Regulation 6 and 15 – Requests for Screening & Scoping Opinions.

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

Wasperton Farm, Barford, Warwickshire.

Proposed sand and gravel quarry with restoration to agriculture and ecological habitat.

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Smiths
CONCRETE

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CONTENTS

FIGURES

TABLES

PLANS

Plan Ref	Title
LD135-WSP-001	Location Plan
WSP-20-1	Site Plan
WSP 20-2	BH Summary Plan
WSP 20-3	Cross Sections
LD135-WSP-002	Site Set Up Plan
LD135-WSP-006	Plant Site Layout
LD135-WSP-003-	Working Plan 1 (Phases 2 -6)
LD135-WSP-004	Working Plan 2 (Phases 7 -12)
LD135-WSP-005	Final Restoration
Molson Presales Rev B	Indicative Purposed Plant
LD135-WSP-007	Designated Sites (magic.gov.uk)

APPENDICES

- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment Phoenix
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment SLR
- ALC and Soils
- Flood Map for Planning. EA

1 Introduction

1.1 This is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening and scoping request that relates to a proposed sand and gravel quarry at Wasperton Farm (the Site) which sits to the south of Barford, Warwickshire.

1.2 The proposed development seeks to create a phased sand and gravel extraction that will be restored to agricultural afteruse including the creation of new ecological habitat to enhance the biodiversity of the current Site.

1.3 The development is proposed by Smiths Concrete Ltd (Smiths) and is intended as a replacement site for its existing Bubbenhall and Wolston Fields Farm sites located to the north east of Leamington Spa.

1.4 The Site is currently designated in the Warwickshire Minerals Plan 2018 Submission November 2019[1] (the WMP) as Allocation Site 4 – Wasperton. However, the final plan has yet to be adopted and the results of the independent examination of it are yet to be published.

EIA Screening and Scoping Requirements

1.5 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the Regulations) articles 6(b) require a screening request to include a description of the development to include the physical characteristics of the development and secondly a description of the location of the development with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of the geographical areas likely to be affected.

1.6 Article 15 (2) of the Regulations relates to the scoping process for a planning application and requires that a scoping request must include;

(i) a plan sufficient to identify the land;

(ii) a brief description of the nature and purpose of the development, including its location and technical capacity;

(iii) an explanation of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment; and

(iv) such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make;

1.7 In this submission; -

- the attached plans satisfy item (i);

[1] SUB01 Mineral Plan Submission - Final Version Nov 2019 v2 (6).pdf

- Section 2 -6 of this document describes the site and the proposed development and sets out the information required by point (ii);
- Section 7 of this document sets out the likely significant effects that the developer envisages. This information covers point (iii) above;
- Attached to this submission are a number of technical reports that have been undertaken for the proposed development. In particular these address ecology and heritage matters. Also attached are a number of development plans showing the excavation phasing, proposed restoration, plant site layout and the site geology. These address point (iv) above.

The Applicant

1.8 Smiths is one of the largest independent suppliers of aggregates and ready mixed concrete in the south midlands area with operations concentrated in the Warwickshire and Oxfordshire areas.

1.9 Smiths Concrete is a joint venture company between Hanson UK and members of the Smiths family who operate Smiths of Bletchington. The company employs nearly 60 people of which 12 are employed at Bubbenhall and Wolston quarries. All employees are occupied in operations that are reliant on internal supplies of aggregate. The granting of planning permission at Wasperton Farm would secure these jobs for the foreseeable future.

1.10 The Company started business in 1958 with a single ready-mix plant at Cassington, near Oxford. Over the years, this has grown to include Bubbenhall and Wolston Fields Farm quarries, seven concrete plants, one mortar plant and two inert waste recovery operations.

1.11 Smiths business is underpinned through the ability to provide washed and graded sand and gravels from its own quarry site to support its downstream outlets. The impending demise of the quarries at Bubbenhall and Wolston, makes it essential that new reserves are acquired for the continuation of its business.

2 The Development Proposal

2.1 The proposed development will comprise the following main elements: -

- A sand and gravel quarry comprising 12 Phases of extraction;
- Plant site / stocks compound enclosed with 3-5m high soil visual / acoustic bund;
- New purpose-built access road onto the A429 Stratford Road;
- Site office;
- Two weighbridges;
- Staff car park;

- Low level processing plant;
- Mineral stocking area;
- Site workshop and stores buildings;
- Reinstatement of the original ground surface using imported inert materials;
- Internal access roads;
- Silt and fresh water lagoons;
- Restoration of most of the site to agriculture
- Creation of an area of nature conservation habitat on the former lagoon areas

2.2 The total mineral reserve in the Site is estimated to be 2.27million tonnes although it should be noted that a proportion of this is expected to be left in situ as a result of retaining hedgerows and drains.

3 The Site

3.1 The Site sits at Wasperton and Holloway Farms, to the south of the village of Barford. The centre of the Site can be found at OS Grid Reference: -

- SP27479 59454.

3.2 Current access is from the A429 Warwick to Stratford road via 3 existing entrance points, at: -

- Wasperton Farm (OS Grid Ref: SP 27102 59839);
- Holloway Farm (OS Grid Ref: SP 27127 59669);
- An access / bridleway that links to Marl Pit Cottages opposite Wasperton village (OS Grid Ref: SP 27112 58974).

3.3 To the north of the Site is Wasperton Lane, with the main village centre for Barford being further north of Wasperton Lane. To the east, the land is in arable use and rises from 45m aOD on Site, up to 85m aOD at Wasperton Hill (OS Grid SP 29084 59516) 1125m to the east. To the south the land is generally flat farmland falling very gently to 44.5m aOD towards the Thelsford Brook. This brook lies 250m to the south of the Site. Just inside the southern boundary of the Site there is the farm track thew Marl Pit Cottages which is also a bridleway that connects Stratford Road to Heathcote Farm (OS Grid SP2936 5888). Parallel to that and south the Site, there is also public footpath connecting Stratford Road with Glebe Farm (OS Grid SP 27307 58824 and Seven Elms OS Grid SP 27733 58807).

3.4 The western boundary is formed by the A429 Stratford Road, with Wasperton village sitting to the west of the road between the A429 and the River Avon.

3.5 Within the Site Holloway Farm (OS grid ref SP 27316 59649) sits on the north western limit of extraction and Wasperton Farm (OS grid ref SP 27368 60013) sits due north of the main quarry.

3.6 The Site is currently used for arable farming with a mix of crops being grown. The better-quality land sits adjacent to Stratford Road with the agricultural land classification (ALC) generally reducing to the east. The field pattern is created by a series of connected mature hedgerows of varying ages. Most hedges contain large mature trees, with the hedges on the south eastern part of the Site tending to be younger and much less well established. This creates a fragmented land form and encloses the landscape – particularly on the eastern of the Site.

3.7 Also within the Site are a number of small tree blocks, which are a mix of natural and planted areas.

Site Boundaries

3.8 Site boundaries are predominantly mature managed farm hedges although the eastern boundary is not demarcated on the ground on the northern half of the Site and follows an unmarked north south line through a wide arable field on the lower slopes of Wasperton Hill.

Land Ownership

3.9 The Site is owned by St Johns College, Oxford and is operated as a tenanted farm. Smiths has an option to lease the site should planning permission be granted for the winning and working of mineral.

3.10 The intention is that the farm will continue in operation whilst the mineral extraction is undertaken. Farmland will be acquired in Phases from the farm as the operations progress. Similarly, as areas are restored, so those area will be released to the farm on a Phased basis also.

Geology, Mineral Reserve and Water Table

3.11 A geological investigation[2] of Holloway and Wasperton Farms was undertaken in 2019 and comprised 68 shell and auger boreholes over 82ha of arable land.

3.12 The site was found to contain workable deposits of fluvial river terrace sand and gravel deposits that are typical of the Barford area.

3.13 The investigation confirmed that the mineral is covered by a thin unit (generally about 1-2m thick) of mainly clayey soil overburden.

[2] Greenfield Enviro – 'A Geological Investigation & Mineral Reserves Assessment of Land at Holloway & Wasperton Farms, Nr Barford, Warwickshire, Jan 2020.

3.14 The proven mineral comprises orangish-brown fine to coarse sand and fine to coarse gravel up to 3.4m in thickness. The mineral varies across the Site and can be broadly categorised as: -

- A differentiated in a main sand & gravel unit, which ranges in thickness from 0.6-3.0m; and
- Silty/pebbly sand unit that ranges from 0.6-2.9m.

3.15 The sandier units are generally localised across the site, with the overall deposit being dominated by the clean, dense sand and gravel.

3.16 Barren areas were identified in the eastern and southern-eastern parts of the Site.

3.17 The laboratory tests confirm that the mineral deposit comprises: -

- Sand 50%
- Gravel 46%.
- Silt 4%

3.18 The sand is predominantly medium grained with a lesser proportion being fine grained.

3.19 The silt content (-63micron) is estimated to be 4% of the deposit although occasional increases occur to 12% within the pebbly sand deposits.

Planning Application Area

3.20 The planning application area is yet to be decided but it is expected to broadly comprise the area edged red on plan WSP20-1. This includes the identified mineral reserve and some barren areas, the latter of which may be required for temporary soil storage and screening.

3.21 This area equates to 89.2 hectares, with the identified mineral reserve occupying 64.3 hectares based on the geological assessment report.

3.22 The identified saleable mineral reserve is estimated to be 2.27 million tonnes although a proportion of this will be sterilised through the retention of hedgerows and drains.

3.23 Overburden equates to 956,000m^3, although this too will reduce if hedgerows and drains are to be retained.

Water Features

3.24 Within the Site there are a number of agricultural farm drains, with two notable drains that runs down the middle of the site. These drains are understood to continue south of the Site and links with the Thelsford Brook. These drains are being retained as part of the proposals.

3.25 There are two small ponds on the Site, both linked to the internal drainage system on the farm. One sits 150m north of Glebe Farm; the other sits 150m east of Wasperton Farm. Both are being retained as part of the proposals

3.26 West of the Site is the River Avon which sits to the west of the A429 Stratford Road.

3.27 Thelsford Brook sits 250 south of the site and runs east to west, joining the River Avon south of Wasperton village.

3.28 There is one source protection zone (SPZ) within 1.5 km of the Site. This is a pumping station (at grid ref OS grid ref SP 27164 58002) and associated covered reservoir, located 1.1km south of the Site and 200m south west of Thelsford Farm adjacent to the A429.

3.29 The is an agricultural water abstraction from the River Avon that imports irrigation water to the farm from the River Avon, close to the Forge Cottage.

Groundwater.

3.30 The geological assessment also included some initial groundwater testing and noted a water table set out in the table below. This suggests winter groundwater depths of between 0.9-1.2m below ground level.

Table 3.1 – Initial ground water monitoring [3]

Date	WA19-05W	WA19-09W	WA19-27W	WA19-65W	WA19-68W
	mAOD	mAOD	mAOD	mAOD	mAOD
21/11/2019	45.72	44.86	43.98	45.72	43.82
03/12/2019	45.69	44.82	43.94	45.70	43.82
18/12/2019	45.72	44.84	43.97	45.77	43.90

Borehole locations and reference numbers can be found on plan WSP 20-1

Flood Risk

3.31 The majority of the site sits in Flood Zone 1 although the southern part of the Site is within Zones 2 and 3 of the Thelsford Brook floodplain.[4]

3.32 Figure 3.1 below shows an extract from the www.gov.uk flood map for planning covering the Wasperton / Barford areas.

3.33 The River Avon flood plain sits close to the western limit of the Site but the natural topography of the Avon valley means that the Site sits well above the river valley flood levels.

[3] Table 3 – Greenfield Enviro – 'A Geological Investigation & Mineral Reserves Assessment of Land at Holloway & Wasperton Farms, Nr Barford, Warwickshire, Jan 2020.

[4] magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx

Figure 3.1 Floodplain

Overburden and Soils

3.34 The overburden in the boreholes across the area of investigation generally comprised dark topsoil and a brown to greyish-brown clay, sandy clay, sandy silt or clayey silt unit, with a mean thickness of 1.5m, but ranging between 0.6m in WA19-47 to a maximum of 3.6m in borehole WA19-06.

3.35 The overburden thickness indicates overburden of less than 1m depth on the western part of the site thickening in the east to over 2m thickness in part of the eastern areas.

Residential Receptors.

3.36 The following list sets out the nearest residential receptors of which we are aware. Note that some of these locations represent a representative point for a group of dwellings.

3.37 The locations listed in the table below are the residential locations considered most sensitive to the development in particular directions from the Site. In some cases, there may be properties that are closer to the Site compared to others that are mentioned in this table. For example, this occurs at the southern edge of Barford village where the properties closest to the development are, Sandy Way and Dugard Place, but there are also village properties north of these two that are not specifically mentioned. The approach in preparing this list has been to identify the 'worst case' receptors in each direction from the Site such that those further away can expect to receive a lesser effect than the identified worst-case receptors.

Table 3.2 – Residential Receptors

Property	**Direction from site**	**OS Grid Ref**	**Shortest Distance to Site Boundary** (measured in m from the edge of the closest part of the Site)	**Notes**
Wasperton Farm	N	SP 27354 59994	65	Tenanted farm owned by the quarry landlord; Farm house is Grade II listed.
Holloway Farm	N	SP 27243 59689	5	Tenanted farm owned by the quarry landlord;
Sandy Way, Barford	N	SP 27169 60230	325	This is a cluster of approx. 65 residential properties.
Dugard Place / Wasperton Lane, Barford	N	SP 27253 60368	290	This is a cluster of approx. 40 residential properties.
Barford Village	N	SP 27058 60821	768 (measurement is to the village hall / approx. village centre)	• Cluster of residential properties. Grid Ref is for the village hall. Properties at Sandy Way (see below) are the closest part of the village to the Site • Village contains approx. 40 Grade II and 2 Grade ii* listed buildings.
Barford School (Playing Field)	N	SP 27201 60664	575	
Barford School (main building)	N	SP 27164 60774	670	
Middle Watchbury Farm	N	SP 27702 60455	278	

Lower Watchbury Farm	N	SP 28047 60575	434	This is a cluster of properties including the Granary/ the Dairy and the Stables.
The Green Barn House	NE	SP 28306 60316	424	
Watchbury Hill	NE	SP 28378 60373	512	A large private residential dwelling on Watchbury Hill.
Woodlands House	NE	SP 28641 60319	736	
Wasperton Hill	E	SP 28584 59577	624	House is Grade II listed
Marl Pit Cottages	SE	SP 28219 59061	244	
Seven Elms Barn	S	SP 27733 58807	171	House is Grade II listed
Glebe Farm	S	SP 27307 58824	10	
Wasperton House	SW	SP 26903 59055	193	House is Grade II listed
Wasperton Village	SW	SP 26859 59021	243	• The Elms is Grade II listed • Church of St John the Baptist is Grade II listed • Old Manor House is Grade II* listed • Scheduled monument at the SW edge of village.

Grovefields House	W	SP 26472 59574	621	House is Grade II listed
The Forge Cottage	W	SP 27048 59756	88	House is Grade II listed
Wellesbourne Road / Brembridge Close, Barford	NW	SP 26991 60135	373	This is a cluster of commercial and residential properties.

Designated Bio and Geodiversity Sites

3.39 There are no nationally designated geo or biodiversity sites on or adjacent to the Site.

3.40 The nearest bio-diversity sites are; -

Table 3.3 – Biodiversity Sites

Designated Site	**Direction from site**	**OS Grid Ref**	**Shortest Distance to Site Boundary** (measured in m from the edge of the closest part of the Site)	**Notes**
Sherbourne Meadows SSSI	NW	SP 24075 61739	3,500	A series of eight adjoining unimproved fields lying on either side of Sherbourne Brook
Unnamed pond and drain at Holloway farm and Wasperton Farm - Local wildlife site	On site	SP 27443 59904	0	Comprises the northern section of a field drain and pond (SE of the Wasperton Farm buildings) which links to the river Avon.
River Avon - Local wildlife site – SP15Li8f	W	SP 27033 59804	50	

Hampton Wood Local wildlife site (SP25P1)	W	SP 25648 59814	1,441	
Copdock Hill Local wildlife site SP25P2	W	SP 25378 59224	1,717	
Watchbury Hill Woodland Local wildlife site SP26V2	NE	SP 28403 60344	466	
Firtree Hill Spiney Local wildlife site SP25Z3	S	SP 27974 58158	631	

3.41 There were no geodiversity sites identified in the vicinity of the Site.

Archaeology and Heritage

3.42 Submitted as part of this screening and scoping request is an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment prepared by Phoenix Consulting Archaeology.

3.43 There are five scheduled monuments within 1.5km of the Site and sixty listed buildings, most being grade II and concentrated within Barford village. A small number of these are grade II*. There are no Grade 1 listings.

3.44 There are conservation areas centred on Barford and Wasperton villages.

3.45 There are no registered parks and gardens nor any battlefield sites.

3.46 As regards archaeological remains, the Site contains only two recorded HER entries, dating to the Roman and post- Medieval periods. However, a 1.5km study radius (drawn from the Site's outer edge) includes an additional 137 HER records, dating back to early prehistoric times. Records include a number of early prehistoric findspots, relating to Palaeolithic and Mesolithic material, with other finds and monuments dating between the Neolithic period and the Iron Age. It is clear that the local landscape has witnessed a considerable continuity of prehistoric human activity, most likely including intermittent, possibly seasonal activity, with later prehistoric monuments and finds attesting to sedentary occupation.

3.47 The most notable feature of the wider Roman landscape is the Fosse Way, the Roman road linking Exeter and Lincoln (Margary 1973). The road now mostly follows the line of the B4455 through the county, within 6km to the SE of the Site. A significant Roman inhumation cemetery is located to the west of the Site; an area also used for burial during the Saxon period (Carver et al. 2009). Rural settlements including enclosed farmsteads are also present within the search

radius, including three Scheduled Monuments. Several sites also attest to local settlement continuity from the Iron Age to Roman period.

3.48 Occupation on the area continued into the Saxon and Medieval periods, with a substantial Saxon cemetery located to the west of the Site. Grave goods from the cemetery included weaponry and items of personal adornment. It is probable that a contemporary settlement existed within the immediate landscape. A single sunken-featured building of this period and a few isolated finds are also recorded from the search area. Local Medieval settlement is characterised by nucleated villages and the Scheduled Monument of Thelsford Priory. Contemporary activity within the Site and its environs is most likely to have been principally agricultural in nature; evidenced by the remnants of ridge -and-furrow cultivation.

3.49 That only two HER records are recorded for the Site, is likely due to the lack of archaeological fieldwork having taken place there. Judging from the concentrated archaeological evidence for the wider study area, one could assume that archaeology of various dates could exist within the Site confines. Further evaluation would be required to substantiate this view.

Public Rights Of Way

3.50 Only one public right of way exists on site being bridleway W101a which crosses the southern part of the Site and follows a farm access track from the A429 Stratford Road, to Marl Pit Cottages and Heathcote Farm to the east of the Site.

3.51 Off site footpaths nearby are: -

- W97 located to the west of the A429 and running north – south between Wasperton village to The Forge Cottage;
- W101, located to the east of the Site running NW – SE and connecting Wasperton Lane to Heathcote Farm via Wasperton Hill;
- W100 to the south of the Site, running east – west and parallel to W101a, and linking the A429 at Wasperton to Woozeley Bridge near Ashorne.

Figure 3.2 - Extract from www.rightsofway (warwickshire.gov.uk) showing 1998 Definitive Map

Aerodrome Safeguarding

3.52 The site is beyond 15km from any CCA certified aerodromes, the nearest being Coventry airport which is 16km from the Site.

3.53 The only operational airfield within 15km of the Site (of which we are aware) is Wellesbourne Mountford airfield (grid ref OS grid ref SP 26591 54999) which is an unlicenced aerodrome[5] 3.5km to the south of the Site.

4 Development Proposal

General Proposal

4.1 The development proposed can be summarised as a sand and gravel quarry working approximately 2.27 million tonnes of mineral. The site will be worked in a phased manner and reinstated using imported inert materials to recreate agricultural land together with a new area of ecological habitat on a proposed silt lagoon. Output is expected to be 250,000 tonnes per annum.

4.2 Ancillary to the excavation will be the following associated facilities: -

- New quarry access onto the A429 Stratford Road;
- Low level processing plant (approx. 8-10m high);
- Single storey site office, two weighbridges and a wheelwash;
- Silt lagoons;
- Workshops;
- Environmental screening works e.g., 3-5m high bunds;
- Internal haul routes and water management system;
- Dust suppression sprays in the plant site area;
- Other facilities usual for a quarry development of this type.

Draft Working Scheme

4.3 Submitted as part of this screening and scoping request is a set of 5 draft development plans that show the proposed development through its life time.

4.4 These plans are: -

- LD135-WSP-002 - Site Set Up;
- LD135-WSP-006 - Plant Site Layout;
- LD135-WSP-003 - Working Plan 1 (Phases 2 -6);

[5] WELLESBOURNE AIRFIELD DATA

- LD135-WSP-004 - Working Plan 2 (Phases 7 -12);
- LD135-WSP-005 - Final Restoration.

Proposed Access

4.5 None of the existing agricultural accesses to the Site are considered suitable for quarry traffic. All three are too narrow for two-way HGV traffic and the southern access (to Marl Pit Cottages) is also shared by a public bridleway. Smiths wishes to avoid mixing site traffic with farm and pedestrian traffic as much as possible.

4.6 Smiths therefore propose a new dedicated quarry access that will link to the A429 Stratford Road (Approx. grid ref OS grid ref SP 27099 59490) on a straight flat section of road approximately mid-way between Wasperton village and Forge Cottage. This access road will be 250m long, level, hard surfaced and have screening bunds along its length. It will be wide enough to accommodate two-way HGVs traffic. At the eastern end of the road there will also be a wheelwash for outbound vehicles in order to maintain highway cleanliness.

4.7 Due to its length, the new access road will also be long enough to ensure that quarry traffic will not back up onto the public highway.

4.8 Visibility splays of 215m each way will be required as this section of road is at the national speed limit.

4.9 Either side of the access road there will be a low 2-3m high soil bund so that noise from site traffic will be contained within the confines of the road.

4.10 The access road will be subject to a low-speed restriction for both safety and dust control.

Proposed Plant Site

4.11 The proposed plant site sits centrally within the overall site. It comprises a fixed plant that will be approximately 8-10m high at its highest point. The attached Proposed Plant Site plan shows a typical layout and the attached Molsen Plant plan gives an idea of the type of plant proposed. Although the final plant design has yet to be concluded at this stage.

4.12 The plant site will be enclosed by 4-5m high screening bunds. These will be constructed from stripped soils; will be seeded and will be retained for the duration of the development.

4.13 The plant site bund will be broken in the following places: -

- On its western side where the Site access road comes in;
- In the north east corner to allow access to Phases 2 and 3; and
- To the south east to provide a means of access between the workings and the plant.

4.14 Within the plant site there will be a primary surge pile to feed the processing plant. This will be to the east of the plant, inside the bund; and to the south and west of the plant structure, there will be stocking space for processed products. See plan LD135-WSP-006.

4.15 Within the plant site there will be a one-way traffic system for HGVs. HGVs coming into the Site will enter over a dedicated 'incoming' weighbridge, before progressing in a clockwise manner around the plant site to collect aggregate or deliver restoration materials.

4.16 HGVs collecting aggregate will be loaded in the stocking area then progress clockwise round the stock yard, through a wheelwash and then the outbound weighbridge, before re-joining the A429 Stratford Road.

4.17 HGVs bringing restoration materials to the Site will follow the same route but instead of collecting aggregate, will peel off to the active restoration area, deposit their material, and return to the plant site area before passing through the wheelwash, weighbridge and either collecting clean aggregate or leaving the Site.

4.18 The quarry surge pile will be fed using standard articulated all-terrain vehicles which will shuttle between the working Phase and the surge pile. These vehicles will never enter the public highway so do not need to use the weighbridges and the wheel wash.

4.19 The north west corner of the plant site will be used to concentrate the site administration facilities. This will include the Site office, weighbridges, staff car park and two workshop / stores buildings. The intention is to restrict the number of people needing to venture into the stock yard and quarry areas, thereby 'designing in' safe working practices that reduce the risks to pedestrians in particular in the operational parts of the Site.

Office, weighbridge and Car Park

4.20 The office is likely to be a prefabricated single storey, flat rooved modular type structure. The current design is based on three standard porta-cabins fitted together to provide a single building. This is similar to the office at Smiths Bubbenhall site.

4.21 A car park is positioned next to the office and has its own spur road off the main access, so cars and HGVs only need to share the main section of the access road.

4.22 The office will provide the weighbridge office as well as the main site management, meeting room and canteen / welfare facilities.

Stores and Workshop

4.23 These will be steel portal framed buildings that will be large enough to allow mobile plant e.g., excavators, to be serviced and maintained in the dry.

Silt Lagoon

4.24 To the south of the plant Site there will be a silt lagoon system comprising a larger southern silt settlement lagoon and a smaller northern clean water lagoon. These are shown on the LD135-WSP-002 - 004.

4.25 This lagoon system will provide a recirculatory water system that will feed clean water to the processing plant; and accept silt laden water from the plant. Silt is allowed to settle out in this silt lagoon. Clean water will then decant from the silt lagoon into a separate clean water lagoon before being returned back to the plant for processing use once again.

4.26 The silt lagoon will be created from the Phase 1 excavation area and will be relatively shallow being initially 3-4m deep. This depth will reduce over time as the lagoon fills with silt.

4.27 The lagoon system will be formed from the Phase 1 mineral extraction area.

4.28 Following completion of mineral extraction operations at the Site the lagoons will be restored to create an area of ecological habitat comprising a mix of wet areas, rough grassland and areas of natural regeneration. The aim is to enhance the overall biodiversity of the site. This is discussed further in the restoration section below.

Phasing - General

Site Development

4.29 The LD135-WSP-002 Site Set Up plan shows how the first stages of the quarry development will be undertaken.

4.30 The site set up will include the following: -

- Construction of the new access road between the plant site and the A429 Stratford Road;
- Stripping of soils from the plant site and Phases 1 and 2;
- Creation of screening bunds surrounding the plant site and alongside the access road;
- Creation of screening bunds on the edges of Phases 1, and 2;
- Storage of excess soils into Phase 11 (east of the lagoons);
- Installation of the processing plant;
- Construction of the offices, weighbridges, wheelwash, car park workshops etc.;
- Excavation of the Phase 1 sand and gravel and placement of it onto the stripped Phase 2 area;
- Dewatering of Phase 1 with clean water being discharged from site;

- Construction of the silt and freshwater lagoons;
- Diversion of powerlines.

Phasing of Extraction

4.31 The phasing of extraction, once the silt lagoon has been created, will start from the north of the site and progress in an anticlockwise sequence around the plant site and lagoons.

4.32 As each Phase progresses, the placement of restoration materials will be undertaken in exhausted Phases so that the restoration follows quickly behind the completion of extraction.

4.33 Once the plant and silting system is operational, Smiths will start to draw down the stock piles **Phase 1** sand and gravel (that is temporarily stock piled in Phase 2.) This stock piled material will be worked down until it has all been processed. Once the Phase1 stocks have been processed, excavation of the **Phase 2** insitu sand and gravel will commence.

4.34 **Phase 3** will see soils stripped and bunds erected around the perimeter of Phase 3. Placement of restoration materials into Phase 2 will commence. Phase 3 material will be hauled to the plant site for processing.

4.35 **Phase 4** will commence with the erection of a screening bund along its northern boundary to protect Holloway and Wasperton Farms. Restoration of Phase 3 will commence as Phase 4 sand and gravel extraction commences.

4.36 **Phases 5 to 10** will then continue in the same vein with soils being used to create visual and acoustic screens around the working areas. Meanwhile placement of restoration materials will take place in the preceding Phases.

4.37 The final extraction area is **Phase 12,** which is the plant site. The processing plant will be used to process part of the material from Phase 12, with the final material beneath the plant being dealt with either as an as dug material or processed using a short-term mobile plant.

Phasing of Restoration

4.38 The restoration phasing is intended to follow on closely behind the mineral working phases such that the restoration of Phase 12 will be completed soon after the plant site has been removed.

4.39 The silt and freshwater ponds will be allowed to naturally regenerate and develop as an ecological habitat that links to the local farm drain network which acts as a wildlife corridor.

4.40 All other working areas will be restored back to agriculture using stored soils from the Site. Where practical, strip and direct place method of soil movement will be employed.

4.41 A key part of the restoration aims is that all hedgerows are to be retained so that the existing field pattern will be maintained in the restored site giving instant maturity to the landscape. This approach will sterilise some workable minerals beneath the hedges and standoffs, but the loss is considered to be worth the biodiversity gain in this instance due to the maturity of the hedges concerned, compared to the low volume of mineral sterilised due to the shallow nature of the deposit.

4.42 Once restoration is complete, the view for the site will be very similar to that which currently exists in terms of topography field patterns and land use.

Sand and Gravel Method of Working

4.43 Soils and overburden will be stripped and placed on a phase-by-phase basis using 360° excavator and all terrain dump trucks. This is likely to take place once each year and will be undertaken as temporary operation.

4.44 Top and sub soils will be separately stripped and stored with the different soils types that are put into store being separated with an appropriate separating medium e.g., terram. It is anticipated that between 1 and 1.2 m depth of soils will be stripped from each working area.

4.45 Topsoil's will be stored up to 3m high and subsoils to 5m high. Where possible soils will be stripped and directly placed into restoration areas.

4.46 Sand and gravel excavation will be undertaken via a single 360° excavator supplying sand and gravel to the processing plant surge pile via all terrain dump trucks.

Hours of Operation

4.47 The Site is expected to operate to those typical sand and gravel quarries. These are typically expressed as

- Monday to Friday – 0700 – 1900
- Saturdays 0700 – 1300
- Sundays and bank holidays – No operations.

4.48 Whilst these hours are typical of those set out in planning permissions, in practice, regular operations usually cease by 5pm each evening, giving a nominal 10-hour period of activity per week day.

Restoration Proposals

4.49 Phase 1 will be used as a silt lagoon throughout the life of the Site and once excavated and infilled with silt, will be allowed to naturally regenerate. That natural regeneration process will commence as soon as the lagoon become active for silting and evolve throughout the life of the lagoon, as marginal plants become established. As the silt deposits build up, beaches will form in the lagoon

close to the discharge points and these too will become colonised as they dry out. Wet areas will be retained as part of the habitat creation aims. Infill rates are expected to match sand and gravel sales rate i.e., 250,000 tonnes per annum.

4.50 The remainder of the site (Phases 2-12) will be restored to agriculture. As the water table in the site is so close to the existing ground surface, the use of imported inert materials will be necessary to bring the land surface back up above the water table.

Method of Restoration.

4.51 Phase 1 will be allowed to naturally regenerate so little work will be required to restore it. When the mineral working is completed the water recirculation will cease and the water level in the lagoon can be expected to fall to match the local water table. This will reduce the areas of standing water (as the silt lagoon water level will generally be higher than the water table) and increase the dry land area. This will also speed up the drying of the lagoon beaches, encouraging natural regeneration on those areas.

4.52 In Phases 2 -12 imported materials will be required to create a farmable surface. As the infill is likely to be less porous than the sand and gravel it is replacing, the final profile of each restored field will be raised slightly by upto 1m in its centre, to aid drainage and run off. Once the field profiles are created, top and sub soils will be replaced. The replaced soils will be a combination of direct placed soils and soils retrieved from store. This minor raising of the field profiles will not be significant and visually the fields will have the same appearance as those that exist today. i.e., the intention is not to overfill these areas for commercial reasons, it is merely a means to build in gravitational drainage.

4.53 Imported restoration materials will be delivered by road going HGVs. These will access the various phases via the plant site and internal haul road system. Restoration materials will be offloaded in the restoration area before being compacted and graded by on site plant (typically a low ground pressure dozer and a 360° excavator. The empty HGV will then return to the plant site and pass through the wheel wash before re-joining the public highway.

4.54 By allowing the silt lagoons to naturally regenerate, the site restoration should be capable of completion within 18 months of sand and gravel operations ceasing and the plant site being removed.

4.55 It has yet to be decided whether the quarry access road will be removed following the completion of operation or whether there will be some benefit to the restored farm in maintaining that access for future use.

Biodiversity Enhancement and Hedegrows

4.56 A key element of the development is minimising the effects on existing ecology and also providing biodiversity enhancement. The forthcoming Environment Bill already anticipates legislation for new developments to provide a 10% increase

in biodiversity and Warwickshire's own development plan policies already promote a similar aim.

4.57 Smiths undertook a preliminary ecological and visual assessments of the Site in 2020 and as a result, identified the existing hedgerows provide the most prominent biodiverse habitat in the Site. Visually the hedges also fragment the Site and already screen views into the mineral reserve. Following a review of that information compared to the geological assessment, the decision was made to retain the existing hedgerows, together with appropriate stand offs to protect root zones. Smiths concluded that the volume of mineral that could be won from beneath the hedges was insufficient to warrant the loss of biodiversity and landscape impact generated by removing the hedges.

4.58 Similarly, the two main drains through the site will also be retained for both biodiversity and long-term water management.

4.59 Younger hedges on the southern and south eastern part of the Site in particular will continue to be maintained in terms of their width, but will be allowed to increase in height to provide stronger visual screening for properties from the south and east. This is particularly aimed at screening views in Phases from Seven Elms, Glebe Farm, Marl Pit Cottages and Wasperton Hill.

4.60 The direct impacts of the proposed works are therefore largely confined to the intensively farmed arable fields where there is little existing biodiversity due to the agricultural practices.

4.61 To enhance biodiversity on Site, the final restoration proposals will see the silt lagoon (Phase 1 area) being allowed to naturally regenerate. Experience has shown that whilst silt lagoons can be capped off and re soiled to create agricultural land, they are much better suited to bio diverse habitats due to their variable nature. Restored lagoons typically contain a mix of dry open areas; marginal / ephemeral water edge zones and areas of deeper permeant water. And these zones are usually surrounded by naturally regenerated scrub, willow and reed on the bank sides. As the silt lagoon area already links to the existing drain network and a number of surrounding hedgerows, it is expected that the natural regeneration occurs quickly.

4.62 Additional tree planting in the form of woodland blocks will extend an enhance the existing woodland on site and additional new hedgerows will link the woodland to the rest of the site, creating wildlife corridors linking north to south and also east to west across the site.

4.63 The expectation is that this approach will result in a greater than 10% increase in biodiversity.

4.64 The approach of retaining hedges and drains has been employed by Smiths at its current Wolston Fields Farm site and has proved very effective at both managing wildlife habitat and leaving a mature landscape.

5 Planning History

5.1 The Site was the subject of a previous planning application for extraction of sand and gravel made by Pioneer Aggregates (UK) Limited in the late 1980s'. That proposal comprised: -

- Extraction of 2.7 million tonnes of sand and gravel;
- Erection of a processing plant and associated infrastructure;
- Use of field conveyors;
- Restoration to two large lakes;
- 106 lorry movement per day;
- 20 car and van movement per day.

5.2 That application was initially refused by the county council with the three grounds for refusal being: -

- Unacceptable environmental effect on Barford village due to noise and dust;
- Loss of high-grade agricultural land;
- Prejudice to the council tourism strategy.

5.3 Pioneer challenged that refusal and was granted planning permission on appeal in August 1989 (Ref APP/H3700/A/88/92504) subject to 49 conditions.

5.4 The inspector at the appeal concluded that at the time there was a significant shortfall in the county's sand and gravel landbank and that the three grounds for refusal could all be dealt with in other ways or were less significant than the need for the sand and gravel.

5.5 However, a subsequent legal challenge made against the appeal decision was ultimately successful and the appeal decision was quashed. At that point Pioneer decided to no longer pursue the proposed development although it remained a future mineral extraction aspiration within their minerals' portfolio for many years after.

5.6 Since that application was quashed, there have been some notable planning changes off site but in the immediate locality. In particular, the Barford bypass has been constructed and further commercial and residential properties have been constructed at the southern end of Barford village, in the angle created between Wellesbourne Road and the bypass.

6 Land Ownership

6.1 Wasperton Farm is owned by St Johns College, Oxford and tenanted. Smiths Concrete has the right to take a lease of the Site in the event that planning

permission is granted for mineral extraction. The intention is that the restored site will be returned, in phases, to the landowner and its tenant so that farming can resume on the restored areas, as they become available.

7 Likely Significant Environmental Effects

7.1 This section considers various environmental topic areas typical for a project of this nature.

Assessment Parameters

7.2 In considering the relevance of the various topic areas, the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 requires the assessors to consider '*the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development…..*'

7.3 Schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 states that the information for inclusion in an environmental statement should include; -

7.4 'A description of the factors specified in regulation 4 (2) **likely** to be **significantly** affected by the development…..'

7.5 It is therefore clear that the scoping needs to follow a considered route and should not become an all-consuming listing of every conceivable effect that might occur. The issues to be assessed must be both 'likely' to occur and 'significant' if they do occur.

7.6 The following topic areas considers the potential effects of the proposal at this Site.

Landscape / Visual impact

7.7 The Site comprises a relatively flat topography falling very gently from north east to south west. At the north east corner (in Phase 3) the land reaches a high point of 47.56m aOD and falls to approximately 45m aOD at the southern boundary. This represents a fall of approximately 1 in 500 across the entire Site.

7.8 The views from the north are perhaps the most critical due to the number of potential receptors proximity at Barford village which is the largest settlement around the Site. The visual effect at Barford will be restricted to properties at the southern edge of the village e.g., on Sandy Way, Wasperton Lane, Dugard Place and Wellesbourne Road. These areas all sit broadly level with the Site (at 45-46m aOD) so do not have elevated views over the Site. This restricts views from them to the closest fields between them and Wasperton and Holloway Farms. The main body of the village north of Wasperton Lane has no views of the Site as buildings and topography screen out those views for the rest of the village.

7.9 To the north east, the ground rises north of Wasperton Lane upto 85m aOD at Watchbury Hill. This zone is occupied by sporadic farms and residential properties which are elevated compared to the Site but generally speaking have very restricted (if any) views of the Site due to the mature hedgerows and woodlands along and north of Wasperton lane as well as on the Site its self. The most elevated receptor is at Watchbury Hill (both the name of a residential property and the hill itself), over 1km from the Site which is located in densely wooded slopes of Watchbury Hill.

7.10 To the east the land rises to 85m aOD there being two groups of residential receptors being Wasperton Hill (65m aOD) and Marl Pit Cottages (55m aOD). These will have some limited views of the eastern side of the Site, although again these views are fragmented due to the retained hedgerows on site and those that sit between the Site and Wasperton Hill / Marl Pit Cottages.

7.11 As the land to the south and west generally sits at or below the Site level, there are few direct views of the Site from those directions. Even Wasperton village, though close by, is screened by the local vegetation hedgerows and built structures.

7.12 To the south of the Site there is the low-lying land occupied by properties such as Glebe Farm and Seven Elms. These sit at a level similar to the Site and are separated from it by a mature hedgerow that restricts most views of the site. The one notable exception is proposed Phase 4 which is close to Glebe Farm. There is a separating hedgerow however, the proximity of the Glebe Farm buildings to Phase 4 means there is clear potential for visual effects to arise during in the workings there.

7.13 Within the site the let residential properties (being Holloway Cottages and Wasperton Farm (house)) both sit next to the proposed development's northern limit, making them the two closest visual receptors. These are owned by the mineral landowner but nonetheless, sit next to proposed areas of excavation and within 250 - 500m from the proposed plant site. The aspect of both residential properties is such that they do not overlook look the proposed quarry and are generally screened from it by existing farm buildings in their curtilage.

Landscape Character

7.14 The landscape character of the area is one of low-lying farmland fragmented by mature hedgerows and small woodland blocks. The area is not subject to any special landscape designation and it falls outside of the west midlands green belt.

7.15 As the proposal seek to retain the existing hedgerows and field patterns, and to restore the majority of the site to similar topographic levels and farming uses.

7.16 During the working phases there will be temporary changes to the landscape within the Site as the various areas are stripped of soils, bunds erected, mineral

excavated and site restored. Similarly, the presence of the plant site will be a prominent though temporary change.

7.17 The final restoration of the silt lagoons to an area of biodiverse habitat will result in permanent change to the current agricultural use in Phase, but overall is not considered to be likely to significantly alter the landscape character as similar wet / marshy habitat can be found along the Avon valley and its tributaries.

7.18 Overall, the likelihood is that there will be a temporary localised change to landscape character during working but that in the longer term those impacts are likely to be quickly reversed.

Proposed Work

7.19 A full landscape and visual impact assessment is proposed for the development to consider both the visual effects and the impacts on landscape character arising from the proposals.

Ecology

7.20 Submitted as part of this screening and scoping request, is a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) that was undertaken at the site in July 2020. This identifies a number of species for which further assessment in recommended in section 5.0 of that PEA.

Designated Sites

7.21 There are no designated sites in or around the development.

Protected Species

7.22 It should be noted that the PEA was prepared on the basis that the whole site was to be worked with hedgerows and drains removed. Since that report was produced, Smiths has altered it strategy and now intends to leave trees, hedgerows and drains intact. As a consequence, the likely effects on species such as otter, white clawed crayfish and bats has significantly reduced as the development will now be confined to the intensively farmed fields alone.

7.23 On this basis that the likely hood of significant effects on bats and nesting birds has reduced we have concluded that the surveys for bats white clawed crayfish, otter and water voles are not necessary.

Proposed Work

7.24 Based on the findings of the PEA, the EIA will include detailed assessments to cover;

- Bats;
- Badger;
- Breeding Birds;

- Great crested newt;
- Invertebrates;
- Reptile surveys.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

7.25 Submitted as part of this screening and scoping request, is an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment prepared by Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Limited.

7.26 That report notes only two records for the site but concludes that this paucity of records is likely to be due to a lack of previous fieldwork on this site, given the higher incidence of finds in the heritage record from the surrounding landscape.

7.27 As regards the cultural heritage on site, there are no statutory designated heritage assets on Site but there are circa 60 listed building within 1.5km of it. Most of these are remote and concentrated in Barford village however, a smaller number of Grade II listed buildings do exist closer to the Site, most notably at the following locations: -

- Wasperton Farm;
- Wasperton Hill;
- Seven elms;
- Wasperton House and the Elms;
- Forge Cottage.

7.28 Farther south and west there are also two scheduled monuments: -

- Thelsford Priory;
- Enclosures and drove road at Manor House Farm Wasperton.

7.29 Thelsford is 440m from, and the Manor House Farm site is over 600m from, the nearest points on the Site.

Proposed Work

7.30 The desk-based assessment notes that further work will be required to assess both the effects on archaeology and heritage assets.

7.31 The purpose of this scoping exercise is to agree what the appropriate works might entail.

Soils and Agricultural Land Classification

7.32 Wasperton Farm is an arable operation with best and most versatile soils across much of the farm.

7.33 A soils assessment undertaken for the Pioneer planning application highlighted the farm comprises ALC grades 2, 3a and 3b land. It is not expected that this will have changed since then.

7.34 Figure 7.1 below shows the previously surveyed ALC areas.

Figure 7.1 ALC grades Extract from

7.35 In the original application these indicated the ALC areas of best and most versatile land (see Table 7.1)

Table 7.1 – ALC

Area of land in each Grade

Grade	Hectares	% of total area
2	11.5	12.8
3a	40.7	45.5
3b	33.4	37.3
3c	3.1	3.5
Non agricultural	0.8	0.9
Total	89.5	100

7.36 The proposed silt lagoon area will not be restored back to agriculture, being instead used to create enhanced biodiversity on Site. This will result in the loss of approximately 6 hectares of grade 3a land at that location

7.37 To compensate for that loss, the soils stripped and stored will be reused elsewhere in the restoration of the farm on land that is currently identified as grade 3b (i.e., not best and most versatile.)

7.38 Overall, the proposed scheme will result in the net loss of 6 hectares of grade 3b farm land. However, it is intended that with the excess of soils that will arise, that is may be possible to leave the farm with more grade 2 and 3a land than it has at present to compensate for the 6-ha loss of farmable land due to the silt lagoon restoration proposals.

7.39 If there is any excess remaining after enhancement work is done, it will be either sold off from Site or offered up to the farm for agricultural improvements elsewhere on the wider farm beyond the quarry area.

Proposed Work

7.40 The EIA will include an assessment for the proposed development and the use of the soil resource in the Site restoration to ensure that the equivalent area of BMV land is created through the restoration of the Site.

Hydrology / Hydrogeology and Flood Risk

7.41 Water management will be a key element at the Site as the ground water is known to be within approximately 1m of the ground surface.

7.42 There are also a number of agricultural drains around the farm which are going to be retained, as well as two small ponds (one adjacent to Wasperton Farm buildings and one adjacent to the bridleway near Glebe Farm) which will also be retained.

7.43 The proposed mineral workings are likely to be approximately 4m below the existing ground surface so it is expected that the workings will need to be dewatered on a phase-by-phase basis. This will be subject to the usual statutory licenses for water abstraction, transfer and discharge.

7.44 As much water as possible will be retained within the site operations from washing however any excess water will be discharged, off site. Full details of that are yet to be clarified but is seems likely that the main option would appear to be a discharge to the River Avon either directly or via the Thelsford Brook through the existing drain network. Any discharge will be fully cleaned before leaving the Site.

7.45 The southern limit of the Site sits in Flood Zones 2 and 3 linked to the Thelsford Brook see Figure 3.1 above. No built development is proposed in that part of the Site, the main uses being mineral extraction and restoration to agriculture.

Proposed Work

7.46 The proposed EIA will include a full assessment of the hydrology, hydrogeology and a flood risk impact assessment of the proposals both during and after restoration.

7.47 Provisions regarding the details of dewatering will be addressed however, as these matters now fall under the statutory water licensing legislation, the main controls once the site become operational will be via the Environment Agency and any assessment for the EIA should be restricted to land use issues only.

Highways and traffic

7.48 The proposed development will require the construction of a new access onto the A429. This is currently likely to be a simple 'T' junction with appropriate visibility spays in either direction.

7.49 Traffic generated could be up to approximately 200 HGV movements per day. (i.e., 100 two-way movements).

7.50 It is expected that most of the Site traffic will be travelling to the motorway network at Warwick although there will be some sales into Stratford and the markets to the south.

7.51 Traffic levels on Stratford Road have not yet been assessed by Smiths although anecdotally, the road does appear to have an existing and regular flow of traffic.

7.52 The worst-case traffic generation assumes an average of 54 loads per day of sand and gravel and a corresponding 54 loads per day of restoration materials coming in. i.e., 216 HGV movements per day.

7.53 Smiths will seek to utilise its transport as effectively as it can and backhaul restoration materials where practicable. However, for the purposes of the EIA we will use a worst-case scenario of no backhauling in order to assess the traffic effects.

7.54 This process will also highlight whether there is a need for any improvement for traffic turning into the Site e.g., ghost islands, deceleration lanes or other traffic controls.

Proposed Work

7.55 The EIA will include a Transport statement to address;

- The existing highway conditions;

- its accident record;
- the effects of site generated traffic on the local networks; and
- the proposed layout to ensure it is safe and feasible.

Noise

7.56 As set out above there are residential properties on all sides of the Site, some closer than others. Table 3.2 above sets out the separation distances. The Location plan also shows the locations of the residential properties in relation to the Site.

7.57 The working scheme has been designed to provide temporary noise screening bunds around the periphery of the working areas in order to contain noise within the Site when operations are in those working areas.

7.58 As the workings progress around the Site, noise sources will regularly relocate to new areas such that the noise effects of the workings will vary significantly from Phase to Phase. For example, the noise effect on Wasperton Lane properties and Barford will be significantly different between Phases 3 and 7.

Proposed Work

7.59 The EIA will include an assessment for the proposed development that will consider the effects on noise sensitive properties. This will accord with the minerals noise guidance in planning practice guidance paragraphs 019 -22 Reference ID: 27-019-20140306 as well as established noise assessment guidance documents such as BS4142.

Dust

7.60 The receptors highlighted in the noise assessment will also be assessed for potential effects of dust.

Proposed Work

7.61 A dust report will be prepared to assess the likely effects of dust and to set out a dust management plan for the site during its preparation and operational Phase.

7.62 This will accord with the minerals noise guidance in planning practice guidance paragraphs 023 - 31 Reference ID: 27-019-20140306 as well as established guidance from the Institute of Air Quality Management in their document 'Guidance on the Assessment of Mineral Dust Impacts for Planning' May 2016 (v1.1).

Health Impact Assessment

7.63 Following comment made during the recent examination of the Warwickshire Minerals Local Plan, it is clear that there is local concern regarding the potential effects of dust and particulates on health of the community around the Site.

7.64 With this concern in mind, Smiths propose to undertake a health impact assessment linked to the dust assessment works in order to identify any issues that might arise and to introduce appropriate changes and mitigation to the scheme

where appropriate to ensure no adverse health impacts result from the proposals.

7.65 Smiths experience is that such impacts on health have not arisen at similar developments over several decades of operations. Notwithstanding that, given the statements made in the minerals local plan examination, it considers it prudent to undertake a health impact assessment to address health concerns and to aid the provision of a robust scheme to ensure such matters do arise.

Environmental Effects Summary

7.66 In summary the proposals contain a number of elements that have the potential to result in likely significant effects.

7.67 The scheme to date has been devised based on information available. Based on that information the following assessments will be undertaken: -

- Ecology, to include relevant protected species surveys;
- Landscape and Visual Impact;
- Transport and highways;
- Archaeology and Cultural heritage. This will include such evaluation site works as might be agreed with the county archaeologist;
- Soils and agriculture;
- Hydrology / Hydrogeology;
- Flood Risk;
- Noise;
- Dust;
- Health impact.

8 EIA Screening

8.1 "EIA development" means development which is either—

(a) Schedule 1 development; or

(b) Schedule 2 development likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location;

9 EIA Screening Assessment

Schedule 1 Development

9.1 EIA Regulation 2 advises that: -

9.2 *"Schedule 1 development" means development, other than exempt development, of a description mentioned in Schedule 1.*

9.3 Schedule 1 of the Regulations lists 24 types of operations of which No. 19 is as follows: -

19. Quarries and open-cast mining where the surface of the site exceeds 25 hectares, or peat extraction where the surface of the site exceeds 150 hectares.

9.4 Planning Practice Guidance at Paragraph 017 Reference ID: 4-017-20170728 advises that if a proposed development is listed in Schedule 1, an Environmental Impact Assessment is required in every case.

9.5 Ass the Site well exceeds the 25ha criterion, this screening application therefore requests a formal recognition from the planning authority that this is EIA development.

10 EIA Scoping Request

10.1 Regulation 15 (1) of the EIA Regulations 2017 allows a prospective applicant to ask the relevant planning authority to state in writing their opinion as to the scope and level of detail of the information to be provided in the environmental statement (a "scoping opinion").

10.2 Smiths would therefore be grateful if Warwickshire County Council could provide a scoping opinion based on the proposal and information contained within this submission.

11 Conclusion

11.1 Smiths Concrete is currently in the processes of preparing a development proposal for a 2.24 million tonne sand and gravel quarry at Wasperton Farm, Barford, Warwickshire.

11.2 The site is allocated for sand and gravel extraction in the draft mineral local plan.

11.3 Smiths propose a 250,000 tonnes per annum sand and gravel operation with an on-site processing plant, silt lagoons, offices weighbridges and workshops / stores.

11.4 The site will be restored back to high grade agricultural land, except for the silt lagoons (Phase 1) which will be left to naturally regenerate. This is intended to result in an operational farm including a seasonally wet area of marshy grassland / reeds and scrub that links to the existing drains and hedges. Planting of new woodland and hedges will also be undertaken. This is expected to provide a significant enhancement to the biodiversity of what is currently intensively farmed arable land.

11.5 There will be a new hard surfaced (tarmac or concrete) site access to link the plant site to the A429 Stratford Road. This will include a wheel wash facility at the plant site end of the road. The site is expected to generate a worst case of up to 216 HGV movements per day.

11.6 The quarry itself will be dug in 12 phases, starting in the centre before progressing to the north and then following an anticlockwise series of phases around the site.

11.7 The silt lagoon and plant site will be situated in the centre of the site, 750m from the nearest point of Barford village and 600m from Wasperton village.

11.8 The land is a mix of ALC grades 2 – Grades 3b, with just over half the site being classed as best or most and most versatile quality.

11.9 With the exception of the silt lagoon area, the workings will be backfilled with inert restoration materials and topped with soils stripped from the site. This approach will ensure there is no net loss of best and most versatile land although there is expected to be a 6ha loss of farmable land although the proposals will endeavour to recreate new best and most versatile land on areas that are currently grade 3b in order to mitigate any loss.

11.10 The water table within the site is approximately 1m below the existing ground surface meaning the proposed workings will be dewatered to fully recover the mineral. This dewatering will be done on a phase-by-phase basis, with excess water being put to the sites internal water management system. Any excess water will be discharged from Site and will be subject to the necessary water discharge license.

11.11 The proposed workings are being restricted to the open field areas so that the existing hedgerows and field patterns can be retained. This sterilises a small amount of mineral, but is considered preferable as it provides significant reductions in ecological and landscape / visual impacts and retains the most important parts of the natural capital on Site.

11.12 A small part of the southern limit of the Site falls into flood zones 2 and 3 for the Thelsford Brook, however the rest of the site is in zone 1.

11.13 The EIA regulations show the proposals to fall within Schedule 1 of the regulations and therefore EIA is required. Smiths would like to formally agree and document this with the mineral planning authority.

11.14 Smiths is also seeking a scoping opinion from the planning authority to state in writing their opinion as to the scope and level of detail of the information to be provided in the environmental statement (a "scoping opinion").

11.15 It is Smiths intention to provide assessments into the following: -

- Ecology, to include relevant protected species surveys;
- Landscape and Visual Impact;
- Transport and highways;

- Archaeology and Cultural heritage. This will include such evaluation site works as might be agreed with the county archaeologist;
- Soils and agriculture;
- Hydrology / Hydrogeology;
- Flood Risk;
- Noise;
- Dust;
- Health impact.

11.16 In summary the proposals will seek planning permission for 2.24million tonne sand and gravel quarry, with associated plant site and management facilities that will be restored to agriculture and ecological habitat. The site will operate at 250,000 tonnes per annum and the working voids will be backfilled with inert materials to allow high quality agricultural land to be reinstated.

11.17 Smiths would be pleased to receive the planning authorities screening and scoping opinions in response to this proposal.

12 Photographs

Figure 12.1 – View along Wasperton Lane looking west towards Barford Note Phase 3 sits to the left of the hedge on the left side of the photograph. OS grid ref SP 27643 60193.

Figure 12.2 – View along Wasperton Lane looking east towards Watchbury Hill Note this image is taken between Green Barn Farm and the Site. OS grid ref SP 28013 60123.

Figure 12.3 – View toward the Site from Footpath W101. between Wasperton Lane and Wasperton Hill. The barn circled marks the eastern limit of the Site with the nearest working area being beyond the first hedge. Whilst views from this location are elevated above the Site, it can be seen that visually this is a relatively flat landscape with few open views of the Site. OS grid ref SP 28313 59881.

Figure 12.4 – View from Wasperton Hill Farm The red dashed line shows the closest point of mineral extraction. This image also demonstrates the way in which elevated views of the Site are fragmented by the existing mature hedgerows. OS Grid ref SP 28508 59473

Figure 12.5 – Proposed Lagoon and existing bridleway W101a The ploughed field on the left will be the south eastern side of the proposed lagoon. The drain will be retained. The bridleway shares the stoned track. This image was taken at OS Grid Ref: SP 27443 59070, north of Glebe Farm and looks northeastwards.

Figure 12.6 – View of Wasperton Hill looking over Phases 8 and 9 from OS grid ref - SP 27361 59015

Figure 12.7 – View of Holloway Farm and Phase 5 the northern limit of which is shown in a dashed red line. The land in the foreground will not be worked. This image is taken from OS grid ref SP 27187 59717 looking south, parallel to the A429 Stratford Road. Note this image contains some distortion as it is a panoramic view intending to show the access to Holloway farm and the residential unit at the farm.

Figure 12.8 – Draft working plan, Holloway Farm Photo location . The red star marks the photograph location.

Figure 12.9 – Photograph taken from Sandy Way looking south over Wasperton Farm. The tall houses on the right are on Wellesbourne Road. Wasperton Farm buildings are shown circled red. The nearest working area sits beyond Wasperton Farm buildings. Photograph taken at OS grid ref SP 27022 60253.

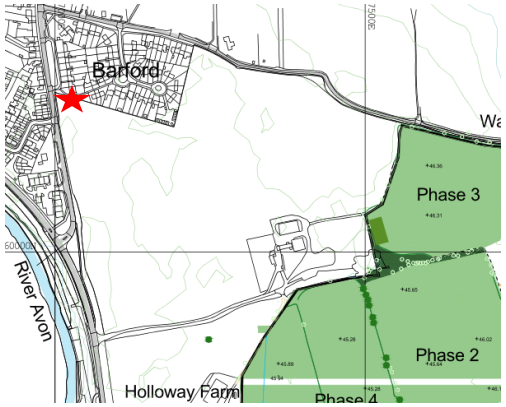

Figure 12.10 – Photo location taken from Sandy Way looking south over Wasperton Farm Photograph location shown with a red star.