timespan. The planning permission (08/00026/MIN) approved under the provisions of the 1995 Environmental Act required the site to be restored to a low level profile which would result in a permanent unnatural landform. Instead of restoring the site in this manner, it is now proposed to import suitable inert material to the site to progressively restore the land beneficially close to pre-development contours to produce a more naturalistic profile upon restoration across the entire site than would otherwise be the case.
- P 1.2. The consented Wakerley limestone quarry site (including the access road) extends to some 151ha whilst the approved mineral extraction area covers 93.8ha; it is that area where it is proposed to import suitable non-recyclable inert materials to reinstate the land close to its pre-development landscape character.



- P 1.3. The proposed scheme of mitigation for the quarry as a whole will continue to provide effective protection against unacceptable noise and dust emissions consistent with central governmental advice, with the amended site design seeking to restore the land to a beneficial afteruse in a progressive and timely fashion providing positive landscape benefits.
- P 1.4. The Company commenced limestone extraction from Wakerley Quarry in 2017 and the processed limestone serves East Northamptonshire, Corby, Kettering, North Northamptonshire, Wellingborough, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire and Leicestershire. Inert fill material from the same market area where the limestone is distributed will be handled by the Company generally on a “back-haul” basis to restore the Wakerley Quarry site.
- P 1.5. The Company are currently restoring the Stonehill Quarry in the north-eastern extremity of the County and that in part is being infilled utilising HGVs returning to Wakerley Quarry en-route from markets in Peterborough. At current infill rates, the Stonehill Quarry will be restored by early to mid-2020 and it is envisaged inert waste from future development sites in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire would be taken to the Wakerley site.
- P 1.6. The principal objective of the Planning Statement is to evaluate the performance of the proposals against the development plan and in particular, to address policies of the Northamptonshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan (Update) 2017 and these include; Policy 10: Northamptonshire’s waste management capacity, Policy 11: Spatial strategy for waste management, Policy 14: Strategy for waste disposal, Policy 16: Development criteria for inert waste disposal and recovery, Policy 19: Encouraging sustainable transport, Policy 20: Natural assets and resources, Policy 21: Landscape character and Policy 24: Restoration and aftercare. This Planning Statement additionally considers the proposed development against the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the National Planning Policy for Waste.
- P 1.7. The scheme provides a high standard of mitigation by delivering net gain in environmental capital along with landscape improvements which are encouraged within the National Planning Policy Framework as well development plan policies and those within the adopted Northamptonshire Mineral and Waste Local Plan (2017).
- P 1.8. Mick George Ltd has a successful track record in the construction sector and offers services that combine demolition, groundworks, earthmoving and delivery of sustainably sourced aggregates/concrete with removal of construction and excavation wastes for disposal at or close to the origin of the aggregates or processing (to produce secondary aggregate). This activity has several sustainability benefits not least of all reducing CO2 levels by optimising on back-hauling. By virtue of its ability to both supply aggregates (primary or secondary) and to remove excess spoil material generated from construction projects, the Company is able to provide cost savings to the construction industry and limit greenhouse gas emissions.

- P 1.9. The construction sector increasingly operates under the maxim of Lean Construction because the private sector and the central government require their building or civil engineering projects to be demonstrably sustainable, sourced from certified suppliers and constructed at least cost. The construction industry seeks to operate with minimal waste and impact on the environment. The return loading of unrecyclable waste generated from construction projects to beneficially restore quarries such as Wakerley in a sustainable manner complies with this objective.
- P 1.10. The back-hauling of inert construction and excavation wastes in the same vehicles that deliver aggregates as is proposed at Wakerley Quarry is an inherently efficient and sustainable mode of transport which minimises 'mineral and waste miles' for the benefit of carbon reduction and is compliant with the Lean Construction principles.

## **P2. NATIONAL POLICY**

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- P 2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first introduced in 2012 and has subsequently been superseded in February 2019 by a revised document and sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for development can be produced but the underlying principle remains adoption of basic sustainable development objectives.
- P 2.2. Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states *“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.”* Importantly the new guidance repeats the basic principles of sustainable development at para 7 which states *“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*
- P 2.3. Furthermore, paragraph 8 repeats the provision of the previous advice in that, *“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*
- a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
  - b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and*
  - c) **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*
- P 2.4. This is reinforced at paragraph 10, when the NPPF states, *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”* and paragraph 11 which confirms that *“decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”* and *“approving development proposals*

*that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay". The NPPF confirms this presumption (in favour of sustainable development) does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Importantly, at paragraph 38 this states that "Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available.....and work proactively with applicants..... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible."*

- P 2.5. The proposal to restore Wakerley Quarry close to pre-development levels is consistent with adopted development plan policies in that it will provide enduring landscape benefits where waste materials will be used beneficially and will be transported to the site on a "back-haul" basis saving significant HGV miles.
- P 2.6. Section 6 of the NPPF relates to "Building a strong, competitive economy" and paragraph 80 confirms "*Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.*" Again, this provides further support for the modified restoration proposals at Wakerley Quarry in that it offers support for a competitive construction industry promoting and assisting economic growth.
- P 2.7. Section 9 of the NPPF relates to "Promoting sustainable transport" and paragraph 102 refers to the fact that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that, apart from other matters "*the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains*". The proposal to deliver waste materials to the quarry on HGVs that would otherwise return empty offers significant environmental gains.
- P 2.8. Part 15 of the NPPF relates to "Conserving and enhancing the natural environment" and paragraph 170 encourages planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. This is done by way of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services. The scheme will continue to minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- P 2.9. In respect of decisions ensuring that new development is appropriate for its location, paragraph 180 of the NPPF confirms any application should take into account the likely 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. The revised scheme of working and restoration at Wakerley Quarry will not

result in any unacceptable harm as identical environmental controls will remain in place as those which relate to the extraction and processing of limestone.

P 2.10. Finally, paragraph 183 confirms *“the focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively. Equally, where a planning decision has been made on a particular development, the planning issues should not be revisited through the permitting regimes operated by pollution control authorities.”*

P 2.11. The infilling operations will be strictly controlled by the provisions of an Environmental Permit (issued by the Environment Agency) and therefore, a further tier of controls will be in place to protect the environment and local amenity.

### **National Planning Policy for Waste**

P 2.12. This national policy highlights the pivotal role of the planning system in helping to secure the objectives of the Waste Management Plan for England in respect of provision of infrastructure (re-use, recovery or disposal of waste), creating employment opportunities and driving waste management up the waste hierarchy without harming the environment.

P 2.13. The national policy also highlights the need for an up-to-date Development Plan for Waste produced at the local level where the provision of planned capacity and its spatial distribution is based on robust analysis and best available data and information and an appraisal of options. The need for waste management facilities must be considered alongside other spatial planning concerns recognising the positive contribution that waste management can bring to the development of sustainable communities.

P 2.14. In preparing Waste Local Plans, local planning authorities are required to identify the tonnages of waste requiring management over the plan period and consider the extent to which capacity of existing operational sites would satisfy any identified need whilst ensuring that adequate provision is made for waste disposal.

P 2.15. In determining planning applications waste planning authorities should only expect applicants to demonstrate a market need for new or enhanced waste management facilities where proposals are not consistent with an up-to-date plan. In such cases, waste planning authorities should consider the extent to which the capacity of existing operational sites would satisfy any identified need. Policy 16 of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan offers clear support for the use of inert waste materials to restore either allocated or committed mineral extraction sites. Wakerley Quarry is one such site.

P 2.16. For proposals involving landfill, waste planning authorities should ensure that the sites are restored to a beneficial afteruse at the earliest opportunity and to high environmental standards through the application of appropriate conditions where necessary. To this end, the Environmental Statement clearly demonstrates the progressive manner of restoration

of the quarry ensuring the scheme is worked sequentially such that only a limited sector of the site is being actively worked at any one time.

### **P3. POLICY CONTEXT**

P 3.1. The planning system is plan-led and planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In terms of planning need the development plan for this proposal comprises the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Update) adopted on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

P 3.2. With respect to this Plan, the relevant objectives of the Plan in respect of the proposal to import inert waste material to the Wakerley Quarry are as follows;

#### **Objective 1: Developing sustainable communities**

- *Support the development of sustainable communities in Northamptonshire by facilitating the provision of infrastructure, facilities and services through ensuring:*
- *Development of a modern network of sustainable waste management facilities which contributes towards achieving net self-sufficiency and meets community, business and industry needs.*

P 3.3. This objective is explained as *"...about ensuring that growth and development in Northamptonshire... are not hindered by (a)...or b) having waste management facilities that are badly sited and therefore not integrated or linked with the communities that generate the waste."*

#### **Objective 5: Spatial distribution of waste development**

*Facilitate the delivery of a strategic urban-focused flexible waste management network which supports the management of waste close to where it has been generated, with particular encouragement of integrated waste recovery and treatment facilities.*

P 3.4. This objective is explained as *"...about ensuring that the spatial strategy chosen for locating waste management facilities is one that meets the national requirements of...having communities take more responsibility for the waste they generate..."*

#### **Objective 10: Conserving and enhancing Northamptonshire's built and natural environment**

*Recognise Northamptonshire's environmental systems and landscape linkages in order to conserve and enhance the built and natural environment through ensuring sensitive working, and where necessary high standards of mitigation of potentially adverse impacts of minerals and waste development.*

P 3.5. This is about ensuring that new or extended minerals and waste related uses not only do not damage or destroy the County's existing environmental and natural assets, but that

opportunities are taken (including via restoration) to enhance existing and planned green infrastructure networks and to support the identified landscape character areas of the county.

**Objective 11: Responsible stewardship through restoration**

*Ensure an appropriate and beneficial after-use from mineral, and where appropriate waste development, through restoration that maximises enhancement opportunities, delivers a net gain in environmental capital and fosters responsible stewardship.*

P 3.6. This objective is explained as *“about not simply promoting restoration to the previous use when temporary minerals and waste uses cease, but to use such restoration to increase biodiversity or other natural assets (for example), and that the results of the restoration are subsequently properly managed and maintained.”*

P 3.7. The key policies to consider are:-

- Policy 10: Northamptonshire’s waste management capacity
- Policy 11: Spatial strategy for waste management
- Policy 14: Strategy for waste disposal
- Policy 16: Development criteria for inert waste disposal
- Policy 18: Addressing the impact of proposed minerals and waste development
- Policy 19: Encouraging sustainable transport
- Policy 20: Natural assets and resources
- Policy 21: Landscape character
- Policy 24: Restoration and aftercare

P 3.8. The Plan does not allocate sites for inert waste disposal but expects provision to come from existing commitments, and through sites allocated or already committed for mineral extraction.

P 3.9. **Policy 10** intends that provision for waste management facilities will come from a mix of extensions to existing sites, intensification or redevelopment of existing sites and new sites including quarries, providing they all meet the spatial strategy for waste management. **Policy 11** considers the spatial strategy for all waste whilst **Policy 19** expects that waste related developments should be well placed to serve their intended markets or catchment area(s) in order to reduce transport distances and movements in order to support the development of sustainable communities that take responsibility for the waste that they produce and work towards self-sufficiency.

P 3.10. **Policy 14** requires provision to be made for inert waste disposal primarily at mineral extraction sites for restoration purposes and that objective is referred to within **Policy 16** which essentially supports the disposal of inert waste for the beneficial restoration of committed or allocated sites (such as Wakerley Quarry). Policy 16 (Development criteria for inert waste disposal and recovery) states; *“Proposals for the disposal or recovery of*

*inert waste, where this does not relate to the restoration of a committed or allocated site for minerals extraction, must demonstrate that:*

- *It will not prejudice the restoration of minerals sites, and*
- *There is clear engineering, agricultural, landscape or recreation amenity justification for the development”.*

- P 3.11. Wakerley Quarry is a new facility for inert waste disposal but is clearly a recognised committed site in the context of **Policy 16**. The quarry is compatible with the locational strategy being located in a rural area which is necessary for the disposal of inert waste, which serves as a quarry restoration medium. The Plan indicates an indicative inert waste disposal provision of 160,000 tonnes per annum although an analysis shows that the indicative capacity figure in the Plan does not reflect current market conditions. The National Planning Policy Framework advises local planning authorities that plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities.
- P 3.12. These principles suggest that when evidence is presented that the market is exceeding indicative requirements by a significant margin, policy and decision taking must be applied flexibly and a review of policy initiated. Indeed, given the huge disparity between the existing inert waste disposal capacity and the indicative requirements in the Plan, it is clear that the local planning authority has been aware of a mismatch between these two factors for some time and has responded flexibly to market signals. Capacity within the County is heavily bias towards short term projects and operations, and is vulnerable to delays in capacity at new sites coming on stream. It is considered that the proposal at Wakerley Quarry would provide for a much needed addition to capacity for inert waste in the County bearing in mind the disparity between capacity and demand as noted above.
- P 3.13. The proposal is to remove waste from areas where the processed mineral from Wakerley Quarry is delivered (such as eastern Northants as well as Leicestershire and Peterborough) and return load the material. The site is well located to do that being well located on the A47 and A43 about 16km from Corby. The applicant considers that the location of the site is neutral in respect of the long term alternatives.
- P 3.14. Current evidence suggests that deposits far exceed the indicative requirements set out in the Plan for Northamptonshire’s inert waste. Comparison with a list of Appendix 2 sites (commitments for mineral extraction) within 30km of Wakerley Quarry shows that of the six other sites listed, 2 are short term projects (including Stonehill Quarry), 2 are non-hazardous landfills which typically need small amounts of daily cover, and 2 would be in direct long term competition with Wakerley (Collyweston and Harley Way). However, these sites are already in competition with MGL’s operations at Stonehill Quarry which is currently being filled at a current rate far in excess of that originally estimated. By the time the Wakerley Quarry site is in a position to receive inert waste as a disposal facility it will replace the short term capacity at Stonehill Quarry with no net effect on the overall market situation.

- P 3.15. In terms of the NPPF, local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. The NPPF advises that local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In addition, to help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century, and policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the Plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.
- P 3.16. In terms of National Planning Policy for Waste, waste planning authorities should, when determining waste planning applications, only expect applicants to demonstrate the quantitative or market need for new or enhanced waste management facilities where proposals are not consistent with an up-to-date Local Plan. In such cases, waste planning authorities should consider the extent to which the capacity of existing operational facilities would satisfy any identified need. Notwithstanding, compliance with policy (as Wakerley Quarry is identified as a “committed site”). The Waste Needs Assessment accompanying the application shows the level of future planned growth within the market area. (This is contained within Annexure 5 of the Environmental Statement)
- P 3.17. Given that planning permissions for both minerals and waste will only be implemented when economic conditions are favourable (i.e. when mineral demand increases), and given that mineral demand is directly linked to demand for new build construction, and that increases in new build construction will inevitably lead to a concomitant increase in inert waste arisings, it follows that it is likely that inert waste demand will keep pace with mineral demand and there will be no shortfall of inert material to restore other quarries within the County. Although more suitable material will undoubtedly be reused on construction sites and not taken off site for disposal, it remains true that a general increase in construction activity will result in increased unrecyclable waste arisings, and hence will not be affected by this proposal.
- P 3.18. In respect of plan policies, **Policy 18** considers the impact of proposed minerals and waste development and states, *“Proposals for minerals and waste development must demonstrate that the following matters have been considered and addressed:*
- *protecting Northamptonshire’s natural resources and key environmental designations (including heritage assets),*
  - *avoiding and / or minimising potentially adverse impacts to an acceptable level, specifically addressing air emissions (including dust), odour, bioaerosols, noise and vibration, slope stability, vermin and pests, birdstrike, litter, land use conflict and cumulative impact,*

- *impacts on flood risk as well as the flow and quantity of surface and groundwater,*
- *ensuring built development is of a design and layout that has regard to its visual appearance in the context of the defining characteristics of the local area,*
- *ensuring access is sustainable, safe and environmentally acceptable, and*
- *ensuring that local amenity is protected.*

*Where applicable a site-specific management plan should be developed to ensure the implementation and maintenance of mitigation measures throughout construction, operation, decommissioning and restoration works.”*

P 3.19. The revised scheme of working pays full regard to the provisions of this policy. No additional land will be disturbed beyond that consented for the quarry but the restoration close to pre-development levels will produce a more naturalistic final landform. Existing environmental controls (relating to the minerals extraction) will be maintained to ensure no undue harm would result from the amended restoration proposals.

P 3.20. **Policy 19** (Encouraging sustainable transport) states, *“Minerals and waste related development should seek to minimise transport movements and maximise the use of sustainable or alternative transport modes. Where possible minerals and waste related development should be located, designed and operated to enable transport by rail, water, pipeline or conveyor. Minerals and waste related development should be well placed to serve their intended markets or catchment area(s) in order to minimise transport distances and movements in order to support the development of sustainable communities that take responsibility for the waste that they produce and work towards self-sufficiency. Proposals for new development or development that would result in a significant increase in transport movements should include a sustainable transport statement to demonstrate how the above has been taken into consideration.”*

P 3.21. Whilst alternative modes of transport are not feasible to either export mineral or import restoration materials, the proposal to “back-haul” materials (which is underpinned by the Company’s own business model) will significantly limit unnecessary HGV miles with significant savings on greenhouse gas emissions).

P 3.22. **Policy 20:** Natural assets and resources; *“Minerals and waste development should seek to achieve a net gain in natural assets and resources, through:*

- *protecting and enhancing international and national designated sites,*
- *delivery of wider environmental benefits in the vicinity where development would adversely affect locally designated sites or other features of local interest,*
- *protecting and enhancing green infrastructure and strategic biodiversity networks, in particular the River Nene and other sub-regional corridors, and*
- *contributing towards Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets for habitats and species.*

*Proposals for minerals and waste development will be required to undertake an assessment (where appropriate) in order to:*

- *identify and determine the nature, extent and level of importance of the natural assets and resources, as well as any potential impacts, and*
- *identify mitigation measures and / or requirement for compensation (where necessary) to avoid, reduce and manage potentially adverse impacts."*

P 3.23. **Policy 21:** *Landscape character; "Minerals and waste development should seek to reflect Northamptonshire's landscape character. Development should mitigate potentially adverse impacts on the local character and distinctiveness of Northamptonshire's landscape where necessary during the development, operational life, restoration, aftercare and after-use. Opportunities for enhancement should be maximised through restoration, aftercare and after-use. Proposals for minerals and waste development will be required to undertake a landscape impact assessment (where appropriate) based on the landscape character assessment in order to identify:*

- *the presence of landscape values (including their nature, extent and level of importance) and determine any potential impacts,*
- *any necessary measures to mitigate potentially adverse impacts, and*
- *opportunities to protect and enhance particular features that create a specific aspect of local distinctiveness or character."*

P 3.24. The proposal will still continue to protect existing peripheral habitats and green infrastructure, will produce a more naturalistic landform and will further enhance the biodiversity potential of the site consistent with both of the above policies. The site's overall natural assets will be enhanced with appropriate contributions to the County's BAP targets, particularly with the extended aftercare promoted for the areas of calcareous grassland and broadleaf woodlands.

P 3.25. Restoring the land to similar pre-development contours will enable the land to better integrate into the local landscape character (rather than produce an alien profile as currently approved). Accordingly, the provisions of Policies 20 and 21 are better met by the proposal to import inert waste materials.

P 3.26. **Policy 24:** *Restoration and after-use, "All minerals and waste related development of a temporary nature must ensure that the site is progressively restored to an acceptable condition and stable landform. The after-use of a site will be determined in relation to its land use context, the surrounding environmental character and any specific local requirements, but on the basis that it:*

- *enhances biodiversity, the local environment and amenity, and*
- *benefits the local community and / or economy.*

*The restoration of minerals and waste sites should meet the following requirements (where appropriate):*

- *sites previously comprising high-grade agricultural land or good-quality forestry use should be restored to the original land use and coupled with a secondary after-use objective,*
- *precedence should be given to the establishment of Biodiversity Action Plan habitat, strategic biodiversity networks, promotion of geodiversity and enhancement of the historic environment and heritage assets where the specific conditions occur that favour such after-use objectives,*
- *sites connecting or adjacent to identified habitat areas and green infrastructure networks should be restored in a manner which promotes habitat enhancement (in line with Biodiversity Action Plan targets) and green infrastructure plans,*
- *sites located near to areas identified as lacking recreational facilities should be restored in a manner that promotes such opportunities,*
- *sites located within river corridors should be restored to support water catchment conservation and incorporate flood attenuation measures, and*
- *in specific instances, and where fully in accordance with policies in other local plans in Northamptonshire, sites may be restored in a manner that promotes economic opportunities.*

*Sites for mineral extraction in river valleys should not be restored to a predominantly open water based form. Restoration of mineral sites elsewhere in the county to a lower level form will be acceptable if it is able to retain the integrity of the local landscape character and minimises overall traffic movements associated with extraction and restoration of the site.”*

- P 3.27. The policy encourages restoration schemes to integrate with the surrounding landscape character and by importing inert materials, this will provide a considerably better end-use and enable the integrity of the local landscape to be retained. Moreover, all higher grade agricultural land can now be fully restored whilst further alternative habitats can be created linking the retained features around the periphery of the site.
- P 3.28. Importantly, as part of the revised scheme of working, it is proposed to manage the areas of reinstated calcareous grassland and broadleaf woodlands for the duration of the quarry development instead of the limited period of 5 years approved at present. Such a proposal is wholly consistent with the provisions of Policy 24 as well as the sustainable development objectives of the NPPF.

## **P4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- P 4.1. Planning consent exists at the Wakerley limestone quarry and that requires the site to be restored to a low level profile which would result in an anomalous landform. Instead of restoring the site in this manner, it is now proposed to import suitable inert material to the site to restore the land close to pre-development contours to produce a more naturalistic profile upon restoration across the entire site than would otherwise be the case.
- P 4.2. The use of imported inert materials to progressively restore the quarry workings in a sustainable manner will enable the quarry to be restored to a beneficial afteruse enabling improved bio-diversity gain to be achieved beyond that currently approved including an extended aftercare management scheme for both calcareous grassland and broadleaf woodland. Such elements are supported by extant development plan policies and the sustainable development objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- P 4.3. The National Planning Policy Framework document was introduced to streamline the planning system and support the fundamental objectives of sustainable development to ensure that development proposals that are consistent with development plan policies and bio-diversity objectives should be approved without undue delay. The revised restoration proposal for Wakerley Quarry which can be achieved through the importation of inert materials is consistent with policies within the existing development plan and there are no significant conflicts with the Plan which would justify the refusal of planning permission.
- P 4.4. Moreover, from the additional detailed appraisals undertaken within the Environmental Impact Assessment there are considered to be no identified material detrimental impacts of overriding weight resulting from such matters as noise, dust, traffic, flood risk or hydrogeology, soil resources or landscape and visual impact taken individually or in combination.
- P 4.5. The submitted proposals respond positively to the spatial vision of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan in respect of helping to meet national and local mineral requirements in support of economic growth; extracting construction materials that have good communications to areas identified for further economic growth; minimising impacts on local communities; protecting reinstated agricultural land whilst providing opportunities for significant biodiversity benefits. The site is sustainable in terms of proximity to waste arisings being one of the nearest locations to receive waste generated thereby complying with stated objectives of the adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- P 4.6. Weighing in favour of the proposal is the market information of greater inert waste deposits than assumed in the Plan, the growth of planned construction activity within the intended market area generating waste and the sustainable location of the site in respect of its intended market. Moreover, the proposal provides a sustainable form of transport by “back-hauling” material thereby saving significant HGV miles travelled and associated reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

- P 4.7. The proposals are therefore considered to be in accordance with the development plan as a whole and no substantive evidence exists which would indicate to the contrary. It represents an important contribution to inert waste disposal needs for the County.

### **Conclusion**

- P 4.8. It is considered on balance that with appropriate mitigation the proposal to import suitable inert material to achieve a beneficial afteruse on land at Wakerley Quarry can be carried out in an acceptable manner consistent with government advice, without causing demonstrable harm to matters of noted importance. The revised restoration scheme particularly reflects County Council objectives and sustainable development objectives in that it will result in an improved restoration profile integrating the restored quarry into the wider landscape reinstating the site's intrinsic landscape value and promoting longer term nature conservation and biodiversity initiatives in line with local and national policies.
- P 4.9. The proposals seek to apply best environmental practice and give practical effect to strategic government initiatives on sustainable development using the importation of non-recyclable inert waste as a catalyst for meaningful beneficial change in habitat creation and re-establishment of the highest quality agricultural land.
- P 4.10. Accordingly, given the scheme's compliance with the sustainable development objectives contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and development plan documents, then consent should not be withheld for a scheme involving the delivery of long term net gains to bio-diversity using inert construction waste as a mechanism to achieve this.