

Minerals Plan Consultation; Policy M3 – Cholsey comments (From page 33)

ID No (& name of org)	Comment/issue raised
967	<p>I am a resident of Cholsey parish and I am writing to express my dismay concerning Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) flawed strategic approach to mineral extraction in this area. It seems that sites under consideration are limited to those proposed by gravel quarrying companies and or the landowners. It goes without saying that both parties will have their own reasons for selecting particular sites which are not necessarily in the best interests of the Oxfordshire as a whole. I believe OCC is abrogating its responsibilities by not comparing all the available sites and making a considered judgement about which site or sites offer the best overall solution to meet mineral extraction requirements in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>I think there are many obvious reasons why the Cholsey site is highly unlikely to be the most suitable site. But as they are not apparently obvious to the OCC I am listing them as follows: heritage, ecological, archaeology, tourism, proximity to housing, restoration, cycle path and transportation of gravel.</p> <p>Cholsey and Wallingford are both communities that have considerable historical importance. Gravel extraction would severely damage their character by spoiling the landscape and creating enormous disturbance amongst several listed buildings around the Wallingford Road that links the two communities.</p> <p>The proposed area for gravel extraction is largely permanent grazing with hedges and trees around most of the boundary. The area is mostly undisturbed and offers home to all manner of wild life.</p> <p>The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area that has evidence of both Bronze and Iron Age occupation. The area is also part of the hinterland of a major medieval town. A suitable archaeological investigation of this site must be undertaken before its archaeology is lost forever.</p> <p>In recent years, a great deal of effort has been put into developing local tourism for the economic benefit of the area. The Cholsey Steam Railway, the Agatha Christie History Trail, additional moorings on the Thames at Wallingford, additional signage in Wallingford town centre and the attempted development of Wallingford Museum to name but a few. The achievement that this effort has created will be severely undermined by this proposal to the great detriment of the area and its inhabitants.</p> <p>The area proposed is close to the homes and work places of up to 10,000 people. To subject that number of people to years of constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. Has OCC really thought this proposal through?</p> <p>I am told that there is no long-term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. Due to the proximity of the River Thames, I understand that neither a lake nor landfill is an option. So we are left with large holes to be filled with rainwater or to be dust bowls depending upon the weather. What a degradation compared with what we have now.</p> <p>As someone who cycles to and from Winterbrook to Cholsey Station, I am concerned that this proposal will prevent the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path from becoming a reality. Both communities have campaigned long and hard for this amenity. As local people know only too well, the Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast which makes it dangerous particularly for</p>

	<p>cyclists. The cycle path is a necessity.</p> <p>The OCC desires gravel extraction to be as close as possible to its point of use. Whilst this is a laudable objective, it is beyond the OCC to dictate where gravel is used. The decision of where gravel is made by the developers of the site. They will sell the gravel to their best commercial advantage irrespective of the location of use and the OCC should accept reality.</p> <p>To conclude, I sincerely believe this proposal to be ill considered when I am told from a number of sources that the material on the site is believed to be a poor quality. That together with all the aforementioned reasons compels me to implore you TO ABANDON THE PROPOSAL TO EXTRACT GRAVEL IN CHOLSEY.</p>
763	<p>I am writing this letter to support a protest against the gravel pit in Cholsey and Wallingford in Oxfordshire. Where you are planning to will destroy huge lovely country land by three big gravel pits for the next 25 years.</p> <p>It is going to be devastating for many families' homes and their lives as well. We live in Cholsey for just a short time but we completely fell in love with this place and really don't want to watch to be destroyed it in such a cruel way. Especially when I know how historically is this piece of land important.</p> <p>And what is even worse that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>Please reconsider your decision to start the gravel pit here.</p> <p>Thank you very much for reading this letter and hope you'll decide wisely.</p>
707	<p>Minerals and Waste Draft Plan Consultation</p> <p>As a member of the Cholsey community and a parent to small children I have serious concerns about the proposed gravel pit. The site is of great historical importance, not only for the Agate Christie Trail but also the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway. Both need to be treasured and safeguards for the future rather than destroyed.</p> <p>In terms of environment, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years. Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter short eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm. it would be unthinkable to destroy these habitats. Also important is the number of tourists that re attracted to the area and the social and economic impact of the loss of the Area of Outstanding beauty.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is aid to be one of the reasons that previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>I am very concerned that the development will delay plans for the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The</p>

	<p>Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist death and injuries on it. I understand from the parish Council that funds from future housing development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally full with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer. A loss of such historical and beautiful landscape is almost unthinkable not only for us, but for the generations to come.</p> <p>Cholsey is a wonderful and unspoiled village with an extremely strong sense of community. I hope these concerns are taken as seriously as they felt within our community.</p>
773	<p>I am writing to set out my objections to the proposed site for gravel extraction between Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>I acknowledge OCC's wish to move gravel extraction away from West Oxfordshire and closer to where development will be taking place i.e where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p> <p>I am concerned about the proximity of the proposed site to the homes of so many people - over 10,000 people live within a mile of the site, and many hundred live around it and will be directly and detrimentally affected by the noise, disruption and dust. In fact the proposed site abutts directly onto existing residential development and is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns no Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm. Brook House is a significant local landmark and it is wrong to destroy the setting ini which these buildings are based as the proposed gravel extraction undoubtedly would. The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people.</p> <p>In addition to the "adverse impact on ... residential amenity" that the proposed proximity site to the residential areas of both Wallingford and Cholsey causes I am particularly concerned about the adverse impact on residential amenity arising from the lorry movements to and from the site. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow and fast and dangerous for all road users but particularly for cyclists, and for pedestrians who have the option of a single width andn inadequate footpath on one side of the road and no footpath at all on the other side. Over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on the Wallingford Road (the A329 having no footpath at all for much of its length from Cholsey to Wallingford). Lorry movements from the proposed gravel site via Wallingford Road would make the road even more dangerous for drivers and too dangerous for use by</p>

pedestrians and cyclists.

In addition to the increased danger presented to all users of Wallingford Road by the proposed gravel site it would prevent the implementation of plans to improve safety for residents and road users through the provision of a cycle path along the Wallingford Road. The communities of both Cholsey and Wallingford have put great efforts into campaigning for a Wallingford to Cholsey cycle path and I am extremely concerned that the proposed gravel site would prevent a cycle path from being provided. There is now a fully costed and part funded proposal developed by the County Council and I understand from the parish council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new sources of funding from central government would turn this proposal into a long awaited reality in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the proposed gravel pit site, which means that the cycle path scheme could not be implemented due to the time limited nature of developer funding. It is vital that this safer route into Wallingford - which is after all the town where we are expected to access our key local services including doctors, dentists, local hospital, secondary school, sports facilities - is not jeopardised by the proposed gravel site nor that the existing route is made more dangerous for users by quarrying activity.

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. I understand that its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

I am concerned that the County Council has chosen to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. This does not seem a reasonable or sensible approach. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.

It does not seem to me that the county council has given sufficient consideration or taken a rational or reasonable approach to the selection of the proposed site between Cholsey and Wallingford. It is understood that the sites under consideration are only those that have been nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. This is not a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to select sites for quarrying activity and to impose upon residents the loss of amenity, inconvenience and disruption that it brings. The communities served by OCC deserve better from it in terms of the way it is carrying out its duty to plan for mineral extraction than having potential sites dictated by those with vested self interest in sites and who it is clear have little or no regard for the interest of local people and the local environment. While it is understandable that they do not, we should expect our county council and its elected leaders to take the interests of local communities into account and to seek out sites independently of quarrying companies and landowners and to carry out proper appraisals on the suitability and impact of those sites before offering them as long term mining operations.

The choice of site is puzzling also because it is understood that the gravel quality of gravel is poor on the proposed sites, which in itself raises the likelihood of greater development and upheaval, noise and disruption associated with trying to mix the gravel with broken rock to produce the quality of aggregate required. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty year ago, so it seems particularly irrational and poorly thought through to present this as the only site for long term gravel extraction.

I am also extremely concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site

	<p>being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer. The fact that this is being presented as the only option for the site once extraction ceases again makes it an unsuitable site for extraction in the first place.</p>
831	<p>I wish to register my objections to the proposed gravel pit in the Cholsey and Wallingford District which are as follows:- The gravel extraction would have a drastically adverse visual impact and create dust, noise and odours plus increased heavy lorry traffic on already ever increasingly busy roads. Existing residential development would be severely blighted by the gravel extraction. The site has footpaths, reed beds, field patterns and water couriers and also supports many species of wildlife. This environment would be totally destroyed. The natural beauty of the area would be lost forever.</p>
854	<p>I am writing to object to the proposed Gravel Extraction along the Wallingford Road, Cholsey. There are several reasons for opposing the pit apart from the obvious one that we do not want it near our village. The gravel lorries I am led to believe come out onto the Wallingford Road, which is a fairly narrow road with not enough room for two vehicles and a bicycle to pass. The lorries would make cycling along the road very hazardous. We were promised a cycle way some years ago by sustrans and the councils, but that has disappeared. With the emphasis on "green travel" and the carbon footprint this seems a backward step, as cyclists will be frightened to go along the road. The pit will also create a lot of dust and dirt in the surrounding area, which will also drift into Wallingford. The Gravel lorries will also travel along the Brightwell Road towards Didcot, which is a very busy road at the moment. The plan will also disrupt the local ecosystem of the Brook and the wildlife which lives along its banks and the birds in the hedgerows.</p>
864	<p>Proposal for a gravel pit in Cholsey & Wallingford I am writing to object to the proposal to install a gravel pit in Cholsey and Wallingford. The proposed site is currently a permanent grazed farmland area with hedges and trees around most of the boundary. The area supports a wide range of bird species including lapwing, grey herons, buzzards, little owls and barn owls. The hedgerow is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. I walk in the area every week and often see Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares. In addition, local residents have reported sightings of Otters by Hithercroft Brook in recent years. In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of the site and they will be consistently subjected to noise, disruption and dust; this is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people? In addition, there are currently several sites being developed for housing in the immediate area; how are developers expected to sell homes that will be so adversely affected by this proposal? Finally, I understand that one of the drivers behind this proposal is the County Council's desire to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will be used (Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development). However, I also understand that</p>

	<p>the proposed Cholsey site will not start production for ten years, by which time most of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial venture, selling the gravel to Reading, oxford or further afield therefore this argument appears to be irrelevant.</p> <p>I urge the County Council to reconsider the proposal to preserve the character, environmental quality and economic viability of Cholsey and Wallingford.</p>
852	<p>I am a resident of Cholsey and wish to register my concerns about and objections to the prospect of a gravel pit being located in the village.</p> <p>Flood risk The proposed site, particularly the area closest to the village, has a high water table and regularly, naturally floods. This area is adjacent to a sewage treatment plant, a watercourse directly feeding into the Thames and houses which lie lower than the proposed site. I am very concerned that any development on or disturbance of the proposed site would result in flood risk to the immediate vicinity and beyond. We have an excellent, local Environment Agency office, but I understand that they have not been consulted on this proposal, and it seems to me that would be essential to any choice of this site.</p> <p>Dust, health issues and noise pollution In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live more directly around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. I am particularly concerned about the risk to health from the operation of a gravel extraction site and any processing plant that might accompany it. I am not aware that a health assessment has been carried out for the immediate vicinity or wider area of the proposed site. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire it is not clear at all the basis on which the County Council has opted to propose a gravel pit that would result in brings years of disruption and health risk so close to so many people.</p> <p>Traffic & transportation I understand that the proposal is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries required for this type of operation on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is no apparent schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial decision, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield. The transport infrastructure around the site is designed for local traffic (in any direction the traffic has to pass directly through villages) and is already quite heavily used by 'through' traffic to Didcot & the A34, and to Oxford and Reading.</p> <p>In addition, Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous, and entirely unsuitable for additional heavy vehicle use. The local community has campaigned for traffic calming measures to be introduced. Adding further heavy vehicles along this road will increase the risk to local people and, because heavy vehicles limit the traffic calming measures that are considered suitable, make it even less likely that such measures will be provided. If Wallingford Road is blocked for any reason, then there are no viable alternative routes for heavy vehicles. A recent very minor accident completely closed the road for several hours from Caps Lane to the by-pass and all traffic was diverted through the centre of the village and along the single-track Caps Lane.</p>

	<p>Cycle path - Cholsey to Wallingford</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully-costed, part-funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. As noted above, Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous. Over the years a number of cyclists have been killed or injured on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this long-awaited route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>Heritage & character</p> <p>The County Council's briefing document refers to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting...". Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area now proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of the County Council's Plan. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village.</p> <p>The area includes sites of complex archaeological interest, open grazing supporting diverse wildlife and an extensively used public right of way through the middle of the proposed site. It is unacceptable to ignore the effect of loss of these to the local and wider community.</p> <p>Social, economic & environmental</p> <p>Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals', but I am not at all convinced that this has been done. A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are conducive to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are most likely to be left with a depression that seasonally will fill with water and become a marshy area in spring and autumn, each of which represent a risk to local children who venture onto the site, and an eyesore in any event.</p>
905	<p>As a regular visitor to Cholsey I am expressing my concerns against the proposed Gravel Extraction in Cholsey.</p> <p>A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the</p>

	<p>town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'</p> <p>The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St Mary;s Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>Do not destroy this village, I love to visit.</p>
907	<p>As a regular visitor to Cholsey I am expressing my concerns against the proposed Gravel Extraction in Cholsey.</p> <p>A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'</p> <p>The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St Mary;s Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>Do not destroy this village, I love to visit.</p>
875	<p>There are so many reasons why the choice of sites adjacent to Wallingford Road in Cholsey is completely inappropriate. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character of a largely unspoilt natural landscape. This is not a case of NIMBYism, but a protest against flawed reasoning. Yes, there is a need for gravel, but there must be other sites that are not so immediately adjacent to a thriving rural population.</p> <p>As a cyclist I would feel unsafe, being be hugely affected by the lorries, dust disruption along the road.</p> <p>As a nature-lover, I am extremely concerned about the impact on our rich natural heritage.</p> <p>As one of the more than 10,000 people who live within a mile of the proposed site, I don't see why we should be subjected to the</p>

	<p>constant noise, disruption and dust, and the impact it will have on our daily lives and livelihood. And as for no plans to restore the site after the devastation, how can it be reasonable to leave a scar on the landscape that is surrounded by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty? Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.' I urge you to give very careful consideration to this proposal and take heed of the concerns of local residents.</p>
878	<p>As a member of the Cholsey community and a parent to two small children I have serious concerns about the proposed gravel pit. The site is of great historical importance, not only for the Agatha Christie trail but also the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway. Both need to be treasured and safeguarded for the future rather than destroyed. In terms of environment, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where weasels and stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years. Buzzards, tawny owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm. It would be unthinkable to destroy these habitats. Also important is the number of tourists that are attracted to the area and the social and economic impact of the loss of the Area of Outstanding Beauty. In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people? I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago. I am very concerned that the development will delay plans for the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead. I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer. A loss of such historical and beautiful landscape is almost unthinkable not only for us, but for the generations to come. Cholsey is a wonderful and unspoiled village with an extremely strong sense of community. I hope these concerns are taken as</p>

	seriously as they felt within our community.
879	<p>Re: Minerals and Waste Draft Plan Consultation</p> <p>I am writing to express my objections to the three proposed gravel extraction sites along Wallingford Road, Cholsey contained in the Minerals Strategy 2011 document published by Oxfordshire County Council.</p> <p>I and my now wife moved to the centre of Cholsey over ten years ago as we found the area to be ideally located affording a beautiful and rural landscape in which we could raise a family. We now have 2 pre-school and 1 foundation year boys attending the local primary school. The village amenities create an ideal environment in which to bring them up.</p> <p>However, this situation is about to be ruined by the proposed gravel pit. I have listed some of my environmental and economic concerns below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I was shocked to learn that last year Cholsey had not been a site for consideration and is now the ONLY site nominated by the County Council. How is it possible that the Council are only putting one site forward? What if the site is found to be unsuitable? This is not selection. Surely there must be other possible sites which should be considered, preferably sited further away from centres of population. 2. The residents of Cholsey and Wallingford most of whom live within 1 mile of the proposed site have not been properly consulted by the County Council of these plans and the timetable for any consultation. Why? 3. The sites are in a lovely setting which provides a small buffer zone between the village of Cholsey and the town of Wallingford and are bordered by areas of outstanding natural beauty and the Thames path. They are overlooked by a number of houses in and will if they get the go ahead actually maroon the newly renovated Brook House. Not to mention the noise and dirt that will pervade our beautiful village. 4. I am very concerned about the effect that the heavy traffic entering and leaving the site will have on Cholsey and Wallingford. The heavy lorries will pose increased danger to all the residents of Cholsey and any other users of surrounding roads including the many pedestrians that currently use the Wallingford Road. 5. My family have been looking forward to using the proposed cycle route along the Wallingford Road which we understand has received part funding by the County Council after being planned for a number of years. I assume that this will not be able to happen if the Gravel Pit is given the go-ahead. This will stop us from using a 'green' alternative to car travel which is a real shame and probably against the County Council's environmental interests. 6. The recently inaugurated Agatha Christie path from Wallingford to Cholsey borders the site. Wallingford and Cholsey have been trying to increase tourism and economic activity by capitalising on the beauty of the landscape and the link with the world renowned writer. This gravel pit can only be detrimental to all the hard work that has been carried out. 7. I am very worried by the fact that there is no long term plan for the restoration of the site. I understand that due to its close proximity to the river Thames, it will not be able to become a lake or (thankfully) used for land fill and instead will most likely be left as an unsightly and dangerous depression. 8. Being so close to the population centres of Cholsey, Wallingford and Brighwell cum Sotwell, the sites will inevitably become a

	<p>dangerous attraction for children and youths with potentially tragic consequences.</p> <p>9. The Cholsey and Wallingford Railway runs regularly along the boundary of two of the proposed sites through picturesque farmland and unspoilt countryside. I understand that the trustees of the railway have stated that they will probably have to close as people will not pay to travel through what will be mostly an industrial wasteland. This will not only have a severely detrimental effect on the amenity that the trains provide to the residents of Cholsey (especially the children who love the Steam engines running past the playing fields) but also economically to the town of Wallingford and the village of Cholsey as the preserved branch line brings many visitors into the area who might otherwise not visit.</p>
776	<p>I object to the proposed gravel extraction and processing between Cholsey and Wallingford. The site is very close to a large number of houses in both Cholsey and Wallingford. Likely increases in housing around Cholsey and Wallingford will lead to an even greater number of residents being affected by the sight, sounds, dust and traffic from the gravel site. Surely a gravel extraction site of this size should not be placed in an area where it is likely to become surrounded by houses within its working lifetime? The pits themselves and the associated lorry movements would have a severe detrimental effect on life in Cholsey and Wallingford. I am particularly concerned about the impact on children and adults who walk and cycle between Cholsey and Wallingford. The lorry movements would add significantly to the danger along this route. Subsequent increases in lorry traffic along the road to Didcot would also be hazardous on a road with many sharp bends.</p> <p>The pits and works would blight a landscape which is heavily used and valued by local residents, I meet many dog-walkers and bird-watchers along the footpath which parallels the Cholsey Steam Railway line, as well as tourists exploring the local footpaths.</p>
623	<p>I am writing to you to protest against the gravel pit between Cholsey and Wallingford in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>You are planning three huge gravel pits in this area where now is beautiful country land, which will disappear in the next 25 years. This piece of land is historically important in lots of ways, especially the Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, which will be destroyed by these proposals and it deserves to be saved for our children.</p> <p>This land is surrounded by many houses and would be devastating for many families.</p> <p>I live in Cholsey myself and really like this place and don't want to watch it be destroyed.</p> <p>I don't understand why it should be this place when the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality.</p> <p>Please reconsider your decision to start the gravel pit here.</p>
224	<p>I wish to protest against the decision to nominate Cholsey/Wallingford as a site for proposed gravel extraction. The dust from the extraction and diesel particulates from the lorries passing every six minutes would pose a threat to the health and well-being of local residents, especially to children.</p> <p>There are other sites more suitable as they are less populated. The criterion that there should be main roads nearby is not a valid one: the human rights and health of local residents are more important than the commercial viability of a developer's scheme (let him incur costs in building a road on a more appropriate, less populated site elsewhere).</p>
225	<p>I am writing to express my concern over the proposed gravel pit near Cholsey and Wallingford. As a resident of Cholsey, I moved here to enjoy the surrounding countryside and as such paid for the privilege when I purchased my house, as did many other local residents. To destroy such beauty would be a terrible shame and unfair to residents as it will deter buyers from the housing market in what is already a very difficult economic climate.</p> <p>Therefore, I would urge you to rethink destroying parts of our beautiful Oxfordshire countryside, as no doubt it will be of no</p>

	benefit to our beautiful county.
230	<p>I strongly object to the nominated sites between Wallingford & Cholsey (SG-33, SG-57 & SG-60) for proposed sand & gravel extraction pits.</p> <p>They are located in largely undeveloped countryside, in view of the Chilterns AONB, on land that is of high agricultural quality and home to an important ecology & wildlife habitat (contrary to MPS1 and MPS2). Any extraction in this area on the scale proposed would severely affect the lives of the residents in the neighbouring communities (through increased noise, dust & fine particle pollution and traffic). It would also adversely impact on all road users in the area, including pedestrians and cyclists on the Agatha Christie Trail from Winterbrook to Cholsey Church, and passengers on the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway (two significant cultural heritage assets), contrary to Oxfordshire Structure Plan Policy M2.</p>
231	<p>I strongly object to the nominated sites between Wallingford & Cholsey (SG-33, SG-57 & SG-60) for proposed sand & gravel extraction pits. They are located in beautiful open countryside that is home to a wide variety of birds and other wildlife. Any extraction in this area would be extremely disruptive to the residents in Wallingford & Cholsey (through increased noise, air pollution and traffic) and more dangerous for all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.</p>
233	<p>I wish to register my objections to the suggested mineral extraction sites in South Oxfordshire - SG60, SG33 & SG57.</p> <p>SG60:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This site is metres from a childrens day nursery - Mongewell Park Nursery School - this nursery has places for 134 children aged from 3 months to 5 years. Very young children are the most sensitive 'receptors' to pollution - dust from the site activities and increased traffic from lorriest ravelling to and from the site. This nursery is in the unfortunate position of being 'sandwiched' between 2 suggested sites - SG60 and SG33. The nursery children are likely to be affected by pollution whatever the wind direction. Aswell as affecting the heath of the children, these suggested sites may have a detrimental economic impact on the nursery business. - This site would affect the Thames path which travels along the West bank of the river and all those that use this path for recreational purposes - both locals and tourists. - Looking at the Environment Agency flood map, SG60 looks susceptible to flooding and would have ' a 1 per cent (1 in 100) or greater chance of happening each year'. It would seem an odd to choice to dig a hole in the ground where it has a high risk of being flooded. - This site is not hidden from general view and would be easily visible from Nosworthy Way - you would look down onto the Thames river and a large gravel extraction pit. Travelling West, the next roundabout is signposted right to 'Wallingford historic town'. It would be very disappointing to travel into Wallingford via an unsightly gravel pit. <p>SG33 & SG57:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This would site a huge gravel pit directly between 2 very populated towns and destroy the natural amenities that looking onto this arable land provides. - Note the close proximity of this suggested site to the Mongewell Nursery School as outlined above. - These sites would be very detrimental to the business of the Cholsey and Wallingford railway.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These site would mean that the suggested cycle route from Wallingford to Cholsey would be non-viable. - These sites require further archeological investigation - archeological sites have been noted close by in Winterbrook and it is not unfeasable, given the close links between Cholsey and Wallingford, that further sites would be discovered in SG33 or SG57. - The movement of lorries would increase traffic in the local area and increase related air pollution. - There are more appropriate areas in Oxfordshire for a mineral extraction site which would not have the same impact on local communities.
234	<p>Proposed gravel extraction site Cholsey/Wallingford</p> <p>I am totally opposed to the proposals made for the Cholsey/Wallingford gravel extraction pits.</p> <p>Firstly I do not feel in any way, that you will be able to "safeguard the character , amenity & setting". Cholsey is of historical importance with features along the Wallingford Road virtually unchanged since 1695. And therefore as such, this area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your plan. The site includes historic reed beds, water courses & field patterns. Therefore how can the proposed extraction site safeguard the current character, amenity & setting of this unspoilt landscape.</p> <p>Much wildlife also inhabit this area, including, Buzzards, Red Kites, Tawny Owls, Little Owls, the list is endless. We should be looking to preserve these areas where wildlife flock, not destroy it. We are doing too much damage to our land. We are on this planet for such a short time & we should be able to enjoy what we have. Not destroy it, at the peril of the wildlife. They are the silent victims. We should be here to protect them & their habitat.</p> <p>The Agatha Christie Trail that runs from her home in Wallingford to her burial site in Cholsey will be destroyed. Wallingford & Cholsey thrive on this attraction drawing in many tourists.</p> <p>This area is also an area of outstanding natural beauty, that also attracts large numbers of tourists.</p> <p>Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty & consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to "consider the Social, Economic & Environmental effect of their proposals"</p> <p>The Cholsey & Wallingford Steam Railway have said that they will be unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover over half of their operating area. This could lead to the closure of the railway which has been run for the past thirty years by volunteers.</p> <p>The site is also surround by many houses & listed buildings. To destroy the settings in which they are based is totally wrong.</p> <p>Moreover, there is the potential for much disruption, dust & noise for the next 25 years, if not 50 years, if a more realistic look is taken.</p> <p>The other factor to take into account is the increased volume of vehicles/lorries to & from the site on a daily basis.</p> <p>The site also lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze & Iron Age.</p> <p>Proper in depth archaeological investigations must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed & lost forever for generations to come.</p> <p>Why has only one site been put forwards for extraction & not others for consideration? also has this site been put forwards when the minerals found in the site is believed to be poor quality, according to a number of sources. This is one of the reasons why a previous contractor withdrew from the site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p>

	<p>I am also very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use & restoration of the site. What are the current proposals? Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer term. There is also no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
236	<p>I am emailing to register my objections to the proposed gravel pit in Cholsey. I believe that this will be detrimental to our village with an increased safety risk to the villagers including my children who currently cycle to see friends along that road. I believe that there are better options for the gravel pit than Cholsey and that these have not been fully explored before the suggestion of Cholsey. I would also like to hear more if who proposed Cholsey as a viable option when I believe they themselves had an undeclared vested interest in ensuring Cholsey was chosen and not their village!</p>
237	<p>I am writing to declare my objections to this gravel pit in Cholsey. This move will destroy a beautiful area and devalue our houses. Just the proposal of this pit has already devalued a friend's house by knocking thousands off her house price- and that's without it even being here yet!! It will increase the traffic to a ridiculous amount for such a small village. The increase of traffic will be a risk to both children and wildlife, as there are deer living in both those areas; as well bats- which can be seen on a regular basis. I do not wish for this hideous thing to destroy the landscape- not just for me but also my children and their future in the village!</p>
238	<p>I object to the suggested mineral extraction proposal in Cholsey, South Oxon: SG60, SG33 and SG57. SG60: This is really close to Mongewell Park Nursery which caters for over 100 children aged 3 months to 5 years. It is not right to expose young children to dust/increased lorry traffic etc from this proposal. The nursery is also in the middle of SG60 and SG33. Nursery children would be affected by pollution whatever the wind direction. As well as affecting the health of the children, these suggested sites may have a negative economic impact on the nursery. The proposal would affect the Thames path which runs along the West bank of the river and all those that use this path for recreational purposes - both locals and tourists. According to the Environment Agency flood map, SG60 is susceptible to flooding and would have a 1 per cent or greater chance of flooding each year. Surely that is an odd place to dig a hole in the ground where it has a high risk of being flooded. The site is in general view from Nosworthy Way. This is one of the routes signposted to 'Wallingford historic town'. It would be very disappointing to travel into Wallingford via an unsightly gravel pit. SG33 & SG57: This proposes a huge gravel pit directly between two very populated towns and the destroying of the natural and very pleasant arable/countryside views that this area provides. Close proximity and detriment to the Mongewell Nursery School. The Cholsey and Wallingford historic steam railway would most likely have to close. Who would use it!? The site would mean that the suggested cycle route from Wallingford to Cholsey would be non-viable. These sites require further archaeological investigation - archaeological sites have been noted close by in Winterbrook and it is not unfeasible, given the close links between Cholsey and Wallingford, that further sites would be discovered in SG33 or SG57. Movement of lorries would increase heavy traffic in the local area, increase related air pollution and contribute to detriment of the roads in the area - just take the B478 Playhatch Road in Sonning as an example near the Lafarge Sonning works - the road is,</p>

	<p>and has been for several years, in a terrible state, despite regular resurfacing.</p> <p>There are more appropriate areas in Oxfordshire for a mineral extraction site which would not have the same impact on local communities.</p>
210	<p>Please don't do it.</p> <p>If you think the gravel pit is a good idea, think again! Having the gravel pit will ruin the wild life, close down the Wallingford railway, houses will have to be knocked down and it will cut the prices of our homes by 20% and sales may not be agreed. Some people think you will make a pond or boating lake after you are finished with it but that will take 15-25 years, it will probably even be a landfill.</p>
205	<p>Cholsey is one of only about 5 of the proposed 60 or so sites that is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. So why are you even beginning to consider it in the first place?</p> <p>There is important wildlife in the area, some of which, eg otters, has only been re-established in recent years. A gravel pit would utterly destroy this with little hope of ever being able to re-establish some of the more sensitive (and rare) wild-life.</p> <p>Part of the area is of archaeological interest including an iron-age settlement. This also would be utterly destroyed by a gravel pit.</p> <p>There is a great danger that Cholsey will lose its identity as a separate village and the destruction of the site will eventually lead to a spread of housing from Wallingford to Cholsey, thus destroying the distinctive identity of the area.</p>
247	<p>I notice O.C.C. have dumped thier gravel extraction plans on the area between Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>This cannot go ahead! The site which will be worked for 25 years is within a mile radius from the homes of 10,000 people!</p> <p>The noise, the disruption, the dirt and the effect 200 x 20 ton lorry movements a day will have on the area would be devastating and unacceptable. The prevailing S.W. winds will amplify the noise from the site in Wallingford as well as blow all the dust into the town, not only from the workings but also the processing plant. The site itself sits between two AONB's just consider the visual and audible impact 160 acres of wasteland is going to have on these.</p> <p>Wallingford is the historic and heritage centre of South Oxfordshire. As a historic market town alongside the Thames it attracts tourism, and much of the towns income is from this industry. The caravan camp sites and riverside moorings at the town are packed during the summer months as people flock here for the heritage and the couttryside. I dont think having a massive gravel pit nearby will help the town, Wallingford will just become "That dirty old Gravel pit town".</p> <p>As most local people now shop in Didcot, tourism is Wallingford town centre's only lifeline for survival. It may not survive if these workings go ahead.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford heritage railway society who's line borders the site will probably close which will be a great pity, as it is one of the only and probably the longest preserved line in Oxfordshire. Visitors are not going to go on a steam train ride just to see a massive quarry. The railway has been run by volunteers for the last 30 years. I wonder how those volunteers feel about all that work being wasted? It has been calculated that at a modest £10 per hour the volunteers do £250,000 of work at the railway each year. That equates to £7,500,000 of work done over the last 30 years. C and W railway will need compensation for all that work and effort, where is that going to come from? This is apart from the future ongoing revenue the railway brings to the area.</p> <p>The site is largely permanently grazed and hedged meadowland. This in itself is so ecologically valuable as old meadows are extremely rare nowadays. Unlike much of the intensively farmed arable areas aroud the site it teems with wildlife, it is in fact a</p>

	<p>oasis for birds and mammals. Weasels, stoats, hare, roe deer, lizards, snakes, bats and barn owls are amongst just a few of what is seen there, all this would be lost forever.</p> <p>Local peoples homes would become "blighted". Few people will be able to sell their homes for the next ten yaers because "The gravel pit is coming". And then, should the workings start, the value of property will be rock bottom - this will ruin many lives. Why has O.C.C. opted to put a pit in an aerea where it will cause a economic blight for 35 years? Is it acceptable to impose such massive upheaval on a locality.</p> <p>Why has O.C.C. only proposed one site for gravel extraction? It seems a nasty imposition and smells of forcing the issue and steamrolling any sensible assessment about site suitability.</p> <p>The proposed workings would have an unacceptable adverse effect on the environment and residential amenity. It is surrounded by residential development, by historic and listed buildings such as the barns on Wallingford Road and at Cox's farm as well as Brook House. The site also includes historic reed beds, water courses and field patterns unchanged for centuries, all of which will be damaged beyond repair.</p> <p>Finally it is understood from various sources that the yield from the pit could be of poor quality. The area was surveyed many years ago and one contractor withdrew from the site stating the gravels were of poor quality.</p> <p>You cannot impose this terrible plan onto the people of Walingford, Cholsey and other local villages.</p>
283	<p>I'd like to register my strong objection to the proposal for the excavation of three gravel pits (SG57, SG33 and SG60) between Wallingford and Cholsey.</p> <p>My objection is on the basis of three reasons: wildlife, safety and heritage.</p> <p>I have cycled from Wallingford to Cholsey every morning and back every evening for the past eight and a half years so I am in a better position that most to judge the effect that digging these pits would have on the surrounding countryside and wildlife. The land between these two towns is full of wildlife - every day I see red kites, rabbits and sometimes pheasants, squirrels, hedgehogs, deer and wild birds in the hedgerows.</p> <p>The trees and hedgerows here are mature and of immense value to wildlife. Given its proximity to the Thames, this land is a vital green area and is an important habitat for insects, birds, butterflies and quite possibly rare species like water voles and newts. The area between SG33 and SG60 is left as meadow land and is a remarkable haven for wildlife - it should probably be classified as a site of special scientific interest, not surrounded by industrial works on this scale.</p> <p>I certainly don't think there should be any development here without a thorough survey of the impact of these gravel pits on the wildlife of the area.</p> <p>My second objection relates to the safety of the site and the hundreds of road journeys that will be made by heavy lorries. As a cyclist, I am aware of how dangerous this road is already. The idea of many more vehicles a day using the road (including lorries turning into and out of the gravel works) would make my journey considerably more dangerous.</p> <p>Finally I object very strongly on the grounds that Wallingford and Cholsey are remarkably unspoilt towns with a great deal of history just below the surface. These pits would, in my opinion, destroy much archaeology and history as well as the rural setting and charm of these towns. The idea of establishing an industrial gravel pit on this scale so close to Cholsey and Wallingford just seems crazy to me - it's exactly the kind of thing town planners and council planning departments are meant to use their powers to prevent from happening.</p> <p>I urge you to preserve the wildlife, the human life and the heritage of this area and reject this deeply damaging and senseless</p>

	proposal.
648	<p>I am writing to you in connection with the proposed gravel extraction works in the area of land between Cholsey and Wallingford. I understand that the same proposal was considered and rejected in 1987.</p> <p>I understand that in October last year that there were considered to be sixty possible sites (of which Cholsey was one) and our representatives were told that "Cholsey was out of the loop". Our representatives therefore paid little further heed to the matter. However, we understand that there was a subsequent meeting last year at which the 59 other sites were rejected and that left Cholsey as the preferred site indeed the only site. The general populace only learnt of this from a copy of the minutes of that meeting subsequently posted on the internet.</p> <p>It does concern me that, if the above is correct, that the appropriate degree of transparency was singularly lacking in a matter which will affect the lives of the local residents for some twenty years.</p> <p>This proposal is for the extraction of probably over four million tons of gravel commencing in approximately five/ten years time and lasting for up to a further ten years.</p> <p>A number of matters concern me.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The scheme is vast and reaches to within 10 metres of the nearest houses. I am told that it will involve approximately 80 lorry movements each day. It is simply too big. 2. I understand that the gravel is not of the best quality and the developers would need to import large quantities of rock onto the site before pulverising it and mixing it with the gravel and then transferring it from the site. If this is correct, the scheme would not simply consist of the extraction of gravel but also the importation onto the site of other materials and the carrying out of a filthy industrial process. 3. We had assumed that the lorries would enter and leave the site via the bypass. However, we are told that this is not possible because they would then need to add an acceleration lane to the bypass. That does not make it impossible. It simply makes it more expensive. But any additional expense is comparatively small set against the huge profits for the developers over the life of the site. If this is correct, the only other exit/entrance onto the site is along the Cholsey/Wallingford Road. This road is straight, comparatively narrow and dangerous. There have over the years been a number of fatalities along the road and the addition of 80 lorry movements per day will make this stretch of road extremely hazardous. 4. The Council does not appear to have any proposals to landscape the site when all the gravel has been removed. It would appear that it is not possible to form a lake because of the proximity of the river Thames. We are deeply concerned that they would simply leave the hole as it is when the last load of gravel leaves the site. <p>I shall be very grateful if you can look into the matter and hope that the Council can be persuaded to drop this crazy plan.</p>
619	<p>I am writing to object to the plans for gravel extraction in the area between Wallingford and Cholsey and also a smaller site south of Wallingford bypass next to the Thames.</p> <p>As I live near the centre of Wallingford, I am unlikely to be directly affected, but the impact on the town as a whole is likely to be considerable.</p> <p>Wallingford depends quite heavily on its old fashioned and relatively peaceful character for income from tourism and from people who like to shop in a country town environment. The designated areas for gravel extraction will impact upon:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walkers who visit the town.

	<p>2. Wildlife and birds in the designated area. 3. Those interested in the Agatha Christie connection in Winterbrook and Cholsey. 4. Enjoyment of the Wallingford and Cholsey Railway. 5. Enjoyment of the Thames path. 6. Safety and congestion problems for those travelling from Cholsey to Wallingford for school and work. 7. Access to Cholsey station from Wallingford will be impeded by increased traffic movements along what is a minor road. 8. Increased lorry movements along the Didcot road will further increase risk along what is already a substandard piece of highway. Please think again!</p>
876	<p>I am writing to object to the plans for gravel extraction in the vicinity of Cholsey and Wallingford. My objections are based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Location very near populated areas. - Location near an historical town. - Destruction of leisure amenities. - Resulting dust pollution and health risks to local population. - Resulting heavy lorry congestion. - Destruction of areas important to wildlife. - Spoiling of natural landscape in an area of beauty. - Poor quality of minerals located at this site. - Apparent poor process and lack of due diligence being followed during selection of site. <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. This is not a reasonable nor acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality, as I have no doubt the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded on one side by the major access road to our thriving village. Destruction of leisure amenities and social, environmental and economic effect:</p> <p>A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.' I see no evidence that these aspects have been given due thorough consideration.</p>

	<p>Furthermore, the recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p> <p>Impact on the natural environment:</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors ..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto the existing residential development. In terms of environment, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p> <p>This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.</p> <p>Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.</p> <p>As a professional wildlife photographer and journalist, I find it deplorable that the very people elected to protect the interests of residents are even considering such a blight on the landscape within an important area of natural beauty.</p> <p>Given these points I urge reconsideration of the current proposals, before implementation of plans that will prove disastrous for the local community, economy, environment and wildlife.</p>
885	<p>It has been brought to our attention that Oxfordshire County Council has recommended that a number of sites very close and adjacent to Cholsey Village be used for Gravel extraction.</p> <p>We understand that you are in the process of "consulting" local residents and interested groups. For some reason we, along with other Cholsey residents we've spoken to, have not received any direct communication from you regarding this proposal and your reasons for choosing these sites. This has not only disappointed us but clearly puts into question your whole process of "consultation" procedures.</p> <p>We would like you to explain to use, in detail please, the background concerning the need for extraction and the choice of Cholsey as the preferred site. we look forward to hearing from you.</p> <p>However, as we have been informed that your invisible consultation finishes on 31 October, we would like to take this opportunity to familiarise you with some of our reasons for objecting to your decision.</p> <p>We assume that in making your decision, you took into consideration the following - if you didn't, as we suspect, then you are failing in your duty as a Council.</p>

The Environment

Obviously the environment will change drastically, thus affecting a very significant number of people, families and children in a number of ways, none of which can possibly be construed as "a benefit" to the village - within a radius of 1 mile of the proposed sites live over 10,000 people covering the whole of Cholsey Village and two-thirds of Wallingford Town:

- Air pollution - there will inevitably be large amounts of dust thrown up into the atmosphere;
- Noise pollution - from both the process of extraction and the heavy lorry transportation to and from the site;
- Wildlife - I'm not an expert but the impact of such a site will affect a large number of animals, particularly a number of protected species;
- Cycle Path - the proposal would cause the abandonment of a very much needed safe cycle path linking Cholsey Village and Wallingford - SODC and the Parish Council have already accepted the urgent need for this and have been looking at ways of funding it - so far, about a third of the cost is in place;

- The volunteer Cholsey and Wallingford Railway Group will almost certainly cease their popular operations as the western perimeter of the main site borders their branch line - they may even have to close down permanently;

When the site eventually closes (10-15 years we've been told), what happens to the site? We've been informed that due to its close proximity to the Thames it can't be a landfill or lake - so is it to be left "a hole"!

Health & Safety

Although the above points relating to the environment are clearly important to everyone, it is the Health and Safety issues which concern us most. Apart from the obvious dust and noise health issues, when making your decision, you must have been aware of the following:

- The road linking Cholsey to Wallingford (Wallingford Road) is used by nearly all Cholsey residents - school coach, bus, car, bicycle and walking;
 - A significant number of cyclists use the road throughout the day, particularly school children going to and returning from Wallingford School - this is why almost all Cholsey residents are in favour of a safe "cycle path" - with no cycle path you are positively encouraging further vehicle usage with its extra pollution consequences;
 - This road is straight and invites drivers, once out of the 30mph limit, to reach speeds of 40-50mph, sometimes 60mph;
 - This road is not particularly wide and can just about cope with 2 buses/coaches/lorries passing each other in opposite directions - they have to drastically slow down in order to do this safely;
 - This road has a narrow single pavement on one side only - when walking in the opposite direction, someone often has to step into the road to pass;
 - There have been a number of accidents on this road - at least one fatal in the last 10 years;
 - Any vehicle other than a small car, when turning left onto the road from a side junction or driveway, has to go onto the opposite side of the road to complete the manoeuvre;
 - The surface of this road, although recently cosmetically resurfaced, suffers from a large number of potholes - after last winter, there were at least 15, some as deep as 6 inches - further lorry use would accelerate the ongoing deterioration of the surface;
- It is for the above reasons that if the site were to go ahead, it would be absolutely "criminal" to access it from the Wallingford Road considering the large number of lorries likely to be using the site. Other access points, either on the existing roundabout or a new roundabout, although a better solution, will still raise fundamental safety issues.

	<p>There are many other issues that we could have raised but if you have done your research fully, you will no doubt be aware of them. Again, we assume your research into all possible gravel extraction sites within the locality was undertaken by independent organisations and not, as I've been told is possible, by Gravel Extraction Companies themselves - this would "stink" of corruption and incompetence. We all know that any promises made by companies to reduce the likely impact of their operations do not materialise. The development by Linden Homes at Cholsey Meadows (the old Fairmile Hospital site) is a classic example - clear promises made to certain groups within Cholsey during the consultation process were conveniently forgotten and ignored once building started!</p> <p>We urge you and your colleagues to look more closely at the proposal and the studies you've already undertaken, together with the impact and consequences both in the short and long term for all concerned.</p> <p>We look forward to receiving your reply addressing our concerns.</p>
889	<p>As a local Wallingford resident at Hurst Close and business owner, running a local estate agency in the town I have spent a number of months listening continuously to the concerns of local residents in and around the area about the gravel pit and the potential detrimental effect on their homes and potential detrimental effect on their property values.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites will safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. Concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p> <p>This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, roe deer and hares are often seen here. Hithercroft</p>

	<p>Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where weasels and stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of otters in recent years.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>I hope that serious reconsideration of this site is made.</p>
890	<p>I am writing to complain about the proposals to locate a gravel pit in Cholsey along the Wallingford Road. Your own briefing document stresses the need to maintain the character and setting of this area and it is impossible to see how the destruction of an area containing reed beds, water-courses and field patterns that have been in existence for hundreds of years can possibly be reconciled with this.</p> <p>The proposed site has already been considered and was rejected in, I believe, the 1980s. The only significant change to the area has been the construction of the by-pass and a large increase in industrial traffic would merely result in an increase in the number of cars using the town centre leading to congestion and a major impact on the tourist trade, a vital part of the local economy. The tourist trade would be further ruined as two main attractions, the Agatha Christie Trail and the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway would be directly affected by the gravel pit. An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty surrounds the site and this also attracts walkers to the area again bringing in revenue for the town. Whilst the local economy suffered the gravel pits would do nothing to compensate in terms of bringing any real wealth to the community.</p> <p>With the increase in housing with developments such as the Fairmile hospital site Cholsey and Wallingford is a major residential area with somewhere in the region of 10,000 inhabitants and it seems particularly unfair to blight a whole community with a major industrial site at its heart that would only benefit a small number of individuals and large companies. Apparently the gravel extracted is not of a suitable grade to be used directly (in fact this is why the original contractor withdrew when it was first proposed to use the site) meaning that a mill would need to be situated on the site to grind rock to mix with it before it can be</p>

	<p>used. This would further increase the number of lorries using the roads bringing rock into the area. Cycling between Cholsey and Wallingford is already dangerous and plans to create a cycle path alongside the proposed site would of course have to be abandoned doing nothing to reduce traffic congestion.</p> <p>Dust generated by the site so near a residential area would also have a major impact on air quality. Also much unique wildlife such as Roe Deer, Hares, lapwing and Barn Owls would be driven from the area. Many areas of archaeological significance would also be destroyed.</p> <p>Please don't let this proposed gravel pit destroy a community.</p>
909	<p>I am a resident of Cholsey and have been for the past 20 years. I would like to register the fact that I totally oppose the gravel pit on the land between Cholsey and Wallingford. I think this would totally ruin the country side around what is, a country village afterall and also the surrounds of the historic town of Wallingford.</p> <p>The increase in large, heavy and noisy traffic would have a terrible effect on the local roads and completely affect the lives of people in this area commuting to work, schools, the medical centre for which we have to travel to Wallingford to attend, shops etc. I'm sure there would be heavy plant noise which will be heard for miles.</p> <p>Wildlife currently in the area would be greatly affected. I am a member of BBOWT and the RSPB, making regular monthly donations, therefore this is a great concern. I've also enjoyed many walks on the footpaths along that area and it would be devastating to lose them. Every time I've walked these footpaths I've passed numerous other people enjoying them so I am sure I am not in the minority.</p> <p>Again, I emphasise that I am totally against the gravel pit and cannot even believe that the area has been considered. I would be grateful if you could let me know if there is anything else I can do to make my objections heard and would also be grateful if you could keep me updated on the situation.</p>
902	<p>There are a multitude of reasons why the plan for mineral extraction or to give its proper title a "grave pit" at the identified locations is an ill-conceived and commercially bad proposal.</p> <p>The information you have presented refers to safeguarding the character, amenity and setting of Cholsey and Wallingford, which by virtue of the nature of the works is unachievable. Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, wild life and field patterns/valued farm land, which is largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan. I also have concerns about possible pollution of the River Thames from any such works.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, the view will change as a result without doubt so I feel these are just words to justify your plans and no real thought has been given to these plans or the effect it will have on the area and community. The land around Cholsey is largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The land is still of agricultural use and this is what is should be used for.</p> <p>The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals and the great concern I have is that once again no consideration has been given to this, it's all ill-conceived. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction is not acceptable</p>

and would be an act of folly.

The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have worked for years to provide an attraction for the area and now these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are rightly concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through noise both from plant and from the increased traffic, pollution from traffic, again both plant and heavy goods vehicles coming to and from the works, dust pollution and odour pollution. What happened to the green agenda, it would appear you have completely ignored it for your own purposes here?

The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.

In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.

I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. If any actions should result then a much longer consultation period should be arranged. One would feel that the short time frame involved is there to push these plans through without letting the local people affected by the plans to have the right which they are entitled to object to the plans. Once again ill-conceived and badly put together, who's leading these proposals, and have the proper procedures been followed, please provide evidence.

This has been a largely permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird and other species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers and these must be retained and preserved. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years. Very few of these environments are left and again this is all part of why the local people wish to live here and why people from the surrounding area visit the area. The local population and the existing attractions came first, the preservation of these and the wish of this local community should be the overriding consideration to be taken into account here.

The diverse bird life in this area is one that needs to be preserved; once again such spaces are more important than a ton of sand. Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites all nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons which also use the water ways around the village for food and potentially these will be lost as well. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In

recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

Visit the local museum and take a look at what else you will be destroying as the site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. The only reason the by-pass was allowed as it preserved the village of Wallingford, your plans just destroy all that's still good with this area. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

We as a family as well as a large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site, and it is our duty to tell you we do not want this, that's on behalf of all who enjoy it in the future. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development (this is not semi-industrial it's full on industrial destruction of the land and environment) which further expands the town's curtilage will have a detrimental effect on the natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.' And I believe you have not done this fully or with the care and consideration that needed and expected.

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take no account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people have settled and live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options, once again ill-conceived and beggar's belief.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either, how has this happened, I feel an explanation is in order.

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? I believe it lacks clarity and

thought. One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. It's purely a get rich quick policy and of no benefit to the local community or people who wish to visit the area, and on this point alone permission should not be granted. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations, perhaps a reply on this point is in order as there appears to be a lack of understanding on who is serving who here.. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre, again perhaps you can explain how you come to be backing a project that the people you serve do not want and you have provided limited time for consultation.

I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago. Please provide all the information you have on this including the past study for our consideration and while we consider all information I request an indefinite delay on any decisions being taken.

I am extremely concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.

I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.

I don't believe that gravel extracted locally will be used for local benefit, commercially the extractor will move this gravel where ever the need arises, so any arguments based around local gravel for use is I believe incorrect. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed, as I said not for local benefit, the gravel will be sold country wide. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.

There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document. Again I suspect these plans have not been correctly put together and little proper consideration and consultation has been carried out.

Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within

	<p>the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term. Do you have any further sites for us to compare the merits of each site, please reply.</p>
896	<p>I would firstly like to observe that the consultation process for the plan under consideration has been virtually non-existent to the point where it would seem that it has been designed in such a way as to prevent meaningful engagement with the community you serve that will be affected by this plan. I cannot believe that guidelines for effective and legally compliant consultation have been followed and so the allegation that you have already decided what course of action you are going to take remains. Should you not change your plan to extract low grade gravel from the fields in Cholsey, an area of environmental, archaeological, and cultural interest I would expect to see a second more thorough process undertaken before you can begin.</p> <p>Secondly I would like to outline some of the main reasons why Cholsey is a wholly inappropriate setting in which to undertake this type of project. The examples outlined below do not by any means represent an exhaustive list of reasons why Cholsey is not a suitable site. They are however, examples so obvious that it must have been very clear from the outset that this plan is completely unviable and that only the most underhand and secretive consultation would enable it to proceed.</p> <p>Finally I would like to point out that as the quality of the gravel that would be extracted is extremely poor what is the point of this scheme at all? Most of Oxfordshire has gravel of this type under its surface so there is no reason whatsoever to choose Cholsey in isolation for this project. The amount of disruption and damage to amenity quality etc that it would cause is completely at odds with the poor return that OCC would get from this project. An obvious solution would be to create a site that is not near any towns or villages - or is the combination of easy road access and the fact that no-one thinks that Cholsey is worth caring about too good an opportunity to miss in terms of the upfront infrastructure development costs that would otherwise be incurred.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in Cholsey, Cholsey Winterbrook and Wallingford communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been created by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is very fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead. As Cholsey is a growing village (300 or more homes are currently nearing completion in the village) the risk of injury and death along this dangerous road will only increase. The effect of increased traffic will massively compound this!</p> <p>Very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people seems to have been taken. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. To subject so many voters to constant noise, disruption and pollution is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight following by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options. The fact that the quality of Gravel is so low on this site makes</p>

this situation even more bizarre. Most of Oxfordshire has gravel of this type under its surface so there is no reason whatsoever to locate this plan in Cholsey other than the combination of easy road access and the fact that no-one thinks Cholsey is worth caring about.

In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan. At the very least I would expect a thorough excavation to take place on the site before any extraction can take place - particularly as the main channel for the Thames passed through the centre of the proposed site in the middle ages when the practice of throwing votive offerings into rivers and streams was common place in Britain. It could be that a Saxon hoard or similarly significant fund is in this area waiting to be discovered.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Sticking a bloody great hole with the aesthetic appeal of an open cast mine in the middle of all this will destroy its beauty but more importantly destroy the economic benefit that the subsequent tourism brings in. Is there some plan in place to actually damage the economic well being of this area?

The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author. To destroy this attraction would be an act of sabotage to the local economy at a time of recession.

Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.' It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either. It's as if a decision has already been made and the consultation is a fob off to local voters who object!

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to move.

I acknowledge that OCC has some obligation to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and thus putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There

	<p>is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document. In addition Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p> <p>In summary I would like reiterate that this plan is highly detrimental to the environment, heritage and economy of Cholsey and Wallingford. The consultation has been a farce and I will take every effort to try and get a new consultation agreed if this project gets approved on the basis of this one.</p> <p>Finally the poor quality of the gravel that would be extracted begs two questions: Why cause so much disruption to the local economy and damage to people's quality of life for such a poultry return?</p> <p>As such low grade gravel is present under most of Oxfordshire - including areas far from any towns and villages, why has only the site at Cholsey been chosen for consideration.</p>
897	<p>I'd like to register my strong objection to the proposal for the excavation of three gravel pits (SG57, SG33 and SG60) between Wallingford and Cholsey.</p> <p>My objection is on the basis of three reasons: wildlife, safety and heritage.</p> <p>I have cycled from Wallingford to Cholsey every morning and back every evening for the past eight and a half years so I am in a better position than most to judge the effect that digging these pits would have on the surrounding countryside and wildlife. The land between these two towns is full of wildlife - every day I see red kites, rabbits and sometimes pheasants squirrels, hedgehogs, deer and wild birds in the hedgerows.</p> <p>The trees and hedgerows here are mature and of immense value to wildlife. Given its proximity to the Thames, this land is a vital green area and is an important habitat for insects, birds, butterflies and quite possibly rare species like water voles and newts. The area between SG33 and SG60 is left as meadow land and is a remarkable haven for wildlife - it should probably be classified as a site of special scientific interest, not surrounded by industrial works on this scale.</p> <p>I certainly don't think there should be any development here without a thorough survey of the impact of these gravel pits on the wildlife of the area.</p> <p>My second objection relates to the safety of the site and the hundreds of road journeys that will be made by heavy lorries. As a cyclist, I am aware of how dangerous this road is already. The idea of many more vehicles a day using the road (including lorries turning into and out of the gravel works) would make my journey considerably more dangerous.</p> <p>Finally, I object very strongly on the grounds that Wallingford and Cholsey are remarkably unspoilt towns with a great deal of history just below the surface. These pits would, in my opinion, destroy much archaeology and history as well as the rural setting and charm of these towns. The idea of establishing an industrial gravel pit on this scale so close to Cholsey and Wallingford just seems crazy to me - it's exactly the kind of thing town planners and council planning departments are meant to use their powers to prevent from happening.</p> <p>I urge you to preserve the wildlife, the human life and the heritage of this area and reject this deeply damaging and senseless proposal.</p>

871	<p>Regarding Gravel Extraction Plans between Cholsey and Wallingford</p> <p>I am writing to express my objection to your plans for gravel extraction in the vicinity of Cholsey and Wallingford. Whilst I understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used, I feel that your choice of site is ill considered.</p> <p>My objections are based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Location very near populated areas. - Location near an historical town. - Destruction of leisure amenities. - Resulting dust pollution and health risks to local population. - Resulting heavy lorry congestion. - Destruction of areas important to wildlife. - Spoiling of natural landscape in an area of beauty. - Poor quality of minerals located at this site. - Apparent poor process and lack of due diligence being followed during selection of site. <p>The choice of site put forward by OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the historic town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people? It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. This is not a reasonable nor acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality, as I have no doubt the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. Destruction of leisure amenities and social, environmental and economic effect:</p> <p>A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.' I see no evidence that these aspects have been given due thorough consideration.</p>
-----	--

	<p>Furthermore, the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>Impact on the natural environment:</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors ..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto the existing residential development. In terms of environment, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p> <p>This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.</p> <p>Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>Finally, the Core Strategy put forward by Oxfordshire County Council is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options. As a business professional I must query the level of due diligence and quality of the process that has been followed here. I am not suggesting that the process is being mismanaged, however based on this evidence there certainly appears to be symptoms of mismanagement present in the way the council is going about its activities with regard to this matter.</p> <p>Given these points I urge reconsideration of the current proposals, before implementation of plans that will prove disastrous for the local community, economy, environment and wildlife.</p>
853	<p>I am writing to you in order to register my objection to the proposal to extract gravel etc from sites in Cholsey as indicated in your Minerals & Waste Draft Plan. The use of the proposed extraction sites will:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Destroy the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape. - Result in the destruction of the Agatha Christie Trail. - Threaten the continued existence of the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway by despoiling the landscape through which the railway runs. - Destroy the fields and watercourses which are the natural habitat for a wide variety of wildlife including deer and red kites. <p>Other considerations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed site along the Wallingford Road adjoins the existing residential development. The noise and dust etc arising from the proposed gravel extraction works will severely and adversely impact the rights of the occupants to the peaceful enjoyment of their property to which they are entitled under the Human Rights Act. - The road network is unsuitable for heavy vehicles and the effect of lorries from a gravel works using such roads through and in the vicinity of the village would be devastating. - Plans for restoration of the land post gravel removal have not been produced - is the existing rural landscape to be replaced by a derelict pit? - Effect on flight paths around Benson airfield - has the Ministry of Defence been consulted regarding effects of the possible increased presence of birds, encouraged by water accumulation in such a pit, on the future use of the Benson facilities? - It seems poor planning that Cholsey is the only new site nominated since when that site is proved unsuitable based on environmental considerations, possibly gravel quality, and location relative to end use, the OCC will be left without a satisfactory strategy for future mineral extraction. Also if only one site is considered how is it to be demonstrated that this is the best site? - It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Obviously, the interests of the local population will be secondary in view of these potential beneficiaries. This does not seem to be a sound approach to finding a site which best serves the interests of the whole community and is not what one is entitled to expect to be the approach taken by our elected representatives, and their officials, whose responsibility one hopes and expects to be to safeguard the interests of the whole community.
842	<p>I am writing to complain about the proposal to create a gravel pit/extraction site on land separating the town of Wallingford and village of Cholsey. I am stunned that this site is even being considered as it will directly affect approximately 10,000 people living in the immediate (under 1 mile) area. I understand no other proposed site in oxfordshire is as close to such large populations that would be negatively affected?</p> <p>I walk through the middle of suggested pit SG33 at least once a week with my dogs from the Wallingford road to join the Agatha Christie Trail that runs from Wallingford to Cholsey Church. I frequently see various types of wildlife including roe deer and kites. If the gravel pit were to go ahead this link would be destroyed making it impossible to join the Agatha Christie path without going all the way into Wallingford first, and this wildlife lost to the area. Destruction of our network of paths and green lane is totally at odds with the government's message to get out and do some exercise, plus reduces the currently very good quality of air in the immediate.</p> <p>Wallingford is a town that thrives because it is a scenic, picturesque, middle England market town full of history and old buildings - in short it is a tourist town. It is a town where television programmes are made to show off how beautiful English towns can be to the rest of the world. It is not a retail hub, where such issues are unimportant. The creation of a gravel pit to the south,</p>

	<p>blowing dust over the town will be bad for businesses and put off visitors. It without a shadow of a doubt would finish off The Bunk Line, Wallingford and Cholsey's historic railway that runs along the full length of the proposed gravel pit.</p> <p>I assume the large lorries will be forced to exit the site onto the Wallingford road? The Wallingford road that is a small road entirely unsuitable for such vehicles (as it is this road has been the subject of need of a cycle path for several years due to fatalities as it is so narrow with funding already well advanced), yet there appears to be no other alternative? I understand it was recently concluded by the Highways Agency that the Wallingford ring road, the A4310 cannot have another roundabout inserted and so they would be unable to exit on to the road? I understand also that it will not only be lorries using the road to take the gravel away, but also lorries coming into the village to bring in rock to mix with the gravel as it is of not sufficient quality.</p> <p>All in all I find it a farce and a disgrace that this site has even been suggested just from the obvious problems it will create, let alone those that present themselves when you look at the site in more detail. These issues include the waterways running through into the Thames (recently praised for good water quality), poor quality of the gravel that could be extracted, high water table in the area, areas of outstanding natural beauty that look down on it. The list goes on ...</p> <p>I hope that sense is seen and this proposal thrown out.</p>
866	<p>There are a multitude of reasons why the plan for mineral extraction or to give its proper title a "grave pit" at the identified locations is an ill-conceived and commercially bad proposal.</p> <p>The information you have presented refers to safeguarding the character, amenity and setting of Cholsey and Wallingford, which by virtue of the nature of the works is unachievable. Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, wild life and field patterns/valued farm land, which is largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan. I also have concerns about possible pollution of the River Thames from any such works.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, the view will change as a result without doubt so I feel these are just words to justify your plans and no real thought has been given to these plans or the effect it will have on the area and community. The land around Cholsey is largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The land is still of agricultural use and this is what it should be used for.</p> <p>The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals and the great concern I have is that once again no consideration has been given to this, it's all ill-conceived. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction is not acceptable and would be an act of folly.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have worked for years to provide an attraction for the area and now these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are rightly concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise both from plant and from the increased traffic, pollution from traffic, again both plant and heavy goods vehicles coming to and from the works, dust pollution</p>

and odour pollution. What happened to the green agenda, it would appear you have completely ignored it for your own purposes here?

The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.

In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.

I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. If any actions should result then a much longer consultation period should be arranged. One would feel that the short time frame involved is there to push these plans through without letting the local people affected by the plans to have the right which they are entitled to object to the plans. Once again ill-conceived and badly put together, who's leading these proposals, and have the proper procedures been followed, please provide evidence.

This has been a largely permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird and other species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers and these must be retained and preserved. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years. Very few of these environments are left and again this is all part of why the local people wish to live here and why people from the surrounding area visit the area. The local population and the existing attractions came first, the preservation of these and the wish of this local community should be the overriding consideration to be taken into account here.

The diverse bird life in this area is one that needs to be preserved; once again such spaces are more important than a ton of sand. Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites all nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons which also use the water ways around the village for food and potentially these will be lost as well. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

Visit the local museum and take a look at what else you will be destroying as the site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system.

The only reason the by-pass was allowed as it preserved the village of Wallingford, your plans just destroy all that's still good with this area. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological

investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

We as a family as well as a large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site, and it is our duty to tell you we do not want this, that's on behalf of all who enjoy it in the future. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development (this is not semi-industrial it's full on industrial destruction of the land and environment) which further expands the town's curtilage will have a detrimental effect on the natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.' And I believe you have not done this fully or with the care and consideration that needed and expected.

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take no account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people have settled and live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options, once again ill-conceived and beggar's belief.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either, how has this happened, I feel an explanation is in order.

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? I believe it lacks clarity and thought. One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. It's purely a get rich quick policy and of no benefit to the local community or people who wish to visit the area, and on this point alone permission should not be granted. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations, perhaps a reply on this point is in order as there appears to be a lack of understanding on who is serving who here.. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre, again perhaps you can explain how you come to be backing a project that the people you serve do not want and you have provided limited time for

	<p>consultation.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago. Please provide all the information you have on this including the past study for our consideration and while we consider all information I request an indefinite delay on any decisions being taken.</p> <p>I am extremely concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>I don't believe that gravel extracted locally will be used for local benefit, commercially the extractor will move this gravel where ever the need arises, so any arguments based around local gravel for use is I believe incorrect. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed, as I said not for local benefit, the gravel will be sold country wide. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document. Again I suspect these plans have not been correctly put together and little proper consideration and consultation has been carried out.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term. Do you have any further sites for us to compare the merits of each site, please reply.</p>
826	<p>It was with dismay that I have learnt of the proposal to develop a gravel pit in the village of Cholsey. I am a local resident who has lived in Cholsey for 5 years and it is clear to me that a gravel pit is totally unsuited to Cholsey.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St.Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford</p>

	<p>Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>The impact that this proposed development will have on a quiet and scenic village is profound and all of the local inhabitants are determined to fight this proposal and protect Cholsey.</p>
824	<p>We object to the "Gravel Pit" in or around Cholsey.</p> <p>Too much traffic with 30-40 lorries going up the by-pass etc each day.</p> <p>The dust etc too near houses.</p> <p>Noise from all the machinery and the water from the lorries which will escape from the "gravel" etc onto the roads.</p> <p>NO TO THE GRAVEL PIT</p>

816	<p>I was absolutely staggered to hear that a site between Cholsey, Wallingford and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell on the piece of land between the "Bunk Railway" to the west and "Cholsey Mile" ie the Wallingford Road on the east, had been proposed for gravel extraction.</p> <p>It sounds to me as if someone had to tick a box by a given time and effectively had "stuck a pin" in a map. As for only allowing a little over two and a half weeks to respond well, this is not what we expect from a County Council. Or maybe it is. How many of the councillors have been taken the trouble to go to the site let alone consult with the people who live in the area, considered the economic consequences of their action or the effect it will have on the historic sites which sit within the area?</p> <p>Allowing this gravel pit to go ahead will blight the whole area for years to come. It will not be just the one site, for if permission is granted then the areas all around will be developed too - leaving the landscape looking like something from the First World War battle zone!</p> <p>Or is there something more to this than meets the eye? Do people stand to gain millions of pounds at the expense of the 3 main communities affected? Why were we told it had been discounted and suddenly it has become the main location?</p> <p>We are told it is poor quality gravel which requires rock added to it to make it viable. So we will have lorry movements to extract the gravel, lorry movements to bring in the rock, lorry movements to clean the roads, potential accidents on poor road access to a relatively recent by-pass around Wallingford, then more lorry movements to fill in the holes. The extraction and transportation will bring with it air and noise pollution along with the associated illnesses, dirty atmospheres, ruining a peaceful piece of countryside, criss-crossed with paths and about to have a new cycle way through it, and at a stroke the benefits from the time, effort and money expended by the communities to attract businesses and tourists to the area will have been slashed. To say nothing of the safety issue of such large lorries trundling along the roads and accessing the by-pass at already very busy roundabouts.</p> <p>Why has there been no consultation? Why did it get hidden away in, of all things, a waste management document? Oh yes - there's another lot of lorries bringing other people's rubbish to fill the holes and to pollute the ground streams etc in the area. Speaking of streams - where on earth will all the water go - houses not currently susceptible to flooding will suddenly be faced with flooding threats.</p> <p>So much for areas of special beauty, the historical past of Wallingford so important, especially now that more and more is being unearthed on the structure and layout of Wallingford town and its immediate surroundings.</p> <p>We have already been forced to have infill building between Wallingford Town and its by-pass - who on earth is going to buy a property with all the environmental hazards associated with quarrying?</p> <p>As for wildlife, fauna and flora - well bang goes that for a start. All the lovely walks we all enjoy in the surrounding countryside will be ruined for years to come.</p> <p>We hear a lot about planning strategy - what planning strategy? One which relies on knee jerk reactions combined with land owners offering up their land to enable a quick buck to be made.</p> <p>Where's the consultation with the communities 3 weeks to defend what will literally blight the whole area for years to come - we know, we have all seen what the area outside Sutton Courtenay looks like! Why are they sites suggested by companies and landowners accepted? Where's the OCC strategy - this should be built to say no when options put forward are "no brainers". There is no guarantee that this gravel will be used locally - by the time the pit gets underway the housing developments it was supposedly intended for will have been finished.</p>
-----	---

	<p>Cholsey, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and Wallingford are inextricably linked - this whole venture will divide the split communities which have been working hard to develop their local economies through tourism, self-promotion, encouraging the reduction of carbon footprint etc by more local markets, social activities etc.</p> <p>One of the major tourist attractions is the Bunk Railway itself - who on earth will want to go for a ride to look at gravel workings? Please think. Stop this project before it wastes any more time and money. In an era of economic crisis this simply does not make sense.</p>
818	<p>I am writing to register my objections to the OCC minerals strategy proposal to recommend the Wallingford Rd site Cholsey as a Gravel pit.</p> <p>Having read the briefing document I do not believe that the proposed works could possibly safeguard the character, amenity and setting of Wallingford Rd Cholsey for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail will be completely destroyed by these proposals, my belief is that Agatha Christie draws many tourists to this area (travelling from her home in Winterbrook to her grave in Cholsey Burial Ground) and this would be lost. - The likely loss/disruption of the well used and popular Cholsey & Wallingford railway, one would presume that riding the steam train past a noisy dusty gravel works would not be so popular and would harm the current option to travel from Cholsey to Wallingford by steam train. - Considerable disruption to properties, in particular the listed Cox's Farm, and the well-restored family home of Brook House as well as the barns along the Wallingford Rd. These homes will lose their character forever if the work goes ahead. <p>If the social, economic and environmental impact of these proposals are taken into account then the following matters should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A largely permanent grazing habitat with hedges and trees supporting a diverse range of wildlife such as owls, red kites, lapwings golden plovers, redwings to name a few of the birds. Not to mention the deer, weasels, hares and stoats would be damaged beyond repair. - The complex Archaeology of this site have never been fully investigated. There is evidence of Bronze and Iron Age settlements. Cox's Farm site is a known medieval settlement site linking up to the town of Wallingford presumably in the past. Before any development of this area this must take place. - The affects this proposal would have on tourism for the local area may well be catastrophic, like many market towns like Wallingford struggles and tourism is a major part of the support for the town. <p>Basically I consider that OCC's approach to the site is flawed for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It seems somewhat bizarre to only recommend one site. If the public objections to the consultation mean that a government inspection is needed what then of the minerals strategy, no site no strategy presumably. - It is understood that sites under consideration by OCC for mineral extraction are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or landowners on whose land the minerals are found - is this a reasonable and acceptable basis to completely disrupt/destroy peoples lives and environment I ask? Should not an independent geologist have been commissioned to do this? - One presumes that local people who object to the destruction of their communities are not as important to their elected representatives as commercial companies and landowners who personally stand to befit financially from this?

	<p>Other points that are of concern to my family and me are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My understanding that there is no long-term plan for the final use and restoration of the site should the works go ahead. A lake perhaps could be an asset for future generations. Inert waste is scarce these days so I presume we will just be left with a deep depression (in our minds and land) which in wet conditions will fill with water and when it dries out become a smelly marsh area and then dust bowl when completely dry. Not a nice legacy for our descendants. - Many of us (in Cholsey & Wallingford) have fought for years to get a cycle path from Cholsey to Wallingford, during the 28 years I have cycled it with my children it has become faster and more dangerous, cycle to school days were/are a nightmare for parents. At the moment it appears that new government money could be available to swell the amount already put aside for this which would mean the cycle path could become a reality in the next 5 to 10 years - but what point the route runs the length of the gravel pit! - I understand the need to find gravel sites near to where it will be used but much of the house building proposed for Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development will be completed within 10 years - well before the Cholsey site would be ready. Meaning the developers of the site could sell the gravel much further afield making a mockery of the claim that the gravel needs to be produced near where it will be used. In addition the reassurances regarding movement of the gravel would then be meaningless the heavy lorries could in fact go anywhere and almost certainly through the village of Cholsey and surrounding villages to reach its destinations. As far as I can see there is no real detail of all the proposed development within South Oxfordshire within the consultation document in support of gravel extraction in this area - has this been done if not why not? - The Cholsey site is relatively small for longer-term use, there is no mention in the consultation document of other sites which would meet the longer term need - OCC must look further ahead. <p>I have grave concerns about this proposal and look forward to your reply. I would ask when the results of the consultation will be known, how people will be informed and what happens next.</p>
759	<p>It was with dismay that I have learnt of the proposal to develop a gravel pit in the village of Cholsey. I am a local resident who has lived in Cholsey for 5 years and it is clear to me that a gravel pit is totally unsuited to Cholsey.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. It</p>

	<p>is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to many people?</p> <p>It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left not only without a site but without a minerals strategy either.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>The impact that this proposed development will have on a quiet and scenic village is profound and all of the local inhabitants are determined to fight this proposal and protect Cholsey.</p>
752	<p>I am writing to protest at the proposed works at Cholsey. What is envisaged will cover a large area of the village, will create wide disruption of traffic to and from the village and its station (an important commuter consideration) and pollute the surrounding widely populated area, with the current expansion of family homes and increase in number of children involved.</p> <p>The site will also affect the current historical site, the footpaths in that area, important to me as a member of the Ramblers Association (who I am sure will be interested in any decision made). The proposed cycle path through the village with the connection through to Wallingford, a much needed road safety measure with the existing amount of traffic will no longer be possible.</p> <p>I am aware of the points put to you by other correspondents, especially regarding the low quality of the gravel in the ground on the site and the vested interests of those proposing the usage of the site.</p> <p>I trust that you will reconsider the position and make a wise decision to reject the proposal.</p>
753	Duplicate of 752
962	<p>I am a Cholsey resident and am writing to express my deep concerns regarding Oxfordshire County Councils "Minerals Consultation Strategy Consultation Draft - September 2011"</p> <p>The vision statement for minerals planning as stated in "Oxfordshire Minerals Planning Strategy Consultation Draft, September 2011" (Executive Summary Pt 6.) is listed below.</p>

	<p>6. The strategy, policies and proposals are based on a vision and objectives for minerals planning in Oxfordshire. The vision has three strands: Provision of minerals to meet development needs; Minimising the distance minerals are transported by road, to reduce impacts on the environment; and Restoration of mineral workings to enhance the natural environment and quality of life for Oxfordshire's residents.</p> <p>I am at a loss to understand how the proposed site between Cholsey and Wallingford will now "meet development needs" when it wasn't considered suitable in September 2010. You have failed in my opinion to show what those development needs are and how they would be met by this strategy.</p> <p>I believe the 2nd strand of your vision statement has not been clearly established. The proposed site is close to a heritage line the "Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway". This line should not be considered for transport of goods trucks. It is a holiday attraction bringing people to both Cholsey and Wallingford. This is a facility which has been established due to the hard work of many volunteers over time. It would not survive this proposed strategy. This would certainly foster resentment among both Railway enthusiasts and the general public. You have not shown why this site fits your vision over and above other proposed sites. I do not believe you have shown any proof of your desire "to reduce impacts on the environments". I believe there is insufficient evidence to show that the impact on environment in question has been considered.</p> <p>The 3rd strand of your vision statement states "restoration of mineral workings to enhance the natural environment". I have seen no viable explanation as to how the proposal will enhance the environment either during the life of the proposed gravel pit or indeed after. As for enhancing the lives of Oxfordshire's residents; in what way would the lives of Cholsey or Wallingford residents be enhanced?</p> <p>I suggest that stating your vision is laudable but then ignoring it in your actions is dishonest.</p> <p>For the reasons stated above, and many other reasons not listed here, I strongly object to a gravel pit at Cholsey. There needs to be wider consultation about this proposal before it is taken any further by the Oxford County Council.</p>
999	<p>I write this letter of protest, apposing the Cholsey gravel extraction plan, with anger, sorrow and a high degree of apprehension when I think about this proposal which is, of course a rape of our countryside.</p> <p>Anger because I think - how dare they, our elected councillors, propose this course of action, which will destroy the Cholsey/Wallingford area and make a living hell of life for the many thousands of local residents who value this open space.</p> <p>Sorrow because of the fact that I have lived the whole of my life in Cholsey and I do not want to see what remains of my life ruined by this.</p> <p>Apprehension because the desecration of the environment that will ensue will be catastrophic - habitat destroyed together with the wild life. Fauna and flora will be gone forever and all this for a gravel which will be of inferior quality.</p> <p>This smacks to me of desperation on your part, so, get a grip and find somewhere more eminently suitable, AND DO NOT DESTROY US.</p>
1001	<p>I am writing to object to your proposals to include the areas between Wallingford and Cholsey as suitable areas for gravel extraction. The County Council has previously identified a number of areas as more suitable than the Wallingford/Cholsey sites, and there can be no justification in now changing these priorities.</p> <p>Wallingford and Cholsey are already being subjected to intense housing development with the Fairmile and Slade Farm sites, which will add substantially to the already heavy traffic on the bypass and local roads. Further traffic generated by gravel</p>

	<p>extraction would make the situation intolerable, both in terms of volume and noise. Furthermore, the site between Wallingford and Cholsey is subject to a prevailing westerly wind, which would inflict both noise and dust from the works onto the town. It cannot be right to inflict this on a large centre of population. There are numerous other reasons for not blighting the valuable countryside between Wallingford and Cholsey, which I am sure others have detailed, however my main objection remains that there are other far more suitable sites that should be reconsidered before Wallingford/Cholsey.</p>
923	<p>By proposing just one area, it seems the Council has left itself with no alternative. I believe the choice of the Cholsey/Wallingford sites will prove to be a bad decision taking into account all the relevant criteria. The local communities are clearly determined to fight this proposal all the way, and this is likely to be very bad publicity for the County Council. An apparent failure to conduct proper consultation and site analysis seem to be especially disturbing aspects of this case, which casts real doubt on proper procedures being followed. The County Council proposal seems to be heavily weighted on a single aspect - that of transport. Proximity to a main road and to Didcot are indeed factors relating to the Cholsey/Wallingford sites. However this ignores the fact that nobody knows where gravel will be required and direct access onto the Wallingford Bypass is I understand contrary to your own policy. Also the choice of these sites will severely affect the historic communities of Cholsey and Wallingford. Extraction in the heart of Cholsey will split Winterbrook from the village centre, and Wallingford lies windward of the sites. All this as Wallingford is succeeding in promoting itself as a tourist attraction. One main attraction is the Agatha Christie factor, something that has been slow to gain momentum due to the Dame's intensely private lifestyle. Now however the cat is out of the bag and the proposed gravel extraction is completely surrounded by the Agatha Christie Trail which has her Cholsey home at one end and her burial place in St. Mary's, Cholsey churchyard at the other end. I am one of many in Wallingford, Cholsey and neighbouring villages who are totally opposed to this proposal.</p>
912	<p>I am a resident of Cholsey and intend to be for many years as I really enjoy the village and surrounding area. I would like to register the fact that I am totally opposed to the gravel pit on the land between Cholsey and Wallingford. I think this would totally ruin the aura of Cholsey as a village, Wallingford and the surrounding area. The increase in large, heavy and noisy traffic would have a disastrous effect on the local community along with pollution and noise pollution. I have had many walks on the footpaths along the area being considered and enjoy the current landscape immensely and can't accept that these footpaths, which have been here for years, will be destroyed along with all the wildlife. I find it difficult to understand why the area would even be considered for a gravel pit site and again emphasise that I am totally against it. Please let me know if there is anything further I can do to reiterate my objections and I would be grateful if you could keep me updated on the situation.</p>
911	<p>Promotion of Sites SG33 - Land South of Wallingford, New Barn Farm, Cholsey; SG57 - New Barn Farm Cholsey; SG60 White Cross Farm, Wallingford to extract sand and gravel. I write to OPPOSE in the strongest possible terms Oxfordshire County Council's Minerals Strategy proposals for sand and gravel extraction within sites SG33, SG57 and SG60 on the following grounds: (1) Gravel extraction from any or all of the proposed sites would result in an intolerable loss of quality of life from noise, dust,</p>

odour and lorry traffic movements to the residents of Wallingford and Cholsey, who number some 10,000 people, the majority of whom live within 1 mile radius of the sites.

(2) The proposals would bring some 20 years of economic, planning and house blight to the important market town of Wallingford, its close neighbour, the village of Cholsey and Mongewell Park (Carmel College) on the east side of the River Thames.

(3) In some instances homes and businesses would be so close to the proposed workings that they would become untenable and unviable.

(4) The proposals would destroy or affect: Listed buildings, archaeology, ecology, existing tourism attractions and the character of the landscape which is surrounded by the Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which abuts the North Wessex Downs AONB, the River Thames and links both visual and historical between town and village.

(5) The sites are highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area forms the hinterland of a major medieval town with a long continuity of earlier settlement. Sites SG33 and SG57 lie immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze and Iron Ages. It is inconceivable that the underlying archaeology should be destroyed without proper, deep archaeological investigation.

(6) The proposed sites are closely surrounded by The Chiltern Hills AONB. The proposed extraction and its legacy would have a severely detrimental impact on the AONB. They would also impact on important views to the North Wessex Downs AONB. Site SG60 would be merely 75m, the width of the river, from The Chiltern Hills AONB on the eastern bank of the River Thames. Site SG57 abuts the AONB on its northern boundary and Site SG33 abuts at its north-western angle. The northern boundary of this site runs at an angle to the AONB. Workings and scars would be highly visible from many parts of the AONB. (See Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty map).

(7) The sites are not economically viable. The quality of the gravel is understood to be poor, being approximately 65% limestone and chalk and it is understood to be that for this reason the previous contractor pulled out. I do not believe that with the necessary bunds, buffer zones, etc in place, it will be possible to extract the amount of gravel proposed.

(8) Insufficient thought has been given to access and egress on the sites and the impact numerous heavy lorry movements would have on the local roads, some of which are already running at full capacity for large parts of the day. Given the time lapse of some 8 to 10 years before extraction would begin it has to be pointed out that the Wallingford and Cholsey's new housing quota will have been completed and thus there will be little, if any, carbon footprint benefit. With the extra traffic from new residential build the roads will be even more unsuitable for the necessary lorry movements than they are now.

(9) There are no certain plans as to how any of the sites would be backfilled and restored following the extraction. There is a very real possibility, given the nature of the sites and their proximity to the Thames, that they will not be suitable for restoration and left as large holes.

(10) No amount of mitigation measures such as bunds or buffer zones would prevent a devastating impact on the surrounding residential areas and countryside.

(11) The cost in damage from loss of quality of life and health for 10,000 residents, economic and planning blight, and destruction of the natural and built environment is too high a price to pay for what would be the short-term gain of a relatively small amount of poor quality gravel.

(12) Clearly little, if any, consideration has been given by Oxfordshire County Council to the suitability of the three sites proposed for sand and gravel extraction. While they may, at first glance, appear to 'tick all the boxes' it is perfectly clear from only the

limited time we have been given for consultation that the sites are quite unsuitable for many important reasons.

(1) SITE SG60 White Cross Farm, Wallingford.

The inclusion of this site in the proposals is so ludicrous as to make me think that it has been included as a red herring. However, the following are reasons for its exclusion in the considerations:

(a) The site is merely 75m from The Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which runs on the eastern side of the River Thames from Wallingford to Reading. The proposed site would run for some 375m along the riverside. (See Chiltern Hills AONB Map).

(b) The site is bounded along its entire length on the east by the Thames Trail, a National Path which is unique in following a river for most of its length, starting in the Cotswolds and terminating in London (184 miles). At this point the path, having passed through Wallingford, continues through the water-meadows and thence to Cholsey Marsh - a Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust reserve. This is described as 'A tranquil riverside marsh with a rich and varied birdlife'. Of course, the wildlife does not restrict itself to the reserve and the path is as much used by those seeking quiet and peaceful exercise from the town as by those on the long distance route. (See figs 1-7).

(c) Views into the site from the A329 and A4130 bypass road are important as they look across the water-meadows to the North Wessex Downs AONB. The proposed gravel workings would be extremely obvious in the middle ground of these views. Likewise, views from Mongewell Park, the river (much used by pleasure craft and, in recent years, the return of Sifers pleasure trip boats to Wallingford), the fields and Thames Trail would be of nothing but the gravel extraction workings for a considerable distance. (See Figs 5 & 6).

(d) This stretch of the river is continuously used by Oxford University Rowing Club, in particular for training their Boat Race crews. Their commitment to using this section of the river was confirmed some years ago by the building a new boathouses with training facilities just over 1k from the proposed site. Oxford Brookes University have a site a similar distance to the south and also use the river along this stretch. (See Fig 7).

(e) On the eastern bank, immediately opposite the proposed gravel extraction site, is the former Mongewell Park which until recent years was partially used as a Jewish college which retained the original William and Mary style house of 1980-1 by R S Wornum (replacing a Georgian mansion) and immediately on the river bank the ruined Normal Church of St John the Baptist (remodelled in Gothic Syle in 1791), described by Pevsner as 'A romantic ruin complete with tombs, in a perfect setting beside the river'. St John the Baptist is listed Grade II. (See Fig 8).

The college introduced other buildings of exceptionally high quality into the riverside landscape:

The Amphitheatre, 1965 by Thomas Hancock, assistand designer John Toovey - Grade II.

The Julius Gottlieb Gallery & Boathouse, 1968-70 by Sir Basil Spence, Bonnington & Collins, design architect, John Unwin Spence - Grade II*.

The Synagogue, 1963 by Thomas Hancock, assistant designer John Toovey - Grade II.

Currently unlisted but also of high quality and making a considerable contribution to the river frontage is the neo-Tudor boathouse.

The setting and ambiance of all these buildings would be seriously affected by gravel extraction works only 75m away on the opposite bank of the river. Gravel extraction could also blight the future of these buildings as the college closed in June 1997 and the buildings have been mothballed since then, awaiting a suitable development plan for the campus. It is believed that a

planning application for new homes is imminent. It is highly unlikely that anyone would wish to restore and develop, or buy on the site while gravel extraction is taking place on the opposite bank.

(f) Immediately opposite the site on the eastern side of the A329 is the highly regarded ('Outstanding', Offsted) Mongewell Park Nursery School, located within a high quality C19 former house of considerable character. The school boasts a fantastic, natural outdoor area with a bike track, trees to climb, a vegetable patch, bridges and large wooden breeze houses for dramatic play or quiet story time with friends. In the new extension all the nursery rooms open directly onto the garden, letting the children move freely from the indoors to outdoors and providing added learning opportunities outside in the fresh-air. The proposed gravel workings, with all the implications of noise, dust odour and heavy lorries would be little more than the road width away. The school's western boundary is only 200 metres from the proposed site SG33. (See Fig 9).

(2) SITE SG33 Land South of Wallingford, New Barn Farm, Cholsey.

Although slightly less sensitive than the above riverside site, this land too is wholly unsuitable and inappropriate for the extraction of sand and gravel for the following reasons:

(a) The site is at its closest only 250m from SITE SG60 and at its furthest 500m. All the above items relating to that site, apply on this site.

(b) Mongewell Park Nursery School (see 1 | (f) above) has a western boundary only 200 metres from this site.

(c) The site abuts the Chiltern Hills AONB at its north-western angle. The northern boundary of this site runs at an angle to the AONB which would be severely affected by the workings. (See Chiltern Hills AONB map).

(d) The site is bounded to the south by the long, straight and dangerously fast Wallingford Road which is the much-used main route between Cholsey Village and the Station and Wallingford. There have been a number of cyclists deaths and injuries on this road over the years leading to both communities campaigning for a Cycle Path. Oxfordshire County Council has now developed a fully costed, part funded proposal for this work. I understand from Cholsey Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the building of this route within the next five to ten years. These funds are time limited and would be lost if the gravel extraction goes ahead. It stands to reason that to access or egress the proposed gravel working site on this road would be wholly impossible.

(e) Included on the Wallingford Road boundary is a Grade II listed C18 barn (List Entry No. 1059256). Of 5 aisled bays with opposing doorways, this large barn retains much of its original timber construction and is the fine example of its type. It is inconceivable that this listed barn could be demolished. The barn is now little used and coming to the point where it is a building at risk and a new future must be secured for it. Even if no application is made for demolition, the future of this building and its setting would be seriously blighted. (See Figs 10-13).

(f) Also on the Wallingford Road boundary is Brook House, a recently renovated early C20 farmhouse which, although not listed, has a bold character and makes a good contribution to the landscape, as do the farm cottages opposite. The demolition of Brook House or the blighting of the setting and amenity of the house and farm cottages would be wholly unacceptable. (See Fig 14).

(g) The northern boundary of the site is formed by The Cholsey and Wallingford Railway, a heritage and tourist railway set up thirty years ago and run and maintained by volunteers. It runs on the Cholsey to Wallingford Branch Line opened in 1866. Steam and diesel trains run on frequent 'special' weekends and are a considerable attraction for both tourist and locals. The area of the proposed gravel workings covers more than half of the railway's operating area. An integral part of the pleasure of trips on the trains is the countryside views from the windows. Not only would views be lost but the passengers subjected to noise and dust.

	<p>There is a very real worry that the impact of the gravel workings would cause a considerable drop in passenger numbers and the income they provide to sustain the railway. Future investment in the railway would also be affected: There is a very real risk that this extraordinary voluntary effort will become unviable and have to close. (See figs 15 & 16).</p> <p>(h) To the north of the railway and 125 metres from the proposed gravel workings is Cox's Farmhouse, a mostly C17 timber-framed house shown on the 1695 Cholsey Estate Map. It was then in a isolated situation and remains so today, probably reflecting a much older settlement pattern. Not only would the residents be intolerably affected by the noise and dust of the gravel workings but the listed building would lose its historic setting about which there is still much to be learnt. The area around the listed building is a known medieval settlement area. (See Fig 17).</p> <p>(i) The archaeological potential of this area is considerable, particularly for its evidence in the development of the town of Wallingford and the village of Cholsey, and their early relationship.</p> <p>(j) It is understood that the proposed site has not been subjected to an intensive ecological study. However, otters have been seen in recent years and many other mammals and birds are known to populate the site which has historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns. The consistent lack of disturbance of the landscape suggests that a proper ecological evaluation is vital before any consideration can be given to destroying it. This is not habitat that can be restored to nature conservation with any benefit to biodiversity. (See Fig 18).</p> <p>(3) SITE SG57 New Barn Farm, Cholsey.</p> <p>All that appertains to Site SG33, appertains to this site with the additional objections:</p> <p>(a) The south-western end of the site protrudes into the village of Cholsey, directly abutting housing and being within a road-width of housing. Noise, dust, odour and general loss of amenity would make the occupation of these houses untenable.</p> <p>(b) On two sides the proposed site abuts a major sewage works, the implications of which have yet to be assessed.</p> <p>(c) This site abuts The Chiltern Hills AONB on its northern boundary and works here would severely impact on the AONB.</p> <p>In conclusion, I do not believe that Oxfordshire County Council has sufficient knowledge of sites SG33, SG57 and SG60 to make a valid policy decision for gravel extraction. As will be evident from the above and objections from other residents and organisations, the sites are wholly unsuitable for sand and gravel extraction.</p> <p>I have strong concerns too over the way in which this site has been selected for promotion as the only possible additional site for sand and gravel extraction in the county. Clearly, this cannot be the case and I would urge Oxfordshire County Council to examine the suitability of sites elsewhere.</p>
913	Duplicate entry of 911
939	<p>I am writing to you in order to register my objection to the proposal to extract gravel etc from sites in Cholsey as indicated in your Minerals & Waste Draft Plan. The proposed extraction sites will destroy the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, situated on the outskirts of, and bounded to one side by the major access road to, our village. Over 10,000 people live within one mile of the proposed site and hundreds live within the immediate vicinity.</p> <p>In addition the development would result in the destruction of the Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home in Winterbrook, to her grave in St Mary's Church graveyard, as well as threatening the continued existence of the Cholsey and Wallingford steam railway by destroying the scenic landscape through which the railway runs.</p> <p>The area that would be destroyed includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged</p>

	<p>to hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat for a wide variety of wildlife including deer and red kites.</p> <p>The proposed site along the Wallingford Road adjoins the existing residential development. The noise and dust etc arising from the proposed gravel extraction works will severely and adversely impact the rights of the occupants to the peaceful enjoyment of their property to which they are entitled under the Human Rights Act.</p> <p>We currently notice vibration from Motorway Maintenance lorries being routed through the village along Wallingford Road. This route is unsuitable for heavy vehicles and the effect of lorries from a gravel works using such routes would be devastating.</p> <p>I have not seen any plans for restoration of the land post gravel removal. It would be an act of vandalism to replace the existing rural landscape with a derelict pit. Previously, when gravel extraction was considered in Cholsey, concerns were expressed that the area of open water that might accumulate could attract large numbers of birds which could be hazardous to aircraft using the Benson airforce base. Has the Ministry of Defence been consulted regarding effects on the future use of the Benson facilities?</p> <p>Regarding the production of the plan, it appears negligent that Cholsey is the only new site nominated since I expect that the site will be proved unsuitable based on environmental considerations, possibly gravel quality and location relative to end use. In this event the council's plans for future mineral extraction will be in disarray.</p> <p>It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCc for mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Obviously the interests of the local population will be secondary in the view of these potential beneficiaries.</p> <p>I expect our elected representatives, and the organisations that they are responsible for, to locate sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal, prior to offering them for mineral extraction operations, based on the interests of all people in the area and not just the interests of those who stand to benefit financially. I trust that this expectation will not be found to be misplaced and that all potential sites will be examined, not just one, to establish the best ones based on the interests of the Oxfordshire public.</p>
940	<p>I am writing about the proposed gravel pit between Wallingford and Cholsey. I oppose it very strongly.</p> <p>Powerful arguments against it have already been put to you by many people in Wallingford and Cholsey. It will impose daunting economic and environmental - and therefore also social - damage on these two places. It will especially damage the unique tourist and cultural attractions that they are now developing.</p> <p>The question that particularly worries me, however, with a long-term professional interest in the processes of public service administration, is how the Oxfordshire County Council reached the present proposal. My understanding is that, having published a list of a dozen or so possible sites for gravel pits in the South Oxfordshire area, the next thing the County Council told us suddenly without explanation was that the list had been reduced to one - Wallingford and Cholsey - and asked us to respond to an immediate consultation.</p> <p>It is impossible not to be worried by this procedure, and to wonder what has been going on behind the scenes. Not a good example of transparent administration. I would be grateful if you would send me an explanation.</p> <p>I am sending a copy of this letter to Ed Vaizey, our MP, in case he should wish to take it up with the County Council.</p>
942	<p>I am a resident of Cholsey and wish to register my concerns about and objections to the prospect of a gravel pit being located in the village.</p> <p>Flood risk</p>

The proposed site, particularly the area closest to the village, has a high water table and regularly, naturally floods. This area is adjacent to a sewage treatment plant, a watercourse directly feeding into the Thames and houses which lie lower than the proposed site. I am very concerned that any development on or disturbance of the proposed site would result in flood risk to the immediate vicinity and beyond. We have an excellent, local Environment Agency office, but I understand that they have not been consulted on this proposal, and it seems to me that would be essential to any choice of this site.

Dust, health issues and noise pollution

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live more directly around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. I am particularly concerned about the risk to health from the operation of a gravel extraction site and any processing plant that might accompany it. I am not aware that a health assessment has been carried out for the immediate vicinity or wider area of the proposed site. with several other sites available in South Oxfordshire it is not at all clear the basis on which the County Council has opted to propose a gravel pit that would result in years of disruption and health risk so close to so many people.

Traffic & transportation

I understand that the proposal is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries required for this type of operation on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is no apparent schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.

There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial decision, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield. The transport infrastructure around the site is designed for local traffic (in any direction the traffic has to pass directly through villages) and is already quite heavily used by 'through' traffic to Didcot & the A34, and to Oxford and Reading.

In addition, Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous, and entirely unsuitable for additional heavy vehicle use. The local community has campaigned for traffic calming measures to be introduced. Adding further heavy vehicles along this road will increase the risk to local people and, because heavy vehicles limit the traffic calming measures that are considered suitable, make it even less likely that such measures will be provided. If Wallingford Road is blocked for any reason, then there are no viable alternative routes for heavy vehicles. A recent very minor accident completely closed the road for several hours from Caps Lane to the bypass and all traffic was diverted through the centre of the village and along the single-track Caps Lane.

Cycle path - Cholsey to Wallingford

I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully-costed, part-funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. As noted above, Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous. Over the years a number of cyclists have been killed or injured on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this long-awaited route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the routeruns for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.

	<p>Heritage & character The County Council's briefing document refers to "safeguarded the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area now proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of the County Council's Plan. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village.</p> <p>The area includes sites of complex archaeological interest, open grazing supporting diverse wildlife and an extensively used public right of way through the middle of the proposed site. It is unacceptable to ignore the effect of loss of these to the local and wider community.</p> <p>Social, economic & environmental Under the Minerals Planning Strategy, the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals' but I am not at all convinced that this has been done. A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames Valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all conducive to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are most likely to be left with a depression that seasonally will fill with water and become a marshy area in spring and autumn, each of which represent a risk to local children who venture onto the site, and an eyesore in any event.</p>
924	<p>I am a resident of Cholsey village and am horrified at the OCC plan to allow gravel pits to be dug between Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>You are considering the plan to allow gravel extraction sites between Cholsey and Wallingford. There are only 2 roads between Cholsey and Wallingford and you intend to dig pits along both of them, which means that the pits will be joining the village to the town!!</p> <p>Tourism will be badly impacted. I always thought that the idea was to encourage visitors to our town, this will certainly discourage anyone from wanting to stay and go for any walks in the area, it will be far too dusty. This will cause the town of Wallingford to lose trade. My cousin lives near a gravel pit, her village has died since they began, those who could, moved, those who couldn't move, now cannot sell.</p> <p>People have already died in traffic accidents on Wallingford Road. This traffic will be even more deadly, especially for all the school children riding their bicycles from Cholsey to Wallingford. You have already passed disastrous plans to build hundreds of houses in the area. These houses alone will add thousands of cars to our already packed roads.</p> <p>The estimate is for 80 trucks a day, which is about 10 trucks an hour. 1 loud, dusty truck throwing its contents all around it every</p>

	<p>6 minutes. This is obscene! Many people use the Wallingford Road to get to and from Cholsey station from Wallingford every day, either walking or cycling the same route. This will become a very dangerous and seriously unhealthy pastime and I expect most people will take to their cars, sadly, we already have traffic building up on the roundabouts, then there is extra housing and the trucks would just make the traffic problem far worse.</p> <p>Also, one of the sites goes all the way to the river, from the Reading Road, now, I always thought that the Thames Path was a public right of way, now I may be wrong, but if the gravel pits go to the river, then walkers, rambblers and visitors to the area will not be able to use the Thames Path along the stretch between Cholsey and Wallingford, and the roads will be punctuated with a gravel truck every 6 minutes, not at all conducive to encouraging visitors to our lovely part of the world.</p> <p>I haven't even thought through the problem of the dust and dirt, which I am sure will affect everyone that has no option but to walk down those roads, but I do also want to point out that you then plan to create a waste landfill site out of the pits when the gravel has been extracted. Now that is obscene in this highly populated area!!</p> <p>You must very carefully consider these points in the consultation for these plans and I wish to add my strongest objections to this unhealthy and dangerous plan for my village.</p>
921	<p>I hereby wish to officially record my objection to the proposed establishment of a gravel extraction site adjacent to the Wallingford Road in Cholsey.</p> <p>This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy. Furthermore, I do not understand why this site is being considered at all, when I am led to believe that it was rejected on the first round of possible sites. Please can you provide me with documentation around this process and an explanation of how this has occurred as well as an explanation of why this is the only site now being considered?</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago. Why is an area of such natural beauty being spoiled to extract low quality gravel, which has a finite quantity, but the resulting defacement of the site is infinite, and will be a legacy left to all future generations. What is the rationale behind doing this?</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for</p>

	<p>landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I respectfully request that this objection, together with the arguments presented herein, be taken into consideration during the decision making process with respect to the future use of this land. Additionally, please can you ensure that I am provided with relevant information with respect to the future use of this land. Additionally, please can you ensure that I am provided with relevant information with respect to the progress of this process as well as answers to the questions I have raised above.</p>
928	<p>I write, along with others, to draw your attention to the proposal by Oxfordshire County Council to nominate a site between Cholsey and Wallingford for the extraction of gravel in their Minerals Strategy, thus allowing applications for such extraction to be made. There appears to have been an unexplained reduction in the number of potential sites in Oxfordshire from sixty to one, namely Cholsey!</p> <p>It was by chance this proposal came to the notice of Cholsey Parish Council, no official notification was received by them, and one has to question whether due process of consultation was followed. There has been little time to arouse public awareness and it is feared this proposal will go ahead 'on the nod'.</p> <p>To place a gravel pit with all its associated machinery, traffic and dust onto the site proposed beggars belief. Cholsey and Wallingford have a combined population of about 10,000 and this site fills a significant area of the countryside between the two communities. The movement of gravel will involve a huge number of lorries entering and leaving the site on a daily basis. The surrounding roads are not suitable for such heavy duty traffic. The road between Cholsey and Wallingford bordering the site is the main access route between the two communities to the local schools, shops, medical centre and hospital, and railway station. Wallingford is a market town which is trying very hard to promote itself as a tourist attraction. There is a wealth of historical sites and archaeological evidence of early settlements plus the attraction of the river. To impose a gravel pit on the area will ruin future archaeological investigation and cause irreversible damage to the flora and fauna currently living there. There appears to be no plan for the future landscaping of the area and the prospect of a series of holes and mounds of debris is not an attractive one. This site will be visible from many places in the adjoining Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p> <p>I hope that you will support local people opposed to this destructive proposal and help to preserve a corner of Oxfordshire.</p>
1002	<p>We are writing to express our opposition to the proposed plan to raise gravel in Cholsey.</p> <p>It will bring a heavy industrial operation close up and alongside a community of 3000 people. The impact on this community will be disastrous. A pleasant village will be blighted by dust, fumes and noise. The main access road subject to an intolerable rise in heavy lorry movements.</p> <p>We understand that gravel there has to be gravel raising, but we also understand the gravel at this site is of poor quality. The main reason a similar plan was abandoned twenty years ago.</p> <p>We therefore ask that this proposal be refused, and Cholsey left without blight.</p>
987	<p>Gravel Extraction here NO!!!!</p> <p>What a truly devastating proposal this is!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One site is immediately beside the river! 2. The other site is very close to the two communities of Cholsey and Wallingford ... The pollution, noise, traffic all unacceptable!

	<p>3. These fields are a wildlife haven adjoining areas of outstanding natural beauty.</p> <p>4. The whole of the surrounding area is A.N.O.B.</p> <p>5. Wallingford has had thousands of pounds spent recently, by various bodies, to enhance it as a tourist destination ... THE WHOLE AREA IS OF HUGE NATIONAL HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE INCLUDING THE PROPOSED SITES.</p> <p>6. Wallingford is already under serious pressure to accept new housing ... enough is enough. Wallingford is a small market town and that is its charm.</p> <p>THE PROPOSAL IS A HUGE ENVIRONMENTAL ABOMINATION. THE VERY IDEA MUST BE TOTALLY REJECTED.</p>
992	<p>I am writing in response to the Minerals Plan Consultation published by Oxfordshire County Council ("OCC") in September 2011 (the "Consultation").</p> <p>The purpose of my letter is to set out my grave concerns regarding the proposal, as set out in Policy M3 of the consultation, that a new area of gravel working be located at Cholsey, to replace Sutton Courtenay when reserves there become exhausted (the "Proposal"). Having reviewed the relevant provisions of the Consultation, the rationale for the proposal seems flawed on a number of levels, not least that there appears to have been no substantive, strategic analysis of the material adverse effects that the proposed development would have on a community of some 10,000 people for decades to come. (Paragraph 6.11 of the Consultation admits that only a preliminary technical site assessment has been undertaken by OCC) My principal objections to the Proposal are set out in sections 1 and 2 below:</p> <p>1. The Conflict between the Proposal and a number of OCC's stated policies</p> <p>a) Strategy for the location of mineral working: Paragraph 4.18 of the Consultation states that the new area proposed at Cholsey would "enable the continued local supply of sand and gravel to markets in Southern Oxfordshire", with the associated objective of minimising the distance minerals need to be transported from quarry to market. Notwithstanding this, it cannot be said with any degree of certainty that the proposed sites at Cholsey would meet these objectives, noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the proposed Cholsey sites are not due to start production for 10 years, by which time much of the house building currently proposed in local areas (e.g Wallingford, Didcot and the Science Vale development) will have been completed; ii. demand will dictate the ultimate destination of gravel supply. It is impossible at this stage to predict accurately that gravel extracted at Cholsey will be used locally; iii. the potential gravel reserves at Cholsey are not extensive (I understand that there are doubts as to the accuracy of OCC's estimate of a yield of 4.9 million tonnes from the proposed sites). It is far from clear that such reserves could adequately meet future local demand (even if one could demonstrate that such demand will exist and the gravel will be used locally); and iv. the quality of the potential gravel reserves at Cholsey is doubtful. I understand from Cholsey Parish Council that the material found in the sites may be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew when the sites were considered 20 years ago. Even if higher quality aggregates were used to supplement the locally produced gravel, such materials would have to be transported to Cholsey by road, which would not only increase disruption for residents due to traffic movements, but also substantially undermine the contention that sites at Cholsey would reduce transport miles to market (and associated carbon emissions). <p>In view of the above it seems extraordinary that Cholsey could be proposed as the single new site for gravel extraction being considered by OCC in South Oxfordshire. Although I am far from advocating the prospect of other communities being blighted by gravel extraction, it begs the question why OCC appears to have given no real consideration to any other new sites in South</p>

Oxfordshire and beyond. Given Cholsey is patently not a suitable location, OCC's policy in this respect seems misjudged.

b) Site restoration: paragraph 4.37 of the Consultation states that applications for mineral working "should include provision for long-term maintenance of the after-use and enhancement of the environment". Although we are at the consultation stage, it is not clear that OCC has adequately considered site restoration proposals for Cholsey, including the unique problems that this location poses in terms of environmental enhancement post extraction. (The conclusion in the SA/SEA Report (as defined below) that "restoration of sites could offer some beneficial community effects in the future depending on the proposed after uses" (emphasis added) is meaningless and unsubstantiated). In this regard I would point out that:

- i. there is no long term plan for final use and site restoration (Cholsey merits a single mention in Background Paper 3 to the Consultation).
- ii. I understand that the site SG 60 cannot be restored as a lake due to the proximity of the River Thames;
- iii. I understand that the prospect of sites SB 33 and SB 57 being restored as lakes is reduced due to the proximity of RAF Benson and the increased risk of bird strikes that would arise as a result (this principle being recognised at paragraph 4.41 of the Consultation); and
- iv. the possibility of any of the above sites being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. Notably, the Consultation states at paragraph 4.39 that "it may take some year to complete restoration because of shortage of suitable fill material (due in large part to increased recycling)".

It is my view that had OCC taken the opportunity to consider these issues in proper order this would have significantly enhanced the possibility of Cholsey being discounted altogether as a location for gravel extraction. In the alternative, residents face the prospect of being left with an unintended depression that will seasonally fill with water. This is unacceptable and furthermore would likely be in breach of applicable environmental law.

c) Flooding and water environment: although Policies C1 and C2 refer to flooding risk and damage to the water environment as being matters for further analysis, I would draw your attention at this stage both to the proximity of the Cholsey site to the River Thames in terms of flooding risk (both during and post extraction) and the proximity of the Cholsey Sewage Works in terms of potential groundwater contamination. These are serious and significant factors that would militate against Cholsey being used for gravel extraction; and surely should have been considered in detail before now. (Background paper 2 to the Consultation offers no detailed evidence as to its conclusion that Cholsey is a low flood risk area. Its other conclusions that Cholsey has "good access and few other environmental constraints" are similarly unjustified.)

c) Environmental protection: paragraph 5.15 of the Consultation states that minerals developments "must be balanced against the need to protect the environment" and that Policy C3 provides protection to local residents from unacceptable impacts caused by such developments. In this regard Cholsey cannot be considered to be a suitable location for gravel extraction:

- i. very little account appears to have been taken of the distance between a noisy, dusty, disruptive industrial site and the homes and workplaces of around 10,000 people. (The statement in the SA/SEA Report that there is "potential for negative amenity effects on the local community depending on the proximity of sites to sensitive receptors (houses, schools etc)" is cursory, at best. No detailed consideration is given to this key issue in the SA/SEA report.) A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of the proposed works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in Policy C3. I am also very concerned that no detailed assessment of the impact on air

quality appears to have been carried out;

ii. Cholsey and Wallingford will become significantly less attractive places to live if the Proposal goes ahead. Personally, I moved from London to Cholsey with the aim of bringing up a family in a safe, secure, tranquil environment. Having a gravel pit within a mile of my house will largely destroy this aim. Additionally, gravel extraction will adversely affect house prices in the area and could have a negative impact on the local economy. No analysis of the potential wider impact on the local economy appears to have been undertaken at all, particularly of the effects on tourism, which is of considerable concern;

iii. the Proposal, if sanctioned, will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey cycle path - the proposed route for which runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. Thus a project widely supported by the local community, which would increase road safety and encourage the use of sustainable transport, will be lost entirely. Local residents like me will be forced to continue to use their cars to access Wallingford safely; and

iv. for the ecological, historical, archaeological, landscape and transport reasons further set out below.

e) Biodiversity: I understand that the proposed sites at Cholsey are not within a statutorily protected conservation area. Nevertheless, paragraph 5.20 of the Consultation states, inter alia, that OCC "will seek to ensure that biodiversity in ... non-designated areas is protected and enhanced and that habitat fragmentation is avoided". Paragraph 5.23 goes further to state that proposals for minerals development "should seek to achieve a net gain in natural assets and resources". It is hard to see how gravel extraction at Cholsey would be compatible with these statements:

i. the Cholsey sites are largely permanent grazed farmland sites with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Site SG 60 directly borders the River Thames;

ii. from the limited studies that have been possible in the short time available, I understand that the area is of great value to wildlife and foxes, roe deer, hares, weasels, stoats and a wide variety of birds are seen here. Little or no consideration appears to have been given to the above in OCC's preliminary site assessment. Furthermore, it is virtually impossible to see how there will be a net gain in natural assets after the destruction of these valuable habitats.

f) Landscape: The proposed gravel extraction sites are directly adjacent to the North Wessex Downs AONB (Sites SB 33 and SG 57) and the Chilterns AONB (Site SG 60). Paragraph 5.26 of the Consultation states that proposals for minerals development "should demonstrate that they will not have a negative impact on views and settings associated with the Chilterns, Cotswolds and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)". To date, no evidence (or even comfort) has been provided that the Proposal would not negatively impact two out of three of these AONB's. Furthermore, I understand from Cholsey Parish Council that the North Wessex Downs AONB has already advised in writing against the selection of the Cholsey and Wallingford area for gravel extraction.

g) History and archaeology: paragraphs 5.28 and 5.30 of the Consultation underline OCC's commitment to protect historical and heritage assets. To develop gravel extraction at Cholsey would be incompatible with these aims:

i. Cholsey is a parish of historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 AD. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the areas proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, watercourses and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today;

ii. the recently adopted "Agatha Christie Trail", running from her former home in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed if the Proposal is sanctioned;

iii. gravel extraction at Cholsey will likely force the popular Cholsey & Wallingford Steam Railway to close, thereby abruptly

terminating the enjoyment of many hundreds of local residents and tourists each year and sacrificing 30 years of hard work by the volunteers who run this attraction;

iv. a number of listed buildings (notably the barns on Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm) will be adversely affected; and

v. the proposed sites lie immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites (the bypass creating a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site). It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Since the area is part of the hinterland of Wallingford, one of the best surviving examples of a major medieval town in the country, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history, disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Professional archaeological investigation will be required if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed. Taking the above into account, the statement in the URS Scott Wilson report "Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment - Aggregates Apportionment Option" dated July 2011 (the "SA/SEA Report") that Cholsey is "largely unconstrained by strategic nature conservation, historic and landscape designations" is, frankly, misleading. Notably, the SA/SEA Report provides no detailed or valid justifications of this statement.

h) Transport: Policy C7 of the Consultation states that minerals development will only be permitted where provision is made to "maintain or improve" the safety of all road users (including pedestrians), the efficiency and quality of the road network, and residential and environmental amenity. In no way is the Proposal consistent with this policy;

i. It would appear that no substantive consideration has been given to the material adverse impact that the increased traffic (principally HGV movement) associated with the Proposal would have. This cannot be right;

ii. many of the local roads to the stated target markets are totally unsuited to significant HGV movements. This includes the A4130 between Wallingford and Didcot, the A4074 and the Wallingford bypass (a likely unfortunate side effect being that traffic will be diverted back through the town centre, making redundant the original purpose of the bypass). I would note that the SA/SEA Report's statements that Cholsey is "well located in relation to markets" and "well linked with good access to the lorry route network" are not backed up by evidence. At least the author has the grace to admit that infrastructure improvements would be required to support working in this area;

iii. I understand from local traffic experts that the entrance to the gravel pit would have to be sited on the Wallingford Road, close to the Winterbrook roundabouts. This seems unacceptably dangerous given this is a narrow, bumpy, poorly lit, already busy road. It is also unacceptable in terms of the extended journey times and congestion that local residents will face entering and exiting Cholsey via this principal route; and

iv. as stated above, the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey cycle path would be precluded.

2. The lack of transparency surrounding the Proposal

In October 2010 OCC agreed a preferred approach to sand and gravel extraction that did not include new works at Cholsey (Per the Consultation document "Development of Draft Minerals Planning Strategy - September 2011"). However, by February 2011, a revised strategy was agreed which did include new works at Cholsey. The reasons for this revision, in such a short timeframe, are far from clear; and consequently this has denied local residents the opportunity to understand why Cholsey has now been selected.

It is, however, telling that paragraph 6.11 of the Consultation admits that possible sites for mineral working are those put forward by mineral operators and landowners. If sites have been nominated solely on this basis, it suggests that OCC has not

	<p>undertaken a proper due diligence exercise to independently verify all potential sites. This would appear to be an ill conceived decision making process. It also indicates that OCC is receptive more to the overture of corporate entities and land owners than to the legitimate concerns of residents and council tax payers, who face the prospect of their community being irreversibly and irreparably damaged.</p> <p>In this context I would suggest that it is incumbent upon OCC to demonstrate openly the reasons for the revision in strategy, including explaining why previously considered sites have not been excluded.</p> <p>In conclusion, for the reasons set out in section 1 above, it is difficult to reconcile the Proposal with numerous OCC policies. This indicates that proper due diligence has not been carried out by OCC when deciding to include the proposal in the Consultation (which in itself may require legal scrutiny in due course). Furthermore, as described in section 2 above, OCC's decision to include the Proposal in the Consultation lacks openness and transparency. I therefore recommend in the strongest terms that the Proposal is discounted by OCC and that OCC excludes the proposed Cholsey sites from its minerals strategy.</p>
959	<p>I oppose the plans to extract gravel in Cholsey.</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.</p> <p>Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.</p> <p>The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.</p>
960	<p>I oppose the plans to extract gravel in Cholsey.</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane</p>

	<p>are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.</p> <p>Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.</p> <p>The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.</p>
961	<p>I hereby wish to officially record my objection to the proposed establishment of a gravel extraction site adjacent to the Wallingford Road in Cholsey.</p> <p>The land under consideration separates the village of Cholsey from the town of Wallingford and is currently utilised as permanent grazed farmland. As such it can be described as open countryside. Visually it is a swathe of green bounded by hedgerows and dotted with sheep and cows.</p> <p>The planning authorities have long recognised the importance of retaining and protecting open land that divides urban centres as encapsulated in their greenbelt policy. According to Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts, these areas have been established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To check the growth of large built up areas - To prevent neighbouring towns from merging - To safeguard the countryside from encroachment - To preserve the special character of a town - To assist in urban regeneration <p>While the stretch of land between Wallingford and Cholsey has not officially been designated as greenbelt land, it very much serves the same purpose as a greenbelt. It prevents the merging of Wallingford and Cholsey and acts to limit the size and spread of these urban centres. As such it allows for the two settlements to continue to develop and maintain their own unique sense of place, community and character.</p> <p>Recent work has been undertaken to identify and define those aspects of Wallingford and its surrounds that can be best exploited to regenerate and sustain the economic viability of the area. This work identified the following assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The rural and scenic location within which Wallingford is sited and its proximity to the Chilterns - The attraction of the Agatha Christie connection to the area - The Wallingford Steam Railway

	<p>- The numerous walking trails providing access to the countryside and the river Thames Retaining the stretch of open countryside between Cholsey and Wallingford is essential for the effective exploitation of these assets. The Agatha Christie trail and the Steam Railway both run adjacent to this land and are only sustainable if this land remains attractive. Existing watercourses and natural habitats that exist on this land contribute to the overall environment and existing nature trails.</p> <p>The utilisation of this land as a gravel extraction site will severely impact (if not totally destroy) these initiatives, established specifically to promote and sustain a viable and healthy economic environment. It will also prevent the establishment of a cycle path between Cholsey and Wallingford. The noise, negative visual impact, dust and significant heavy vehicle traffic will all work together to undermine the character of the area and destroy the value of those assets that are essential for the regeneration and sustainable growth of these urban centres.</p> <p>The land under consideration is an asset to the area. While its value cannot be easily quantified, it certainly is far too valuable to be destroyed for the sake of the short term benefits associated with the extraction of what is essentially fairly poor quality gravel. The fact that this site will not be rehabilitated means that the use of the site for gravel extraction will destroy its value not only for the period of time during which the extraction is in operation, but forever after.</p> <p>I respectfully request that this objection, together with the arguments presented herein, be taken into consideration during the decision making process with respect to the future use of this land. Additionally, please can you ensure that I am provided with relevant information with respect to the progress of this process.</p>
964	<p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting ..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>Para 8</p> <p>It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and</p>

	<p>space left in which to manoeuvre. As a regular visitor to Cholsey I am expressing my concerns against the proposed Gravel Extraction in Cholsey.</p>
762	<p>I appreciate the need for gravel, but I am dismayed that you are considering excavating a site between Cholsey and Winterbrook, Wallingford because it is too close to houses. I ask you, please, to reconsider.</p>
758	<p>I write in objection to the proposed gravel extraction site between Wallingford and Cholsey - your site references SG33, SG57 and SG60.</p> <p>I would like to start by stating that I find it absolutely scandalous that as a community Wallingford and Cholsey have to raise a substantial amount of money in such a short time to demonstrate to the council officers how ill-advised and inappropriate on so many levels these proposed sites are. I wish to remind those responsible for this poorly researched and considered proposal that we the tax payers, are providing, through our extortionate council taxes their wages and it is expected in return that a high level of competence is demonstrated such that we can trust Council decisions and judgements without question. This should then allow us to go about our daily business secure in the knowledge that our best interests are being protected by our elected representatives at Council and their employed officers - clearly and most concerning this isn't the case.</p> <p>Such is the incompetent and suspicious manner in which this proposal seems to have been hastily foisted upon the Wallingford and Cholsey communities it suggests that there could be vested interests involved somewhere in the decision process. In fact we are told that the council are being presented with only one choice from which they can make a selection, I am not sure which novel of fiction this has come from because in the real world A SELECTION FROM ONE OPTION IS NOT A CHOICE.</p> <p>The recommendation of only one site to select from for future gravel extraction in the council's core strategy plan leaves the authority with no other options when the only proposed site is proven to be inappropriate, which it surely will. In the commercial world this could be considered as gross negligence on behalf of the proposer(s) which if discovered the likely outcome would be dismissal for not performing a competent job.</p> <p>Consultation - we have been told that there was a consultation process, but there has been no consultation!! Not only has there been no consultation from OCC on this matter, but to all intents and purposes it appears that the Council hoped to slip this in under the radar with the local communities oblivious until it was too late. This would have been the case had it not been for the vigilance of the local town and parish council representatives of Wallingford and Cholsey. Once again this raises suspicion of the motives of the Council and its employees involved in the process. Has the council fulfilled its legal obligations correctly and can this be demonstrated. This should be challenged and if proven otherwise a public enquiry should be conducted and those involved questioned to discover their true agenda.</p> <p>It does not seem reasonable for us to expect that our elected officers at Council use the resources at their disposal, paid for by our rates and taxes, to identify potentially suitable sites well in advance, conducting a full and proper appraisal of their viability and impact, making the ultimate selection well considered and above reproach. For goodness sake what are we paying for? I shouldn't need to remind you that you are there to serve us, somehow this simple concept has been lost, too many Council Officials see it as their job to dictate to us what we should do, which is an appalling and intolerable state of affairs.</p> <p>I understand that one of the council's arguments for the validity of this site is that its selection is based on the grounds that the gravel extraction will be local to where the mined resources will be used due to its proximity to the planned building in the immediate area, including Didcot. This argument just doesn't add-up, we are told that the extraction is unlikely to start in the</p>

	<p>next ten years, so surely all the planned local building will be completed by then, suggesting that the use of the resource is likely to be elsewhere and not local. The operation will be run on commercial grounds and the contractor will sell their product wherever it is needed and they can get the best return on their investment. Another example of what appears to be desperate action by the Council based on flawed amateurish reasoning.</p> <p>I trust that you will have received many arguments from others on why this proposal fails on so many grounds, Ecological, Environmental, Archaeological, Geological et-al. For my part I would like to mention the 10,000 plus tax payers and local residents living within a mile of this proposed extraction site that will be blighted for many years to come by this outrageous proposal if it goes ahead. Without any other valid argument (although here are many) against this crazy plan is not conceivable that the council could find a more suitable site away from a centre of population where it is less likely to impact on so many people's lives.</p> <p>In fact I believe as a "check and balance" to such decisions it should be made law by Government that by way of compensation those directly affected by these decisions should have their council taxes suspended during the blight period - in this case I understand to be in the region of 25 years. This way a County Council would be financially penalised and residents compensated for their losses and inconvenience brought about by the decision, it should also ensure that local authorities make rational decisions based on a true need and that all other options have been fully considered and exhausted before a final decision is made.</p> <p>I trust that once this ridiculous proposal has been fully considered it will be consigned to the bin and someone will question how Oxfordshire County Council allowed themselves to get into such a deplorable mess.</p>
718	<p>I would like to register my objection to the proposed gravel extraction operation in Cholsey. As the Fairmile Hospital site is being developed into a housing estate I feel that Cholsey is already subject to upheaval and development enough. I don't believe it is fair to have two developments that will impact the lives of people living in Cholsey in such a short space of time. Additionally, the wallingford Road is the main route in and out of Cholsey for most people and the ugly nature of such a scheme will depress everyone rather than just those who have to live alongside it.</p>
820	<p>I would like to formally register my complaint against the proposed planning of the Gravel Extraction pits in and around Cholsey. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction site can possibly safeguard the current character and setting of Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific to Cholsey. If Cholsey is the only site put forward for Gravel extraction it raises several points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A selection of one is no selection, it is an imposition, and will not lead to full evaluation of the limitations and drawbacks. - It will not be possible to withdraw the site if the site is subsequently deemed unsuitable (as it inevitably will). - I understand that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. In other words those who have a vested interest in the financial return, rather than concern for the local community and environment, decide on the site(s). OCC should have made, or be undertaking, a FULL and PROPER ASSESSMENT of ALL the sites in the county, not just Cholsey.

	<p>- It is important to remember that the site was REJECTED 25 years ago as being unsuitable. If anything, the site is less suitable now than it was then.</p> <p>This is an unreasonable and unacceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our area?</p> <p>I reject the entire premise on which this (lack of) consultation is based.</p>
821	<p>I would like to formally register my complaint against the proposed planning of the Gravel Extraction pits in and around Cholsey. The choice of site put forward by the OCC seems to take no account of the distance between the gravel pits and the homes of 10,000 people. The area proposed is farmland and is all that separates Wallingford and Cholsey. To turn this farmland into a disruptive, dusty and noisy eyesore will do nothing but damage these two communities. The council have to reconsider their proposed plan.</p> <p>It beggars belief that the county council is even considering the development of the gravel pit when the surrounding roads can barely cope with current traffic levels. The idea that the council puts forward of moving the gravel extraction close to the point at which it will be used is naive and foolhardy. In the commercial world in which everybody except the OCC live it is obvious that the gravel operators will sell their products beyond the limited scope of the local area thereby significantly adding, rather than reducing traffic congestion and road degradation on barely adequate local road networks. It should also be noted that by the time the gravel pit comes on stream, much of the local housing will already have been completed.</p> <p>I hope that you will register my objection to the proposed plan and would ask that you please confirm receipt of this letter.</p>
810	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to the planned Gravel Extraction between Wallingford and Cholsey.</p> <p>I live right next door to the area concerned, and regularly commute to Wallingford by bicycle. I also take exercise by walking, jogging and cycling around the many footpaths and bridleways that surround my house. These paths, and the peaceful farmland and countryside adjacent to my property were a major driver for me to financially extend myself to buy property in this area rather than in less attractive and more industrialised parts of the country.</p> <p>One of the things that appealed to me when buying in this area was the fact that Agatha Mallowen (better known by her maiden and pen name of Agatha Christie) is buried in St Mary's graveyard. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, which runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook to her burial site in Cholsey, will be destroyed by these proposals. I'm told that a major attraction in our area is the Agatha Christie connection, and I am certainly amongst those who were attracted to this area for this reason. I think to destroy such a tourist attraction would be not only a great cultural shame but also an act of economic foolishness. Gravel pits will come and go, but this author's popularity has already lasted many decades, and will remain part of English culture for many more.</p> <p>I am also concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. I have long hoped for this to become a reality, and I'm told that a fully costed, part funded proposal has now been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. If you've ever cycled along it you will know the sensation of taking one's own life into one's hands you get when you cycle to Wallingford for shopping etc. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>As I say, a major factor that attracted me to buying property here was the quiet countryside that surrounds my home. I paid a</p>

	<p>considerable premium for this location on the understanding that there was absolutely no prospect of industrial development nearby. Speaking personally, I fear that the development might well put me into negative equity, resulting in a considerable personal financial loss of me, as well as the loss of the peace, serenity and beauty I paid so much for in the first place. This would be a personal tragedy for me, and one that I hope you understand would impact me financially for the remainder of my life. As a result, I implore the County Council to find another site for the extraction of gravel, rather than spoiling an area of natural beauty, environmental importance so close to so many residences.</p>
771	<p>I am a local resident concerned about the proposals to locate a gravel pit between the village of Cholsey and the local town, Wallingford. I find it hard to believe that the County Council are showing a duty of care to its citizens by choosing to site the gravel pit in the proposed location.</p> <p>The chosen location will be near a combined population of nearly 10,000 which is growing to 12,000 + over the next few years. These residents will be subjected to traffic congestion, noise pollution, particle pollution and enduring a blight on the local landscape for years to come. I cannot understand how this fits with the duty of care OCC has for its communities? The council should surely find a site which has a minimal impact on the towns and villages under its care, instead it has chosen a site which will have a significant impact on a sizeable local community and affect them in terms of;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. their health (pollution); 2. economy 3. town of historical interest, tourism; 4. local businesses; 5. the immediate impact on residents (fall in local house prices); 6. quality of life (increased congestion from lorries, noise pollution); 7. destruction of the rural aspects of village life. <p>Why has this site been chosen when it has such an immediate proximity to a large population?</p> <p>If the council are trying to find a location which will have a lower environmental impact, it has made a mistake in choosing Cholsey. It may appear to be closer to the A34 and other transport links, but beyond the local by-pass, the roads are small, they are slow moving and would be totally unsuited to large numbers of lorries transporting gravel and other materials. This is likely to cause more pollution, more accidents and more disruption to local communities, whose roads are filled with local traffic trying to avoid the gravel transporters. This is not showing due care for the local community and may even expose the local community to more danger, from the large increase in heavy traffic locally. This area is filled with local residents and families who will suffer from this decision, not just for 10 years but for 20 or more. Where is the evidence we have the infrastructure to support the increase in traffic and most appropriate transport links for this proposal?</p> <p>Another responsibility of the council must surely be safeguarding the local economy. The gravel pit may create half a dozen jobs locally, this would be tiny in comparison to the jobs lost in the local town, as people take their spending away from the town and to places away from the gravel pit. This will be in the face of SODC efforts and proposed corporate priorities to support the local community and create long term jobs, which has been hard in these small local market towns in South Oxfordshire. A gravel pit and processing works will make the area unattractive for tourism, it will destroy it's historical and geographical heritage and will deter tourists and Local residents will look to go elsewhere in their free time!!</p> <p>I would also question whether the council have followed due process in making this decision. The council must have a duty to be</p>

	<p>open and forthcoming about the process for choosing a site, they are considering a decision which will impact greatly on a large number of people. The local community have NOT had an opportunity to be fully consulted and therefore the council have not properly exercised their duty of care to the residents affected. Where is the feasibility study supporting the choice of this site? It seems to lack appropriate transparency? Why have local residents not been fully consulted?</p> <p>This lack of care also extends to the local ecology, where it seems little thought has been given to how the gravel pit will affect the local wild life and ecology. This is an area of natural beauty, where the rural and river location attract a wide range of bird life, mammals and insects. This will genuinely be put under threat given the size of the proposed locations and the possibility of new sites being exploited, when the gravel in the proposed sites are exhausted. How can this be in the best interests of the community and must be contrary to the OCC's duty of care to the local environment. Where is the evidence supporting the choice of this site when local geology reports suggest the gravel is of poor quality?</p> <p>On the outskirts of Cholsey there is a sewage farm where in recent years numerous improvements have been made to lessen its impact on those living close by, to remove gravel in such close proximity to the vicinity of the sewage farm could have serious impact on the function of the farm and yet again impact on the local community.</p> <p>I know that in writing this letter that a large number of residents are astounded at the lack of transparency regarding this proposal and the negligible lack of thorough consultation and we would like our questions answered. At the very least we would like an open meeting where we can attend to listen to the facts, the presentation of your feasibility studies and the assurance that the site has been selected for the most appropriate reasons supported by substantiated evidence to justify your decision. In the meantime;</p> <p>The questions to which I would like answers can be summarized as follows :</p> <p>Why has this site been chosen when it is in such a close proximity to a large population?</p> <p>Where is the evidence we have the most appropriate transport links for this proposal?</p> <p>Where is the feasibility study supporting the choice of this site?</p> <p>Why have local residents not been fully consulted in an open and transparent manner?</p> <p>Where is the evidence supporting the choice of this site when local geology reports suggest the gravel is of poor quality?</p> <p>What impact will this have on the health of local residents?</p> <p>What impact will the gravel pit have on the local economy?</p> <p>Answers Please!</p>
829	<p>As a resident of Wallingford, I am writing to express in the strongest terms possible my objection to the proposal to approve the siting of three gravel pits in the beautiful countryside between Wallingford and Cholsey. This is not an issue of NIMBYism, but of genuine shock that so environmentally catastrophic and socially undesirable a development should even have reached this stage. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly occur without severe damage to the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, situated between two thriving communities.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p>

The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I

	<p>would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>For all of the above reasons, this development is completely unacceptable and you know that it will be massively opposed by the people whose lives will be affected by this unreasonable proposal.</p>
838	<p>We wish to object strongly to what is in our view, this ill conceived proposal for imposing a gravel pit in such an unsuitable position for the following reasons:</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting ..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape.</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p>

	<p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>Cholsey is a small village, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
900	<p>Please accept this letter as my support against the proposed gravel extraction proposed for Cholsey, Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people.</p> <p>Para 6 & 7</p> <p>The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.</p> <p>Cholsey infrastructure can not support the vehicles on our village roads, with proposed 80 lorries required to extract the material each day - the pollution from the vehicles alone will affect local residents and wildlife - let alone the plan to mix gravel within the pitches.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>We do not want gravel extraction in our village.</p>
901	<p>Please accept this letter as my support against the proposed gravel extraction proposed for Cholsey, Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people.</p> <p>The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is</p>

	<p>not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.</p> <p>Cholsey infrastructure can not support the vehicles on our village roads, with proposed 80 lorries required to extract the material each day - the pollution from the vehicles alone will affect local residents and wildlife - let alone the plan to mix gravel within the pitches.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>We do not want gravel extraction in our village.</p>
903	<p>I am writing to protest at your suggestion to use the land at Cholsey for gravel extraction.</p> <p>Four million tons of gravel extracted over ten years, means an awful lot of 'twenty ton' lorries travelling up and down the Cholsey to Wallingford road.</p> <p>I am seriously alarmed at the damage this will create. Not only because the traffic will intensify, but because it will be damaging to the wildlife, covering everything with dust for miles around, while destroying some very beautiful countryside between Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>Please re-consider this proposal. This is not the best place for it, and I will be writing to my MP to stress this.</p>
906	<p>I am totally opposed to Oxfordshire County Council's plans to excavate gravel in the land between Cholsey and Wallingford. It will completely destroy the rural nature of the village of Cholsey, while also ruining the approach to the ancient market town of Wallingford.</p> <p>I am also deeply concerned about the effect this would have on local traffic. It is estimated that this project would lead to hundreds of lorry movements each day.</p> <p>It is insensitive, to say the least, to even contemplate this kind of scheme just outside what is one of the most historic towns in the whole of England.</p> <p>I can assure you that the local residents are deeply upset by the proposal to dig for gravel on this site.</p>
908	<p>I write to express my serious concerns regarding the nomination of Cholsey as Oxfordshire County Council's preferred site for gravel extraction.</p> <p>The area proposed for this extraction lies between the village of Cholsey and the market town of Wallingford the combined population of these being approximately 10,000. The increase in traffic movement of lorries carrying the gravel away from the site will impact on most of these people. The bypass will need considerable alteration to accommodate the lorries and an exit onto the Wallingford Road could easily be seen as the least disruptive. This road is the main access route between Cholsey and Wallingford for schools, the Medical Centre and hospital, and railway station. It is a narrow road and there has been a fatal accident there in recent years.</p> <p>We are told the gravel on this site is not the most suitable for cement and will require mixing with pulverised rock. This will also increase the traffic movements in the area bringing rock onto the site. The inevitable dust created will impair the air quality and do nothing to improve the health of the local population.</p> <p>The presence of such a large scale industrial processing site is totally out of keeping with the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Wallingford is making huge efforts to promote itself as a tourist attraction. There is a wealth of historical sites and archaeological evidence of early settlements plus the attraction of the river. To impose a gravel pit on the area will ruin future archaeological</p>

	<p>investigation and cause irreversible damage to flora and fauna currently living there. There appears to be no plan for the future landscaping of the site and prospect of a series of holes and mounds of debris left behind is not an attractive one. This site will be visible from many places in the adjoining Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p> <p>There has been a very brief period of time in which local residents have been able to express their views and I would ask that the Council takes notice of the real concerns brought to their attention by the people of Cholsey and Wallingford. This proposed site is the only one mentioned in the Minerals Strategy, it needs to be justified and an explanation given as to why all the other potential sites have been excluded.</p>
891	<p>I am writing in regard to the proposals for the promotion of a gravel pit on the outskirts of Wallingford. There are a number of concerns I should like to raise and would be grateful if my questions could be answered.</p> <p>Impact on the River Thames</p> <p>Will there be any pollution of the river by either the extraction methods or the pre-mix concrete facility through extra water run-off or drainage? Part of the site is water meadow and is flooded regularly. Will steps be taken by the gravel company to prevent this from happening to their site? If so, will water back up and increase the risk of flooding for Wallingford. I speak as someone whose house was in danger of flooding twice in the last decade. If there are restrictions to the river course or silting up as a result of the gravel pit I suspect that my house would be flooded if we have similar conditions to 2003 and 2008. Are there guarantees that actions on the part of the gravel company will not cause this to happen? The sceptic in me also wonders whether three pits are being proposed as a strategic measure. Could it be that one is so outrageously inappropriate that its rejection will allow the others to slip through as being less bad options?</p> <p>Recreation and Sport and Tourism</p> <p>The river is a major recreation facility not only for Wallingford. The recent fundraising efforts of David Walliams have highlighted this? Will there be any increased pollution to the river with implications for anglers? The three local rowing clubs have national recognition and some athletes have achieved Olympic status. Will there be any implications for them from gravel and concrete dust? Will they and their numerous supporters have the same incentive to put on and enjoy of regattas? Will the Thames Footpath still be usable in its current pleasant state? It is used by many people as part of their recreational, health and exercise regimes and is part of the tourist attraction of Wallingford.</p> <p>How are you to reconcile a policy of promoting tourism in the area when a gravel pit will affect not only the beauty of the area, the freshness of the air but will risk a number of interesting aspects disappearing, namely the Agatha Christie trail and the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway?</p> <p>Dirt and Noise Pollution</p> <p>The increase in very heavy traffic and the introduction of industrial machinery will make life unpleasant for people living closest to the activity through unwelcome levels of noise and dirt. (Is there not a nursery on an adjoining site?) Will there be compensation to people living nearby for the loss of their environment and the value of their homes? Are people who are being targeted to buy new homes in the area being made aware of the dramatic change about to be introduced? Is the Council Tax likely to be reduced to compensate for a change in our environment? Is it possible that the owners of the proposed pit will be seeking to compensate the inhabitants of Wallingford for the destruction of the environment? After all they are the financial beneficiaries.</p> <p>Health and Safety</p>

	<p>To what extent will the dirt and dust affect the quality of air immediately surrounding the site and therefore the houses nearby? How will traffic be regulated to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists can continue to use roads safely? Will you be promoting Healthy Walks in this area? The roundabouts on the express way will be more difficult to manoeuvre. Will speed limits be reduced for the area?</p> <p>Wildlife</p> <p>Finally what guarantees are being given that wildlife will not be affected by the introduction of a gravel pit to the area? Any indication that we are losing diversity will surely be an indication of the harmful effects of the gravel pits. At that point the damage is done and to hold out hopes that recovery at the end of 30 years exploitation of the area is not really consolation. I would only be prepared to welcome these gravel pits if I felt that all the issues that I have thought about can be resolved satisfactorily. I suspect that this is not the case. My final question is to whether the Council and its officers and the owners of the gravel pit would be prepared to live next to it for thirty years or be prepared to accept the loss to the environment and to housing values were they already to live next to the site. If not, I would like to know on whose behalf they would accept the gravel pits. I hope that all parties are looking at the situation with the interests of the community they serve in mind.</p>
893	<p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p> <p>A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from</p>

	<p>either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p>
886	<p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p>

	<p>A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p>
880	<p>I write to register my objection to the proposed gravel extraction at sites reference SG-33, SG576, and SG-60, all within the parish of Cholsey.</p> <p>My objections are based on the following:</p> <p>Core Strategy flawed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The strategy sets guidelines for agencies seeking to exploit possible sites, it is not site-specific. Cholsey is the only nominated site and if approved will be so without adequate analysis of its merits or shortcomings. - Sites are proposed by agencies wishing to profit from the extraction, no consideration is given to local people. <p>I question the morality of this action and suspect political motives.</p>

Procedures not followed

- The residents of Cholsey were informed that Cholsey was not under consideration as a site, as the proposed site had been rejected as unsuitable ten years ago. This was changed in March of this year without adequate notification and allowing insufficient time to gather evidence in support of the continued unsuitability of the site.

I question the legality of this action.

Proximity to housing

- An arc drawn one mile from the site boundary includes all of Cholsey and 2/3 of Wallingford.

- 10,000 people affected within this area and many thousands more in the local vicinity.

All these people would be adversely affected if the proposal goes ahead.

Heritage

- Cholsey and Wallingford's historical importance is undeniable with proof of Stone and Iron Age settlements, Roman settlements, Saxon remains and the best preserved medieval town in the country.

- The archaeology of the site has yet to be investigated.

- The Agatha Christie connection draws worldwide interest.

- The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway is a national tourist attraction.

These sites of historical and archaeological importance and cultural interest would be destroyed.

Character

- The site is in the middle of unspoilt countryside and farmland affording perfect habitat for numerous flora and fauna.

- This site has been largely the same for over 1000 years.

The character of the site and surrounding countryside would be changed forever. This is in direct contradiction to stated aims of the Council to 'safeguard the character' of the area.

Tourism

- The benefits to few would be heavily outweighed by the loss to the many

o Saxon and medieval site blighted by dust, its reputation as an unspoilt piece of England destroyed

o Agatha Christie trail destroyed

o Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway discontinued

o Walkers discouraged with the Ridgeway and Thames path directly affected

For Wallingford to survive as a town it must attract tourism and new investment in keeping with its character.

Environment

- Gravel extraction should be close to the point of its use but by the time the site would be operational, proposed housing development in the local area would be completed.

- Estimates of 200 lorry movements per day to and from the site.

- No guarantee as to the routes taken by these lorries.

- Consequent congestion of all surrounding roads

- The 'advantage' of the proximity of the by-pass is a false one:

o Direct access to the by-pass from the site is unlikely to be sanctioned by the Highways agencies

o Access via the Cholsey to Wallingford Road would prove dangerous to other users

	<p>o The by-pass does not connect to Didcot; this route would put heavy lorries on the a country road past Brightwell and Haddon Hill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed cycle path between Cholsey and Wallingford would not be possible. - The site cannot be restored as a lake for local amenity due to its proximity to the river Thames. We will be left with ah pit, unusable, unsightly and dangerous - What other industry will be permitted on the site? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Rock crushing o Cement manufacture o Land fill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The site will yield a very poor return (the reason it was rejected last time) as surveys show that only a low percentage of what would be extracted would be of use. Though (presumably) financially economic, its carbon footprint will be significant. - What precedent would this site set for others in the area? <p>To these direct objections add the concerns of the effect the site will have on the health and safety of local inhabitants. Objections of this nature are often referred to as NIMBYesk and yes I am a Cholsey resident but I think I have catalogued a whole range of reasons why this proposal is wrong for this site. It is unacceptable that no other site is even considered. I urge you to reconsider. Please do not destroy this part of England.</p>
653	<p>I wish to object in the strongest terms to the proposal contained in the Minerals and waste draft plan to start new gravel extraction in Cholsey. This was considered as long ago as 1987 and the proposal was rejected. Nothing has changed since this time to make the site acceptable and therefore I contend the site is till not acceptable.</p> <p>The County Council has I know received many letters a very comprehensive submission form Cholsey residents and CAGE. They have I am aware highlighted numerous excellent and well researched reasons why this site should not be opened for gravel extraction and I am in total agreement with all of them.</p> <p>I would like to concentrate on two issues in this letter.</p> <p>If this proposed site were to be included for gravel extraction it would create a working in the centre of village and divide the village in two- a situation that is totally unacceptable. The area known as Winterbrook is in the Parish of Cholsey and the residents of that area of Cholsey have on several occasions been asked if they wish change the boundary to be part of Wallingford. On each occasion the answer was a resounding "No".</p> <p>Brandford Brook is and always has been the boundary between the two settlements and therefore the proposal is in the centre of a village. I am not aware of any other existing working in Oxfordshire where this is the situation.</p> <p>The second issue is the suitability of the roads that would carry the Lorries working at the site. In 1987 much was made of the unsuitability of the road systems and it was a very major and significant reason to reject the proposal. Nothing since then has changed. The Wallingford by-pass has been built it is true but the description of the road might allow one to think it is a major road when in fact it is just a normal two- lane road.</p> <p>It would allow Lories to go road Wallingford but the road ends at Brightwell and then become a road with many turns including a very sharp turn of 90 degrees at the exit from North Moreton. Already large Lorries cause dangerous problems on his corner as they find it almost impossible not to cross the centre line due to the sharpness of the turn. The amount of traffic using the roads from Cholsey to Didcot has increased very much since 1987 and this has made the reason to reject the proposal for traffic reasons</p>

	<p>even more relevant. There are agreed plans to add many more houses and retail development in Didcot so the problems that already exist become much more severe. Where is the suitable road system in Didcot to take the gravel Lorries? Certainly not pass the station, nor on the road around Ladygrove as more houses are proposed in this area. The indication that the gravel would be used in Didcot and the Harwell area would cause severe traffic in this area and I am not satisfied that this would be the only area served by the extraction at Cholsey thus causing traffic problem in a much wider area.</p> <p>In my opinion the existing sites in Oxfordshire can produce enough gravel for the future and further new extraction sites should not be part of the Minerals Strategy. To open a new site, dividing a community and endangering people using local roads is totally unacceptable.</p> <p>There are many other reasons why this is an unsuitable site that has been highlighted by other letters and I wish to add those to my strong objection to this proposal.</p>
624	<p>The proposed gravel pit development would seem to be very bad for the area in every respect. Individual companies or landowners would be the only people to profit. Surely the County Council has the duty and authority to protect the Wallingford and Cholsey communities from this development.</p>
775	<p>I write concerning the proposed plan for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road between Cholsey and Wallingford. I cannot express my opposition to this proposal too strongly for the following reasons.</p> <p>This is an area of largely unspoilt landscape and these fields and watercourses provide a natural habitat for a large variety of wildlife too numerous to mention here.</p> <p>The loss of this natural habitat, trees, hedgerows etc would be detrimental to all wildlife at a period of time when many species, particularly birds, are decreasing in number.</p> <p>Wallingford Road is a very busy and somewhat dangerous road, particularly for cyclists, therefore the proposed and much needed cycle track between Cholsey and Wallingford would be abandoned should the plans for the gravel pit be passed. Also, the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway would be unable to operate as the track passes through a large area of the proposed pit site.</p> <p>Added to all this would be the continuous stream of large lorries through our village and along the by-pass only adding to an already very busy traffic area, not to mention the adverse impact visually as well as the noise and dust, particularly on the roads in wet weather, and dust and general unpleasantness during the summer months.</p> <p>And what of the proposed building of houses in Wallingford and quite close to the gravel pit area? Who would want to buy a house here and put up with all the aforementioned problems?</p> <p>I understand that the planning authorities are obliged to "consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals". Clearly, this has not been done.</p> <p>This proposal would have a detrimental effect on our community for years to come and I urge your department to "think again".</p>
601 (River Users Society)	<p>We have considered the principles of gravel extraction at the side of the River Thames (SG-03, 17, 19, 41, 42, 44, 45, 47 and 60) and wish to raise OBJECTIONS for the following reasons:</p> <p>The Green Corridor character of the Upper Thames is an important asset vital to maintain. It should not be compromised by adverse visual or noise intrusion close to the river.</p> <p>The Thames Path is a popular National Trail, well used by walkers, anglers, cyclists and others and its environment must not be damaged by unpleasant or unattractive development.</p> <p>There are national planning guidelines to prevent development on the flood plain. It is essential to respect these rules with</p>

	<p>regard to gravel extraction. There must be no interference with the free flowing of flood waters. Security fencing to protect any workings would become blocked with water-borne debris in times of flooding, preventing the free-flowing of flood water with increased risk of flooding elsewhere.</p> <p>Due to the high water table most waste material is unsuitable for landfill so other solutions are needed for replacement of extracted material, or the sites must become new water space areas.</p> <p>If flood water from the river was allowed to flow into gravel workings the biological diversity of the two waters would become mixed and likely to cause damaging effects.</p>
299	<p>I object to the Counties proposal on a number of grounds these include:</p> <p>Wallingford and Cholsey are separated by just under a mile of arable and grazing farmland, hedges and trees. It is a peaceful and largely undisturbed area, supporting an amazingly wide variety of bird species and wildlife. The mining of sand and gravel will mean the loss of this natural landscape forever and the well-trodden footpaths, including the Agatha Christie Trail from Winterbrook to Cholsey Church, will be ruined.</p> <p>The Wallingford Road is also an important thoroughfare for many commuters travelling daily to Oxford, Reading and London from Cholsey station, and others going the other way to school, work or shopping trips in Wallingford. Apart from wrecking the scenery, the extraction of gravel and heavy lorry traffic will bring danger, noise and dirt for all the cars, pedestrians and cyclists.</p>
300	<p>writing against gravel being extracted form Wallingford and Chosley areas. It will cause a lot of misery for people living in and around these areas, destroying the area as we know it and the wildlife that may exist here. The routes to Reading, Chosley, Didcot, Abingdon etc. will be destroyed by roads being blocked with heavy vehicles toing and froing at all times of the day causing traffic jams, dirt and dust being distributed when digging up on windy and calmer days. Wallingford railway line obliterated not to mention the road which is needed to travel to various areas. The area destroyed of peace and tranquillity in the countryside. Gravel pits should be well away from communities and towns where people live peacefully..</p>
301	<p>am writing to register my objections to the OCC minerals strategy proposal to recommend the Wallingford Rd site Cholsey as a Gravel pit.</p> <p>Having read the briefing document I do not believe that the proposed works could possibly safeguard the character, amenity and setting of Wallingford Rd Cholsey for the following reasons;</p> <p>The recently adopted Agatha Christie trail will be completely destroyed by the proposals, my belief is that Agatha Christie draws many tourists to this area (Travelling from her home in Winterbrook to her grave in Cholsey Burial Ground) and this would be lost. The likely loss/disruption of the well used and popular Cholsey & Wallingford railway, one would presume that riding the steam train past a noisy dusty gravel works would not be so popular and would harm the current option to travel from Cholsey to Wallingford by steam train.</p> <p>Considerable disruption to properties in particular the listed Cox's farm, and the well-restored family home of Brook House as well as the barns along the Wallingford Rd. These homes will loose their character forever if the work goes ahead.</p> <p>If the social, economic and environmental impact of these proposals are taken into account then the following matters should be considered</p> <p>A largely permanent grazing habitat with hedges and trees supporting a diverse range of wildlife such as owls, Red kites, Lapwings, Golden Plovers, Redwings to name a few of the birds. Not to mention the deer, weasels, hares & stoats would be damaged beyond repair.</p>

	<p>The complex Archaeology of this site have never been fully investigated. There is evidence of Bronze & Iron age settlements. Cox's farm site is a known medieval settlement site linking up to the town of Wallingford presumably in the past. Before any development of this area this must take place.</p> <p>The affects this proposal would have on tourism for the local area may well be catastrophic, like may market towns Wallingford struggles and tourism is a major part of the support for the town.</p> <p>Basically I consider that OCC's approach to the site is flawed for the following reasons: It seems somewhat bizarre to only recommend one site. If the public objections to the consultation mean that a government inspection is needed what then of the Minerals strategy no site no strategy presumably? It is understood that sites under consideration by OCC for mineral extraction are limited to those nominated or proposed by quarrying companies and/or landowners on whose land the minerals are found - is this a reasonable and acceptable basis to completely disrupt/destroy peoples lives and environment I ask? Should not an independent geologist have been commissioned to do this?</p> <p>One presumes that local people who object to the destruction of their communities are not as important to their elected representatives as commercial companies and landowners who personally stand to befit financially from this?</p> <p>Other points that are of concern to my family and me are: My understanding that there is no long-term plan for the final use and restoration of the site should the works go ahead. A lake perhaps could be an asset for future generations. Inert waste is scarce these days so I presume we will just be left with a deep depression (in our minds and land) which in wet conditions will fill with water and when it dries out become a smelly marsh area and then dust bowl when completely dry. Not a nice legacy for our descendants.</p> <p>Many of us (in Cholsey & Wallingford) have fought for years to get a cycle path from Cholsey to Wallingford, during the 28 years I have cycled it with my children it has become faster and more dangerous, cycle to school days were/are a nightmare for parents. At the moment it appears that new government money could be available to swell the amount already put aside for this which would mean the cycle path could become a reality in the next 5 to 10 years - but what point the route runs the length of the gravel pit!</p> <p>I understand the need to find gravel sites near to where it will be used but much of the house building proposed for Wallingford, Cholsey, Didcot and the new Science Vale Development will be completed within 10 years - well before the Cholsey site would be ready. Meaning the developers of the site could sell the gravel much further afield making a mockery of the claim that the gravel needs to be produced near where it will be used. In addition the reassurances regarding movement of the gravel would then be meaningless the heavy lorries could in fact go anywhere and almost certainly though the village of Cholsey and surrounding villages to reach it's destinations. As far as I can see there is no real detail of all the proposed development within South Oxfordshire within the consultation document in support of gravel extraction in this area - has this been done if not why not? The Cholsey site is relatively small for longer-term use, there is no mention in the consultation document of other sites which would meet the longer term need - OCC must look further ahead.</p> <p>I have grave concerns about this proposal and look forward to your reply. I would ask when the results of the consultation will be known, how people will be informed and what happens next.</p>
296	<p>I have considered the above consultation document and certain supporting documents (eg URS 'non-technical' summary of the minerals preferred strategy) on the county council's website but as these are voluminous and many are highly technical I have not</p>

been able to consider them all.

The consultation document seeks comments from the public but there is no structure to invited responses nor are there specific questions or issues on which responses are requested.

The document sets out the proposed strategies and policies and then makes proposals for specific areas of mineral working and these are set out in a Minerals Key Diagram at Fig 8. In my view the document fails to provide the essential link between the strategies and policies and the proposals for working areas. Indeed, Fig 8 appears on a separate page with no explanations and no comments. In particular, a proposed new area of gravel extraction at Cholsey is introduced without consideration in the document of all other potential sites and there is no explanation or justification of why this one has been chosen as the proposed new working area.

It is clear that many essential considerations have not yet been addressed so that it is difficult to see how any preferred site can be supported at this stage. For example, policy C3 requires that the impact on local residents must be considered but paragraph 5.15 makes it clear that this issue cannot be considered until more detailed information is available.

One of the stated objectives is to minimise the distance that minerals are transported by road and the use of unsuitable roads. However, there is nothing in the document which gives any information how this key issue has been addressed.

2

Another objective is for high quality restoration of mineral workings 'to an appropriate after-use'. This is likely to be fulfilled differently depending on the site but there is no information provided showing how this restoration would be made for the chosen Cholsey site. Proposals for aftercare and after-use are needed to enable proper consideration of chosen sites.

Paragraph 5.12 of the document states that the impact of any proposals for minerals development on water quality and pollution prevention has not yet been considered. Again, I consider that this means that limiting proposed new gravel sites to one is premature.

In paragraph 5.26 the document states that where development is proposed within or in proximity to an AONB the assessment should be informed by the relevant AONB Management Plan. All the Cholsey sites are in proximity to AONBs but there is no information about a management plan in the document.

In my view the consultation process is seriously flawed because, as illustrated above, proposals are advanced where the required issues have not been addressed or set out in the document and it does not indicate how the decision to favour a new minerals working area at Cholsey has been arrived at. Consequently, respondents are unable to consider how the minerals strategy, and in particular the proposed sites, has been implemented.

PROXIMITY OF THE PROPOSED NEW AREA OF GRAVEL EXTRACTION AT CHOLSEY TO THE POPULATION CENTRES OF WALLINGFORD AND CHOLSEY

I consider that a key consideration (not addressed in the consultation document) is that the proposed Cholsey site is very close to the town of Wallingford and the village of Cholsey.

This, and the effect on local populations, is not mentioned in the consultation paper. In practice, there will be a considerable adverse impact, possibly to human health, resulting from dust, exhaust fumes, noise, visual impact and deprivation of the enjoyment of tranquil countryside and riverside. These matters are recognised in the URS report. Wallingford is making strenuous efforts to develop tourism on the back of its historical background (including its Anglo-Saxon fortifications and the site of the Norman castle - a Scheduled Monument), its attractive town centre and the amenity and beauty of its River Thames frontage and local walks in Areas of Natural Beauty. Much of this would be lost with unsightly gravel workings on the river and beside the ring road, together with a huge increase in lorry traffic, noise and dust.

The privately run Cholsey and Wallingford Railway is dependent on offering views of beautiful countryside (see attached pages from its website) but a large part of its route runs along the boundary of the proposed SG-33 and SG-57 sites. I understand that the operators have said that the proposed mineral workings would force the closure of the railway and I believe that that would be a logical decision. The railway is an important tourist attraction for Wallingford.

Similarly, the Agatha Christie connection is being developed for tourism but the published trail from Winterbrook to Cholsey, which crosses the proposed gravel pit area and runs close to much more of it, would be ruined. Numerous businesses in Wallingford, reliant on tourism, would also be adversely affected.

3

Cholsey would be almost overwhelmed with the workings so close to the village and the upheaval on the narrow road to Wallingford. There would be a major impact on the present close relationship between Wallingford and Cholsey. URS refer to mineral working as a highly disruptive activity - this, in my view, should not be permitted so close to large populations.

I make additional comments below about the specific proposed mineral sites.

SITES SG-33 AND SG-57

I understand that SG-33 was rejected in 1987 on the basis that the gravel was considered to be of poor quality. How can that have changed?

I note that in a consultation in 2007 there were extensive negative responses to SG-33 and this site was not proceeded with. I anticipate that all the objections then raised would still apply. In my view the suggested actions to mitigate at that time failed to address the problems raised. I do not consider that the potential after-use suggested in the response document would be satisfactory.

There are considerable concerns concerning traffic movements to and from sites SG-33 and SG-57. I assume that lorries would have to enter and exit the site from Wallingford

Road. This is a narrow road and is already the main access between Wallingford and Cholsey, it is also the access road for Wallingford residents to their nearest railway station, Cholsey, and it is an access route for traffic from Wallingford to the A34 south and the M4. I consider that the volume of site traffic would be unacceptable on such a narrow road and would be very dangerous, especially lorries having to cross the flow of traffic. There would also be danger to pedestrians walking along Wallingford Road, and to cyclists.

Site traffic on Wallingford Road would have to join the A4130 at the roundabout and the volume of traffic in both directions would cause considerable congestion. I understand (Minerals Key Diagram) that traffic flows would be in the direction of Didcot. Although the Wallingford ring road could probably cope with the likely traffic volumes I consider that the narrow winding road from the roundabout near Brightwell could not do so satisfactorily and this would cause considerable danger and congestion.

The only alternative transport exits from the site would appear to be either direct onto the A4130 ring road or at the roundabout at the junction of the A4130 and Wallingford Road. It appears that both would be dangerous and cause substantial traffic congestion.

The site is very close to the North Wessex Downs AONB and would have a substantial detrimental effect on it. The site would also be an eyesore from high ground around in both the North Wessex Downs and Chilterns AONBs.

There are existing rights of way across the site and it is difficult to see how these could be satisfactorily diverted.

SITE SG-60

As far as I am aware this site has not previously been identified as a potential one for mineral extraction. In my view it is completely inappropriate. I cannot believe that this site is seriously considered as being suitable for gravel extraction.

4

Much of it directly adjoins the River Thames and would be a considerable eyesore to all river traffic as well as from the opposite bank, where, I understand, a housing development is contemplated. The east bank is in the Chilterns AONB and mineral workings opposite would be a considerable detraction from it.

The proposed site would directly interfere with the Thames Path National Trail, which runs along the same bank of the river as the proposed gravel pit.

The site would have considerable negative repercussions on river wildlife. For example, kingfishers regularly nest on the opposite bank.

In my view this site would have catastrophic implications for the enjoyment of river amenities by the population of Wallingford, tourists and other visitors to the town, boat operators, commercial river steamers, fishermen, walkers and nature lovers.

	<p>CONCLUSION</p> <p>I recognise the need for gravel extraction in Oxfordshire and, of course, this has to be from sites where gravel is located. However, I consider that the minerals plan at this stage has been misdirected in identifying only one new site and without adequate consideration of the relevant issues. Further, I consider that the consultation document is unsatisfactory as it does not explain why the Cholsey sites are preferred for new mineral extraction or why other sites have been rejected.</p> <p>In my view the Cholsey sites are inappropriate for mineral extraction.</p>
303	<p>The proposed locations SG33, SG57 and SG60 are considered inappropriate for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) from publicly available resources (eg BGS Geoindex), the resource seems of variable quality and extent. The gravel appears to include high proportions of limestone, presumably from the Jurassic Oolitic formations. This would have very poor properties for most of the required uses. 2) the road access is very poor - Wallingford Road is too narrow and fast, and is already dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists. Cyclists already use this route as a link from the station in Cholsey to the centres of employment in Wallingford/Crowmarsh. The bypass is too fast to allow lorries to safely join the flow of traffic. 3) The area seems to be high quality agricultural land. How would the site ever be restored to beneficial use? 4) The water table would seem to be variable, due to the topographical variation between the upper sites and the Thames. The site would therefore not become a usable leisure feature like those former pits at Dorchester, nor would it be suitable for landfill. Instead we would be left with an unattractive damp area with no benefit to the community for the years of disruption. 5) Has a hydrogeological impact assessment been undertaken? Is there a need for (seasonal) dewatering? What possible impacts could this have; these effects could affect the economic viability of the resource (eg mitigation of subsidence effects etc).
338	<p>As A Cholsey resident I am writing to strongly protest about the proposed plan to extract gravel from Cholsey.</p> <p>Why has only 1 site been put forward for consultation? There seems to be no choice if this is so. It seems maybe a fete accompli is what you desire.....</p> <p>The proposed site was dismissed last year as the quality of gravel is poor.</p> <p>The site is opposite major residential housing, whose quality of life will be hugely affected by lorries driving up and down Wallingford Rd. Hundreds of people who live opposite will be affected, let alone the thousands who live within a mile of the area. I also understand that - in order to save money - there will be no separate site entrance along the bypass. Maybe this will be offered as a sop when all the letters opposing the site are responded to.</p> <p>Another major concern is the fact that the pit - if it goes ahead - will not be filled in or replaced by a lake. Cholsey has amazing wildlife. I have seen roe deer, weasels and stoats myself - and the old hedges are a natural source of food and shelter - as I live on Wallingford Road. The area will be an eyesore for many years to come. Would you wish to live in such a place?</p> <p>The pavement - often walked upon on visits to Wallingford - will be very dangerous for children and the elderly as lorries thunder along.</p> <p>And what will happen to the proposed cycle path? This path will prevent further death on Wallingford Rd - as people still drive too fast. Many people cycle into Wallingford School and to and from the station daily.</p> <p>Old Cholsey maps show the area concerned to contain reed beds and water courses.</p>

	<p>Not to mention the burial place of Agatha Christie - a tourist attraction in this area. Surely we should be encouraging tourists to visit Wallingford and Cholsey - not present them with an eyesore?</p> <p>At present Cholsey is a peaceful village, with occasional heavy traffic and light users heading to and from the station. Wallingford Railway has delighted tourists and local children for many years - and their volunteering will be completely undone - should this crazy plan go ahead.</p> <p>The Wallingford Road has recently been superbly resurfaced - what will 60-80- lorries daily do to this?</p> <p>I would also ask - where do the members of the planning committee live? Have other proposals been turned down in other villages on this score? If so their right to vote on this issue surely comes into question?</p> <p>How long will the gravel extracted from Cholsey last? How long term is the quantity going to be available for? I have already mentioned the quality - not as good as you may reasonably desire.</p> <p>I hope you take into account all my points raised and I look forward to hearing from you in due course</p> <p>I repeat - Cholsey does not want a gravel extraction site on its doorstep</p>
339	<p>I write in opposition to the County's plan to extract gravel at Cholsey.</p> <p>I have written to my MP about the underlying reason why Cholsey has been selected by the County as the preferred site for gravel extraction. It is not geological. In the written version of that letter, I include website links to substantiate the allegations made. If you proceed with the current plan, Gravel-gate will eventually attract sufficient media interest and/or legal challenge to force you to withdraw the minerals strategy. It is a waste of public funding to persist with a plan that is technically unsound as well as politically flawed.</p> <p>Nevertheless, I wish to record the other reasons why I consider Cholsey the wrong site for this gravel extraction. Please be sure to note and consider each of the points made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed gravel extraction is entirely within the parish of Cholsey. It will greatly disrupt life in the parish, and blight other development. 2. The proposed site is directly upwind of Wallingford. There will be health implications for those living and working in the town, and possibly for villages to the NNE such as Benson and Warborough (PAGE parishes that may mistakenly believe that they have escaped by the preference shown for Cholsey). 3. I suggest that you study Asthma: the facts by Donald J Lane and Anthony Storr (Galaxy Books, 1983). Dr Lane was based in Oxford and was the consultant who treated my son's asthma in the 1980s when we lived close to Sutton Courtenay. 4. The Cholsey site has considerable landscape and natural history value. This is not my particular area of environmental expertise but the only time I have seen a group of small deer in the Cholsey area was at dusk on this site. 5. There is no clear plan for restoration of the site. The plan cannot proceed without one. 6. The preference shown for Cholsey refers to a new site at Cholsey had been added with good links to Didcot, and the Wantage and Grove area. Several queries arise from this: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do those who commute along the A4130 consider it a good link? b. How will gravel & rubble lorries manage the Haddon Hill area? c. How will gravel & rubble lorries access the A4130? d. Will the demand for gravel and the recycling of building materials be concentrated in Didcot within the timeframe planned for gravel extraction?

	<p>e. Is HS2 to be re-routed through Didcot?</p> <p>7. With regard to the A4130 near the proposed site:</p> <p>a. Are you aware of the inherent structural weakness of the western approach embankment to the A4130 crossing of the Thames at Winterbrook?</p> <p>b. Are you monitoring the subsidence? It is most evident in levels on the cycle-path.</p> <p>c. Why did OCC not insist on Galliford Midland rebuilding the western approach embankment when it slipped in January 1994, six months after Wallingford Bypass was opened in July 1993? What professional advice did the County take? Did OCC heed it?</p> <p>8. Why is it acceptable for two such large communities as Wallingford and Cholsey to be unlinked by cycle-path?</p> <p>a. When will the Wallingford-Cholsey cycle-path be built?</p> <p>b. Where will it be built?</p> <p>c. Are you aware of the fatalities and serious injuries to cyclists on the so-called "straight mile"? I am a regular cyclist but never use that route from Cholsey to Wallingford. It is simply too dangerous. I have avoided it throughout my 18 years cycling around Cholsey. Cyclists will not co-exist with gravel & rubble lorries on Wallingford Road for very long: the risks to cyclists will be too great.</p> <p>d. In a survey on Wednesday 19 October 2011, 44 cycle movements were counted in 10.5 hours. Almost 3000 car movements were counted in the same period. Forty-four is a scarily high number given the inherent danger to cyclists posed by the straightness and narrowness of the road. It is unlit.</p> <p>9. What will happen to the heritage railway line: the Cholsey Wallingford Railway?</p> <p>10. What will happen to the Agatha Christie Trail from Wallingford Museum, through Winterbrook to St Mary's Graveyard in Cholsey?</p> <p>11. What will the effects be on tourism, especially in Wallingford?</p> <p>12. An Oxfordshire County Councillor alleges that there is an unacceptable concentration of gravel extraction in West Oxfordshire.</p> <p>a. What basis is there for this statement? One would have to site gravel extraction immediately adjacent to Witney or Carterton for as many people to be directly affected in West Oxfordshire as will be affected if the Cholsey site proceeds.</p> <p>b. Why is a gravel site slap in the middle of the Wallingford-Cholsey conurbation considered an appropriate site?</p> <p>c. To whom is the Cholsey site more acceptable than a rural site in West Oxfordshire?</p> <p>The whole of Cholsey and Wallingford is impacted and blighted by the plan. Please reject this politically dodgy and technically unsound plan now.</p>
340	<p>I am writing to object to the planned gravel pit and waste disposal site in Cholsey and Wallingford. This chosen site is not in any way suitable and would spoil the lives of many who live here for many years to come.</p> <p>Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance and the proposed site along the Wallingford Road contains water courses which have largely unchanged since the 1600s. This area is therefore a Heritage asset and also provides an environment that supports numerous wildlife. The impact on people and the local infrastructure would also be immense.</p> <p>It would be a great loss as these plans would also effect the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway which would be forced to close.</p> <p>Both Wallingford and Cholsey have thriving communities and this proposal would adversely effect thousands of lives.</p>

346	<p>I am writing in response to the Minerals Plan Consultation published by Oxfordshire County Council ("OCC") in September 2011 (the "Consultation").</p> <p>My husband has already replied to the Consultation and, in particular, he has responded in detail on various technical aspects of the proposal, as set out in Policy M3 of the Consultation, that a new area of gravel working be located at Cholsey, to replace Sutton Courtenay when reserves there become exhausted (the "Proposal"). I agree with all of the points raised in his letter but also wish to raise my own personal 'less technical' objections to the Proposal.</p> <p>My initial concern is that the Proposal will devalue the lives of the residents in the affected area, not only economically but also in terms of general day to day well being. There seems to be a lack of regard by OCC for over 10,000 people living within a mile of the proposed site. OCC clearly considers the residents of Cholsey and Wallingford to be a low priority consideration and the potential exposure in the future of such residents to constant noise, disruption and dust seems to be an end that justifies the means. This lack of regard extends more immediately to the fact that OCC considers it irrelevant that in an already depressed property market it would be prepared to impose even more economic hardship on the home owners in the affected area by inflicting on them a long term project that would inevitably devalue properties and positively discourage people from moving to Cholsey and the surrounding Wallingford area.</p> <p>My second main concern is that the Proposal will inevitably bring more traffic into the area and, in particular, make exiting Cholsey along the Wallingford Road more congested and, for pedestrians and cyclists, significantly more dangerous. Further, it is not clear what proposals would be put in place to restrict lorries travelling through the heart of Cholsey (cutting directly through the school run route to Cholsey primary school) in order to access the A34 travelling South? In addition, I understand that the proposed Cholsey to Wallingford cycle route would be prejudiced by the Proposal; in the longer run I would have through OCC should be encouraging people to use more environmentally friendly/healthy means of transport (i.e. cycling/walking) rather than taking away the choice of the residents and requiring them (for safety sake) to resort to cars (or the (currently infrequent) bus service).</p> <p>Finally, the fact that there is one site only under consultation in relation to the Proposal intimates that this is a 'done deal' from OCC's perspective. How can it be the case that in the whole of South Oxfordshire there is no other potential site which could be considered alongside Cholsey? I find it particularly surprising that Cholsey has been singled out as the best prospect given the fact that OCC rejected a similar proposal over 20 years ago; what is the present OCC's justification for ignoring the considerations, reasoning and conclusions of Council at that time?</p> <p>There are obviously numerous other concerns and objections that one could raise but I know that CAGE in particular has eloquently presented these to OCC. I am grateful that Cholsey Parish Council and CAGE have been so active in raising the awareness of the residents of Cholsey and Wallingford to the Proposal. As far as I can see OCC have made no effort to directly contact the potentially affected residents to alert them to the Proposal and so, on such a basic level, it is hard to see how the Consultation can have been 'run in an open and honest' way giving 'all relevant parties the chance to have their say'.</p>
348	<p>The 3 proposed gravel pits very close to Wallingford would provide a huge eyesore close to an area of natural beauty. Surely we should preserve what we have as it is so precious. If there alternatives in more obscured locations they should be used ? Thousands of people drive by every day. Please don't add more urban sprawl.</p>
360	<p>I am writing to object to the inclusion of the Cholsey site for gravel extraction.</p> <p>I appreciate that you must provide sites for gravel extraction. However, Cholsey has been placed as a preferred site without</p>

	<p>adequate consultation with the parish council and the local community, despite reference in paragraph 2.29 to options being developed in consultation with district and parish councils.</p> <p>Wallingford and its smaller partner, Cholsey, are situated adjacent to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Chiltern Hills) and has developed as a tourist town because of its Anglo-Saxon history and its steam railway. It is a unique rural market town and, therefore, an Oxfordshire asset which should not be marred by a sand and gravel pit sited within the settlements.</p> <p>There is evidence that there have been settlements since the Iron Age and the land upon which the extraction will take place has yet to be properly researched. Planning permission should not be granted until archaeological investigations have been undertaken.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Railway will be threatened by the gravel pits because it runs so close to the site. Passengers will not want to ride alongside a working pit and lack of income may force the railway's closure as a tourist attraction. Since, it attracts a large number of people to the town, its closure could also threaten the livelihood of shopkeepers within Wallingford, who rely on tourism bring extra people to the town.</p> <p>Recently I discovered the Agatha Christie Trail linking Wallingford to Cholsey Church. When we have visitors, this is now one of our favourite walks. The trail will not be so attractive if it skirts a working gravel pit.</p> <p>One of my biggest concerns, however, is the impact that the gravel pit will have on the health of residents. It is much too close to houses, including the areas on which new homes will be developed. There is a correlation between respiratory diseases and gravel extraction. There is likely to be an increase in asthma in children and the elderly population. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that there is a maternity unit, a geriatric unit and a care home for the elderly within a short distance from the proposed site.</p> <p>Cholsey is not the site for this sort of venture and, because it is a newly considered site, no-one has informed local residents about long-term plans for restoration. Rumours suggest that it will be a site for the disposal of inert waste, producing concerns about what noxious substances would leech into the water supply. No permission should be granted until there is reassurance that the areas will benefit residents ultimately.</p> <p>I urge you to reconsider your decision and remove the Cholsey site from your plan.</p>
379	<p>I understand that the deadline set by OCC for objections to the plan to use ground between Cholsey and Wallingford for the purposes of gravel extraction is coming close.</p> <p>I wanted to take this opportunity for expressing my deep concern about the effects that such a plan could have on the well being of the Wallingford and Cholsey communities, the proposed location for the extensive gravel pits being where it is, in the beautiful fields of Cholsey Parish which bridge the communities of Winterbrook, Wallingford and those in central Cholsey.</p> <p>Like many residents of Wallingford and Cholsey, I use the Wallingford Road for cycling to and from Wallingford. I have for a long while been very supportive of a plan to have a cycle track between the two areas, and my son hopes to use this for the purposes of cycling to school.</p> <p>However, the proposed plan will lead to a significant amount of lorry traffic along this road and also will make the cycle track plan unworkable. The safety of cycling to and from the station, much used by Wallingford residents and to and from Wallingford, much used by Cholsey residents including schoolchildren, will be seriously diminished.</p> <p>Also the prevailing wind is likely to transport the dust from such works over Wallingford and is likely to impact upon the health and well being of the residents who live close to the Reading Road and Winterbrook. This area includes one nursing home, a</p>

	<p>doctors surgery, a primary school and a community hospital, and so the dust will exert its chronic respiratory effects on vulnerable people in the area.</p> <p>As a medical doctor, I am concerned about the deleterious effects that this proposed plan would have on the health of the Cholsey and Wallingford communities. As a community member I am concerned about the deleterious effects the plan would have on the enjoyment of the beautiful natural environment we have bridging our communities. There is not one person I have spoken to who is not strongly opposed to this proposal.</p> <p>Please reconsider the location of these gravel pits.</p>
372	<p>I am writing in response to the Minerals Plan Consultation published by Oxfordshire County Council ("OCC") in September 2011 (the "Consultation"). The purpose of this letter is to set out my serious concerns regarding the proposal, as set out in Policy M3 of the Consultation, that a new area of gravel working be located at Cholsey, to replace Sutton Courtenay when reserves there become exhausted (the "Proposal"). Having reviewed the relevant provisions of the Consultation, the rationale for the Proposal seems fundamentally flawed, not least that there appears to have been no substantive analysis of the adverse effects that the proposed development would have on a community of some 10,000 people for decades to come. The nature of the investigations carried out to date (and documented in the consultation documents) is insufficient to justify a decision to include new works in Cholsey in the preferred strategy.</p> <p>My principal objections to the proposal are set out below:</p> <p>1. Social impact on Cholsey, Wallingford and the surrounding area. In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this proposed site with many hundreds living adjacent to it. The likely levels of noise, disruption, dust and other negative impacts are not acceptable to the local community. The true extent of the negative impact of the proposals on the social fabric of our community has not been explored in the consultation documentation, or the decision-making process leading up to it. The under-estimation of the negative impact of the Cholsey works on people and local communities in the consultation is frankly insulting, and potentially extremely misleading (With reference to the 'Comments' column on p65 of the SA/SEA document, against '8. To minimise negative impacts of waste management facilities and mineral extraction on people and local communities', namely: "All but one of the proposed working areas are existing minerals working areas, the exception is Cholsey (sand and gravel). In this respect, while there will be no significant adverse effects of such workings on new communities (with the exception of the Cholsey area), those communities that are currently adversely affected by mineral workings are expected to continue to experience some effects for the long term, although once sites are fully worked out and restored, positive permanent effects are expected. The degree and nature of impacts is dependent on mitigation measures put in place, proximity to sensitive receptors and the duration of working.").</p> <p>2. Transport</p> <p>The proposals have not considered the hugely negative impact of increased HGV movement on the local roads between Cholsey, Wallingford and Didcot. Estimates of HGV movement on the road network in the area and the impact on traffic flows and road safety have not been included in the consultation documentation. I am also extremely concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The</p>

Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. As a parent of 3 young children I fear for their safety as they will grow to use this stretch of road independently in the future. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.

3. Strategy for the Location of Mineral Extraction

I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale Development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield. There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.

4. Quality and Quantity of the Extracted Gravel

I understand from Cholsey Parish Council that the material found in the sites may be of sub-standard quality. The poor quality of the gravel is one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew when the sites were considered 20 years ago. Even if higher quality aggregates were used to supplement the locally produced gravel, such materials would have to be transported to Cholsey by road, which would not only increase disruption for residents due to traffic movements, but also substantially undermine the contention that sites at Cholsey would reduce transport miles to market and associated carbon emissions. In addition, I have serious concerns that the Cholsey site will be able to provide the required yield. The reserves are not extensive and I understand that there are doubts as to the accuracy of OCC's estimate of a yield of 4.9 million tonnes from the proposed sites. It is far from clear that such reserves could adequately meet future local demand (even if one could demonstrate that such demand will exist and the gravel will be used locally.) It shows blatant disregard for the community and environment that such disruption is being considered for such a poor yield.

5. Site Restoration

Paragraph 4.37 of the Consultation states that applications for mineral working "should include provision for long-term maintenance of the after-use and enhancement of the environment". Although still at the consultation stage, it is not clear that OCC has adequately considered site restoration proposals for Cholsey, including the unique problems that this location poses in terms of environmental enhancement post extraction. It will not be possible to restore the site as a lake due to the proximity of the River Thames and to RAF Benson, as increased risk of bird strikes would arise as a result. The possibility of the sites being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. Notably, the Consultation states at paragraph 4.39 that: "it may take some years to complete restoration because of shortage [sic] of suitable fill material (due in large part to increased recycling)".

I also understand that site will be at risk of flooding, both during and after the extraction period. Given the proximity to the Cholsey Sewage works, I have serious concerns regarding the likelihood of potential groundwater contamination and the health issues this may raise. These are significant factors that would raise serious concerns against Cholsey being used for gravel extraction and surely should have been considered in detail before now. Instead, residents face the prospect of being left with an unintended depression that will seasonally fill with water. This is dangerous, unacceptable and furthermore would likely be in breach of applicable environmental law.

6. Economic Impact and Protection

Paragraph 5.15 of the Consultation states that minerals developments "must be balanced against the need to protect the environment" and that Policy C3 provides protection to local residents from unacceptable impacts caused by such developments. In this regard Cholsey cannot be considered to be a suitable location for gravel extraction:

a) very little account appears to have been taken of the distance between a noisy, dusty, disruptive industrial site and the homes and workplaces of around 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of the proposed works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in Policy C3. I am also very concerned that no detailed assessment of the impact on air quality appears to have been carried out;

b) Cholsey and Wallingford will become significantly less attractive places to live if the Proposal goes ahead. I moved from London to Cholsey, just last year, with the aim of raising my family in a safe, secure and tranquil environment. Having a gravel pit within a mile of my house will destroy this aim. Additionally, gravel extraction will adversely affect house prices in the area and could have a negative impact on the local

economy. No analysis of the potential wider impact on the local economy appears to have been undertaken at all, particularly of the effects on tourism, which is of considerable concern.

7. Biodiversity and Wildlife

I understand that the proposed sites at Cholsey are not within a statutorily protected conservation area. Nevertheless, paragraph 5.20 of the Consultation states, inter alia, that OCC "will seek to ensure that biodiversity in ... non-designated areas is protected and enhanced and that habitat fragmentation is avoided". Paragraph 5.23 goes further to state that proposals for minerals development "should seek to achieve a net gain in natural assets and resources".

It is hard to see how gravel extraction at Cholsey would be compatible with these statements. The cursory examination of the impact of the proposed site referred to in the consultation documentation (referencing the SA/SEA assessment) does not reference the fact that the site is currently a habitat for a number of bird and mammal species including weasels, stoats, deer, hares foxes, otters, buzzards, owls and red kite and the works would lead to the complete destruction of this habitat. The associated loss of invertebrates, wild plants and trees (which warrant targeted surveys in their own right) would seriously affect the biodiversity of the area, and have knock-on impacts for ecosystem services such as flood protection and carbon storage.

Furthermore, it is not apparent from the documentation that any modelling of the impact of the works on local air quality and hence the health of the local population, has been carried out. Little or no consideration appears to have been given to the above in OCC's preliminary site assessment. It is virtually impossible to see how there will be a net gain in natural assets after the destruction of these valuable habitats.

8. History and archaeology

Paragraphs 5.28 to 5.30 of the Consultation underline OCC's commitment to protect historical and heritage assets. To develop gravel extraction at Cholsey would be incompatible with these aims:

- a) Cholsey is a parish of historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 AD. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, watercourses and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today;
- b) the recently adopted "Agatha Christie Trail", running from her former home in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed if the Proposal is sanctioned;
- c) gravel extraction at Cholsey will likely force the popular Cholsey & Wallingford Steam Railway to close, thereby abruptly terminating the enjoyment of many

hundreds of local residents and tourists each year and sacrificing 30 years of hard work by the volunteers who run this attraction;
d) a number of listed buildings (notably the barns on Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm) will be adversely affected; and

e) the proposed sites lie immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites (the bypass creating a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site). It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Since the area is part of the hinterland of Wallingford, one of the best surviving examples of a major medieval town in the country, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history, disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Professional archaeological investigation will be required if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

Taking the above into account, the statement in the URS Scott Wilson report "Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment - Aggregates Apportionment Option" dated July 2011 (the "SA/SEA Report") that Cholsey is "largely unconstrained by strategic nature conservation, historic and landscape designations" is, frankly, misleading. Notably, the SA/SEA Report provides no detailed or valid justifications for this statement.

9. The lack of transparency surrounding the Proposal

In October 2010, OCC agreed a preferred approach to sand and gravel extraction that did not include new works at Cholsey. However, by February 2011, a revised strategy had been determined which did include new works at Cholsey. The reasons for this u-turn, in such a short timeframe, are not transparent. As a result, local residents have been denied the opportunity to understand why Cholsey has now been selected.

It is interesting to note that paragraph 6.11 of the Consultation admits that possible sites for mineral working are those put forward by mineral operators and landowners. If sites have been nominated solely on this basis, it suggests that OCC has not undertaken a proper due diligence exercise to independently verify all potential sites. This is an extremely poor decision making process. It clearly suggests that OCC is more receptive to the interests and concerns of corporate entities and land owners than to the legitimate concerns of residents and council tax payers, who face the prospect of their community being irreversibly and irreparably damaged.

In this context, it is incumbent upon OCC to openly demonstrate the reasons for the revision in strategy, including explaining why previously considered sites have now been excluded.

	<p>In conclusion, for the reasons set out above, it is difficult to reconcile the Proposal with numerous OCC policies. This indicates that proper due diligence has not been carried out by OCC when deciding to include the Proposal in the Consultation (which in itself may require legal scrutiny in due course). Furthermore, as described in section 9 above, OCC's decision to include the Proposal in the Consultation lacks openness and transparency. I therefore recommend in the strongest terms that the Proposal is discounted by OCC and that OCC excludes the proposed Cholsey sites from its minerals strategy.</p>
390	<p>I am a member of Wallingford Town Council and four months ago completed my year in office as Mayor of the town. During my year in office, in October 2010, it was made very clear that Oxfordshire County Council had decided not to pursue gravel extraction from any new areas and this was made very clear in the local press where it stated in the 'Wallingford Herald' on the 27th October 2010 :</p> <p>"the cabinet rejected the option of taking gravel from areas such as Clanfield, Bampton, Stanton Harcourt, Clifton Hampden, the Wittenhams, Benson, Shillingford, Warborough and Cholsey. Instead they agreed to focus extraction work on the areas already being worked in the Lower Windrush Valley, Eynsham, Cassington, Yarnton, Radley, Sutton Courtenay and Caversham."</p> <p>I was aware of two workshops which were held on the subject and I brought these to the attention of members of the Town Council. Because the position of the County Council regarding future gravel extraction had been clearly stated, the Town Council did not give the matter great thought and did not ask any members to attend other than our County Councillor who was going to attend one of these workshops anyway. Even from feedback from these workshops it was not believed they were part of a constructive public consultation</p> <p>It was only as a result of a local resident reading the minutes of the County Council Cabinet meeting in February this year that I, the Town Council and Cholsey Parish Council became aware of a total about face in respect of gravel extraction between Wallingford and Cholsey.</p> <p>It is absolutely appalling that through the latter part of 2010 and early 2011 this changed thinking was taking place at the County Council without any liaison or communication with Wallingford Town Council which represents around 8,000 people who live within about a mile of the proposed extraction site. Even when Cabinet agreed this change you did not have the courtesy or common sense to have discussions with the Town Council. I know we are two tiers down in the local government hierarchy and perhaps our views and input are thought by you to count for very little but on such an important issue affecting the lives of our residents I believe we deserved to be closely consulted and kept informed.</p> <p>How is localism going to operate if tiers of government don't communicate and work together for the good of the local communities ?</p> <p>The result of how this matter has been handled and the vacillation of the County Council has left the Town Council ill informed and with limited time and opportunity to gather their thoughts and make representations of their concerns regarding the proposals in respect of the site between Wallingford and Cholsey.</p> <p>I consider the manner in which this has been handled, the failure to properly consult and the confusion caused by publicised decisions and subsequent secretive changes makes the draft strategy unsound and I suggest it should be set aside for this reason alone.</p>

	<p>However, turning to the draft strategy itself, as a contributor to the CAGE (Communities Against Gravel Extraction) submission I must wholeheartedly endorse the issues put forward in that document and I will not repeat them all here.</p> <p>I know in considering proposed gravel extraction sites many of the key issues in determining the selection are matters such as the impact on AONBs, environment, archaeology, ecology, etc. However to me, as an elected Town Councillor, due weight must be given to the impact on people. To me it is beyond belief, irrespective of the other key determinants, that a site could be proposed for gravel extraction that lies between, and so close to, the two significant settlements of Wallingford and Cholsey. There will be a population of around 10,000, and rising, within a mile or so of the proposed sites. What is not fully appreciated in respect of Wallingford and this part of South Oxfordshire is that a number of settlements are very tightly grouped, e.g. Wallingford, Cholsey, Crowmarsh, Benson, Shillingford, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, etc. The land and landscapes between these tightly grouped settlements is very important to the setting of these settlements and needs to be preserved. The cumulative total population of all these tightly grouped settlements, the traffic they generate and the right they have to enjoy and benefit from the limited countryside around them will be dramatically affected if gravel extraction proceeds as proposed.</p> <p>The other point I would highlight and which is of grave concern to me personally and as a Town Councillor, is the impact on tourism and the local economy. It is recognised that small market towns such as Wallingford are increasingly struggling to sustain a viable retail element due to competition from nearby Didcot, Reading and Oxford. The Town Council has been working hard with the District Council and both have recognised that the future viability must be built and developed on the back of tourism brought about by the history of the town, its riverside setting and its setting in the landscape. Your proposals potentially destroy that strategy which is the only lifeline left open for the future of the town and surrounding area. The full impact is spelt out in more detail in the CAGE submission.</p> <p>Finally, I repeat that to propose this site in this location with no meaningful input from the Town Council, a site which will have such a major impact on so many people as well as the historic setting of the town, views from the two AONBs, etc., is really beyond belief. The efforts many of us have made over many years to maintain Wallingford and the surrounding areas as economically viable and attractive will be destroyed at a stroke.</p> <p>I hope common sense will prevail and the sites between Wallingford and Cholsey will be removed from the strategy.</p>
392	<p>As a Wallingford resident I wish to write in objection to the proposed gravel extraction pit on the outskirts of Wallingford and Cholsey. There are surely many areas of river gravels in the Thames Valley and the plan to extract so close to a major residential town seems perverse, given the inevitable noise of the site survey drilling and subsequent long-term extraction, plus hundreds of lorry movements. The extraction area is close to a major road, local watercourse, and amenities such as the Cholsey and Wallingford railway and the Agatha Christie trail. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can avoid harming the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape. A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. Many local groups and volunteers have been working hard to promote tourism in the area. This plan to devastate a large area will destroy their efforts.</p>

	<p>Who would want to visit 'Wallingford-cum-gravelpits' on their holiday? The excellent Agatha Christie Trail, which has only just been created, and is based on the world's best-selling author, would be destroyed by this proposal. The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway, built up by more than thirty years of voluntary work by the community, would be unable to operate and could be forced to close. The proposed gravel extraction site lies adjacent to a known archaeological area with evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age, and may itself contain similar material (it has not to my knowledge been properly surveyed). The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation takes very little account of the impact of this disruptive and noisy eyesore on the lives of up to 10,000 people who live within a mile of this site. And with the heavy mechanisation of the mineral extraction industry there will be few, if any, local jobs created. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council so suddenly opted to put a gravel pit that brings twenty plus years of economic blight and disruption so close to so many people, without a full analysis of its benefits and drawbacks? It appears that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated by gravel quarrying companies or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found, with no input from the local people. That seems to undermine the democratic process, and treats the local community with contempt. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject them to proper appraisal before offering them for long-term mining operations. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term. The eventual 'use' of the extraction site after the gravel has been extracted as a dumping ground for waste (according to the Wallingford Herald) will also be damaging to the residents in the surrounding area, and with the site on the floodplain so close to the river it raises potential risks of polluting the River Thames. I completely understand the County council wishes to move gravel extraction closer to where it will be used. But the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed, leaving the developers of the site, transporting the gravel by road to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p>
385	<p>I have been made aware of the current Minerals & Waste Plan Consultation, with its stated preference for sites at Wallingford and Cholsey for sharp sand and gravel workings. These include proposals for specific sites (not limited to a general area), and these sites directly affect me as a resident, including one nominated site (SG57) which is within 15m of my property. I am disturbed that in these circumstances, I have had to reply on third parties to alert me to the proposals, and I have had to wade through large volumes of consultation materials which are not written in Plain English for the general public, in order to find those parts which affect me. I note that this may not be in accordance with the Council's own consultation policy.</p> <p>My wife, who is a professional geologist has written to you separately with a clear analysis of the issues in relation to the proposed sites in Cholsey and Wallingford. She has set out clear arguments relating to each site in regard to proximity to settlements; landscape and wildlife impact; viability as a sustainable source of sand and gravel; flooding risk; and access and traffic issues. I fully support the arguments in her letter and the conclusions she draws.</p> <p>In future I would like to be directly consulted by the Council on matters related to mineral extraction development on these sites, and I look forward to receiving a summary of the results of this consultation.</p>
386 (Wallingford Museum)	<p>The Directors of Wallingford Museum are very concerned about the proposals for gravel extraction in Cholsey (SG33, SG57, SG60) and wish to object to the Core Strategy document which has placed these sites as the only option for new gravel extraction in South Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Wallingford Museum is situated in the finest surviving example of a Saxon fortified town in England, which has an undisturbed</p>

hinterland that can be demonstrated to have existed for many thousands of years. The town and its huge royal castle have played critical roles in national history. The town has witnessed many upheavals in its past, but few have been more threatening to its existence than the present proposals.

The sites proposed for gravel extraction are within the historic southern hinterland of Wallingford and would not only mutilate the preserved setting of the ancient town but also totally destroy its landscape archaeology.

They also lie in an area which has proved rich in archaeological finds. Much of the proposed extraction site has already quite rightly been highlighted by the County planning archaeologists as an Area of Archaeological Restraint.

Furthermore, the work of the project (the result of a substantial Arts and Humanities Research Council grant), has reinforced the importance of considering the hinterland of towns and villages, especially in the case of Wallingford. Here there is a strong continuity of occupation to the south of Wallingford which is not yet fully understood or investigated. The gravel extraction would obliterate a large tract of this important landscape.

It has been recognised in a number of recent studies that the future economic viability of Wallingford depends heavily on its attraction as a centre for heritage.

Wallingford Museum has worked very hard with the Wallingford Partnership, Wallingford Town Council and South Oxfordshire District Council, who funded this research, to improve the tourism aspects of Wallingford:

- We have been involved in the preparation of walks for visitors - both guided and self-guided by MP3 commentary or by leaflet.
- We have worked on the historical information for the new boards to inform visitors to the town.
- Our 'Days Out around Wallingford' leaflet and website (www.daysoutinsouthoxon.org.uk), entices visitors to the attractions of the vicinity
- We actively promote the historic attractions of the town through our website (www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk) and by regular talks and conferences
- We provide a core of permanent exhibitions and annually changing special exhibitions to encourage more visitors to the town and museum

All this is done by volunteer effort which, over the thirty years of our existence, has helped raised the profile of Wallingford as a beautiful and historic place to visit.

The Adverse Impact of the Proposed Gravel Extraction

The impact of huge gravel workings over many years immediately to the south of the town cannot fail to have an adverse effect on this growing tourist trade. For example:

- Agatha Christie's connection with Wallingford is proving to be a very important draw for tourism and our exhibition 'Christie to Causton' has been a significant influence on the increased visitor numbers to the museum this year. One vital part of the Agatha Christie story is that she lived for 42 years and finally died in Winterbrook House, Wallingford and

	<p>was then buried in Cholsey churchyard. The Agatha Christie Trail from Wallingford to Cholsey runs through and alongside the proposed gravel workings. The advertising of a special Wallingford Museum guided walk along this trail recently attracted over 50 people (at £5 per head) many of whom had travelled considerable distances to join the walk through the rural and undisturbed countryside that Agatha Christie is known to have enjoyed. The gravel workings would totally destroy the attraction of this popular trail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The Cholsey and Wallingford Railway, with which the Museum has worked closely in promoting local attractions will be utterly devastated if the gravel work goes ahead. There is at present a scenic (mainly) steam railway line, developed over 30 years, again by volunteers, and totally dependent on high numbers of visitors. Who would pay to view a gravel-working? The CWR is another very important catalyst to tourism which is now severely threatened. · The town is surrounded by both the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs AONBs; it also lies on the River Thames on its longest unspoilt reach and alongside the nationally acclaimed Thames Path; these are all features which attract visitors and tourists to the town. The movement of significant numbers of heavy gravel vehicles along the approach roads to Wallingford, together with the effects of noise pollution and dust carried on the prevailing wind and the added scar of SG60 immediately abutting the river, would make Wallingford far less attractive to visitors than it now is. The Core Strategy also fails to address the impact on the setting of the two AONBs - which OCC has a duty to consider. · What is more, these intrusions would be there for at least 25 years and there is no guarantee that the landscape could ever be reinstated properly because of the proximity of the river, which floods regularly, and the lack of suitable inert infill material. <p>To sum up: Wallingford Museum fears for its future if the town's attraction to tourists is undermined by the current proposals. No proper consideration has been given in the Core Strategy document to the economic effects on Wallingford or of the impact on the neighbouring AONBs which help to attract visitors to the town. We would ask that the whole process and decision should be carefully reviewed before any further move is made towards allowing gravel extraction in the Cholsey/Wallingford area.</p>
<p>388 (Wallingford Town Council)</p>	<p>The town council wishes to register its strong objection to the proposal by Oxfordshire County Council to include an area between the south of Wallingford and the north of Cholsey as a preferred gravel extraction site. We believe that to introduce a gravel extraction site into this area would have a very serious and detrimental effect on the population of these two centres and would also be detrimental to the local economy and tourism. The town council strongly endorses the submission by CAGE opposing the gravel extraction on this site and would particularly request that the following comments be taken into consideration.</p> <p>Local Economy and Tourism</p> <p>The Town Council and District Council have for some years now recognised the changing circumstances and the fact Wallingford has to change to remain a vibrant and prosperous town. Both Town and District Councils share the same vision for the future of the town. This vision in broad terms sees:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the promotion of the town through its nationally recognised historical importance as one of the country's best preserved Saxon towns together with its place at the heart of subsequent English history and with its riverside setting in beautiful countryside. - the expansion of cycle ways, historic walks and the like.

- the need and opportunity for small independent specialist retailers who would be complementary to the retail offer in the large towns.
- the promotion of good restaurants and use of local food.
- the promotion and expansion of local markets.
- improvements to make the town centre more attractive and visitor friendly.

These principles are set out in a number of documents but all with a similar thrust.

In a report prepared by The Civic Trust they note " There are strong assets on which to build: a unique history and heritage, a range of specialist shops, a superb location on the banks of the River Thames. This confirms that Wallingford is a unique town in a superb setting."

The District Council's Core Strategy, currently being subjected to review by a Government Inspector, also states "Wallingford's strengths include its location by the River Thames and proximity to the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs". The Core Strategy also recognises that Wallingford is now " hosting events which draw people to the town including markets, festivals and rowing events ".

The Core Strategy goes on to identify that the strategy for Wallingford is to :-

- support measures which improve the attraction of Wallingford for visitors.
- improve local air quality.
- support schemes which enhance the town's environment.

The South Oxfordshire Market Towns Action Plan 2010-11, which draws on the Civic Trust and other reports and is referred to in the Core Strategy, includes the following actions in respect of Wallingford:-

- increasing awareness as a destination.
- support the development of activity packages to stay longer and spend more.
- increase awareness of cycling opportunities.
- increase visibility of Wallingford's historical assets (improve physical links between historic sites).
- develop themed trails such as historic tours and Agatha Christie.
- support the delivery of a cycle path between Cholsey station and Wallingford.

The main thrust of all the reports and the conclusions of the Town and District Councils is the need to promote the assets of the town and surrounding area in terms of its history, landscape setting and countryside activities in order to maintain a vibrant and sustainable economy.

The river and surrounding countryside are key elements to the successful implementation of this strategy and extensive gravel extraction workings within the parish of Cholsey and close up to the settlement of Wallingford, and specifically impacting on visitor attractions such as the Bunkline, Agatha Christie trail, footpaths and the riverside setting would be a major obstacle to progressing the strategy so essential for the future economies of Wallingford and Cholsey, with the inevitable negative impact. The future of Wallingford therefore is going to be increasingly dependent upon tourism brought about by its history the river, its landscape setting and associated visits to attractions such as walks, cycleways, the Agatha Christie trail, the Cholsey to Wallingford railway, etc. Any threat to these dramatically impacts upon the future of the area, employment and the local economy.

Proximity to Centres of Population

It would seem reasonable to expect that gravel extraction sites, CDE facilities and the like should be sited in locations which minimise the impact on significant centres of population. Wallingford is closely surrounded by a number of individual, distinct settlements e.g. Cholsey, Crowmarsh and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. Any gravel extraction workings in this area and close to the town of Wallingford is inevitably going to be very close to significant centres of population.

The proposed sites SG 33, SG 57 and SG 60 are in locations which take no account of the impact on significant nearby populations. These sites are within about one mile of approximately 10,000 people living in Wallingford and Cholsey. In relation to the impact on these centres of population it is known the situation will become more critical over the coming years because this part of South Oxfordshire is designated for a significant amount of house building. Within close proximity to these proposed gravel extraction sites, there are currently being built or there are proposals within the draft District Council Core Strategy or there are proposals at or approaching planning stage for the following developments :

- (1) 550 houses between Wallingford and the bypass.
- (2) 350 houses under construction at the Fair Mile Hospital site.
- (3) 150 houses in Cholsey, allocated in the Core Strategy
- (4) 42 houses under construction on the Wilders site in Crowmarsh.
- (5) 160 houses for which a planning application is about to be submitted for the Mongewel Park (Carmel College) site. This housing will be directly across the river from the proposed extraction site SG 60.
- (6) In the region of 100 houses on the CABI site approaching planning application stage

There will inevitably be windfall sites in the immediate vicinity of Wallingford not least of which is likely to be the redevelopment of the South Oxfordshire District Council office site in Crowmarsh when the merger of management and administration with the Vale of the White Horse is finally concluded.

The above demonstrates it is easy to identify well in excess of a further 1500 houses to be built in the near future all within a mile or so of the proposed gravel extraction sites. This additional housing will result in the region of 3500 new residents.

When the Town Council considered similar gravel extraction proposals in January 1987 they expressed concerns in their submission to Oxfordshire County Council stating :

"Planning permission to private gravel extraction was refused for the adjoining land east of the Wallingford / Reading road. If the proposed site is accepted there will be no good grounds for refusing any renewed application. In addition, the entire town is built on and surrounded by gravel - to begin extraction in this area is to open up the possibility of extraction all round the town."

This concern remains but is now of greater significance due to the expanding population in the tightly grouped settlements in this area of South Oxfordshire.

With the pressure for housing, the town and parish councils are working hard to try to preserve the distinctiveness, individual identities of the settlements and the very important separating landscape environment. The proposed gravel extraction sites put all these issues under great pressure.

With such large centres of population close to the proposed gravel extraction sites, the concerns in the town of Wallingford are

- (a) The prevailing wind is from the south west and this will bring dust and noise pollution into the very heart of the town.
- (b) The by-pass was constructed to take traffic away from the centre of the town to overcome severe problems in consequence of the narrow roads, limited infrastructure, fragile historic buildings, sub standard air quality etc. The significant number of lorry

	<p>movements and consequent hazards, dust and disruption on the small two lane bypass will deter motorists from using it and encourage them to go through the town. This will be contrary to the objective in constructing the by-pass and would seem to be an abuse of the planning decision which lead to its creation.</p> <p>(c) The threat posed to the nationally important Saxon town of Wallingford. Dr. Neil Christie who has led an extensive archaeological project over the last three years involving Leicester, Oxford and Exeter Universities, concludes that Wallingford is of much greater importance than previously thought. The importance is not just the archaeology within the town but the setting of one of England's best preserved Saxon towns within the landscape.</p> <p>(d) The impact on tourism which is at the heart of the vision for the future viability of the town and surrounding area as explained in greater detail elsewhere in this submission.</p>
318	<p>I am objecting to the consultation draft which states that the only new location for sharp sand and gravel working will be at Cholsey, to replace Sutton Courtney when reserves become exhausted, on the following grounds.</p> <p>1) Under Policy M3, there appears to be only one alternative and therefore no scope for fairly comparing one potential location with another - the exercise does not therefore constitute a consultation.</p> <p>2) There are many reasons why Cholsey is an inappropriate location, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the proximity of up to 10,000 houses (and a number of listed buildings), with the consequent risk of dust and noise on air quality and health - the inadequacy of local highways beyond Wallingford bypass between the proposed site and areas of proposed building at Didcot and the new Science Vale development and - the very real and negative impact the proposed workings would have on the economic viability of the area, which has built up a reputation as a tourist attraction based on a major medieval settlement at Wallingford and the surrounding area of outstanding natural beauty. <p>3) In the context of the new approach to localism, the County Council is not obliged to conform to a regional strategy and is therefore at liberty to decide how much provision should be made for sand and gravel extraction into the future. In these circumstances and bearing in mind the growing pressure and developing technology for producing secondary and recycled aggregates, I challenge the fundamental conclusions in Policies M1 and M2 regarding the need for new mineral workings beyond 2020. Certainly, at this stage, it is premature to conclude that extraction in such a sensitive area as Cholsey is necessary</p>
410	<p>I am writing to strongly object to the above proposals due to the considerable blight it will bring upon the families and physical environment of Cholsey and Wallingford, and from a regional perspective, this proposal does not appear to meet the longer-term development requirements, as stated. In terms of sustainable development, and the related statutory requirements on Local Authorities, many stakeholders, including me, feel that this proposal satisfies only one of the three elements of the 'triple bottom line' - that being a (narrowly defined at that) financial one!</p> <p>It does not seem right that a site the size proposed can be really considered safe and unobtrusive, so close to a town the size of Wallingford and a village the size of Cholsey. The choice of site put forward by OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is a potentially disruptive, noisy, dusty eyesore and the health, homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either side of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy. To subject</p>

	<p>so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings decades of economic blight and disruption so close to so many people? How has the loss of tourism revenues been accounted for in the plan?</p> <p>As the crow flies, the gravel pit will be approximately 700 m from many family homes, two primary schools and two pre-schools. We understand that the prevailing wind blows directly over these, bringing with it the dust, noise and odour into our gardens and streets where our young children play. The dust, we believe could trigger already-existing childhood asthma, as well as potentially inducing it in other children. What budget has been allocated for the increase in demand on the local PCT? i.e. what price have you put on our children's health?</p> <p>We understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction close to the point of use. The plan, apparently, is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for 10 years by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. Please explain to me what will stop the site's developers selling the gravel into Reading, Oxford or even further afield?</p> <p>Please explain why there is no evidenced schedule or proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction suggested within the Consultation document?</p> <p>The concern of the effects of lorries coming to and from the site daily, and the build up of traffic around the ring road, will inevitably force motorists to re-route through the centre of Wallingford. The town already copes with a lot of traffic, but does not have the infrastructure to cope with much more, at times the pavements are precariously thin and the tranquil and safe atmosphere that the town centre generally exudes will disappear in car fumes and noisy engines. A lot of people in Wallingford cycle to their destinations - adults and children - what are your plans to ensure their safety and rights if the town disappears under a fog of fumes and impatient motorists?</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting" Cholsey and Wallingford are Parishes of considerable historical importance, with recognised beginnings in 986A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly benefit the health of the local children and safeguard the current local character, amenity and setting, sited as planned, on the outskirts of a thriving town and village. Further, by the standards by which we understood you to be considering the options, this proposal, does not appear to satisfy the longer-term development requirements; surely a 'lose-lose' solution. In summary, we urge you to think again, if not for the adults, or physical environment, then for the thousands of children's health that will be affected by your decision.</p>
411	<p>I am writing to strongly object to the above proposals due to the considerable blight it will bring upon the families and physical environment of Cholsey and Wallingford, and from a regional perspective, this proposal does not appear to meet the longer-term development requirements, as stated. In terms of sustainable development, and the related statutory requirements on Local Authorities, many stakeholders, including me, feel that this proposal satisfies only one of the three elements of the 'triple bottom line' - that being a (narrowly defined at that) financial one!</p> <p>It does not seem right that a site the size proposed can be really considered safe and unobtrusive, so close to a town the size of</p>

Wallingford and a village the size of Cholsey. The choice of site put forward by OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is a potentially disruptive, noisy, dusty eyesore and the health, homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either side of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings decades of economic blight and disruption so close to so many people? How has the loss of tourism revenues been accounted for in the plan?

As the crow flies, the gravel pit will be approximately 700 m from many family homes, two primary schools and two pre-schools. We understand that the prevailing wind blows directly over these, bringing with it the dust, noise and odour into our gardens and streets where our young children play. The dust, we believe could trigger already-existing childhood asthma, as well as potentially inducing it in other children. What budget has been allocated for the increase in demand on the local PCT? i.e. what price have you put on our children's health?

We understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction close to the point of use. The plan, apparently, is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for 10 years by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. Please explain to me what will stop the site's developers selling the gravel into Reading, Oxford or even further afield?

Please explain why there is no evidenced schedule or proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction suggested within the Consultation document?

The concern of the effects of lorries coming to and from the site daily, and the build up of traffic around the ring road, will inevitably force motorists to re-route through the centre of Wallingford. The town already copes with a lot of traffic, but does not have the infrastructure to cope with much more, at times the pavements are precariously thin and the tranquil and safe atmosphere that the town centre generally exudes will disappear in car fumes and noisy engines. A lot of people in Wallingford cycle to their destinations - adults and children - what are your plans to ensure their safety and rights if the town disappears under a fog of fumes and impatient motorists?

In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting" Cholsey and Wallingford are Parishes of considerable historical importance, with recognised beginnings in 986A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.

It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly benefit the health of the local children and safeguard the current local character, amenity and setting, sited as planned, on the outskirts of a thriving town and village. Further, by the standards by which we understood you to be considering the options, this proposal, does not appear to satisfy the longer-term development requirements; surely a 'lose-lose' solution. In summary, we urge you to think again, if not for the adults, or physical environment, then for the thousands of children's health that will be affected by your decision.

412	<p>Living on the southern edge of Wallingford we begin to feel as if we're living under siege. First we have spent endless hours trying to fight off speculative developers from building up to 800 houses in the field behind us and now we have the even worse prospect of gravel pits between the south of Wallingford and Cholsey. Has the Council gone collectively mad?</p> <p>Life will be absolute hell for the residents of this lovely area because: 160 (probably more) lorries a day on the totally unsuitable access roads in and out of Wallingford and Cholsey will cause huge problems for anyone trying to get to work, school, hospital etc. The dust and noise will be a hazard to the health of us all, especially children. The disruption will totally kill off businesses and shops in Wallingford as people decide to go elsewhere to avoid the mayhem. All in all, this is a crazy idea. Do you as the Council have the courage to put a stop to this plan before it goes any further?</p>
473	<p>wish to lodge my strong objection to the proposals for gravel extraction in Cholsey SG33, SG57, SG60) as it would seriously harm the local economy and the important amenity value of the area both in the short term and the long term. Furthermore, I wish to object to the Core Strategy document which has placed these sites as the only option for new gravel extraction in South Oxfordshire.</p> <p>My principal concerns, together with reference to the relevant OMPSC are that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It would severely harm the character of the land between two large settlements, Wallingford and Cholsey. 2. It would adversely affect the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB and Chilterns AONB. 3. It would destroy valuable undisturbed geological history. (4. It would be contrary to as two of the sites, SG33 & SG57, are subject in part to flooding and one, SG60, which abuts the River Thames, is almost entirely subject to river flooding. 5. It would be contrary to as there may be risks of contamination to the groundwater from Cholsey Sewage Works. 6. It would mutilate the preserved setting of an historic Saxon town and ancient village and destroy its landscape archaeology. 7. It would affect the setting of two Grade II listed buildings and threaten the future existence of one of them. 8. It would harm important popular rights of way. 9. It would severely threaten the existence of a heritage and tourist railway. 10. It would adversely affect OCC's approved cycle path between Wallingford and Cholsey. 11. It would adversely and directly impact on the lives of some 10,000 people living in Wallingford and Cholsey. 12. It would damage the local economy and tourism and be contrary to the

District and Town Councils' core strategy for the future.

13. It would destroy the undisturbed habitat of a rich variety of birds and other wildlife.

14. It would almost certainly not be possible to restore the sites to a standard acceptable to the RAF, and in keeping with the District LDF policies and the surrounding AONB, as there is a shortage of inert waste material, a constraint recognised in the OMPSC.

15. It would put an unsustainable burden on local roads and encourage more local traffic to divert through the historic town rather than use the bypass which was created to protect the town.

16. Site access would create an unavoidably dangerous junction onto the narrow busy local road connecting Cholsey and Wallingford

17. The site would not provide a replacement for Sutton Courtenay, as the quality of the mineral reserve would be inadequate to meet the demand for construction materials in South Oxfordshire, and minerals would have to be imported from elsewhere. ()

18. The many constraints on the site, some not previously identified, mean that the reserves would be less than anticipated, reducing the economic viability of the site. The site operator may therefore be likely to want to use the plant from their existing site in the Lower Windrush Valley, once the reserves there are exhausted. As those reserves are likely to last for some considerable time beyond 2020, the Cholsey/Wallingford sites would not provide continuity of supply when the Sutton Courtenay reserves become exhausted. ()

19. The proposed strategy would have the effect of putting at least half, if not 70%, of Oxfordshire's supply in the hands of one operator. This casts some doubt on whether it would be deliverable, or appropriate in terms of market effects.

20. All the other South Oxfordshire sites are closer to Oxford, which would be the probable destination of half the reserve, and none of the sites is materially further from the rest of the market, so there is no benefit in selecting Cholsey/Wallingford as closer to areas of demand for construction materials.

21. A more detailed analysis of the available sites demonstrates that the Cholsey/Wallingford sites actually rank amongst the least favourable.
(It would appear that there are no OMPSC relevant to points 9 & 12 above, two issues which are both particularly significant in this case.)

In the light of these objections, I would urge that the whole process and decision should be carefully reviewed before any further move is made towards allowing gravel extraction in the Cholsey/Wallingford area.

475

I am writing to express my alarm and concern about the proposed gravel pit in Cholsey, Oxfordshire. I believe very strongly that the proposals run counter to the interests of the community and indeed the county for a variety of social, personal, environmental, geological and archaeological reasons. My instinctive reaction on finding out about the plans was that I didn't want this sort of thing on my family's doorstep. However, this knee-jerk response was soon replaced by a realisation that such a project probably was required somewhere in South Oxfordshire. As my thinking on this subject matured, I realised that my objection was not a "Nimby" concern, but one based on sound reasons why the gravel pit should not be located in Cholsey.

The proposed site is located between the village of Cholsey and the town of Wallingford. The two communities are very close - not just geographically, but also socially. My husband and I and our four children lived in Wallingford for six years before moving to Cholsey in spring last year, so we know many people in each community. If the proposals were to go ahead, the gravel pit would act as a wedge between the two communities, most tangible perhaps, in the form of the "Bunk-line", the old railway link which is kept alive by a team of committed local enthusiasts and much loved by the citizens of both Wallingford and Cholsey. I find it hard to believe that a site cannot be found which would be less disruptive to local communities - between them, Wallingford and Cholsey have a combined population of approximately 10,000 people!

My husband and I both lived in bigger cities before we met, but chose to settle down together in a gentler, rural environment. Despite this, our eldest son suffers from asthma, a condition which would undoubtedly be exacerbated by the dust and other pollutants that would accompany such a project. Two of our other children also occasionally suffer from milder asthma symptoms and we fear that their conditions may deteriorate if this plan goes ahead. This is a fear that we know we share with many other parents in Cholsey and Wallingford.

I am a keen nature lover and my husband is very interested in ornithology. Our children too, have all shown a strong passion for wildlife in their early years. We regularly take walks in the fields and meadows around our village, including the area on which the proposed gravel pit would stand. It is a beautiful place - unspoilt, wild and teeming with wildlife. We have seen some fantastic birds there, some of them quite rare - red kites, buzzards, tawny owls, lapwing, green woodpecker, grey heron, corn bunting to name but a few. We have also seen foxes, hares, stoats and deer on those fields and a neighbour has also recently seen an otter! It would be a tragedy if this beautifully wild habitat was lost to the community forever. Clearly, this would be an unavoidable consequence if the gravel pit was to become a reality. Beyond the working life of the pit, the plans for final use and restoration are very disappointing and suggest that this proposal has been poorly thought through.

Since learning of the project, I have come to understand that the material found in the site is likely to be of inferior quality which, yet again, suggests the proposals lack robustness. Perhaps this was one of the main reasons a previous contractor withdrew from the site when it was considered twenty years ago. I believe the proposals lacked rigour then and they lack rigour now. Not only has it been suggested that the gravel is of dubious quality, there are other materials known to be in the immediate vicinity which are potentially of much more value to the local community and indeed the nation. The proposed site lies adjacent to an area of substantial archaeological interest with evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Given this and the site's proximity to the major medieval town of Wallingford, surely a comprehensive archaeological investigation should be undertaken if the historic importance of this area is not to be totally destroyed?

For all of the above reasons, I object to the idea of a gravel pit in the village of Cholsey and wish the proposal to be reconsidered and ultimately withdrawn.

476	<p>Please think again! Please do not destroy what is a beautiful and widely loved part of our countryside. Why bother investing in the town of Wallingford and village of Cholsey and then put a gravel pit so close to so many homes. Why bother trying to invest in bringing tourists to this beautiful and largely unspoilt area and then have lorries driving in and out of the area on a continuous basis polluting the air.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>Please think again - as a mother of two I am really concerned for the future of our local community - please reconsider.</p>
477	<p>I write as a Cholsey resident and solicitor practising in Wallingford to object in the strongest terms to the proposed gravel site at Cholsey.</p> <p>I am a member of CAGE and I endorse the arguments contained in the CAGE Submission which you will shortly receive in every particular.</p> <p>In particular I challenge the consultation process (or lack of it) which led to this misconceived proposal. How can OCC possibly recommend a choice of one new site for replacement of the existing sites when exhausted?</p> <p>The only possible course is for OCC to withdraw this proposal, and to return to the drawing board by considering properly the merits of ALL possible sites rather than selecting one.</p>
887	<p>I write to state my opposition to the proposed site in Cholsey for mineral extraction.</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact</p>

visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".

The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.

In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.

This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.

Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing

to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.

I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.

I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.

I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.

I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will

	<p>ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
892	<p>We are writing to express our opposition to the proposed development of gravel pits between Cholsey and Wallingford, sites SG-33, SG-57 and SG-60.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>Furthermore, the development would be contrary to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting ..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan, as well as an area that supports a large range of wildlife.</p> <p>The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options. However, we do not believe that the residents, wildlife and history of the area should bear the consequences of a poor strategy by a council that is supposed to serve its residents.</p>
895	<p>I am writing to object to the proposal to extract gravel from two new sites between Wallingford and Cholsey. I have lived in Cholsey for 15 years and worked in Crowmarsh Gifford for 14 years and over this time have really come to appreciate living and working in such a beautiful, unspoilt and historic area. The prospect of having to have to live with a blot on the landscape that the gravel pit would represent is heart-breaking and I'm sure many other residents feel the same way.</p> <p>I cannot understand why this site is the only new site under proposal to replace Sutton Courtenay when the deposits there are exhausted. I cannot see any explanation in the strategy as to why now only this location and not any others are under consideration as new sites. Are we considered a soft target? What would happen to the County Council's Mineral Strategy if this site was not approved?</p> <p>Whilst no community is going to welcome having a gravel pit in their community, there are many reasons why it should not be</p>

	<p>sited here, between a parish dating back to the Anglo-Saxon period and an ancient town founded by King Alfred and with many Anglo-Saxon and medieval features. Much of the archaeology of the area remains unexplored, but a significant bronze age site was discovered when the Winterbrook Bridge was constructed and I believe many of the field boundaries, which would be lost if the gravel was extracted, are of ancient origin. Although I'm sure a cursory archaeological survey would be made, the area merits detailed future study. Once the gravel is taken, the archaeology is gone with it and the opportunity to explore the history of the area is lost forever.</p> <p>The future of the Cholsey & Wallingford Railway, established and run by volunteers is now in jeopardy, as few visitors will want a trip alongside a working gravel pit and the stability of the line may be put at risk. In view of the efforts to establish both Wallingford and Cholsey as visitor destinations, and with the establishment of the Agatha Christie trail between her former home in Wallingford and burial place in Cholsey, siting a gravel pit here would end any hopes of promoting Wallingford and Cholsey this way.</p> <p>The proposed site of the gravel pit is currently grazing land which regularly floods in the winter and provides a valuable site for farmland and wetland birds to feed and roost on. There are footpaths which follow the boundary of the site which will be compromised and one area lies adjacent to the renowned and much-walked Thames Path. The plan for a much needed cycle path alongside the Wallingford Road in Cholsey would also be scuppered.</p> <p>Critically, it lies between and close to two centres of population, currently totalling over 10,000 people and near areas where new housing developments are either underway (the former Fairmile site) or proposed (the Carmel College and CABI sites in Crowmarsh, just across the river and Winterbrook in Wallingford). The noise and dust created, plus the increased heavy vehicle traffic resulting, will have a major impact on residents well-being and health. High levels of noise cause stress and dust affects anyone with chest problems, such as asthma. The increased traffic will cause congestion and road safety issues. The road between Brightwell and Didcot is narrow, twisting and unsuitable for large numbers of heavy vehicles. I understand that there is likely to be a concrete plant and a building waste processing plant on-site too, which will further contribute to the dust and noise. Aside from the impact on current residents, who will want to come and live in new housing which is sited within sight and sound of these activities? Furthermore, by the time it is in operation, the major house-building development in the Didcot area will be nearing completion and the aggregate will have to be transported by road to other destinations. Furthermore, as the gravels extracted from these sites are likely to be of poor quality and require mixing with other aggregates, which presumably will be brought in by road, the fact that Cholsey is relatively close to the Didcot area of development is irrelevant.</p> <p>I am also concerned about the lack of information about what would happen to the proposed site at the end of gravel production. How would it be restored? I understand that, due to the proximity to the river, a lake would not be considered and that landfill is also not an option. Will we be left with an unsightly hole in the ground, with all the safety issues that implies? Will the extraction activities simply move to exploit new areas within the parish and blight it for decades to come?</p> <p>To conclude, this proposed development is short-sighted and ill-considered and would have a major impact on the health and well-being on the communities living in the vicinity as well as a severely detrimental effect on the local environment, wildlife, amenities, and economy. For these reasons I cannot urge you strongly enough to reconsider it.</p>
841	<p>I am writing to strongly object to the above proposals due to the considerable blight it will bring upon the families and physical environment of Cholsey and Wallingford, and from a regional perspective, this proposal does not appear to meet the longer-term development requirements, as stated. In terms of sustainable development, and the related statutory requirements on Local</p>

Authorities, many stakeholders, including me, feel that this proposal satisfies only one of the three elements of the 'triple bottom line' - that being a (narrowly defined at that) financial one!

It does not seem right that a site the size proposed can be really considered safe and unobtrusive, so close to a town the size of Wallingford and a village the size of Cholsey. The choice of site put forward by OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is a potentially disruptive, noisy, dusty eyesore and the health, homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings decades of economic blight and disruption so close to so many people? How has the loss of tourism revenues been accounted for in the plan?

As the crow flies, the gravel pit will be approximately 700m from many family homes, two primary schools, and two pre-schools. We understand that the prevailing wind blows directly over these, bringing with it the dust, noise and odour into our gardens and streets where our young children play. The dust, we believe could trigger already-existing childhood asthma, as well as potentially inducing it in other children. What budget has been allocated for the increase in demand on the local PCT? i.e. what price have you put on our children's health?

We understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point of use. The plan, apparently, is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. Please explain to me what will stop the site's developers selling the gravel into Reading, Oxford or even further afield?

Please explain why there is no evidenced schedule or proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction suggested within the Consultation document?

The concern of the effects of lorries coming to and from the site daily, and the build up of traffic around the ring road, will inevitably force motorists to re-route through the centre of Wallingford. The town already copes with a lot of traffic, but does not have the infrastructure to cope with much more, at times the pavements are precariously thin and the tranquil and safe atmosphere that the town centre generally exudes will disappear in car fumes and noisy engines. A lot of people in Wallingford cycle to their destinations - adults and children - what are your plans to ensure their safety and rights if the town disappears under a fog of fumes and impatient motorists?

In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey and Wallingford are Parishes of considerable historical importance, with recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.

It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly benefit the health of the local children and safeguard the current local character, amenity and setting, sited as planned, on the outskirts of a thriving town and village. Further, by the standards by which we understood you to be considering the options, this proposal, does not appear to satisfy the longer-term

	development requirements; surely a 'lose-lose' solution. In summary, we urge you to think again, if not for adults, or physical environment, then for the thousands of children's health that will be affected by your decision.
844	<p>I am writing to strongly object to the above proposals due to the considerable blight it will bring upon the families and physical environment of Cholsey and Wallingford, and from a regional perspective, this proposal does not appear to meet the longer-term development requirements, as stated. In terms of sustainable development, and the related statutory requirements on Local Authorities, many stakeholders, including me, feel that this proposal satisfies only one of the three elements of the 'triple bottom line' - that being a (narrowly defined at that) financial one!</p> <p>It does not seem right that a site the size proposed can be really considered safe and unobtrusive, so close to a town the size of Wallingford and a village the size of Cholsey. The choice of site put forward by OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is a potentially disruptive, noisy, dusty eyesore and the health, homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings decades of economic blight and disruption so close to so many people? How has the loss of tourism revenues been accounted for in the plan?</p> <p>As the crow flies, the gravel pit will be approximately 700m from many family homes, two primary schools, and two pre-schools. We understand that the prevailing wind blows directly over these, bringing with it the dust, noise and odour into our gardens and streets where our young children play. The dust, we believe could trigger already-existing childhood asthma, as well as potentially inducing it in other children. What budget has been allocated for the increase in demand on the local PCT? i.e. what price have you put on our children's health?</p> <p>We understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point of use. The plan, apparently, is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. Please explain to me what will stop the site's developers selling the gravel into Reading, Oxford or even further afield?</p> <p>Please explain why there is no evidenced schedule or proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction suggested within the Consultation document?</p> <p>The concern of the effects of lorries coming to and from the site daily, and the build up of traffic around the ring road, will inevitably force motorists to re-route through the centre of Wallingford. The town already copes with a lot of traffic, but does not have the infrastructure to cope with much more, at times the pavements are precariously thin and the tranquil and safe atmosphere that the town centre generally exudes will disappear in car fumes and noisy engines. A lot of people in Wallingford</p>

	<p>cycle to their destinations - adults and children - what are your plans to ensure their safety and rights if the town disappears under a fog of fumes and impatient motorists?</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey and Wallingford are Parishes of considerable historical importance, with recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly benefit the health of the local children and safeguard the current local character, amenity and setting, sited as planned, on the outskirts of a thriving town and village. Further, by the standards by which we understood you to be considering the options, this proposal, does not appear to satisfy the longer-term development requirements; surely a 'lose-lose' solution. In summary, we urge you to think again, if not for adults, or physical environment, then for the thousands of children's health that will be affected by your decision.</p>
822	<p>I am writing to express my concern about Oxfordshire County Councils proposed plan to build gravel pits on the land between Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p>

	<p>Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.</p> <p>The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.</p> <p>I am also really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p>
769	<p>I wish to write in objection to the proposed gravel extraction pit on the outskirts of Cholsey and Wallingford. There are surely many areas of river gravels in the Thames Valley that the proposal to extract gravel so close to a major residential town seems perverse, given the inevitable noise of the site survey drilling and subsequent long-term extraction, plus hundreds of lorry movements.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation takes very little account of the impact of this disruptive and noisy eyesore on the lives of up to 10,000 people who live within a mile of this site. And with the heavy mechanisation of the mineral extraction industry there will be few, if any, local jobs created. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire, why has the County Council so suddenly opted to put a gravel pit that brings twenty plus years of economic blight and disruption so close to so many people, without a full analysis of its benefits and drawbacks?</p> <p>We understand that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated by gravel quarrying companies or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found, with no effective input from the local people. That seems to undermine the democratic process, and gives the impression of treating the wishes of the local community with contempt. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject them to proper appraisal before offering them for long-term mining operations. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p> <p>The extraction area is close to a major road, local watercourse, and amenities such as the Cholsey and Wallingford railway and the Agatha Christie trail. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can avoid harming the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape.</p> <p>A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames Valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,</p>

	<p>which surrounds this site. Many local groups and volunteers have been working hard to promote tourism in the area. This plan to devastate a large area will destroy their efforts. Who would want to visit 'Wallingford-cum-gravelpits' on their holiday?</p> <p>The excellent Agatha Christie Trail, which has only just been created, and is based on the world's best-selling author, would be destroyed by this proposal. The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway, built up by more than thirty years of voluntary work by the community, would be unable to operate and could be forced to close.</p> <p>The proposed gravel extraction site lies adjacent to a known archaeological area with evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age, and may itself contain similar material (it has not to my knowledge been properly surveyed).</p> <p>The eventual 'use' of the extraction site after the gravel has been extracted as a dumping ground for waste (according to the Wallingford Herald) will also be damaging to the residents in the surrounding area, and with the site on the floodplain so close to the river it raises potential risks of polluting the River Thames.</p> <p>I completely understand the County council wishes to move gravel extraction closer to where it will be used. But the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed, leaving the developers of the site, transporting the gravel by road to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p>
761	<p>I am writing to object to the inclusion of the Cholsey site for gravel extraction.</p> <p>I appreciate that you must provide sites for gravel extraction. However, Cholsey has been placed as a preferred site without adequate consultation with the parish council and the local community, despite reference in paragraph 2.29 to options being developed in consultation with district and parish councils.</p> <p>Wallingford and its smaller partner, Cholsey, are situated adjacent to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Chiltern Hills) and has developed as a tourist town because of its Anglo-Saxon history and its steam railway. It is a unique rural market town and, therefore, an Oxfordshire asset which should not be marred by a sand and gravel pit sited within the settlements. There is evidence that there have been settlements since the Iron Age and the land upon which the extraction will take place has yet to be properly researched. Planning permission should not be granted until archaeological investigations have been undertaken.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Railway will be threatened by the gravel pits because it runs so close to the site. Passengers will not want to ride alongside a working pit and lack of income may force the railway's closure as a tourist attraction. Since it attracts a large number of people to the town, its closure could also threaten the livelihood of shopkeepers within Wallingford, who rely on tourism bring extra people to the town.</p> <p>Recently I discovered the Agatha Christie Trail linking Wallingford to Cholsey Church. When we have visitors this is now one of our favourite walks. The trail will not be so attractive if it skirts a working grave pit.</p> <p>One of my biggest concerns, however, is the impact that the gravel pit will have on the health of residents. It is much too close to houses, including the areas on which new homes will be developed. There is a correlation between respiratory diseases and gravel extraction. There is likely to be an increase in asthma in children and the elderly population. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that there is a maternity unit, a geriatric unit and a care home for the elderly within a short distance from the proposed site.</p> <p>Cholsey is not the site for this sort of venture and, because it is a newly considered site, no-one has informed local residents about long-term plans for restoration. Rumours suggest that it will be a site for the disposal of inert waste, producing concerns about what noxious substances would leech into the water supply. No permission should be granted until there is reassurance that the areas will benefit residents ultimately.</p>

984	<p>With reference to the gravel pit I wish to express my dismay and disgust at the proposals. There seems to be a total disregard for local history, listed buildings, wildlife and the residents who live in a close proximity to the proposed site.</p> <p>In your Briefing Document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting ...". Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the proposed area for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses and field patterns which are largely unchanged today. This particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>The proposed site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. It is an area that is very likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known Medieval settlement area so therefore disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.</p> <p>The Agatha Christie Trail which runs from her former home in Winterbrook to her burial site in St Mary's Church graveyard in Cholsey would be destroyed by the proposed site. Also the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that the proposed plans would result in their being unable to operate as the site would cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway, which would be a disastrous end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. To destroy such historic attractions would be ridiculous.</p> <p>The proposed site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings (the barns on Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm). It would be terrible to destroy the setting in which these buildings are situated. In terms of the environment, the previously mentioned historic reed beds, water-courses and field patterns are full of wildlife. The hedges and trees around the farmland on the proposed site support a wide range of species of birds and the current lack of disturbance probably explains the sightings of animals that require space away from humans, such as Hares, Roe Deer and Foxes. At Hithercroft Brook there have been sightings of Weasels, Stoats and also Otters. Buzzards, Tawny Owls and Red Kites nest on the proposed site and in Winter months the fields are used by flocks of birds including Lapwing, Golden Plover, Redwing, Fieldfare and also roosting Grey Herons. Little Owls, Barn Owls and sometimes in Winter Short-Eared owls can also be seen.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by Oxfordshire District Council seems to take very little account of the distance between the homes/workplaces of up to 10,000 people and what would be a disruptive eyesore, creating dust and noise pollution. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed site would encompass the whole of Cholsey and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. To subject so many people to the constant disruption and dust/noise pollution is not acceptable. Why has Oxfordshire County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight, followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people and their homes/workplaces although there are several other sites available in South Oxfordshire? It seems odd for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site - when subjected to public examination by a Government Inspector - is found to be lacking? The County Council</p>
-----	---

	<p>will not only be left without a site, but will have no minerals strategy either. I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the proposed site is believed to be of poor quality and this is said to be one of the reasons that a previous Contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered approximately twenty years ago.</p> <p>I understand that the sites under consideration by Oxfordshire County Council for mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated/proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. This does not sound like a reasonable or acceptable basis on which to impose such a large upheaval on our community. One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. It would be good to think that our elected Leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisals prior to offering them for long-term mining operations.</p>
963	<p>The lack of details about what the Council's proposal will really mean for Cholsey on the website and the short period for responding leave me with the strong feeling that the council is not looking after the interests of local people at all, with regard to this proposal.</p> <p>The proposed site along Wallingford road will have a severely detrimental effect on this historic village, where I have lived for most of my life.</p> <p>The pattern of streams, reed beds and fields has not changed that much in the last 300 years. It is rich in wildlife, such as deer, hares, weasels and stoats, and even otters have been sighted. It also provides a habitat for many birds. This would all be swept away. So far as I can see there has been no study to examine the likely damage to wildlife, and the short period of consultation does not give time for a proper study to be carried out. It is tragic that such an area should be destroyed.</p> <p>The area, near to the historic market town of Wallingford, has evidence of Bronze and Iron Age sites, and medieval settlement around Cox's Farm, a listed building. All this would be lost.</p> <p>The area is attractive both for residents and tourists to enjoy at the moment. To place an industrial site between Cholsey and Wallingford will have an enormously detrimental effect on tourism and the enjoyment of the area by Wallingford and Cholsey residents. The new Agatha Christie Trail, running from her former home in Winterbrook to her grave in St Mary's Church, Cholsey, will be lost. I suspect that the long campaigned for cycle path would not go ahead. Cycling between Cholsey and Wallingford would not be pleasant anyway being so close to the noise and dust of the gravel workings. The presence of gravel lorries would make cycling more dangerous. The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway, maintained by voluntary workers for the last 30 years, is likely to be unable to operate. Why would passengers pay to view gravel works, rather than the natural area surrounding the railway at present. The setting for many historic houses in Cholsey, Winterbook and Wallingford would be destroyed. The proposal would therefore have a very adverse effect on the area socially, and economically as well as environmentally.</p> <p>The proposal means that the lovely area of farmland between Wallingford and Cholsey will be replaced by a noisy, dusty, unpleasant industrial site, within a mile of the homes and workplaces of some 10,000 people, with many hundreds very close indeed to the site. This will be preceded by a period of economic blight before the actual extraction begins. That is an appalling thing to do to so many people, transforming a lovely setting for Cholsey and Wallingford, to a horrible one. The site is just too close to too many homes. This is made worse by the fact that there does not seem to be any proper plan for the restoration of the area after the gravel has been extracted.</p> <p>I cannot see that this proposal safeguards the character, amenity and setting of Cholsey and Wallingford in any way. What makes</p>

	<p>it worse is that the gravel is of a poor quality anyway, and the site not large enough to provide for the likely long term needs of gravel. Neither does there seem to be a proper examination and presentation of alternative sites, or a proper analysis of how gravel extraction from the Cholsey site would relate to the needs of the current housing proposals for the area.</p> <p>It seems to me that if this proposal is accepted it will cause a great deal of suffering to a very large number of local residents over a long period of time. It will change the character, amenity and setting of Cholsey and Wallingford irreversibly. It will do huge environmental, social and economic damage. It has not been properly thought out. It ought not to go ahead.</p>
989	<p>I write further to the proposal to establish a gravel pit extraction site at Cholsey. I wish to register my heartfelt opposition to the scheme. There are numerous reasons why the plan should not go ahead. However, allow me to highlight those I consider to be most salient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed site is sandwiched directly between the small tourist town of Wallingford, and Cholsey village; it is, in this position, close to the homes and workplaces of 10,000 people. The negative impact on a large community of siting what is effectively a heavy industrial site at its heart cannot be overstated; this further flies in the face of the local authority's avowed planning strategy. - If the site is to go ahead in this position, there are further impacts, on rich local wildlife, walks, the steam railway, unexplored sites of archaeological interest, and the recently agreed Cholsey to Wallingford Cycle path. - The proposal of just one site for consideration smacks of vested interest, paucity of ideas, or both; a consultation with a selection list of one is no consultation at all. The council limits its options by this failure, and this bureaucratic and consultative shortfall has deep and wide implications for thousands of local people. The issue deserves greater consideration. - The materials found at the site are reputedly of second rate quality. Why then is this site number one, on a list of one, for consideration? Is it not true that the material extracted will likely have to be 'bulked out' with imported rock, crushed and mixed on site? Have the further effects of the additional traffic, bringing materials to site, along with traffic removing material, been considered?
981	<p>I write with regard to Oxfordshire County Council's Waste Plan Consultation 2011, based on a Waste Planning Strategy that entails a gravel extraction facility on the Wallingford side of Cholsey. I write to object to this strategy and in particular the placement of such a facility in Cholsey. The planned site is small, will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term, and will in any case provide material of poor quality (one of the reasons a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago). Why is there no mention within the Consultation document of other sites that would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term? The specified area is, however, far more valuable to Cholsey and Wallingford in its current state, which attracts tourists and families alike to the area, near the Thames and Ridgeway Paths, the new Agatha Christie Trail, the Cholsey and Wallingford Sream Railway (who have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area), not to mention river traffic (holiday boaters, rowers from the Wallingford Rowing Club and the Oxford Blues), and the proposed Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path, for which people in both communities have long campaigned (now a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council). Visitors and other users of this area in all of these activities will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for</p>

hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around most of the boundary. Those bordering Green lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years. Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm. A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames Valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals'.

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people? It has been suggested that the County Council favours this site because it might put gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time most of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield. There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, moreover, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.

I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot

	<p>be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer. Please do encourage the OCC to rethink the entire strategy and to give the community some consideration rather than rushing into an ill advised and barely thought out plan.</p>
937	<p>Dear Mr Vaizey Please help us to stop this ridiculous notion of Oxfordshire County Council for the proposed site in Cholsey for the gravel pit. This will ruin the countryside, peoples lives, there will be so much more heavy lorries on the roads, it is a ludicrous idea. I thought the whole idea of having a County Council was to ensure we keep our countryside beautiful, look after our heritage, our towns and villages and above all its people! what on earth are we paying them for???</p> <p>Please help us to stop the gravel pits!!</p>
945	<p>I would like to object to Oxfordshire County Council's Draft Minerals and Waste Planning Strategy for proposing the Wallingford and Cholsey area as suitable for sand and gravel extraction. I support the CAGE submission and the arguments put forward in this document.</p>
320	<p>Sites SG33, SG60 and SG57 are situated in very close proximity to and situated in between 2 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty For this reason they should be NOT be allowed to be developed.</p> <p>What comments have been received by the 2 authorities running these areas of outstanding natural beauty</p>
321	<p>If one of the objectives is the restoration of mineral workings to enhance the natural environment and the quality of life for Oxfordshire's residents then the development of sites SG33, SG60 and SG57 is totally contrary to this ideal.</p> <p>There are 10,000 people living in the Wallingford/Cholsey area who currently have a fabulous natural environment and a great quality of life because the land between Wallingford and Cholsey is tranquil.</p>
27	<p>I am writing to register my objection to the proposed gravel extraction site at SG-33, SG-57 and SG-60 for the following reasons;</p> <p>The land has rights of way crossing and alongside it which are used by local residents for recreational purposes, this land is valuable in that it is sufficiently close for residents of both Wallingford and Cholsey to access on foot providing a much needed green breathing space for these substantial communities.</p> <p>Although not an expert, the land seems to have a wide variety of plants and animals which would suffer loss of habitat as a consequence</p> <p>The SG-60 site is adjacent to the Thames Path which is an important national tourist attraction</p> <p>The noise and dust created by a site so close to communities would negatively impact on the quality of life in both Wallingford and Cholsey.</p> <p>I would be extremely sad to see this land lost to gravel extraction and hope that alternatives can be found, not least including the sourcing of aggregates from recycled materials rather using primary resources. This would also help solve landfill problems.</p>
872	<p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p>

It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. Also the recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be ludicrous.

I gather the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".

The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.

In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.

I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.

Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.

I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.

I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste

	<p>tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>Surely you must see that this makes no sense at all to completely ruin the surrounding countryside and the lives of everyone in the area, I thought the whole idea of having a County Council was to, one of many tasks, ensure we keep our beautiful countryside beautiful, and to look after our heritage, and our towns and villages, and above all its people!!!</p>
898	<p>I am writing to you in order to oppose the possible siting of a gravel extraction area in Cholsey.</p> <p>It will ruin the area which is unspoilt and rich in wildlife, flora and fauna. It will be ugly, and tourism to the area, especially to Agatha Christie's house and grave, is bound to be adversely affected.</p> <p>We have a rich and ancient history, more of which may yet be uncovered. Walking in the area will no longer be attractive. It is bound to be noisy and dusty and smell unpleasant. Our steam railway would have to close.</p> <p>Please do not put the gravel extraction site here.</p>
478	<p>I would like to register my objection to the proposed site of a gravel pit in Cholsey. As a resident of the village (and the place I grew up) I'm appalled at the idea of turning this natural and beautiful part of my heritage into a commercial and desolate wasteland that will draw a surplus of heavy industrial traffic and the noise that goes with it right on the door step of our Village. Could a site not be found that is more isolated and will not ruin or disturb the environment for so many members of our community, Thanks for your attention.</p>
486	<p>I wish to register my objection to the proposed gravel pit(s) that are planned for cholsey.</p> <p>Clearly, it is not appropriate to have such extensive works close to a residential area.</p> <p>Please do not allow this to proceed.</p>
488	<p>I have just got back from my regular walk between Wallingford, along the railway line to Cholsey, over the hill via Larkmead Vets and Fairmile Hospital then back North to Wallingford beside the river.</p> <p>I honestly can't believe that OCC's Core Strategy for minerals and waste prefers sites SG-33, SG-57 and SG-60, which lie within this route. The landscape, setting and character of the area constitute a significant Heritage Asset which should be protected, not slated for destruction. Add to that the route's significance for visitors following the Agatha Christie Trail or enjoying a trip on the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway and it is plain that the proposed gravel extraction would render this a wasteland which effectively removes any amenity value or enjoyment from these experiences. These people are often paying guests who bring income to the area through their tourism - a growing part of the Wallingford area's economy. So please remove these sites from your preferred gravel extraction sites.</p> <p>In addition, the lives of around 10,000 local people will be blighted by an industrial development of this scale. As well as the noise, road soiling and airborne dust and grit, the hundreds of daily vehicle movements will be a danger to road users for miles</p>

	<p>around. Once trucks hit the end of the Wallingford bypass, the local transport infrastructure won't cope, that's plain to see. This will add tail-backs and traffic jams to thousands of motorists's journeys and the increased vehicle emissions, especially from stationary traffic, will constitute significant additional pollution to what's now an area which enjoys very good air quality. Some of the proposed sites are VERY close to existing houses. The residents there will pay a very high price for this gravel, not only for the inconvenience and intrusion, but with diminished physical and mental wellbeing. The very real human and medical costs for addressing this 'collateral' damage would inevitably be higher than it is reasonable to accept. And from a pro-health/sustainability perspective, where's our Wallingford-Cholsey cycle path going to go?</p> <p>Further to the above arguments, the publicly available geologists' core-logs of test bores show that the gravel beneath the proposed sites is only mediocre quality. It isn't suitable for building and would need to be augmented with imported rock to bring it up to construction specification. Is such a first rate landscape and all the wildlife it is home to, between two large thriving communities worth destroying for second-rate gravel? Of course not.</p> <p>When I first heard about the potential for gravel extraction in Cholsey, my first thought was that it must be a hoax, an administrative error. There isn't an argument that would hold water to recommend the area for such an enterprise, especially given the gravel quality and local context of the proposal. You can imagine my disappointment to find out it was an actively chosen decision by public servants! Shame. It is also suspicious that local people have not been made aware of the options of other extraction sites. Are there any? How have the merits of the Cholsey site been assessed in comparison to other sites? Or have 'short-cuts' been taken in the planning process. And who stands to gain if they have? It is hard to find an honest, public-serving motive in preferring the Cholsey site over any other. There's always an alternative!</p> <p>As representatives and servants OF this community, OCC's first loyalty is TO that community. Therefore it is your duty to defend the proposed sites from this kind of development. I look to you to for this protection.</p> <p>I owe it to future local communities to do what I can, now, to make sure that the bits of green space that people currently use for agriculture, field study, physical and spiritual respite are protected. Having voiced these objections to the preference for the Cholsey sites, I would be grateful for information about what I can do next to prevent the plan's progression.</p> <p>Meanwhile, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation.</p>
965	<p>I am writing to object to Oxfordshire County Council's plans to promote new gravel pits on land between Cholsey and Wallingford. Over a period of 25 years, these plans will destroy the current rural landscape and the gravel pits would adversely affect the lives of the 10,000 people living nearby within these two communities.</p> <p>In your briefing document, you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting ...". The area between Cholsey and Wallingford is a peaceful stretch of unspoilt countryside, supporting a wide variety of wildlife. In addition, one of the area's biggest tourist attractions is the Agatha Christie Trail, and this will be destroyed by these proposals. The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway will not attract paying passengers with such an eyesore covering more than half their route. The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, whose setting would be destroyed.</p> <p>All of the above features represent the character and heritage of the village of Cholsey. A gravel pit would destroy this forever; such an irreversible plan surely has not been researched thoroughly nor have alternative sites been put forward.</p> <p>A large number of people would be adversely affected by these plans. Our rural village should not be subjected to the noise, disruption and dust that a gravel pit would bring to our community. I am particularly concerned that the long-awaited cycle route from Cholsey to Wallingford will not be possible if a new gravel pit is established.</p>

	<p>Cholsey is a small site, and it seems to me that the only benefits of the gravel pit plans are to landowners who would profit financially from turning our beautiful countryside into a dusty, noise area with huge lorries thundering towards our rural village. Surely other sites should be proposed, and the aim should be to minimise the potential damage to local communities in terms of heritage, economy, and ecology.</p>
990	<p>Planning Minerals Extraction between Wallingford and Cholsey This plan seems absolutely bonkers and seems to completely ignore all the thousands of people and wildlife that this will affect - PLEASE STOP IT! In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people? Para 6 & 7: The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options. Please act on this - a lot of people will be watching what action you take.</p>
943	<p>I am writing to voice my objection to the proposed gravel pits in Cholsey. This will be a huge blot on the landscape and will cause massive disruption to the local residents. On a personal level, I and my fellow dog walkers value enormously the many delightful walks along the Thames path and in the surrounding countryside within easy walking distance of our homes. I meet many tourists, rowers, runners, and walkers on my daily walks. The cycle routes around Wallingford and Cholsey are also a much valued asset that would inevitably be lost forever. To spoil this area of natural beauty with dusty, noisy gravel pit will permanently affect the leisure activities of so many who are drawn to this attractive countryside. The proposed pit would inevitably also significantly affect the quality of life for the 10,000+ local residents. The prospect of being subjected to the constant noise and disruption both from the work in progress and the passage of the inevitable volume of lorries required to shift the gravel is unacceptable. Why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit which will blight the lives of so many local residents for 20 years, so close to so many people? I sincerely hope there will be a reconsideration of these potentially seriously damaging plans.</p>
500	<p>I am writing to oppose the proposed option for gravel extraction at Cholsey shown in your current consultation. I support all the points raised by CAGE in their response to your consultation, as this is a lengthy and comprehensive response I will not repeat their points. In addition I would add the following concerns: Vision This only looks to minimise the distance that aggregates are transported by road, the objectives suggest that this is to reduce adverse impacts of mineral transportation on local communities and the environment. This is only half the issue, I believe the</p>

	<p>vision should also seek to minimise the distance/amount of transport of fill materials for the same reason. The plan fails therefore to take account of the very significant impacts of transport of fill materials.</p> <p>Transport -detailed analysis</p> <p>The analysis based on tonne miles to market fails to take account of the tonne miles to site for inert waste on sites that cannot be left as open water. This item should be factored into the analysis. Those sites that could be restored requiring no or less fill material should be scored as better than those that require restoration using fill materials.</p> <p>It could also be argued that it is not tonne miles to site that is important but time to site, this would require factoring in the type and quality of routes.</p> <p>I'm not sure where sources of inert waste arise presumably a significant amount has historically derived from Didcot power station which is due to close in the near future. It is clear that fill materials will be in short supply and it is likely that they will be sourced from quite a wide area, possibly even out of county, therefore transportation of fill materials will be a significant factor.</p> <p>Ecology</p> <p>Records of protected species identify that water voles are present in Cholsey Brook just on the East side of the Wallingford Road. Since they will travel along the water corridor there must also be a likelihood that they will be present on the site.</p>
502	<p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>Destruction of the Character of Wallingford and Cholsey</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>Destruction of the local Environment</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p>

Likely Impact on local Economy

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St.Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. It is widely recognised that Agatha Christie is the number one attraction of our area is. In addition tourists come to the area for its rich history, the serenity of the River Thames and the diversity of the landscape. To dig a quarry so close to Wallingford has to be an act of folly. It will be an eyesore on the entire landscape as viewed from all of the surrounding hills that form an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Poor Economic Decision - A Poor Decision for the Community

It is understood that this the only new site under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area and was proposed by Smiths of Bletchington, the very quarrying company who has an option over the land and stands to gain the most if permission is granted. This is neither a reasonable nor an acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality.

This site is the only new site proposed within the Minerals Strategy, yet there is no evidence that it is the best site for the job. There is no evidence that the site has been adequately appraised and yet it is the ONLY site being put forward by the Council. It has no local support outside of the vested interests of the landowners.

Only very limited research has been conducted to date on the site SG33 to test the quality of the minerals. The results of the bore holes drilled reveal that the aggregates are low grade and will require to be mixed with other stone before they could be used by the building industry.

The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.

Transport Issues - a major increase in trucks on the road

I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.

If the aggregates are sold locally they will need to be mixed with other stone or if there is no local market it will have to be sold to developers in Reading and Wantage. Either way there will be a massive increase in miles travelled by heavy trucks. This is one of the council's key parameters dictating any potential location.

Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term.

We implore the Council to re-visit the proposal to put the site at Cholsey forward for planning.

It is not the best site in the County

	<p>It has low grade aggregates The heavy trucks will have a huge impact on the entire surrounding area The community has not been adequately consulted It will blight the local economy of Wallingford It will be a monstrous eyesore that is surrounded by designated areas of outstanding natural beauty.</p>
503	<p>I would, first of all, comment on your web site regarding the proposals. It is extremely difficult to find relevant information to assist one in coming to a sensible decision regarding any particular proposal. It would have been better for each proposal to have its own dedicated page with a map, proposer's name, OCC's opinion and what the gravel company proposes to do with the site after completion of the gravel extraction. How deep will the workings be? Will the workings fill with water immediately or after a period of time? Whether your decision on the siting of gravel pits is decided by which local group shouts "Not in our back yard" the loudest I have no idea. There is a vociferous group in the Cholsey/Wallingford area which is making a lot of noise at the moment and asking local residents to object. I take a more pragmatic view. We need gravel and sand for roads and buildings and so gravel pits have to be dug somewhere. Despite not having a clear idea of what is proposed I have the following comments on the three proposals affecting Cholsey parish: SG60 This site is not too close to any large group of houses (at the moment), but I am concerned (on behalf of others) about the route gravel lorries will take. Any increase in traffic on the A329 southbound will have a deleterious effect on the villages of Moulsoford, Streatley, Pangbourne and Tidmarsh. In fact whichever way the lorries travel they will create extra noise and pollution and increase wear and tear on the roads. If this site is chosen I would trust that OCC will insist that what is left following the work is not just one large lake taking up all the space indicated on the map but will be a series of smaller lakes with an island or two (or three) which will become a nature reserve. (See my later comment regarding proposal SG33.) SG37 This site is far too close to the village of Cholsey and will create an unacceptable increase in traffic on the Wallingford Road to the Wallingford by-pass. I must object to this proposal in the strongest of terms. SG33 The least objectionable of the three proposals in Cholsey parish. However, any work allowed by OCC must have strict provisos: No gravel lorries allowed to travel through Cholsey village (and I am still concerned about the increase of traffic on other local roads). Why not insist on the gravel being taken out by the trainload via the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway? The track and some culverts would have to be upgraded to take the weight of heavy wagons and a new junction would have to be built to the north-west of Cholsey railway station. The only drawback might be the possibility of the railway being used to bring in rubbish (as is done near Appleford). This must not be allowed to happen. The digging of one large lake up to the boundary of the proposed area must not be permitted. A series of smaller lakes with</p>

	<p>islands and properly landscaped with appropriate trees would eventually become a haven for wildlife and could have picnic areas, a cycle way from Cholsey to Wallingford perhaps, and would finish up as a great asset to be enjoyed by future generations. Work could start at the southern end of the proposed area and by the time work reached the northern end the first area worked would be well on the way to becoming an asset for the community.</p> <p>I would draw your attention to what was done some decades ago when gravel was extracted from the area near the River Loddon to the south-west of Twyford railway station in Berkshire - the area was landscaped with sloping banks, islands were created in the middle of the lake and trees were planted. It has become a beautiful area and a haven for wildfowl and, no doubt, mammals. There is no point in being a "NIMBY", but if SG33 were to be picked, the area MUST finish up being an area which can be enjoyed by future generations of local people.</p>
504	<p>Please do not continue with the plan to have three huge gravel pits in the beautiful area around Wallingford and Cholsey. There is, in fact, a sign at the Wallingford/ Crowmarsh roundabout which clearly states 'area of outstanding natural beauty' therefore the gravel pits you plan will mean this is no longer true!</p> <p>Wallingford is a town of significant historical importance. This provides tourists and consequently money for the community, it's shops etc. The gravel pits will be noisy and ugly. This will be very apparent for the railway line and could cause people not to use it, thus it may close down.</p> <p>I have walked many times around the fields in this area and have seen a hare on the planned site. This was brilliant and quite rare. The site will kill the homes of such wildlife for miles around.</p> <p>I do hope that this consultation will see that these points are true and valid. It would be a terrible mistake on many levels to agree this plan. Please stop and find somewhere else!</p> <p>Many thanks,</p>
505	<p>I wish to register my objection to the proposed siting for gravel extraction between Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>Wallingford and Cholsey are separated by just under a mile of arable and grazing farmland, hedges and trees. It is a peaceful and largely undisturbed area, supporting an amazingly wide variety of bird species and wildlife. The mining of sand and gravel will mean the loss of this natural landscape forever and the well-trodden footpaths, including the Agatha Christie Trail from Winterbrook to Cholsey Church, will be ruined. It is impossible to see how the proposal to extract over 5 million tonnes of gravel can safeguard the current character, amenity and setting of a largely unspoilt natural landscape.</p> <p>The site is surrounded by a number of houses, many of them listed. Indeed over 10,000 people live within a mile of the site. The choice of site seems to take little account of the disruption such a development would cause to so many people. At present the proposed site is the only greenbelt area that separates the two communities and one cannot overstate the negative impact this will cause.</p> <p>The area includes many rural features which will be lost forever should this development proceed, including reed beds, water courses and field patterns.</p> <p>The Wallingford Road is also an important thoroughfare for many commuters travelling daily to Oxford, Reading and London from Cholsey station, and others going the other way to school, work or shopping trips in Wallingford. Apart from wrecking the scenery, the extraction of gravel and heavy lorry traffic will bring danger, noise and dirt for all the cars, pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>This proposal is ill conceived. One can only assume it serves the interest of Developers and those set to benefit from the sale of</p>

	the land. It certainly doesn't serve the interests of the local people
506	<p>I would like to add my voice to what by now must be a significant groundswell of opposition to this project. The environmental consequences of such a development will be inevitable, wherever gravel extraction takes place, and I am sure that any other village about to be blighted in this way could name dozens of local amenities and heritage factors adversely affected by the process. In any county needing gravel to be extracted locally this will always be the case, and while many friends and neighbours focus on this it is not the primary reason for my concern.</p> <p>What disturbs me is that the consultation has only one option, that the extraction of gravel from this site was proposed twenty five years ago and rejected because the gravel was not of a suitable quality, and that the housing construction for which the gravel is purportedly destined will have been completed before the site is fully operational in ten years time. There does not seem to be any good reason to develop this site now, if ever. Indeed, this proposal looks like the end result of a series of bad decisions and bad luck, and Cholsey site appears to be the proverbial straw at which a beleaguered department is clutching to make good a target which is otherwise falling beyond its grasp.</p> <p>If this is the case this proposal deserves to fail before a large amount of money is committed to something whose raison d'etre is suspect from the very outset, to say the least. I shall be copying this text to Ed Vaizey MP, and sincerely hope that his support and the local pressure to this proposal, which appears to growing in strength as time moves on, will encourage you to re-consider your plans and seek more suitable options before blighting a beautiful area of your county and cutting a community in half.</p>
508	<p>I would like to protest in the strongest possible way to the proposal by Oxfordshire County Council to permit sand and gravel extraction from farmland in the Cholsey area.</p> <p>The proposed site is within close proximity of much residential property and the whole area of Cholsey and Wallingford will be blighted for the next 20 years if this suggested extraction is allowed to proceed.</p> <p>The fear of this proposed development will cause considerable unease amongst residents for the next 10 or so years in anticipation of this work and if it is allowed to go ahead the lives of 10,000 or so people, who live in this area, will be severely disrupted from early morning to late afternoon by the noise, dust and increased heavy traffic which would result. This is to say nothing of the dreadful desecration of this fine piece of our countryside.</p> <p>What seems to be almost unbelievable is the fact that O.C.C. has, on the one hand, been so supportive by assisting our local Council in developing Wallingford, this old market town with it's remarkable history, as a tourist attraction and then suggest inflicting this damaging development on our township. It must be remembered that the prevailing wind will carry the noise and dirt from this proposed extraction site right across Wallingford.</p> <p>I trust, for the reasons I have highlighted, together with the many others, that O.C.C. will find more appropriate sites than Cholsey for sand and gravel extraction.</p>
509	<p>Proposed Gravel Extraction Wallingford/Cholsey - Oxfordshire</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Oxfordshire County Councils proposal to extract gravel on two sites between Wallingford and Cholsey for the following reasons:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Both areas are scenic and contribute enormously to the local economy through tourism. One of the areas proposed is on the Thames Path which attracts visitors from all over the world. b) Precious farm land will be lost forever. Should we really be losing good quality cattle grazing and arable land when there will

	<p>probably be world food shortages due to an ever increasing world population?</p> <p>c) The area on the Thames Path is a floodplain, and we have seen the devastating results many times when it has been disturbed.</p> <p>d) This beautiful area of Oxfordshire is already blighted by gravel pits (holes).</p> <p>e) The huge housing development proposed for Wallingford is likely to increase the population by about 30%. There are many traffic issues already - add to this the additional traffic generated from the proposed Wallingford housing development, the Fairmile housing development at Cholsey, and the increased traffic from the gravel extraction site and we will become gridlocked and dirty! This is not the image we need for a small, attractive, historic market town.</p> <p>So what are the alternatives?</p> <p>The price of gravel should reflect the unsustainable resource. So much gravel is wasted. How many front gardens and parking areas have been gravelled over because it is cheap and available. It is messy, and much of that gravel ends up in our drainage system causing more problems with blockages. Our Government (whichever party is in power) and local authorities have got to look at making better use of what we have before it is too late - better use of housing stock and better use of our limited resources. Our country has always been known as a 'green and pleasant land', but if we go on destroying and abusing our land at the current rate there will be nothing 'green' about it at all! There are sustainable alternatives - use them!</p>
510	<p>I am writing to express my concern at the proposal to extract gravel at three sites on the outskirts of Wallingford and Cholsey - SG33, SG57 and SG60. All three sites are very close to settlements and are bound to cause nuisance in the form of dust, extra traffic and noise. In particular the stretch of A329 running between Wallingford bypass and Moulsoford is used by many parents on school runs to nurseries in Cholsey and schools in Moulsoford, and the heavy lorries exiting from the sites could only cause extra hazard on what is already a busy road.</p> <p>Furthermore, my principle concern regards site SG60 which borders onto the Thames. Extraction here is bound to cause pollution of the river, from which much of our drinking water is drawn, and on which many holidaymakers enjoy boating holidays, bringing investment into the area. There is also likely to be significant damage to the banks, endangering water voles and kingfishers which are in evidence along this stretch. The noise will also disturb the wildlife and the walkers who enjoy this stretch of the Thames path.</p> <p>I trust you will take these comments into consideration when making your decision.</p>
514	<p>I would like to object to the planning for a quarry on the outskirts of Cholsey and Wallingford.</p>
515	<p>I wish to object to the nomination of sites SG-33, SG-57 and SG-8C as preferred sites for gravel extraction. I believe that the disruption caused by the proposed development of these sites would be prejudicial to the environment and setting of both Cholsey and Wallingford and would create unacceptable safety concerns for the residents of both areas.</p> <p>My major concern lies with the traffic impacts of the development. We live on the Brightwell side of Wallingford and both of our children are at school in Brightwell - we live within the catchment area for Brightwell-cum-Sotwell CoE school. Our walk to school involves crossing the Wallingford bypass, which is an extremely busy road with fast moving traffic, especially during the morning and afternoon rush-hour. The crossing is hazardous enough currently, but I believe would become a genuine risk to the safety of my family with the addition of the heavy lorries that would be an inevitable consequence of the proposed gravel pits. The same would apply to any family living in our area.</p>

I also have an number of additional serious concerns with the proposals, based around the local environmental and social impacts of developing the sites for gravel extraction:

The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I believe that the retention of this type of attraction is a vital part of the economic future of Wallingford and Cholsey.

The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work.

The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses; such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.

In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I am extremely concerned about the impact that the proposals will have upon the residents of Cholsey and on their local environment, road network and air quality.

The archaeological value of the site must be investigated and considered before these proposals are finalised. The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. The choice of

	<p>site should be based upon sound and thorough consideration of alternative locations and the pros / cons and issues with each, and not simply in response to commercial pressure for development which will not identify the optimal site for Oxfordshire.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. I would wish to see a considered and sustainable long-term strategy for the site before the proposal for mineral extraction were accepted and implemented.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield or to preclude the housing developers from buying their materials from cheaper sources elsewhere. The location of the gravel extraction nearer to a supposed end user in no way justifies an unsuitable site.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p>
516	<p>I am writing to object to Oxfordshire County Council's plans to promote new gravel pits on land between Cholsey and Wallingford. Over a period of 25 years, these plans will destroy the current rural landscape and the gravel pits would adversely affect the lives of the 10,000 people living nearby within these two communities.</p> <p>In your briefing document, you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting...". The area between Cholsey and Wallingford is a peaceful stretch of unspoilt countryside, supporting a wide variety of wildlife. In addition, one of the area's biggest tourist attractions is the Agatha Christie Trail, and this will be destroyed by these proposals. The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway will not attract paying passengers with such an eyesore covering more than half their route. The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, whose setting would be destroyed.</p> <p>All of the above features represent the character and heritage of the village of Cholsey. A gravel pit would destroy this forever; such an irreversible plan surely has not been researched thoroughly nor have alternative sites been put forward.</p> <p>A large number of people would be adversely affected by these plans. Our rural village should not be subjected to the noise, disruption and dust that a gravel pit would bring to our community. I am particularly concerned that the long-awaited cycle route from Cholsey to Wallingford will not be possible if a new gravel pit is established.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, and it seems to me that the only benefits of the gravel pit plans are to landowners who would profit financially from turning our beautiful countryside into a dusty, noisy area with huge lorries thundering towards our rural village. Surely other sites should be proposed, and the aim should be to minimise the potential damage to local communities in terms of heritage, economy, and ecology.</p>
517	<p>I am extremely concerned that OCC is considering a gravel extraction plan for Cholsey. This proposed development would have an enormously detrimental effect on the area given the number of people who will be affected on both in Wallingford and Cholsey.</p>

	<p>The impact of the proposed development will be far reaching, not only for the 10,000 residents who live within a mile of the site, but also for wildlife and the landscape. The Cholsey & Wallingford railway will face closure and the proposed cycle path from Wallingford to Cholsey is likely to be shelved. Local tourism will also suffer with the Agatha Christie trail from Winterbrook to Cholsey being disrupted. Please reconsider this proposal, the effect on the residents of Cholsey and Wallingford will be huge with hundreds of trucks on the local roads every day and health related issues from the dust and noise.</p> <p>Housing development over the next 10 years will be significant, there is no need for a gravel extraction plant once the majority of houses have been built! Please take time to consider other options which would be less harmful and more in tune with future plans within the County.</p>
518	<p>I am writing as an extremely concerned resident of the Parish of Cholsey. The proposed gravel extraction on the Wallingford Road presents major environmental and health issues.</p> <p>This Parish not only has historical importance but is still today surrounded by unspoilt countryside. The area is visited regularly by tourists interested in the Agatha Christie connections in both Winterbrook and in the village of Cholsey itself. Building a number of industrial units for gravel extraction and its associated processes will deter tourists but more importantly reduce the quality of life of the more than 10,000 residents who live within a mile of the site. The impact of dust and noise will be horrendous given that heavy goods vehicles will be constantly leaving and arriving at the site throughout the working day.</p> <p>As I understand it the quality of gravel at the proposed Cholsey site is poor - why then is this the only site being considered? If the proposed site is rejected where does that leave the Minerals Plan for Oxfordshire? Clearly further consideration needs to be given to more purposeful alternatives.</p> <p>There are plans for major housing developments in the area - however, the majority of houses will have been built by the time this proposed gravel extraction site is commissioned. The extraction of gravel from the proposed site will not therefore coincide with the largest housing development this area has seen. Where will this gravel be used? Why do we need it?</p> <p>I would urge you to re-consider this proposal. There is an increasing groundswell of activity locally, in both Cholsey and Wallingford. It is abundantly clear that this site has nothing positive to contribute.</p>
519	<p>I write about the proposed Cholsey gravel pit(s). I understand Occ have (again) received proposals for pits in Cholsey parish. In my 40 years living here this has been a regular thing. We all know everyone needs gravel, and perhaps one day the workings will come. If this day comes sooner, rather than later, then at least we want to see that the village gets something in return for the inconvenience, noise, disruption, discomfort. And we need assurance that Occ and our MP and others 'in authority' support us in our requests/wishes (See below).</p> <p>The Occ website does not give a lot of information what these pits will entail, nor what will happen when the workings are finished. These are things that MUST be sorted out before permission is granted for these to go ahead.</p> <p>Firstly: for the workings all to happen at the same time is not acceptable.</p> <p>The proposed area is huge. Traffic will be a real problem. Two of the sites are probably acceptable but should be phased. The site closest to the village is not in any way acceptable. The largest site should be developed in the same way as the workings at, for example, Twyford and Stanton Harcourt were developed - with islands and landscaping to complete the job to make a proper nature reserve/recreation area for the village and surrounding area - gravel workings fill up with water - we all know that.</p> <p>Work landscaping, etc, should be carried out as the gravel work progresses, possible even allowing use as work goes on, and so that at the end the WHOLE site is in a good state for people to use. The site should NEVER be used, or even considered to be</p>

	<p>used, for 'landfill'. It is much too close to the Thames for one thing, and much too close to habitation for another. Wildlife parks, recreation facilities are what is required.</p> <p>Secondly: To mention traffic - NO TRAFFIC AT ALL associated with the workings should be allowed to come through the village of Cholsey at any time. Every effort should be made for material to be taken away directly to the main railway line via the 'bunk' train line, still allowing the C&WRPS full access to the line, and in fact receiving some benefit for allowing use of the line in the first place.</p> <p>There are no doubt others concerns/issues that must be addressed and worked out. As I said earlier - the website is not clear what will happen, especially with regard to when the workings are finished, so how will we be assured that our views/wishes will be taken into account and met? Nothing should be done until a proper consultation is carried out and these issues addressed.</p>
521	<p>This is a copy of a letter I have posted today which may not reach you by the deadline of midnight tomorrow.</p> <p>I am writing to voice my objection to the proposed gravel pits in Cholsey.</p> <p>This will be a huge blot on the landscape and will cause massive disruption to the local residents.</p> <p>On a personal level, I and my fellow dog walkers value enormously the many delightful walks along the Thames path and in the surrounding countryside within easy walking distance of our homes. I meet many tourists, rowers, runners, and walkers on my daily walks.</p> <p>The cycle routes around Wallingford and Cholsey are also a much valued asset that would inevitably be lost forever.</p> <p>To spoil this area of natural beauty with dusty, noisy gravel pit will permanently affect the leisure activities of so many who are drawn to this attractive countryside.</p> <p>The proposed pit would inevitably also significantly affect the quality of life for the 10,000 + local residents. The prospect of being subjected to the constant noise and disruption both from the work in progress and the passage of the inevitable volume of lorries required to shift the gravel is unacceptable.</p> <p>Why has the County council opted to put a gravel pit which will blight the lives of so many local residents for 20 yrs, so close to so many people?</p> <p>I sincerely hope there will be a reconsideration of these potentially seriously damaging plans.</p>
557	<p>I would like to register my objection to the proposed gravel pit between Cholsey and Wallingford. Not only does there not appear to be any clear thought given to such a proposal, in fact, the location has been rejected in the past, but there does not seem to be any thought as to the impact on the environment, the residents of 2 parishes, the increase in traffic on already oversubscribed roads. It is a ludicrous suggestion without evidence to substantiate such an idea.</p>
541	<p>Please register my views on the proposed mineral extraction at Cholsey, as detailed below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is not enough information in the consultation documents that have been put in the public domain. See further questions below. 2. What costs have you allocated against the extra heavy vehicle road movements that will require additional maintenance, repair and resurfacing due to these movements. This is a massive amount of material that you are considering moving from this one source area that will have a huge impact on the surrounding roads. 3. The lorry plan is inadequate. This does not show in detail the predicted movements on the surrounding minor roads. Do you realise the damage done to road surfaces by HGV lorries far far exceeds that done by motor cars. 4. Increase in casualties to pedestrians, bicyclists, car users. This number of vehicle movements will very likely cause an increase

	<p>in casualties or worse. Where has this been analysed. I cannot think of a less acceptable place to extract sands and gravels from. You need to state your reasoning why this location can be reasoned as acceptable when by all sensible bases of assessment it is clearly not.</p>
529	Duplicates 992.
530	<p>I write to register my opposition to the proposed gravel extraction scheme near to Cholsey in Oxfordshire in the strongest possible way.</p> <p>I moved to the area in 2009 and was attracted by the tranquillity and beauty of the area which, in my view, is unsurpassed. I was therefore horrified to learn about the proposals which amount no more than an act of rural vandalism, conducted for short-term financial gain without regard to our nature environment or the legacy which our descendants could rightly expect us to preserve for them.</p> <p>There are many reasons to object to the proposals and no doubt many which I am not aware of which will be made by other residents with a more extensive knowledge of the area than me. I feel that the loss of amenity which will result from realisation of the proposals is far too high a cost for what essentially will be the reward of a huge pile of stones (most of which might do more damage elsewhere in damaging our treasured countryside with even more buildings and retail parks of which we already have a surplus!)</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape. This notion is simply incredulous as the proposals for this activity over such a long period will do exactly the opposite and to expect residents of the area to believe otherwise is both insulting to our intelligence and patronising.</p> <p>In addition to the general concerns regarding the visual impact, environmental damage and traffic concerns, there are specific losses which need to be taken into account in preventing this madness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The destruction of the recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St.Mary's Church graveyard. - The impact on the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway which will result in them being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. This will of course reduce their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. Another possible loss of amenity and attraction purely to line pockets which are probably already overflowing! - The impact on houses close to the site, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. - The possible disruption and damage to an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is a known medieval settlement area. Therefore, since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history consideration of disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. - The destruction of an area close to the River Thames which is popular with tourists and residents alike both of whom are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway

	<p>paths, the historic town of Wallingford. What may also be overlooked is the detrimental effect that the riverside activity would have on the tranquillity of the Carmel College site to the extent that the current owners could be deterred from advancing their development proposal. The resulting development blight needs to be taken into account.</p> <p>I am also very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. There is therefore a very high risk that the area would become simply a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p>
531	<p>On behalf of Mongewell residents:</p> <p>We write to register our opposition to the proposed gravel extraction scheme near to Cholsey in Oxfordshire in the strongest possible way.</p> <p>As residents of Mongewell we are all attracted to the area by the tranquillity and beauty of the area which, in our view, is unsurpassed. We were therefore horrified to learn about the proposals which amount no more than an act of rural vandalism, conducted for short-term financial gain without regard to our nature environment or the legacy which our descendants could rightly expect us to preserve for them.</p> <p>There are many reasons to object to the proposals and no doubt many which we are not aware of which will be made by other residents with a more extensive knowledge of the area than us. We feel that the loss of amenity which will result from realisation of the proposals is far too high a cost for what essentially will be the reward of a huge pile of stones (most of which might do more damage elsewhere in damaging our treasured countryside with even more buildings and retail parks of which we already have a surplus!)</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape. This notion is simply incredulous as the proposals for this activity over such a long period will do exactly the opposite and to expect residents of the area to believe otherwise is both insulting to our intelligence and patronising.</p> <p>In addition to the general concerns regarding the visual impact, environmental damage and traffic concerns, there are specific losses which need to be taken into account in preventing this madness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? The destruction of the recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St.Mary's Church graveyard. ? The impact on the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway which will result in them being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. This will of course reduce their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. Another possible loss of amenity and attraction purely to line pockets which are probably already overflowing! ? The impact on houses close to the site, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. ? The possible disruption and damage to an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is a known medieval settlement area. Therefore, since the area is part of the hinterland of a

	<p>major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history consideration of disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly.</p> <p>? The destruction of an area close to the River Thames which is popular with tourists and residents alike both of whom are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford. What may also be overlooked is the detrimental effect that the riverside activity would have on the tranquillity of the Carmel College site to the extent that the current owners could be deterred from advancing their development proposal. The resulting development blight needs to be taken into account.</p> <p>We are also very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. We understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. There is therefore a very high risk that the area would become simply a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p>
532	<p>My overall concern is that your consultation draft is neither a detailed plan nor a set of policies. On the one hand it provides some vague guidelines for mineral extraction and restoration but then mixes this with unjustified (and hence impossible to prove or challenge) planning demands and specific nominated sites to satisfy this unknown demand. There are no options presented, no consideration of impact, no diligence of the viability of these sites and given the uncertain demand no proposed method that could satisfy a varying requirement.</p> <p>With respect to your proposed plan to extract gravel within the village of Cholsey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in summary, there has no diligence as to the viability of gravel extraction from this area by the River Thames with respect to the quality of the gravel, no restoration plan, no understanding of the impact on the existing community and amenities in that area. You should not base a council strategy on a speculative pitch by quarrying companies and land-owners who, obviously, propose sites for their own personal gain without you having performed your duty of care. - the proposed site is actually contained within the parish of Cholsey and would effectively split our village in two. This site is constrained on 3 sides (by the River Thames and housing) and would border populated areas (with more than 10,000 people living within a mile of the proposed quarry). Given this close proximity to housing you would be unable to guarantee that residents would be not be affected by noise, dust, waste products and odour over an extended period of time. You could also not guarantee that the River Thames would not be affected by any pollution. - as already stated, there is no restoration plan for this site. The normal practice of leaving lakes or land-fill would be precluded due to the proximity of the river, Benson airfield and the high water table. Again, I hope that you would not make a decision and embark on an action without agreeing to an acceptable outcome at the end of any work? - the area bordering the River Thames has always been considered a conservation area, supporting wildlife, river based activities and protecting history for future generations. It has been protected, as far as planning applications are concerned, as an area of outstanding natural beauty. Why should it now be considered acceptable to allow a quarry to border the Thames, with no regard for wildlife (kingfishers, kestrels, deer, swans, etc) existing leisure activities (rowing, walking, fishing, cycle paths and footpaths etc), tourism (Thames Path and the Ridgeway) and historical importance of the area (Wallingford bunk line, Wallingford castle, Agatha Christie trail, etc). <p>Given the proposed site's proximity to housing and the River Thames it would be impossible for any gravel extraction to safeguard</p>

	the current character, amenity and the unspoilt natural landscape in Cholsey.
534	<p>To whom it may concern with regards to strongly opposing the Cholsey gravel pit.</p> <p>We have recently moved to Cholsey, it is a lovely friendly village fantastic for young families with beautiful surrounding countryside and many walks, I would be very upset if this were to change.</p> <p>The briefing document refers to 'safeguarding the character, amenity and setting'. I find it hard to believe that the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting of a largely unspoilt natural landscape. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford road contains reed beds, water courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today.</p> <p>The proposed gravel pits would have a severe impact visually as well as noise, dust and smell. To learn that the proposed sites would mean the very probable closure of the wallingford to Cholsey steam railway following 30 years of volunteer work would be so sad and quite simply unacceptable.</p> <p>The area proposed includes various listed buildings including cox's farm, barns on the Wallingford road and Brook House, it would be very unfortunate to destroy the land forever where these buildings are set.</p> <p>With respect to wildlife the proposed site would destroy many areas of mature hedge row that provide home for many species including roe deer, foxes and hares particularly around green lane. Just recently I saw deer running past. Not to mention buzzards, tawny owls and red kites nest there. The fields are also used by flocks of birds including lapwing, golden plover, fieldfare, redwing and roosting grey herons. Cox's farm is also home to barn owls.</p> <p>The proposed area had unknown archaeological importance from bronze age and medieval settlements, which have not been explored and may be destroyed forever if the gravel pits were to go ahead.</p> <p>I believe the social, environmental and cultural aspects of the site must be considered. With the large areas of outstanding natural beauty in the surrounding areas and huge industrial development destroying adjoining walks and ruining the landscape would have a detrimental affect on the incoming tourists and the house prices of the surrounding areas.</p>
535	<p>To whom it may concern with regards to strongly opposing the Cholsey gravel pit.</p> <p>We have recently moved to Cholsey, it is a lovely friendly village fantastic for young families with beautiful surrounding countryside and many walks, I would be very upset if this were to change.</p> <p>The briefing document refers to 'safeguarding the character, amenity and setting'. I find it hard to believe that the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting of a largely unspoilt natural landscape. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford road contains reed beds, water courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today.</p> <p>The proposed gravel pits would have a severe impact visually as well as noise, dust and smell. To learn that the proposed sites would mean the very probable closure of the wallingford to Cholsey steam railway following 30 years of volunteer work would be so sad and quite simply unacceptable.</p> <p>The area proposed includes various listed buildings including cox's farm, barns on the Wallingford road and Brook House, it would be very unfortunate to destroy the land forever where these buildings are set.</p> <p>With respect to wildlife the proposed site would destroy many areas of mature hedge row that provide home for many species including roe deer, foxes and hares particularly around green lane. Just recently I saw deer running past. Not to mention</p>

	<p>buzzards, tawny owls and red kites nest there. The fields are also used by flocks of birds including lapwing, golden plover, fieldfare, redwing and roosting grey herons. Cox's farm is also home to barn owls.</p> <p>The proposed area had unknown archaeological importance from bronze age and medieval settlements, which have not been explored and may be destroyed forever if the gravel pits were to go ahead.</p> <p>I believe the social, environmental and cultural aspects of the site must be considered. With the large areas of outstanding natural beauty in the surrounding areas and huge industrial development destroying adjoining walks and ruining the landscape would have a detrimental affect on the incoming tourists and the house prices of the surrounding areas.</p>
536	<p>I wish to object to the inclusion of Cholsey sites within your Minerals Plan (policy M3), and would emphasize these aspects:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The projections for future gravel use need to be more robust. Surely there is a need to set greater usage targets for recycled aggregates, and to make that option economically worthwhile before exploiting any new river gravel deposits? 2) The M3 proposal does not appear to reflect the SODC Core Strategy where growth will be predominantly in the 'Science Vale Area'. Surely, for economic and environmental reasons any gravel winning should be directed closer to the area of final use. 3) Thousands of people live within one mile of the proposed quarry, in Cholsey and Wallingford. It is unacceptable to expose that number of people to the disruption and dust for 10-20 years. 4) The proposal will have a significant impact upon the growth of tourism in the area, particularly the Agatha Christie heritage and Cholsey & Wallingford Railway initiatives to the south of Wallingford, and upon the District Council's aims to re-invigorate Wallingford as a 'market town'. The negative impact on the Town will be manifest on its local economy. <p>I believe that there are good reasons to drop the Cholsey sites now, and that the process to identify Cholsey as the single area for new extraction of sharp sand and gravel is flawed.</p>
537(Moulsford Parish Council)	<p>As part of the Consultation on the draft Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Planning Strategy I am writing on behalf of Moulsford Parish Council.</p> <p>Specifically, we wish to record our support for the CAGE submission dated 28th October 2011 titled "Submission by CAGE relating to the inclusion of the area close to Cholsey & Wallingford as suitable for sand and gravel extraction, SG33, SG57 & SG60."</p> <p>We believe that sand and gravel extraction in the Cholsey and Wallingford area would have a detrimental impact on the local economy, tourism and the amenity value of this area.</p>
323	<p>I would like to object to the proposed gravel pits in Cholsey. The traffic on the Reading Road is already difficult at rush hours, with cars persistently breaking the speed limit and making it difficult to exit at the top of Papist Way.</p> <p>The new Fairmile development will increase this traffic even more, with little provision seemingly made to accommodate this extra traffic and allow access from Fairmile onto the Reading Road.</p> <p>By increasing the traffic even more and allowing the gravel pits to go ahead, it will add heavy goods traffics to the mix as well. I cannot possibly see how this can benefit anyone, particularly not the residents of this lovely village.</p> <p>I can see it having a negative impact on people wanting to live in the village.</p>
327	<p>If water voles are a protected species and they are present in Cholsey Brook how will this affect the proposed sites of SG33, SG60 and SG57?</p>
543	<p>I oppose the designation of these three sites in Cholsey for mineral extraction for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The selection of this site was rejected at inquiry in the 1980s. 2. The sites are close to the residential areas of Wallingford and Cholsey and smaller settlements in Mongewell and even closer to

	<p>individual houses that adjoin the sites.</p> <p>3. The material is likely to become available (if the sites are selected) after the housing development nearby (which might use the minerals) has been completed.</p> <p>4. The Wallingford Road is particularly unsuitable for heavy lorries - it is the road along which Cholsey residents have to walk or cycle into the town and Wallingford, and residents walk or cycle to Cholsey's railway station.</p> <p>5. Wallingford is a market town with a developing tourism strategy that it needs to thrive economically and socially and will not be able to welcome the visitor numbers it needs with a degraded environment with heavy excavation.</p> <p>6. Closely connected to that, two of the sites threaten the closure of the 30-year old Wallingford-Cholsey Steam Railway, the loss of the volunteer effort already input, and the loss of several thousand visitors annually. The plan suggests that sites along the railway could use it for transporting minerals, but this is a light railway which is not designed for heavy freight and it would probably be incompatible with tourist use.</p> <p>7. SG-33 & SG-57 would affect the path between Wallingford and Cholsey, which is promoted as an Agatha Christie trail - part of the local tourist attraction - providing the pedestrian route between her former home and her grave in Cholsey.</p> <p>8. SG-60 would have a significant impact on the Thames Path south of the Wallingford bypass - opposite Mongewell's listed buildings - and .</p> <p>The Minerals Planning Strategy should include a consideration of the social, economic and environmental effects of any such proposals.</p>
549 (SODC)	<p>The proposed Cholsey Area of Search is subject to a number of potentially significant constraints and is in an area of locally significant tourism initiatives, which must be given careful consideration before any decision is taken to put the Cholsey area forward as a proposed Area of Search in the submission minerals core strategy. The detailed comments below set out our concerns regarding the long term landscape and air safety implications which might arise from the 'restoration' of the site. Notwithstanding those comments, it is possible that as more information becomes available about other constraints and the impact on tourism it may become clear that they present other grounds that mean the area is ultimately not appropriate for mineral extraction. The comments below are therefore given without prejudice to the consideration of further information, as it becomes available, on those other matters. We object to this policy, on grounds that are also repeated in respect of policy M6, on restoration: The core strategy is concerned with the general principles of how sites are restored rather than the specific proposals for restoration of individual sites. However, the extraction of minerals can have permanent impacts on the character of the landscape in an area. In respect of sand and gravel this is most commonly the restoration of land within river valleys as lakes rather than to the original landform due to environmental issues with infilling below the watertable. Where there may be permanent and irreversible impacts on the landscape character of an area through the extraction of minerals it would be appropriate to consider these prior to the designation of an Area of</p>

	<p>Search in the core strategy. The importance of this potential landscape impact is heightened in the context of the proposed Area of Search for Cholsey because of its proximity to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NWD). The setting of the NWD is a significant material consideration in the context of proposed mineral working and the impact should be carefully assessed before any view is taken as to whether the proposed Cholsey Area of Search is appropriate.</p> <p>The Cholsey Area of Search is in the vicinity of RAF Benson. If the restoration of the site may include a body of water then this gives rise to the need for consideration of the potential risk from bird strike to air craft. This should be investigated and considered before any view is taken as to whether the proposed Cholsey Area of Search is appropriate.</p> <p>Additional work by the county is therefore needed in respect of the overall principles for the restoration of any sites worked in the proposed Cholsey Area of Search, in order to determine, prior to the Area of Search being designated, that the overall impact of the restored sites in the longer term is acceptable.</p>
416	<p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>We understand that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. We feel very aggrieved that our quality of life in our community is being sacrificed in this way by our local representatives. The interests of local people will not be not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales.</p> <p>We are cyclists and would like to cycle more frequently from Chosey to Wallingford if a safer route could be made, and we are really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. We understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>We completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will</p>

	<p>ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial matter, selling the gravel to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. We would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
375	<p>Policy M3 - Comment:</p> <p>The recognition that the Sutton Courtenay working will need to be replaced during the plan period is supported. The suggestion that this should be restricted to Cholsey is considered too restrictive and a wider area of search should be shown that is similar to that for the other minerals (e.g. crushed rock at Bicester or soft sand along the A420). This area of search should extend both north and south of Wallingford to include those sites that were put forward for consideration to include the land at Drayton St. Leonard / Berinsfield.</p>
328	<p>I object to the proposal for gravel extraction at Cholsey - Wallingford Road and Reading Road. My reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This will irreparably spoil and area of sensitive countryside which forms part of the rural and attractive setting to Wallingford. - Wallingford is one of the most important small historic towns in the country and this setting is an integral part of Wallingford and Cholsey's historic character. - The area of extraction will specifically spoil the setting for the Agatha Christie walking trail, the heritage 'Bunk' railway, the Thames path - all of which contribute to the area's character and tourist 'offer'. - The extraction is too close to the existing settlements of Cholsey and Winterbrook/ Wallingford and would harm the amenity and environment of the area. - The amount of extraction being planned for is more than should be - more sustainable methods of construction/ conservation of resources are possible and should be built into the Council's plans.
608	<p>I am writing to express my grave concerns and opposition against the proposed gravel extraction site which is currently being considered by Oxfordshire County Council at Cholsey in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The proposed site by OCC does not seem to take into account the distance between what will undoubtedly be a noisy, dusty and disruptive eyesore, to all of 10,000 people plus who all live within a mile of the proposed site and to the hundreds of homes of the people who will live in the immediate vicinity all of whom will have to put up with the daily noise and disruption in an area which is generally extremely tranquil, is totally unacceptable.</p> <p>The site will have a devastating economical impact on the population of Wallingford and the surrounding areas. At present Wallingford is a pretty historic town surrounded by pretty villages and hamlets, such as Cholsey which draws tourists, along the Thames Footpath to Wallingford on both the Agatha Christie walking tour and Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway, both of which have said that the proposed plans will result in them no longer being able to operate, as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. Wallingford and Cholsey will be turned into an industrialised wasteland that will deter</p>

tourism, a much needed commodity to help local shop keepers maintain an income and the 10,000 plus homes in the surrounding areas, that people have worked hard all their lives to buy will see what they thought was a relatively secure investment de-value considerably overnight. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight, followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

The site is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary, and supports a wide range of bird species. Red kites, herrings, tawny owls and other birds of prey nest in this area. Much of the hedging is hawthorn and plays host to a number of species.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age, and it is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore, since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history, the disruption of this site should not be under taken lightly and a proper deep archaeological investigation should be undertaken so that the potential of this area is not totally destroyed. The surrounding roads from Wallingford Bypass out towards Didcot, Reading, Henley and Oxford are inadequate for the amount of lorries that will be coming and going from the proposed gravel extraction site and using the roads on a daily basis. This will not only put pedestrians and cyclists at risk but also other motorists currently using these roads. There are already a number of accident hot spots close by to the proposed gravel extraction site and the added volume of lorries will no doubt add to an increased number of serious and fatal traffic accidents on the local roads which are currently already be used to full capacity. It is bizarre for the County Council to put forward just one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subject to public examination by a government inspector is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not only no site, but no minerals strategy either.

I can only assume that the interest and wellbeing of local people is not a priority to either the OCC, large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from the hefty land sales, if this gravel pit was to go ahead. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use all of their resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject them to a proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations.

I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. A reason that a previous contractor withdrew from this site some twenty years ago!

There appears to be no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site, as I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that the same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Are we to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in the summer?

In conclusion, Cholsey is a small site that ultimately is of poor quality and will not meet with the state development requirements in the longer-term. It will ruin the beautiful surrounding countryside, destroy the habitat of many species and will be the downfall of what is currently a thriving and happy local community. I therefore urge you to cease your current proposed plans for extracting gravel from Cholsey.

609

I am writing to express my grave concerns and opposition against the proposed gravel extraction site which is currently being considered by Oxfordshire County Council at Cholsey in Oxfordshire.

The proposed site by OCC does not seem to take into account the distance between what will undoubtedly be a noisy, dusty and disruptive eyesore, to all of 10,000 people plus who all live within a mile of the proposed site and to the hundreds of homes of the people who will live in the immediate vicinity all of whom will have to put up with the daily noise and disruption in an area which is generally extremely tranquil, is totally unacceptable.

The site will have a devastating economical impact on the population of Wallingford and the surrounding areas. At present Wallingford is a pretty historic town surrounded by pretty villages and hamlets, such as Cholsey which draws tourists, along the Thames Footpath to Wallingford on both the Agatha Christie walking tour and Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway, both of which have said that the proposed plans will result in them no longer being able to operate, as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. Wallingford and Cholsey will be turned into an industrialised wasteland that will deter tourism, a much needed commodity to help local shop keepers maintain an income and the 10,000 plus homes in the surrounding areas, that people have worked hard all their lives to buy will see what they thought was a relatively secure investment de-value considerably overnight. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight, followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

The site is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary, and supports a wide range of bird species. Red kites, herrings, tawny owls and other birds of prey nest in this area. Much of the hedging is hawthorn and plays host to a number of species.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age, and it is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore, since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history, the disruption of this site should not be under taken lightly and a proper deep archaeological investigation should be undertaken so that the potential of this area is not totally destroyed.

The surrounding roads from Wallingford Bypass out towards Didcot, Reading, Henley and Oxford are inadequate for the amount of lorries that will be coming and going from the proposed gravel extraction site and using the roads on a daily basis. This will not only put pedestrians and cyclists at risk but also other motorists currently using these roads. There are already a number of accident hot spots close by to the proposed gravel extraction site and the added volume of lorries will no doubt add to an increased number of serious and fatal traffic accidents on the local roads which are currently already be used to full capacity.

It is bizarre for the County Council to put forward just one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subject to public examination by a government inspector is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not only no site, but no minerals strategy either.

I can only assume that the interest and wellbeing of local people is not a priority to either the OCC, large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from the hefty land sales, if this gravel pit was to go ahead. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use all of their resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject them to a proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations.

	<p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. A reason that a previous contractor withdrew from this site some twenty years ago!</p> <p>There appears to be no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site, as I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that the same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Are we to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in the summer?</p> <p>In conclusion, Cholsey is a small site that ultimately is of poor quality and will not meet with the state development requirements in the longer-term. It will ruin the beautiful surrounding countryside, destroy the habitat of many species and will be the downfall of what is currently a thriving and happy local community. I therefore urge you to cease your current proposed plans for extracting gravel from Cholsey.</p>
577	<p>Brightwell cum Sotwell Parish Council have been consulted during the preparation of the submission made by CAGE and we endorse it.</p>
615	<p>I am writing to outline my objections to the proposal for a gravel site in Cholsey.</p> <p>The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.</p> <p>It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from</p>

	<p>either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term. I ask that you re-consider this matter and listen to the community who strongly object.</p>
616	<p>I write to object to the proposal for a gravel pit in Cholsey for the following reasons:</p> <p>The site proposed is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for</p>

	<p>hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers.</p> <p>A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term. I ask that this proposal be considered again and refused on the objections set out in this letter.</p>
620 (Cllr Lynda Atkins)	<p>I have a number of concerns about both the content of the Consultation Draft and the process by which it was developed. In selecting 3 sites (SG33, SG57 and SG60) between Cholsey and Wallingford for gravel extraction, the Consultation Draft does not consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poor access to and from the site. This is relevant in several ways. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. When developing a previous strategy, OCC identified in 1987 that: 'the impact of gravel lorries on routes radiating from Wallingford remains a concern.' <p>With the exception of the Wallingford by-pass, which is a local not a radial route, the roads have not been improved since 1987. While it may be argued that the gravels extracted from the Wallingford/ Cholsey sites is intended to be used in Didcot, so the problems anticipated in 1987 with routes to the M40 would not apply, the A4130, which links Wallingford and Didcot and thus the A34, is a very poor road for large transport lorries. Within the past few years, the speed limit along the road has been reduced to</p>

40mph following fatalities.

b. The A4130 is also the only road from which access to the village of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell is possible. The vastly increased volume of traffic along this road which would result from the extraction of gravel at Wallingford/Cholsey will exacerbate the significant problems local residents already experience in exiting from the village on to the A4130 thus also having a deleterious impact not only on those who live in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell but also on residents in Wallingford and Cholsey who use this route to Didcot and the A34. I understand (from an email sent by Lois Partridge on 2nd August) that further extraction at Culham was ruled out because of the impact on local amenity in the communities through or past which lorries would travel. Why does this not apply to the communities in Cholsey, Wallingford and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell?

c. Immediate access to and from the site will be a further problem. This would have to be either on to the Wallingford Road leading into Cholsey or onto the Wallingford by-pass. In the former case, the road is relatively narrow. Lorries turning into or out of this site along this road would present a considerable hazard to other traffic. Access to the site via the by-pass would necessitate the construction of a new roundabout (ruled out by OCC Highways team for proposed new housing developments on the other side of the by-pass as inherently limiting traffic speeds along the by-pass and thus negating its impact in encouraging traffic out of the town) or a junction similar to the one between the A4074 and Dorchester, which has been the subject of safety concerns since it was built - again, this is borne out by a recent reduction in speed limits to 40 mph along the section of road concerned. If such a junction were introduced along the by-pass it would require a similar speed limit and would, therefore, have precisely the same impact on speeds and thus the attractiveness of the by-pass as a roundabout, and be just as unacceptable.

2. Economic concerns. The proposed gravel extraction sites would have a significant damaging impact on several aspects of the area's economic development.

a. The Cholsey and Wallingford Railway. This heritage railway line is a significant element in the tourism 'offer' in the area. It runs directly alongside the 2 largest of the 3 sites (SG33 and SG57). The extraction of gravel from these two sites would render the railway pointless as a tourist attraction: why would anyone pay to travel along the bund bordering a gravel pit?

b. All 3 of the sites are directly adjacent to, and surrounded by, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is a feature which, again, attracts people to visit Wallingford and Cholsey, but once again, its attractiveness will be damaged significantly by the proposed gravel extraction.

c. The Agatha Christie trail is a recent introduction by the Wallingford Partnership supported by both SEEDA and SODC for the economic value it will bring to Wallingford and its hinterland, through capitalising on the links the author had to the town of Wallingford and the parish of Cholsey where she is buried. The trail will be completely wiped out by the proposed gravel workings.

3. The impact on the 10,000 people who live within a mile of the proposed gravel extraction sites. As mentioned above, OCC has identified in the case of Culham, gravel extraction there would have a serious impact on the local amenity of residents. There are, however, considerably more residents living considerably closer to the proposed sites in Wallingford and Cholsey than there would be at Culham. The noise, traffic and dust created by the gravel extraction would have a very damaging impact on 'local amenity' which does not appear to have been scoped within the Consultation Draft.

Process:

There is considerable local concern about the process which led to the publication of the Consultation Draft. Cholsey was excluded from the preferred option on 19th October 2010 but then added back in on 16th Feb 2011. The Cabinet agenda of 16th

	<p>February recommends that Cabinet: 'Agree the County Council's preferred spatial strategy approach for mineral working for consultation is: i. sand and gravel - concentration of working in existing areas of working [my emphasis], at Lower Windrush Valley, Eynsham/ Cassington/Yarnton, Sutton Courtenay, Cholsey and Caversham;' this is, of course, incorrect as Cholsey is not an existing are of working. The explanation in the papers is: 'The interim preferred strategy for mineral working agreed by Cabinet in October 2010 has been tested for deliverability using these supply levels against a preliminary assessment of potential sites. This identifies that the Radley/Nuneham Courtenay area is unlikely to be deliverable and that the Sutton Courtenay area can only provide for part of the plan period to 2030. The shortfall could not be met from additional capacity in the other interim strategy areas: Lower Windrush Valley; Eynsham/Cassington/Yarnton; and Caversham. An additional strategy area should be identified in southern Oxfordshire. Assessment indicates that, of the deliverable options available, the Cholsey area is less constrained and better located to serve local markets than the Clifton Hampden or Drayton St Leonard/ Stadhampton areas.' The papers do not, however, demonstrate that the Cholsey/Wallingford site is less damaging to the local economy, the local environment or the local population's 'amenity' as these points have not been considered. Had the Cholsey area been identified in October 2010, then these points could have been tested in the same way as they were for other areas (such as Culham): that opportunity was not allowed as a result of the process OCC adopted. I would contend that the failure to adopt an open process with regard to the selection of Cholsey means that the results of the selection are flawed, and that the incorrect identification of Cholsey as an existing site in the Cabinet paper is indicative of a sloppy and ineffective approach to the selection of sites which needs to be corrected before a sound Strategy can be adopted.</p>
621	<p>I am writing with objection regarding the consultation about the possible gravel extraction from the propped sites in Cholsey, Oxfordshire. Although I do understand the importance and need for gravel extraction, I am concerned that the propped sites are perhaps not the best fit and would urge that all sites be reviewed. should cholsey truly be the best site then I would not object so strongly as I would not want to be thought of as a person 'not in my backyard, put it in someone else's'. I have many of the same worries as everyone else, but perhaps the fear of traffic accidents being my highest prioty. I am a mother to two almost teenage children who have begun to cycle along the Wallingford Road. already this road posses a danger to cyclist, which has already seen a few fatalities and several accidents over recent years. Adding heavy lorries on to this road could only exacerbate the problem. i worry too that we have been trying to raise money for a cycle path for a while now, that this will jeopardise this process. My second main concern would be the proximity to existing housing. Are we really trying to merge Cholsey into the suburbs of Wallingford, can we not, keep our village status and be surrounded as we are at present by green fields? Please consider these issues along with so many more that I could mention that that I feel show Cholsey not to be the ideal site, such as OCC's flawed approach to the site, which could under public examination lead them to have no mineral strategy whatsoever, the detrimental effect on tourism that it would bound to incur, let alone changing the heritage and character of our village. Please do not let this happen</p>

554	<p>I am writing to express my alarm and concern about the proposed gravel pit in Cholsey, Oxfordshire. I believe very strongly that the proposals run counter to the interests of the community and indeed the county for a variety of social, personal, environmental, geological and archaeological reasons. My instinctive reaction on finding out about the plans was that I didn't want this sort of thing on my family's doorstep. However, this knee-jerk response was soon replaced by a realisation that such a project probably was required somewhere in South Oxfordshire. As my thinking on this subject matured, I realised that my objection was not a "Nimby" concern, but one based on sound reasons why the gravel pit should not be located in Cholsey.</p> <p>The proposed site is located between the village of Cholsey and the town of Wallingford. The two communities are very close - not just geographically, but also socially. My wife and I and our four children lived in Wallingford for six years before moving to Cholsey in spring last year, so we know many people in each community. If the proposals were to go ahead, the gravel pit would act as a wedge between the two communities, most tangible perhaps, in the form of the "Bunk-line", the old railway link which is kept alive by a team of committed local enthusiasts and much loved by the citizens of both Wallingford and Cholsey. I find it hard to believe that a site cannot be found which would be less disruptive to local communities - between them, Wallingford and Cholsey have a combined population of approximately 10,000 people!</p> <p>My wife and I both lived in bigger cities before we met, but chose to settle down together in a gentler, rural environment. Despite this, our eldest son suffers from asthma, a condition which would undoubtedly be exacerbated by the dust and other pollutants that would accompany such a project. Two of our other children also occasionally suffer from milder asthma symptoms and we fear that their conditions may deteriorate if this plan goes ahead. This is a fear that we know we share with many other parents in Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>I am a keen bird-watcher and my wife is also a nature lover. Our children too, have all shown a strong passion for wildlife in their early years. We regularly take walks in the fields and meadows around our village, including the area on which the proposed gravel pit would stand. It is a beautiful place - unspoilt, wild and teeming with wildlife. We have seen some fantastic birds there, some of them quite rare - red kites, buzzards, tawny owls, lapwing, green woodpecker, grey heron, corn bunting to name but a few. We have also seen foxes, hares, stoats and deer on those fields and a neighbour has also recently seen an otter! It would be a tragedy if this beautifully wild habitat was lost to the community forever. Clearly, this would be an unavoidable consequence if the gravel pit was to become a reality. Beyond the working life of the pit, the plans for final use and restoration are very disappointing and suggest that this proposal has been poorly thought through.</p> <p>Since learning of the project, I have come to understand that the material found in the site is likely to be of inferior quality which, yet again, suggests the proposals lack robustness. Perhaps this was one of the main reasons a previous contractor withdrew from the site when it was considered twenty years ago. I believe the proposals lacked rigour then and they lack rigour now. Not only has it been suggested that the gravel is of dubious quality, there are other materials known to be in the immediate vicinity which are potentially of much more value to the local community and indeed the nation. The proposed site lies adjacent to an area of substantial archaeological interest with evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Given this and the site's proximity to the major medieval town of Wallingford, surely a comprehensive archaeological investigation should be undertaken if the historic importance of this area is not to be totally destroyed?</p> <p>For all of the above reasons, I object to the idea of a gravel pit in the village of Cholsey and wish the proposal to be reconsidered and ultimately withdrawn.</p>
-----	---

556	<p>I just wanted to register our views on the proposed gravel pit in Cholsey & Wallingford. We are a family of four and have two young children, one aged five and a one year old. We regularly use the footpaths all around the proposed area, particularly the Thames Path and path running alongside the railway track. We are family members of Cholsey & Wallingford Railway and often travel on the train to Cholsey on event days, then walk back with the children. A gravel pit would stop us doing this, since our son has mild asthma but this is made much worse by dust. On a more general note, there is an outstanding children's nursery, Mongewell Park (Bright Horizons) located between the proposed sites. We used this nursery for four years and the children are playing outside every day. We would be extremely concerned at the impact of the site on this nursery. It is a very well respected nursery locally but Ofsted have also agreed and said it is outstanding. The dust and noise created by the gravel pits would have a huge impact on the nursery. We moved here eleven years ago for the beautiful countryside and walks in the local area. It would be incredibly sad if a more appropriate location could not be found. I'm very grateful for having the opportunity to air our views, and thank you in advance for reading this.</p>
602	<p>I would like to submit my very strong objection to the suggested site for gravel extraction near Wallingford and Cholsey. As a resident of Wallingford I am astounded that this suggestion has even been submitted due to the unique community Wallingford is able to offer and the outstanding natural beauty with which it is situated. These suggested gravel sites would completely destroy the feeling of the whole area and its natural habitat. Also as a mother of 2 young children the detrimental impact of such a thing happening would drive us away from this lovely community. I strongly oppose to these plans I wish these objections to be passed forwards</p>
603	<p>I am writing to express my grave concerns and opposition against the proposed gravel extraction site which is currently being considered by Oxfordshire County Council at Cholsey in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The proposed site by OCC does not seem to take into account the distance between what will undoubtedly be a noisy, dusty and disruptive eyesore, to all of 10,000 people plus who all live within a mile of the proposed site and to the hundreds of homes of the people who will live in the immediate vicinity all of whom will have to put up with the daily noise and disruption in an area which is generally extremely tranquil, is totally unacceptable.</p> <p>The site will have a devastating economical impact on the population of Wallingford and the surrounding areas. At present Wallingford is a pretty historic town surrounded by pretty villages and hamlets, such as Cholsey which draws tourists, along the Thames Footpath to Wallingford on both the Agatha Christie walking tour and Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway, both of which have said that the proposed plans will result in them no longer being able to operate, as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. Wallingford and Cholsey will be turned into an industrialised wasteland that will deter tourism, a much needed commodity to help local shop keepers maintain an income and the 10,000 plus homes in the surrounding areas, that people have worked hard all their lives to buy will see what they thought was a relatively secure investment de-value considerably overnight. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'</p> <p>With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight, followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>The site is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary, and supports a wide range of bird species. Red kites, herrings, tawny owls and other birds of prey nest in this area. Much of the</p>

	<p>hedging is hawthorn and plays host to a number of species.</p> <p>The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age, and it is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore, since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history, the disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly and a proper deep archaeological investigation should be undertaken so that the potential of this area is not totally destroyed. The surrounding roads from Wallingford Bypass out towards Didcot, Reading, Henley and Oxford are inadequate for the amount of lorries that will be coming and going from the proposed gravel extraction site and using the roads on a daily basis. This will not only put pedestrians and cyclists at risk but also other motorists currently using these roads. There are already a number of accident hot spots close by to the proposed gravel extraction site and the added volume of lorries will no doubt add to an increased number of serious and fatal traffic accidents on the local roads which are currently already be used to full capacity. It is bizarre for the County Council to put forward just one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subject to public examination by a government inspector is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not only no site, but no minerals strategy either.</p> <p>I can only assume that the interest and wellbeing of local people is not a priority to either the OCC, large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from the hefty land sales, if this gravel pit was to go ahead. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use all of their resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject them to a proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. A reason that a previous contractor withdrew from this site some twenty years ago!</p> <p>There appears to be no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site, as I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that the same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Are we to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in the summer?</p> <p>In conclusion, Cholsey is a small site that ultimately is of poor quality and will not meet with the state development requirements in the longer-term. It will ruin the beautiful surrounding countryside, destroy the habitat of many species and will be the downfall of what is currently a thriving and happy local community. I therefore urge you to cease your current proposed plans for extracting gravel from Cholsey.</p>
582	<p>Please accept this email as a strong objection to the proposed gravel pit in Cholsey/Wallingford.</p> <p>So many lorries ???</p> <p>On roads many people cycle on to school and work ?</p> <p>Gravel Pit ??</p> <p>On such a lovely spot ?</p> <p>So near to town ?</p> <p>So near to a village ?</p> <p>Behind a nursery school ??</p> <p>And all this when developers perpetually try to build so many houses and a new school so very near by ?</p>

	<p>I believe it is an absurd idea and quite frankly feel it is a stealth effort to target the residents of Wallingford and Cholsey and play into the plans of the developers.</p>
586	<p>I hereby object to the consideration of your committee to the extraction of gravel form the area between Wallingford and Cholsey.</p> <p>Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset".</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. Additionally, the recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St.Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. The number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p>
587	<p>I object to the Minerals & Waste Draft Plan Consultation document proposals.</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St.Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway.</p> <p>This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work.</p> <p>All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for</p>

hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.

Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly.

Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site.

The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district.

Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

Para 6 & 7

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract

minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks.

If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.

Para 8

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think

that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.

I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.

I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.

I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years.

Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.

I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will

	<p>ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
590	<p>I am writing to object to the consideration by Oxfordshire County Council of Cholsey for gravel extraction.</p> <p>I am objecting on the following grounds:</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.</p> <p>It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.</p> <p>It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.</p>

	<p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
592	<p>am writing to object to your draft proposal for a large gravel extraction facility on land between the outskirts of Wallingford and Cholsey. Not only would this proposal impact negatively on the lives of the 10,000 people who live within a mile or so of the site and use the surrounding road network but it would also destroy the Agatha Christie trail, the Wallingford to Cholsey steam train route and the proposed Wallingford to Cholsey cycleway which locals have campaigned for so long.</p> <p>Surely it would be preferable to choose a site that is not adjacent to a town and a large village? The traffic, noise and dust would severely impact this historic market town and we call on our County Council to have more respect for one of the few towns in its area.</p> <p>This seems to have been dumped on Cholsey and Wallingford very late in the day. If this is a consultation, why are there no other sites being suggested in south Oxfordshire for residents to comment on? You seem to be offering us a choice of one.</p>
593	<p>I wish to object to the proposed gravel extraction pit in Cholsey.</p> <p>I believe it is important to "safeguard the character, amenity and setting..." of Cholsey which is a Parish of considerable historical importance. Maps going back to 1695 show that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed</p>

	<p>beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, I suggest that this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>Also, the recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail would be destroyed by this gravel pit. As Agatha Christie's history is one of the main tourist attractions to Wallingford and area this would have a serious economic impact.</p> <p>Finally, Cholsey is a small site which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term and therefore it would seem more sensible to select a single larger site than several smaller ones.</p>
594	<p>I would like to object to the proposed plan to site gravel extraction in the area south of Wallingford. This large unspoilt area will totally change for the worse desecrating the green rural environment and producing extra heavy traffic and dust. The area north of the M4 is known for its pretty villages, rural landscapes and market towns and a huge eyesore will be created.</p>
595	<p>I wish to object strongly to the proposed gravel pits at Wallingford and Cholsey (SG30 and SG60).</p> <p>No one wants gravel pits in their backyard, but you have chosen the sites where there are the maximum number of existing backyards. You have ignored the fact that just across the river from your proposed Thames-side pit there will be up to 250 new dwellings on the Carmel College site - and thus many more immediate back yards.</p> <p>I am particularly concerned at the threat to the Thames and the Thames Path. The Thames is a major national water playground, used by may hundreds of boats every year, while the Thames Path is also a major national and local tourist asset, walked by thousands of walkers from across the country -as well as regularly by local people - every year. These are not just very important recreational assets; they are also economically valuable in the trade they bring into the area.</p> <p>The proposed pit is situated in the Thames flood plain and floods periodically. The risk of contamination to the River Thames in such circumstances is considerable. This in turn risks breaching the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the UK government's Thames River Basin District Management Plan set up to enforce it.</p> <p>The UK plan designates the Thames as "one of the most iconic rivers in Britain", says that "there has been great progress in protecting its natural assets and cleaning up many of the water environment problems people have created in the past". However, it adds, a range of challenges remain, including point source pollution, and in order to meet the challenges of meeting government targets to improve water quality..</p> <p>"It is important for everyone to play their part now and in the future. River basin management is an opportunity for this generation .. to work together to improve the quality of every aspect of the water environment - to create an environment we are all proud of and can enjoy".</p> <p>What you are proposing is, by contrast, to degrade the environment of one of Britain's most iconic rivers and increase the risks of degrading its water quality.</p>
786	<p>As a resident of Cholsey, Oxfordshire, I strongly oppose the plan to extract gravel from the area between Cholsey and Wallingford. This is a wonderful natural area in the centre of a number of busy communities and as a consequence, I believe that this proposed plan could adversely affect the lives of up to 10,000 people.</p> <p>My concerns about this plan are based on a number of issues:</p> <p>The proposed area is rich in wildlife and is an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. However, we regularly see a rich array of wildlife including hares and red kites and have even spotted otters. One of the main reasons for moving to Cholsey with my family was the proximity to</p>

	<p>the countryside and the scenic walks around the village and towards Wallingford. This gravel pit will destroy this environment enjoyed by so many, including myself.</p> <p>I am greatly concerned about the increased volume of traffic including large trucks that will be created by this proposed development. Wallingford Road is used by a large number of cyclists on a daily basis. These are made up of many different people including commuters travelling to catch the train at Cholsey or school children travelling to and from school in Wallingford. There is a much welcomed proposal to create a cycle path running parallel to this road, however, this gravel pit would not only jeopardize this plan, the heavy traffic is unfortunately, likely to increase the risk of accidents on this and adjacent roads. This increase in lorry traffic is also likely to adversely affect all the small towns and villages, in my view on the inadequate route to Didcot from Cholsey. Has an extensive traffic survey been conducted of this area?</p> <p>Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in them being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. I understand this entirely. Why would anyone want to ride from Cholsey to Wallingford for pleasure if this vista was a working gravel pit which would include would come with the associated noise dust and odour of such an area? Having used this railway with my children on many occasions, I greatly appreciate the hard work of the voluntary workers on this Railway. It would be heartbreaking to see this go from our area.</p> <p>The Agatha Christie Trail runs from her former home in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St.Mary's Church graveyard. This will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent article in the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie, the world's best-selling author. Why would you want to destroy a unique and key tourist attraction that people visit from all around the world? I cannot see the logic behind this decision from a Council that wishes to promote tourism in the area.</p> <p>Finally, I certainly understand the need for gravel and the use it has in construction however, my huge concern with this proposal is the proximity to a large (in fact larger once all proposed developments have been constructed, including the Fairmile development) built up residential area and the huge numbers of people whose quality of life will be affected by this either by the increased traffic, damage to the local environment including increased noise, dust and odour. Surely this has to be reconsidered as a viable option?</p>
780	<p>I am writing to protest against the ill-conceived proposal to desecrate and divide the communities of Cholsey, Winterbrook and Wallingford, destroying an area rich in history, culture and wildlife. The idea that gravel pits could be established in a beautiful water meadow bordering the Thames and the fields which link both the hamlet of Winterbrook and the town of Wallingford to Cholsey is UNBELIEVABLE! This area was the home of Agatha Christie and many tourists come to the area to see her house and walk the footpaths from Winterbrook to the church in Cholsey where she was buried. This would not be possible if the proposed plan for gravel pits is accepted.</p> <p>Wallingford is a town steeped in history with the remains of its Saxon past still visible along with the ruins of the castle, a reminder of Wallingford's past. Environmentally, this area is rich in wildlife due to the largely unspoilt natural habitat. It is not uncommon to see roe deer, Hares and Foxes in this region as well as numerous species of birds including Red Kites, Buzzards, grey Herons and owls to name but a few.</p> <p>Why destroy all of this wonderful environment, for what I understand is low quality gravel? The thought of heavy lorries pounding up and down the local roads, the incessant noise and dust that will be created not to mention the pollution and subsequent</p>

	<p>effects on the health of the local population is mind blowing. So please stop this proposal NOW.</p>
781	<p>I wish to record my objection to planned work with regard to the proposed quarry between Wallingford and Cholsey on the following grounds:</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.</p> <p>Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district.</p> <p>Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years</p>

	<p>ago.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>In summary: It is not the best site in the County, It will blight the local economy of Wallingford It has low grade aggregates The community has not been adequately consulted nor informed The heavy trucks will have a huge impact on the entire surrounding area, including school runs, work runs, general traffic from small villages such as ours to the towns as well as through traffic through our small villages that have no footpaths, increasing the danger to parents and small children walking around their homes and home environment It will be a monstrous eyesore that is surrounded by designated areas of outstanding natural beauty.</p>
782	<p>We write within the framework of the above consultation process as the present owners of Winterbrook House, Winterbrook, Wallingford, the listed former home of Dame Agatha Christie, the famous author and playwright.</p> <p>We object to the proposed gravel extraction at sites in Wallingford and Cholsey, which are intended to be located in the immediate vicinity of Winterbrook House.</p> <p>Our objection is based inter alia on the following grounds:</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St.Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p>

The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".

The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based. Winterbrook House is also in the immediate vicinity of the proposed sites.

In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. We understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.

This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans.

Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.

Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly.

Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site.

The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district.

Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. We would like to think that our community's elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.

We understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.

We are very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.

	<p>We are also concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; we believe that over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. We understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>We understand that the County council wishes to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required.</p> <p>We would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
783	<p>I am writing to express my objections to the proposed gravel extraction between Wallingford and Cholsey.</p> <p>As a resident of Wallingford and parent of two small children I am very concerned as to how the plans would affect the area and life within the town and village. I moved to Wallingford nine years ago and have come to love the town and its surroundings. It is an area we are very happy to be raising a family in and one that we are loathe to see spoiled.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting of a largely unspoilt natural landscape.</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Both Wallingford and Cholsey are long-established. The 1695 map of Cholsey shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>The plans will also affect the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway (with a 30 year history) and destroy the recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, running from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St.Mary's Church graveyard (I believe the number one attraction of the area is Agatha Christie).</p> <p>All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p>

In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors...", the proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.

This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. The area supports a wide range of bird species and creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, roe deer, hares, weasels and stoats are often seen here and there have been sightings of otters in recent years. Buzzards, tawny owls and red kites nest here and the fields are especially used by flocks of birds in winter including lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line and extraction area is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a

	<p>cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p> <p>I hope that these comments indicate the level of concern that is felt by the people of the area and that a more appropriate solution can be identified.</p>
630	<p>I wish to object most strongly to the inclusion of a site between Wallingford and Cholsey in the OCC minerals medium to long-term proposals. To put it simply it is as though Cholsey is under siege from current housing development, possible future housing development and now the gravel pit proposal.</p>
631	<p>I wish to register my strongest objection to your proposals to site a gravel extraction pit alongside the Wallingford Road, Cholsey. I have served this community of Wallingford and Cholsey for the last 25 years as a General Practitioner and understand how the two communities are linked and exist together. The Wallingford Road doesn't separate these communities but links and binds them together. Wallingford residents use this road for access to Cholsey shops, facilities and railway plus access to the</p>

	<p>countryside beyond. Cholsey residents look towards Wallingford for many services and shops so the two communities work together.</p> <p>It seems incredible that Oxfordshire County Council proposes this use on a site which is purely farmland which would immediately be refused permission for other industrial or residential development due to its proximity to a railway line, fast moving traffic along a narrow road, where there have been fatalities, with pollution of dust and noise to the surrounding area. The land is also road locked for the removal of the proposed gravel. Westwards the road to Didcot is narrow and winding; going south either through Cholsey or Moulsoford would be impossible. Eastwards Nettlebed and Henley wouldn't take heavy lorries, nor would Nuneham Courtney towards Oxford. Wallingford Bypass was built to relieve congestion within the centre of Wallingford and across the old bridge but other routes were not expanded to make the passage from east to west or north to south any easier.</p> <p>I also wish to complain about the manner in which this decision has been made and the lack of information available as to why this site is favoured over others. It was advertised last year not to be a favoured site then without informing this community it became the site of choice. Your lack of transparency will be challenged as the reasons for this decision is not apparent. This site is not the right place for 25 years of gravel extraction and you should look elsewhere.</p>
642	<p>The choice of site for the Cholsey Gravel Pit put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit so close to so many people?</p> <p>Please reconsider the location for this gravel pit.</p>
643	<p>I am writing to express my objection and voice my concern over the proposed gravel extraction pit on land between Wallingford and Cholsey.</p> <p>This seems to have suddenly been pushed through without sufficient time for consultation, and it is shocking that our local councils appeared to almost stumble across it by accident! I have lived in Cholsey for eighteen years and am horrified at the impact such a proposal would have on the people in these two communities and the damage to the countryside itself.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. The imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term. It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit.</p> <p>A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,</p>

	<p>which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. In terms of the environmental impact, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed a full assessment to be made. We do know, however, that the hedges and trees bordering much of the site are home to a wide variety of established bird species. Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen.</p> <p>Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans, such as Roe Deer and hares. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.</p> <p>It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? It seems that the views and opinions of the residents themselves have little impact on large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales.</p> <p>We therefore rely on our elected leaders using resources from our rates and in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations.</p>
626	<p>Dear gravel pit man [Boss]</p> <p>This is my letter to say why I don't want the gravel pit.</p> <p>I don't want the gravel pit going on because it will disrupt the steam train company and even if you put a hedge there all they will be able to see is a hedge.</p> <p>If you do come the air of the freshness of cholsey will become like a city cramped with people all coughing and sneezing which can make people ill.</p> <p>There is no space for lorries and trucks any way and there would be tons of crashes and all your preois rock will be GONE and spilt all over the road and that will block the road so the other lorries couldn't get to there destination. We have lots of accidents on this road already, you would make it worse.</p> <p>That is why I don't think that you should come to cholsey and destroy our lives.</p>
790	<p>The planning assault on Wallingford, and on Winterbrook in particular, appears to be sinking to new levels even again. Cholsey is of course included here. It is no surprise that the whole neighbourhood is upset and disturbed at this proposal. We have here the frightful prospect of even more and heavier traffic, but married with a ghastly open sore on the landscape, a prevailing wind of</p>

	<p>incessant noise and dust. The team must recognise the essential peace and charm of this area of outstanding natural beauty. Is it really the case that there are no possible alternatives? As a last and depressing detail; this kind of development carries with it the inevitable light pollution. A whole generation should not need to journey to Exmoor to see the Milky Way, the night sky here is still glorious. So as we close, the community puts its head down in fearful anticipation of unwanted disturbance. The writer respectfully petitions the Council to refuse this application.</p>
791	<p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>Destruction of the Character of Wallingford and Cholsey</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>Destruction of the local Environment</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p> <p>Likely Impact on local Economy</p> <p>A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'</p> <p>The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St.Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. It is widely recognised that Agatha Christie is the number</p>

	<p>one attraction of our area is. In addition tourists come to the area for its rich history, the serenity of the River Thames and the diversity of the landscape. To dig a quarry so close to Wallingford has to be an act of folly. It will be an eyesore on the entire landscape as viewed from all of the surrounding hills that form an area of outstanding natural beauty.</p> <p>Poor Economic Decision - A Poor Decision for the Community</p> <p>It is understood that this the only new site under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area and was proposed by Smiths of Bletchington, the very quarrying company who has an option over the land and stands to gain the most if permission is granted. This is neither a reasonable nor an acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality.</p> <p>This site is the only new site proposed within the Minerals Strategy, yet there is no evidence that it is the best site for the job. There is no evidence that the site has been adequately appraised and yet it is the ONLY site being put forward by the Council. It has no local support outside of the vested interests of the landowners.</p> <p>Only very limited research has been conducted to date on the site SG33 to test the quality of the minerals. The results of the bore holes drilled reveal that the aggregates are low grade and will require to be mixed with other stone before they could be used by the building industry.</p> <p>The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>Transport Issues - a major increase in trucks on the road</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>If the aggregates are sold locally they will need to be mixed with other stone or if there is no local market it will have to be sold to developers in Reading and Wantage. Either way there will be a massive increase in miles travelled by heavy trucks. This is one of the council's key parameters dictating any potential location.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term.</p> <p>We implore the Council to re-visit the proposal to put the site at Cholsey forward for planning.</p> <p>It is not the best site in the County</p> <p>It has low grade aggregates</p> <p>The heavy trucks will have a huge impact on the entire surrounding area</p> <p>The community has not been adequately consulted</p> <p>It will blight the local economy of Wallingford</p> <p>It will be a monstrous eyesore that is surrounded by designated areas of outstanding natural beauty.</p>
792	<p>We understand the need for continued growth of the economy and the part gravel extraction plays. However we oppose Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) proposals for gravel extraction sites in Cholsey because we do not believe that Cholsey is the best site for gravel extraction in South Oxfordshire. We outline our reasons below, following a discussion of the failings we have identified in this consultation process.</p>

Lack of comparative analysis for consultation

We are dissatisfied that no other sites have been formally considered as part of this consultation; we would expect there to be a comparison of a number of sites, against a series of appropriate criteria. A proper, comparative analysis would allow the selection of the appropriate site. In evaluating Cholsey alone for gravel extraction suitability, we believe it is highly unlikely that it is the optimal site in South Oxfordshire for the reasons outlined below.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, we request that SODC disclose any other options for gravel extraction in South Oxfordshire against which it has fully compared its proposals for Cholsey, and identify the criteria upon which its comparison was made.

Please disclose the full comparative analysis of sites, including the cost benefit analyses.

Communication of the consultation

We do not believe that the consultative approach taken by SODC has been open and fair to all those directly affected by the proposals. It appears to us that there has been a lack of essential communication of the Council's consultation to those affected; for example, we are Cholsey residents who living less than half a mile from the site, but we knew nothing of the consultation until informed by a community action group in a newsletter from the parish council at the end of September 2011. Fellow Cholsey residents have confirmed that they too had encountered no information about the consultation, in any medium or format, until being informed by an action group. The Council's lack of direct information has resulted in a large number of the local residents still being unaware of the consultation and hence being unable to participate.

In order to fulfil the principal aim of a public consultation, the public must be consulted. This does not appear to have happened and for this reason I assert that this consultation is currently invalid.

I'd like to make a further request under the Freedom of Information Act, for OCC to disclose how it publicised the consultation to residents of South Oxfordshire, and specifically to Cholsey & Wallingford residents. Please make clear exactly how, and when, all communications took place, including all mediums used.

Please also disclose any legislative or regulatory requirements, and any guidelines, to which OCC believes it is subject in carrying out this consultation process. Please disclose how OCC has adhered to these requirements.

We now list our reasons for objecting to gravel extraction sites, as proposed by OCC, in Cholsey. Please note that many of these are associated with situating a gravel pit very close to a population of around 10,000 people (growing to 14,000 people in the next few years). These concerns should be investigated by the Council before a decision is made. For many issues we would expect this to take place in the form of a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

Environmental concerns

- Road congestion- The bypass is a fast moving road where one would assume it would not be possible for lorries to enter from a standing start, so the Wallingford road would be the likely exit point from the main site. This is a narrow road that struggles with the current flow of smaller vehicles, let alone large multi-tonne lorries.
- Road safety - Cyclists and pedestrians use the Wallingford Road to journey to and from Cholsey/Wallingford; this road is the only way for Cholsey residents to access essential services in Wallingford such as the doctors, dentists and children's centre, plus shopping and social activities. It is already a danger to make this trip on foot/bike, given the width of the road and the speed of vehicles travelling on it. This is the reason that a cycle path has been planned alongside the Wallingford road for many years, which is much needed. Funds for this cycle path have nearly been secured. With increased lorry movements on the road, not only would it be much busier, and with heavy vehicles, but one must assume the cycle path would no longer be a feasible solution,

	<p>which is untenable for the residents of Cholsey. The same is true for Wallingford residents travelling on foot/bike to Cholsey station.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Air quality - dust can aggravate and induce respiratory conditions - Noise pollution - we have been given no understanding of what the noise impacts would be, however we anticipate unacceptable levels of extraction noise and other site noise, as well as the noise associated with large volume of lorry movements. - Negative impacts on the water table due to the proximity of the Thames river. - We have concerns regarding the potential seepage of nearby sewerage works into the gravel pit and the associated health/environmental hazards associated with this. - Threat to local species - a big concern is the threat to the local species of fauna and flora in the proposed area; particularly due to the proximity of the site to the Thames. Sightings of rare and threatened species such as otters, newts, several bat species, a number of owl species (barn, tawny and short eared owls) would be put at risk. Not to mention the birds of prey (hobby falcons, buzzards, red kites, kestrels), resident and migrant birds (golden plover, snipe, fieldfare) and other flora. - As stated above, we believe that a full Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposals is necessary in order to understand the extent of the impacts upon the area, and in particular, the impacts upon the Thames, its species and its ecosystem. <p>Social concerns (particularly in light of the Local Development Plan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrity of Cholsey Parish destroyed, through the removal of green land between Cholsey and Wallingford. Effectively leaving no green break between the two villagers due to the gravel pit itself. - Inappropriateness of an increasingly populous area for a gravel pit (3 new developments underway/recently receiving planning permission raising the local population to around 14,000), for the reasons specified above and also for visual blight. - Heritage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Cholsey Railway would have no commercial future due to the blight of its surroundings. o Proposals would mean the removal of the footpath between Cholsey and Wallingford. o Growing importance of tourism and archaeology to the local area. Agatha Christie's heritage and Wallingford's status as a historic market town and old settlement, bring increasing tourism to the area, which aids the local economy. A gravel pit does not fit with SODC's plans for this kind of local development as it would render the area unattractive and congested with lorries. <p>Gravel quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suitability of the gravel reserve - we believe this should be fully investigated as part of a cost benefit analysis of the Cholsey site, and in comparison with other potential sites. This is because we believe that the Cholsey gravel is not of optimal quality and hence worth less than may be expected, which would greatly lessen the economic case for a gravel extraction site in Cholsey.
655	<p>I am writing to object very strongly against the recent proposed plan to extract gravel in the Cholsey area, below please find my detailed points.</p> <p>As I understood these 2 sites were looked at a few years ago, you then decided for various logical reasons that they were not suitable these reasons included that the type of gravel was not suitable. Can you please explain why you now believe this same gravel will be suitable? If previously the material found in the site was believed to be of poor quality, being the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable</p>

historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan. Within a mile of where Julius Caesar first crossed the Thames!

It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

Para 6 & 7.

The local roads are completely unsuitable for the proposed increase in traffic, the A4130 towards Didcot already has constant delays, because of the narrow bendy road that is used by extensive trucks etc The increasing traffic would be looking for "rat runs" in all directions, for example traffic towards Reading would take the short cut and cut through the large village of Cholsey. If going towards the M40 would take traffic through Watlington's narrow congested streets.

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.

The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.

The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour", with the prevailing wind taking this towards Wallingford!

The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.

In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.

I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.

Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

Para 8

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I

	<p>would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p>
662	<p>We would like to object most strongly to the proposed excavations for gravel in the Cholsey and Wallingford areas on the following grounds:</p> <p>1 Environment All three sites are in rural settings bounded by the historic market town of Wallingford and the village of Cholsey. We fail to see how major gravel extraction works could be carried out whilst maintaining the character, amenity and setting of this rural landscape.</p> <p>2 Noise and Pollution The gravel extraction process and subsequent filling of the area would badly affect both Cholsey and Wallingford which are very close to the proposed sites. The noise, pollution and environmental degradation associated with this large scale industrial process would be devastating and adversely affect the lives of local residents and also the abundant wildlife.</p> <p>3 Road Capacity The road network around Wallingford is already used at near capacity levels and, with the prospect of many new houses being</p>

	<p>built in the near future, this can only get worse. Already there will be extra traffic generated by the occupation very soon of the houses being completed on the Fair Mile Estate in Cholsey. The addition of the many lorries associated with the gravel extraction would present serious problems of congestion.</p> <p>4 Tourism</p> <p>A great deal of effort and funding has gone into promoting tourism in Wallingford, with new signs and more publicity. The links between Cholsey and Wallingford through the life of Agatha Christie are one of the attractions for visitors and the new footpath between Wallingford and Cholsey, where she is buried, would be seriously affected by the large gravel working areas SG33 and SG57. There is the likelihood that the path would be obliterated. The Wallingford and Cholsey Railway line also passes through this area. This is another successful attraction for visitors to Wallingford which would be adversely affected by the proposed workings.</p> <p>5 Thames Path</p> <p>One of the areas proposed, SG60, adjoins the River Thames where the Thames Path, a National Trail, is one of the most used footpaths in this part of Oxfordshire. It is used by both locals and serious walkers alike and the industrial nature of gravel workings would impact seriously on the attractiveness of this section of the Thames.</p>
910	<p>STOP THE GRAVEL PIT!</p> <p>Would you like it if the whole of Cholsey destroyed your home. That's how we feel. Think if you were a animal and we ruined your habitat. I hope you're thinking about it. Think of the people who live there. People will not like it.</p>
1019 (CAGE)	<p>We are instructed by CAGE and enclose herewith our clients' formal response to the consultation draft of the County Council's Minerals and Waste Planning Strategy. Our clients have been assisted in preparing the enclosed submission by appropriate external expertise and we do not seek in this letter to summarise the points therein. Rather, we set out below four respects in which the draft proposals are either legally or procedurally flawed. These failings make the draft strategy 'unsound' and they are such as to require the current exercise to be halted. We should add that the external expertise referred to above from Mr Robert Lewis of Radcliffe Chambers and in particular on the terms of this letter.</p> <p>The enclosed response concentrates on the inclusion in the draft Strategy of a proposed new site for sand and gravel extrcation at Cholsey. It explains why, in planning terms, the inclusion of that site is wrong. However, the failings detailed below relate to the wider plan-making exercsie and in our view it would be wrong to continue with the current process since the draft strategy is likely to be rejected when scrutinised by the Examiner. Its unsoundness arises from the following failings, each of which we expound on below: (i) the deficient nature of the consultation exercise undertaken by the council; (ii) the failure of the Council to carry out an adequate environmental assessment; (iii) the failure to consider sites other than those put forward by mineral operators, agents or landowners.</p> <p>(i)Inadequate consultation</p> <p>The guidance on 'soundness' issued by the Planning Inspectorate makes it clear that a key aspect of whther a plan is sound is whether the consultation process has allowed for 'effective engagement of all interested parties'.(Para 2.9). That cannot be said of the current exercise. Following the publication of the revised PPS12 in 2008, the Council abandoned the consultation exercise that it had started the previous year and in Feb/March 2010 embarked upon fresh consultation. At that stage Cholsey was identified as a potential sand and gravel site. The consultation exercise is described in the draft strategy in the following words:</p>

2.29 Options for where mineral working might take place were developed over the past year through consultation with a range of stakeholders, including parish and district councils, mineral operators, environmental groups, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Highways Agency and other interested parties. Initially, 17 areas of sand and gravel, two areas of soft sand and five areas of crushed rock were identified as potential areas for new working. Seven of the sand and gravel areas were discounted due to the thin and intermittent nature of the resources present in them.

Stakeholders were consulted on draft strategy options in March and April 2010 at workshops and feedback was sought from statutory and technical consultees. The feedback informed a revision of these options and stakeholders were consulted on revised options in July 2010.

What the draft strategy fails to state is that in October 2010 the Council's Cabinet resolved that extraction should be confined to the existing areas of working at Lower Windrush Valley, Eynsham/Cassington/Yarnton, Radley, Sutton Courtenay, and Caversham. Cholsey dropped out of the picture. As a result, many of the organisations whose views are represented by CAGE took no further part in the exercise. It should be noted that it was only by chance in February this year that a Cholsey resident spotted the elevation of the Cholsey site in the Cabinet minutes and drew this to the attention of the parish council. No formal notification had been received by Cholsey Parish Council or Wallingford Town Council. There was no formal opportunity therefore to influence the Council's proposals until the start of the current consultation exercise on 5 September 2011.

It has taken the county council some four and a half years, from February 2007 to September 2011 to devise its current proposals. We do not complain about that; the exercise is a complex one. However, it cannot be reasonable to expect consultees, many of whom will be seriously affected by the proposals if adopted, to respond in a properly considered manner in the absence of any earlier formal notification in such a short period of time. The consultation exercise invites comment on no fewer than 19 separate documents. It may be possible within that timeframe for consultees to raise issues of a purely local nature, such as the impact that sand and gravel working would have on public rights of way or the visual impact it would have on the local countryside, but it is quite impossible for them properly to address the key strategic issues which lie behind the proposed allocation and to address the question whether some other site or sites might be preferable when compared to the one new site that was selected, Cholsey.

Consultees cannot be expected to repeat the entire exercise carried out by the council in preparing the draft strategy. They have neither the time nor the resources. In particular, only the Council is able to consider potential sites county-wide. Our clients, for example, are obviously unable to assess the suitability of potential, but unidentified sites located elsewhere in the county. We therefore accept that it is unlikely that bodies such as CAGE will be able to propose wholly new sites, ones that have not been considered by the council (although the same is not necessarily true of other bodies such as district councils). However, what they can expect is that the council engages in meaningful consultation that allows the merits of the alternative sites that have been identified to be considered by consultees. That consideration takes time and assistance from the council in explaining why the alternatives were rejected.

In the case of our clients the approach described above has not been followed. Having been made aware in October last year that

Cholsey was no longer under threat, it was found, almost by accident earlier this year, that Cholsey was apparently back in the frame. The consultation period was preceded by the summer holiday months and CAGE (which had to be put together in haste and without any initial resources) could only convene meaningful public meetings early in October, over half way through the consultation period. This unsatisfactory background hardly satisfies the principle stated in PPS12 (and repeated in the council's own statement of community involvement) that there will be a 'front loading' of involvement, there should be opportunities for early community involvement and a sense of ownership of local policy decisions.'

We believe that this failing is such as to make the draft strategy unsound.

(ii) Inadequate environmental assessment

While it is stated in the consultation document that the exercise provides the opportunity for consultees to respond to the 'overall approach' proposed for minerals and waste planning, and that 'specific sites will be identified in a subsequent document' that is disingenuous. Only one new site for mineral extraction is identified, namely the site at Cholsey. The precise boundaries of that site may not have been delineated in the draft strategy, but its location is identified on the plans with a high degree of precision and to all intents and purposes this amounts to a site allocation, not merely the broad identification of a strategic area. It is therefore incumbent on the Council to carry out a proper environmental assessment of the impacts that working will have on the area of Cholsey and Wallingford, and to compare those effects with the impacts that would be caused by and to alternative sites.

The purpose of introducing SEA was to address the point that it made little sense to require individual projects to be assessed if they are part and parcel of a wider plan, particularly where there exists a requirement that they be in accordance with that plan. If that plan was itself adopted without being subjected to environmental scrutiny, in a situation where only one site is identified in a plan, and where, in consequence, the subsequent allocation of that site and that site alone would be in conformity with the plan, it cannot be lawful (as implied will be the case at para 4.3.3 of the SA/SEA report prepared for the council by URS Scott Wilson) to defer environmental assessment until the allocation stage. Unless it is done now, not only is there an obvious risk that the Cholsey site will be included in the plan, even though working there may have significantly greater adverse environmental effects than working at another site or sites, but at the allocation stage it will not be possible to assess the Cholsey site against alternatives because no such alternatives have been included in the strategic guidance.

The Scoping Report issued in May 2011 for the MWDF states at para 2.5.3 that a key requirement of the SEA process is an environmental report which describes, inter alia, the likely significant effects of implementation of the plan and alternative options that were considered while producing the plan. We have read the URS Scott Wilson report and cannot find any assessment of the environmental impacts likely to be created by working at Cholsey, nor how these might compare to the impacts of working at other potential sites. Indeed, there is not even any mention of what the alternative sites were.

The part of the URS/Scott Wilson report which concerns itself with Policy M3 and the identification of sites is highly misleading. It states as follows:

'Policy M3 sets out the spatial strategy for mineral working. It is recognised that whilst concentrating extraction predominantly in

areas where working is currently taking place or has taken place recently has economic advantages and presents opportunities for coordinated large scale restoration projects which would in the longer term lead to beneficial effects for local communities, landscapes and wildlife; the long term nature of mineral works means that communities and environments within/close to the identified areas will continue to experience the cumulative adverse effects of mineral working for the foreseeable future. Measures to mitigate against negative effects should be required at site selection and planning application stages.

Appropriately, the policy will not lead to an overall increase of working activity in West Oxfordshire, or in any particular area, and so no significant additional adverse cumulative effects are expected on top of those already experienced, which is particularly important in areas where there has already been extensive working.

The use of the word 'predominantly' in the first of these paragraphs is the only indication that not all the identified sites are sites of existing working. The impacts of new working at Cholsey have been overlooked, to be considered at site allocation stage, and the impacts of working at the alternative sites that were considered but rejected are not even mentioned. It appears that they were never considered to be relevant. The statement in the second paragraph that the policy will not lead to an increase in working activity in W Oxfordshire, while strictly correct, is hardly a fair summary of the effect of the draft strategy because it will lead to an increase in working in south Oxfordshire. The comment that it will not increase working 'in any one particular area' is simply wrong.

(iii) The failure to consider sites other than those advanced by operators or landowners

The approach taken to initial site identification is explained in the report that was presented to the council's Cabinet on 16 February 2011 at Annex 2. A three stage process was followed: Stage 1 was the identification of a long list of sites, Stage 2 the assessment of deliverability, and Stage 3 the planning criteria assessment. It is stated that while the minerals sites proposal and policies Issues and Options paper published in 2007 included not only those sites put forward by operators, agents and landowners as a result of the 'call for sites', it also included sites that had been identified by officers. However, it explained that the latter 'have not been considered further' for the single reason that 'delivery' was uncertain and there were sufficient resources within nominated sites. However, that decision was taken at stage 1 of the exercise although stage 2 was 'assessment of delivery.' It appears that all officer-identified sites were discarded on deliverability grounds even before deliverability was assessed.

We do, of course, appreciate that deliverability is a relevant consideration, but to reject an entire class of potential sites on this ground alone runs the obvious risk that sites are overlooked that may well have been deliverable if the matter had been investigated and where working would be less environmentally damaging than the sites nominated by those with a vested interest.

The draft strategy makes it clear that already operational sites will be sufficient to ensure an adequate supply of sand and gravel until approximately 2020. It is only from that date that it is envisaged that the new site at Cholsey need come on stream. This gives a more than adequate period within which sites identified by officers can be investigated by operators and, if thought appropriate, acquired by them. This is the way in which housing and other allocations are made when district councils are

	<p>formulating their LDFs and, indeed, any other procedure runs the risk of distorting the market because landowners may be denied the benefit of any uplift in value that identification in a plan may entail.</p> <p>Further government advice in MPS 1: Planning and Minerals makes clear that the provision does not have to be made from specific sites but from preferred areas and/or areas of search. More specifically the MPS 1 practice guide clarifies at paragraph 42 that 'In most cases sufficient specific sites and/or preferred areas should be identified, so that on adoption of a LDD, there is adequate provision to cover the LDD, if sufficient acceptable sites are known at that stage. Where this is not possible Areas of Search can also be identified to cover any remaining part of the LDD period. The annual monitoring of LDDs provides an opportunity for MPAs and the industry to develop specific sites and/or identify preferred areas as required from the area of search previously identified.</p> <p>If there were a current or imminent shortfall in supply we would understand the Council feeling obliged to concentrate only on immediately 'deliverable' sites, but that it is far from being the case in Oxfordshire. Officer-nominated sites should have been considered alongside industry-nominated ones as candidates for potential strategic site selection, preferred areas and areas of search.</p> <p>PPS 12 states 'The ability to demonstrate that the plan is the most appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives delivers confidence in the strategy. It requires the local planning authority to seek out and evaluate reasonable alternatives promoted by themselves and others to ensure that they bring forward those alternatives which they consider the LPA should evaluate as part of the plan making process'</p> <p>The sites identified by the officers cannot be classified en masse as being unreasonable.</p> <p>The Inspector's guidance on 'soundness' includes as one of the criteria: 'Can it be shown that the LPA's chosen approach is the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives?' In our view the council's approach was not the most appropriate.</p> <p>Conclusions For the reasons we give above, whether considered individually or together, it is our view that the draft strategy is unsound and that it will be so found by the Examiner. We therefore invite the council to halt the current process, re-visit the strategy and undertake a fresh round of public consultation in due course. Should you not do so, we will ask the Examiner to find the strategy unsound. Whether additional steps should be taken if you do not halt the current exercise is a matter that our clients would also have to consider. We very much hope that the need for that consideration does not arise.</p>
869 (CAGE)	<p>Part 1: CAGE objects to sand and gravel extraction in the Cholsey and Wallingford area as it would seriously harm the local economy and the important amenity value of the area both in the short term and the long term. It has identified a significant number of constraints on extraction in this area that would not appear to have been previously considered in the Oxfordshire Minerals Planning Strategy Consultation (OMPSC). The professional appraisal commissioned by CAGE confirms that the Cholsey and</p>

Wallingford area is the least suitable of the areas identified in South Oxfordshire for gravel extraction. CAGE is also concerned that the OMPSC appears to lack any logical progression from earlier consultations in 2010 and has resulted in the selection of a single precise new area for sand and gravel extraction in South Oxfordshire, based on rationale that appears flawed and information that may be incorrect.

The process has apparently relied heavily on the information provided in Site Nomination Forms by mineral companies and landowners, and not on any strategic appraisal by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). Only sites put forward in this way have been considered.

The OMPSC plan is so specific in its selection of one new area in South Oxfordshire that it provides no flexibility to consider alternative areas, should the chosen area be found on detailed analysis to be either unsuitable or too small to meet OCC's requirements.

CAGE's research casts considerable doubt on the correctness of the decision to propose the Cholsey/Wallingford area as suitable for sand and gravel extraction, which appears to be based on the belief that the site is:

- the least constrained;
- has good access to the lorry route network;
- and is closer (by road) to areas of demand for construction materials in southern Oxfordshire

(Source: Paragraph 19 of the County Council's report to Cabinet of February 2011)

This submission demonstrates that these conclusions are fundamentally flawed, and CAGE believes that alternative, less sensitive, sites should be considered, if indeed a new site is required in the district. CAGE's principal concerns, together with reference to the relevant OMPSC Common Core Policies for Minerals and Waste, are that:

1. It would severely harm the character of the land between two large settlements, Wallingford and Cholsey. (Policy C5)
2. It would adversely affect the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB and Chilterns AONB. (Policy C5)
3. It would destroy valuable undisturbed geological history. (Policy C6)
4. It would be contrary to Policy C1 as two of the sites, SG33 & SG57, are subject in part to flooding and one, SG60, which abuts the River Thames, is almost entirely subject to river flooding.
5. It would be contrary to Policy C2 as there may be risks of contamination to the groundwater from Cholsey Sewage Works.
6. It would mutilate the preserved setting of an historic Saxon town and ancient village and destroy its landscape archaeology. (Policy C6)
7. It would affect the setting of two Grade II listed buildings and threaten the future existence of one of them. (Policy C6)
8. It would harm important popular rights of way. (Policy C8)
9. It would severely threaten the existence of a heritage and tourist railway.
10. It would adversely affect OCC's approved cycle path between Wallingford and Cholsey. (Policy C8)
11. It would adversely and directly impact on the lives of some 10,000 people living in Wallingford and Cholsey. (Policy C3)

page 5 of 36

12. It would damage the local economy and tourism and be contrary to the District and Town Councils' core strategy for the future.
13. It would destroy the undisturbed habitat of a rich variety of birds and other wildlife. (Policy C4)
14. It would almost certainly not be possible to restore the sites to a standard acceptable to the RAF, and in keeping with the

District LDF policies and the surrounding AONB, as there is a shortage of inert waste material, a constraint recognised in the OMPSC. (Policy M6)

15. It would put an unsustainable burden on local roads and encourage more local traffic to divert through an historic town rather than use the bypass which was created to protect the town. (Policy C7)

16. Site access would create an unavoidably dangerous junction onto the narrow busy local road connecting Cholsey and Wallingford. (Policy C7)

17. The site would not provide a replacement for Sutton Courtenay, as the quality of the mineral reserve would be inadequate to meet the demand for construction materials in South Oxfordshire, and minerals would have to be imported from elsewhere. (Policy M3)

18. The many constraints on the site, some not previously identified, mean that the reserves would be less than anticipated, reducing the economic viability of the site. The site operator may therefore be likely to want to use the plant from their existing site in the Lower Windrush Valley, once the reserves there are exhausted. As those reserves are likely to last for some considerable time beyond 2020, the Cholsey/Wallingford sites would not provide continuity of supply when the Sutton Courtenay reserves become exhausted. (Policy M3)

19. The proposed strategy would have the effect of putting at least half, if not 70%, of Oxfordshire's supply in the hands of one operator. This casts some doubt on whether it would be deliverable, or appropriate in terms of market effects.

20. All the other South Oxfordshire sites are closer to Oxford, which would be the probable destination of half the reserve, and none of the sites is materially further from the rest of the market, so there is no benefit in selecting Cholsey/Wallingford as closer to areas of demand for construction materials. (Policy C7)

21. A more detailed analysis of the available sites demonstrates that the Cholsey/ Wallingford sites actually rank amongst the least favourable.

It would appear that there are no OMPSC Core Policies relevant to points 9 & 12 above, two issues which are both particularly significant in this case.

page 6 of 36

2. Introduction

CAGE (Communities Against Gravel Extraction) has been set up by Cholsey Parish Council and Wallingford Town Council to respond to the Oxfordshire Minerals Planning Strategy Consultation (OMPSC) plans for new sand and gravel extraction in the Parish of Cholsey. The two councils only became aware of these plans in February 2011, from reading Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) cabinet minutes of 16 February. No prior communication had been received from OCC. CAGE appointed a mineral consultant to advise them on the issues and, following an initial report, decided that there were strong and reasonable grounds to object to the OMPSC plans for this new sand and gravel area/quarry. The town council and six neighbouring parish councils formally support this submission.

CAGE is concerned about the lack of consultation with the main stakeholders directly affected by the OMPSC proposals, including South Oxfordshire District Council, the Wallingford Town Council, Cholsey Parish Council, the Environment Agency and the RAF/MOD. CAGE contacted these five bodies and all confirmed that they had not been consulted by OCC either at the time CAGE was researching this submission or prior to the present consultation.

OCC's 'consultation workshop' in Benson in July 2010 gave the misleading impression that there was little or no likelihood of sand

and gravel extraction in the Wallingford/Cholsey area. This view was reinforced by an article following the consultation workshop in the Wallingford Herald on 27th October 2010 which stated that "...the cabinet rejected the option of taking gravel from areas such as Clanfield, Bampton, Stanton Harcourt, Clifton Hampden, The Wittenhams, Benson, Shillingford, Warborough and Cholsey. Instead, the cabinet agreed to focus extraction work on areas already being worked in the Lower Windrush Valley, Eynsham, Cassington, Yarnton, Radley, Sutton Courtenay and Caversham." It is not surprising that in these circumstances Cholsey Parish Council and Wallingford Town Council gave no further thought to the matter and made no further representations to OCC.

CAGE question the transparency, basis and logic of the decision making process. Some of these concerns were highlighted at a meeting with OCC on 12 September 2011 (Appendix II). In particular there appeared to be

- No clear mineral map showing where the economically recoverable sources of sands and gravels are available in Oxfordshire.
- No clear statement as to where the market for these materials will be, what they are to be used for and how the market works.

The OMPSC's overriding priority appears to be to reduce 'tonne miles to market', but in a free market this is not within their control, as will be discussed.

- No explanation about the significance and weighting given to all the points in their Appendix 2 table titled 'Site Assessment' which not only appears to have a number of inaccuracies but also ignores important issues such as, in the Cholsey and Wallingford case, the economic and social impact a quarry may have close to two large settlements, encircled by an AONB.
- No consideration is given at this stage of the process to probably one of the most important issues of all, the long term impact extraction would have on sensitive environments, such as the environs of Wallingford and Cholsey, and how the countryside should be best restored and if indeed the objective is actually deliverable within a reasonable timeframe - or ever.

This last point is particularly relevant when the OMPSC plan is not actually identifying a broad area, as it suggests, and as OCC maintained in the meeting of 12 September 2011 (see point 22 of meeting note at Appendix II) but a specific new site for sands and gravels in Cholsey. The fact that a specific site has been chosen is further evident from the Council's background paper: "Development of Draft Minerals Planning Strategy September 2011", which identifies at Section 12 that Stage 10 of the process involved an assessment of the sites nominated by mineral operators and landowners to check that they could potentially deliver the required amount of aggregate. Even the mining operators invited to the Discussion Group

page 7 of 36

meeting in Oxford on 29th September questioned the logic of a consultation process that puts forward a choice of just one specific new site (SG33 - the other two SG57 and SG60 are too small on their own) and they asked for more openness and flexibility in the site selection process.

There also appears to be a lack of logical progression from the options offered at the workshops in 2010 to the strategy that has now been chosen.

At the 2010 workshops referred to at paragraph 2.30 of the OMPSC a number of options for sand and gravel supply were being presented. Initially (February - April 2010) the options were:

- Option 1: Concentration of sand and gravel extraction in areas in central Oxfordshire;
- Option 2: Dispersal of mineral extraction as widely as possible;
- Option 3: Meeting the requirement up to 2026 from extensions to existing workings, then identifying a new area from Clanfield, Warborough/Benson/Shillingford and Clifton Hampden.

These options were then developed for the July 2010 workshops to:

- Option 1: Concentration on Existing Working Areas:
- Option 2: Concentration on New Working Areas
- Option 3: Dispersed Working

The Cholsey/Wallingford area was identified within Options 2 and 3, but alongside and with working also taking place at a number of other sites.

It is apparent that OCC has not adopted any one of the options discussed at the workshops, but a hybrid of those options, on which there has been no further consultation until now, at this very late stage, in the form of the final version of the draft core minerals strategy.

The CAGE research which has gone into this submission, assembled by necessity in a very short period of time, casts considerable doubt on the correctness of the decision to propose the Wallingford and Cholsey sites as suitable for sand and gravel extraction.

The issues raised need to be openly considered and then compared to the alternative sites in South Oxfordshire, if indeed a site is required in the district.

From the information in this submission, it is clear that this small largely undisturbed piece of land has very significant economic, ecological, amenity and historic value, all of which would be seriously damaged by gravel extraction.

We draw attention too to the reasons put forward by Wallingford Town Council in 1987 against the same gravel extraction proposals. These reasons, which were upheld by OCC, are no less valid today than they were then. (Appendix III)

3. Farmland Closely Encircled by AONB

3.1 Character of land between Cholsey & Wallingford

Cholsey village and Winterbrook on the outskirts of Wallingford are separated by just under a mile of arable and grazing farmland, hedges and trees. It is a peaceful and largely undisturbed area, supporting an amazingly wide variety of bird and wildlife, as will be explained in this submission. The farmland is largely Grade 2 agricultural land, and as such should be protected from mineral workings.

The area is close to the Thames, overlooked from Cholsey Hill, around which the river used to meander many years ago, before straightening its course. Unlike any of the alternative areas that were being considered for sand and gravel extraction in South Oxfordshire, this area borders directly on an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is closely surrounded by both the North Wessex Downs AONB and Chilterns AONB.

3.2 The North Wessex Downs and Chilterns AONB

North Wessex Downs AONB has advised CAGE that it has already responded to the OMPSC, advising against the selection of the Cholsey/Wallingford area for gravel extraction. Their comments are as follows -

"All three sites (SG 33, 57 and 60) lie in a narrow gap between the North Wessex Downs AONB to the west and the Chilterns AONB to the east [see map on page 10]. The sites lie within the setting of both AONBs, and although not within the AONBs, run a very high risk of affecting the setting of both.

"The preference of the North Wessex Downs AONB unit is therefore that the Cholsey sites are excluded at this stage of the process on the basis of likely impact on the setting of two nationally protected landscapes.

"Alternatively, that these sites progress no further until detailed landscape and visual impact assessments have been prepared to assess in detail the potential for harm to the setting of both AONBs.

"The North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement on Setting is attached with these comments.
 "Policy C5 should be amended to include the supporting text actually within the Policy.
 "Policy C5 should refer specifically to the AONBs, the duty to conserve and enhance AONBs (Section 85 CRoW Act 2000), and refer to the need to consider the potential impact of development outside but within the setting of the AONBs. The scale of development in AONBs (PPS 7) is again referred to in the supporting paragraph but should be brought into the Policy itself.
 "Policy C5 should be more specific in respect of potential harm to AONB setting as the Cholsey sites SG 33, 57 and 60 all lie in a narrow gap between the North Wessex Downs AONB and Chilterns AONB. As stated in respect of the map that illustrates this within the Plan, the Cholsey sites are requested to be rejected by the North Wessex Downs AONB as they stand, based on likely setting impact on the AONBs. Alternatively these sites should not proceed any further in terms of consideration until detailed landscape and visual impact assessments have been prepared, as there is a substantial risk from these sites impacting negatively on two nationally protected landscapes."
 The North Wessex Downs AONB position statement on setting gives very relevant examples of adverse impacts on the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB:
 - Development which would have a significant visual impact on views in or out of the AONB;
 page 9 of 36
 - Loss of tranquility through the introduction or increase of lighting, noise, or traffic movement or other environmental impact like dust, vibration, spatial associations and historic relationships;
 - Introduction of abrupt change of landscape character;
 - Loss of biodiversity, particularly if of habitats or species of importance to the AONB;
 - Loss of features of historic and natural landscape interest, particularly if these are contiguous with the AONB;
 - Change of use of land where of a significant enough scale to cause harm to landscape character;
 - Development individually or cumulatively giving rise to significantly increased traffic flows to and from the AONB, resulting in loss of tranquility and erosion of the character of rural roads and lanes.
 The OMPSC points out in the section on Landscape (5.26) that it is Government policy that major minerals developments should only be permitted in areas not likely to have a negative impact on views and settings associated with an AONB. Annex 2 of the County Council's report to Cabinet of February 2011 (at which it was agreed to pursue the draft Minerals Core Strategy) identifies the planning criteria against which each of the site nominations are to be assessed, and endorses this Government policy. It states at the section headed "Environmental constraints":
 "There is a policy presumption against mineral working unless it can be shown that the need for the development outweighs any adverse environmental consequences on:
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or their setting;
 - The conservation interest of a Special Area of Conservation, SSSI or National Reserve;
 - A Scheduled Ancient Monument or other nationally important archaeologically (sic) asset." (bold not in original)
 Given the significant importance of AONB designations it is not surprising that it is given prominence as the first in the above list of environmental constraints. The County Council has, however, not followed its own assessment criteria that areas such as Cholsey/Wallingford should only be identified for mineral working in very exceptional circumstances.

4.1 Geomorphology

The proposed sites for gravel working lie to the west of the current course of the River Thames which flows north to south. The Thames has a very long history during which its size and course have varied considerably as the climate has changed. At Sugworth near Abingdon the Thames Gravels are dated to 600,000 years before present and contain fossils of rhino and exotic plants and fruits. 450,000 years ago the Anglian glaciation caused the re-routing of the Thames, while 250,000 years ago there is evidence of the presence of Neanderthals, and at the end of the last glacial advance the Thames Valley was used as a corridor for migration of peoples from Europe.

In the area around Wallingford and Cholsey the Thames valley contains a wide plain formed by the Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand at levels between 42m and 52m above Ordnance Datum. A large former meander enclosed the low rounded hills at Cholsey and Mackney. When the river changed course again and abandoned the meander loop the old channel silted up with sediments brought down from the surrounding Chalk hills by spring fed waters of the Kibble Ditch, the Mill Brook and Cholsey Brook.

The Thames Gravels are remnants of deposits which once covered the floors and lower flanks of the main valley and tributary valley. With uplift of the land after the end of the last glaciation and changes in the course of the Thames the river eroded into the sediments leaving disconnected terraces on the valley sides. The river terrace deposits underlie much of Wallingford, Cholsey, Brightwell and South Moreton providing raised and well drained land ideal for settlements. Cholsey Church and Mackney are also located on terrace deposits.

The three proposed extraction sites lie in the former channel and on the river terraces between Cholsey Hill and the current river Thames, and have the potential to destroy valuable evidence about the history of the river valley and the influences of climate change.

4.2 Geology

The solid geology of the area is mainly formed of Lower Chalk comprising a soft grey marly chalk with hard silty seams. The basal 2 to 4m are glauconitic and sandy, and are termed the Glauconitic Marl. These formations overlay the Upper Greensand which is a sequence of banded pale grey to pale green siltstones and sandy limestones (Corser, 1981).

Lower Chalk is present beneath all three proposed excavation sites with Glauconitic Marl being found in the south west corner of site SG33. Site SG57 is underlain by the sequence of Lower Chalk, Glauconitic Marl and Upper Greensand.

The drift geology in the area comprises periglacial deposits, river terrace deposits and alluvium. At least eight levels of river terrace can be traced, but it is the First Terrace that is present on sites SG33 and SG60. Alluvium is present on site SG57 (BGS, 1980).

The First Terrace is a continuous deposit covering some 24.6km², but about half is overlain by alluvium. The deposits around Cholsey are about 2m thicker than those in the present-day valley and comprise sands with pebbles of Jurassic limestone, chalk and flint and minor amounts of ironstone, quartz and quartzite.

The alluvium reaches its greatest extent along the former course of the River Thames to the west of Cholsey with a maximum thickness of 3.4m. It consists of dark grey calcareous loams, silts and clays with sporadic lenses of sand and fine gravel and seams of peat and molluscan shells.

4.3 Mineral Information

In Mineral Assessment Report 64 (Corser, 1981) a borehole (SU 68 NW 9) was drilled immediately to the west of the southern end of site SG60 on the opposite side of the Reading Road. Beneath a topsoil cover of 0.2m the First Terrace River Deposits comprised 1.0m of sandy clay over 2.6m of clayey pebbly sand. Lower Chalk was encountered at 4.8m depth. The particle size distribution was dominated by sand with a mean gravel content of 16% and the composition of the gravel was predominantly chalk and limestone (66-70%).

In site SG33 a mineral assessment borehole (SU 58 NE 14) was located in the south west corner, and another borehole (SU 58 NE 13) was located immediately to the west of the railway line in the northwest corner. Borehole SU 58 NE 13 comprised 0.1m of soil over 0.6m of very silty clay over 5.1m of clayey sandy gravel. Sand (61%) was the dominant particle size with 23% gravel. The mean limestone and chalk content of the gravel was 65%.

Borehole SU 58 NE14 was drilled to a depth of 5.7m. The sequence comprised 0.2m of soil over 0.9m of sandy clay over 4.3m of clayey gravel. The particle size distribution was split between 41% sand and 40% gravel with 19% fines. The average composition of the gravel component was 52% limestone, 18% chalk, with flint, quart, quartzite, ironstone and some minor constituents comprising the remaining 30%.

No mineral assessment boreholes were present on site SG57. However, two nearby borehole records are available on the GeolIndex for the UK at www.bgs.ac.uk. Borehole SU 58 page 13 of 36

NE 88 and SU58 NE 89 indicate that beneath a topsoil and less than 1m of clay there is a horizon described as 'ballast' with chalk and clay of approximately up to 3m.

4.4 Assessment of Mineral Potential

The mineral deposits are essentially sands with gravels of a high carbonate content. Such aggregates are not of the best quality and their usefulness may therefore be limited without further augmentation and processing.

4.5 Hydrogeology

The Lower Chalk beneath the area is a Principal Aquifer which means the rocks usually provide a high level of water storage. They may support water supply and/or river baseflow on a strategic scale. The First River Terrace deposits and the Alluvium around Cholsey are classed as a Secondary A aquifer with permeable layers capable of supporting water supplies at a local scale, and potentially forming an important source of baseflow to brooks and the river. Both aquifers have a high permeability and are highly vulnerable to pollution of the groundwater. www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Groundwater levels as indicated in the Minerals Assessment Report (Corser, 1981) lay at the time of measurement between 1m and 3.2m below ground level. However, depending on the extent of hydraulic continuity with the River Thames, groundwater levels are likely to be influenced by the seasons and water levels in the river itself. The hydrogeological map of the area (IGS, 1978) does not define the direction of groundwater flows in the area.

No groundwater protection zones are indicated in the Cholsey and Wallingford area close to the proposed extraction areas, www.environment-agency.gov.uk. The significance of the local aquifers to local supplies will require a search of local authority private water supply records and the Environment Agency's register of permitted abstractions.

4.6 Impact on Groundwater

The detail of the groundwater regime in the vicinity of the extraction sites is not well known. Investigations are required to establish the impact of the sites on the groundwater quality and flows in the context of the abandoned Cholsey meander loop and

its connectivity and storage potential with the current River Thames channel. Consideration should also be given to the proximity of Cholsey Sewage Works and its potential to be a source (like many other sewage works) of groundwater contamination from contaminants such as ammonium salts. This sewage works was the source of a major sewage Pollution Incident on 8th September 2003, www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

Any dewatering operations need to consider the impact on:

- sensitive ecological areas;
- dehydration of peat deposits in the Cholsey meander loop and the release of carbon dioxide; and
- ground stability.

4.7 Hydrology

The watercourses around Cholsey Hill, and the River Thames are designated as main river. Site SG60 abuts the River Thames and is almost entirely subject to river flooding. Site SG57 is extensively subject to flooding from rivers, and the southern part of site SG33 is prone to extreme flooding events, www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

The water quality of the Mill Brook is not identified by the Environment Agency. Water quality in the Cholsey Brook has a B rating for chemistry and biology, but has a high nitrates and phosphates content.

The River Basin Management Classification www.environment-agency.gov.uk for the local main rivers is assessed as follows:

page 14 of 36

River Thames
Cholsey Brook
Mill Brook
Ecological Quality
Moderate
Poor
Good
Chemical Quality
Good
Good
Not assessed

Mitigation of the impact of any planned extraction operations will be required on the flooding potential, chemical quality and ecological quality of these sensitive surface waters. Such development is likely to have a negative influence on sustained improvement in flood management and quality objectives.

References

British Geological Survey, 1980. Henley-on-Thames Sheet 254. Solid and drift Edition 1:50,000 series.

Corser C E , 1981. The sand and gravel resources of the country between Wallingford and Goring, Oxfordshire. Mineral Assessment Report 64. Institute of Geological Sciences, Natural Environment Research Council.

Institute of Geological Sciences, 1978. Hydrogeological Map of the South West and the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs. Scale 1:100,000.

page 15 of 36

5. Historic Environment

5.1. The Historic Background

Wallingford and Cholsey lie in a rich archaeological and historical environment. Their boundaries were established over a thousand years ago and their hinterlands have revealed a continuity of settlement dating back at least three thousand years. Wallingford is the largest and most complete surviving example of a Saxon fortified town in England; its still impressive earthen defences and town ditch (in places eight metres deep beneath the height of the surviving rampart) date from the time of King Alfred (871-899). Cholsey was acquired by the king in the same period, part of the build-up of royal lands as a defensive hinterland to Wallingford and was an important royal holding until it was gifted to the new Reading Abbey in 1121 by Henry I. Both places are listed in Domesday Book (1086) by which time Wallingford was the leading town of Berkshire, with a royal castle that played a major role in the dominance of the Thames Valley throughout the medieval period and was visited or inhabited by numerous medieval kings, queens and princes.

The town received its royal charter in 1155, one of the earliest granted, and thrived until the late 13th century when, for complex economic reasons, its fortunes waned. Unlike neighbouring towns such as Reading, Oxford and Abingdon, Wallingford did not grow hugely, so preserving the essence of the late Saxon and early medieval town. This historical accident has made it a unique survival.

The historic and archaeological potential of Wallingford secured a substantial Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) grant from 2008-2010 for a team from the Universities of Leicester, Exeter and Oxford. With the help of The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society (TWHAS) and Wallingford Museum and the encouragement of local councils, it has undertaken geophysics, excavations, test-pitting and topographic surveys of the town and its suburbs with a view to expanding understanding of Wallingford and medieval urbanism.

This combined university and community Wallingford Burh to Borough Project has highlighted the importance both of the town and its hinterland as a whole. Interim results, several articles and a British Archaeological Report have so far been published, with two further publications in preparation for 2012. The research work is continuing, as is the test-pitting, and further archaeology is planned.

The Burh to Borough project has raised the awareness of the town nationally, and locally has reinforced the already highlighted potential of tourism as a key role in the town's economic future. Numbers of tourists are already increasing, visitor numbers to Wallingford Museum have substantially risen in 2011 and various new town trails - including the Dame Agatha Christie trail to Cholsey - are proving popular.

The proposed gravel extraction in Cholsey lies within the historic southern hinterland of Wallingford and would not only mutilate the preserved setting of the historic town and ancient village but also totally destroy its landscape archaeology.

5.2. The Archaeological Environment

The building of the bypass in 1992 and subsequent study of the southern hinterland of Wallingford have highlighted the importance of ancient boundaries and the continuity of settlement on the fertile Thames Valley gravel areas. There have been numerous archaeological finds and features identified in close proximity to the proposed gravel extraction site and signs of other as yet unidentified features have been noted on air photographs and recently acquired LIDAR images. What follows is a brief chronological summary [references are to sources S1 etc below]:

page 16 of 36

Pre-historic

The stretch of the Thames Valley around Wallingford has produced various scatters of flint tools, including Mesolithic axe heads from a garden in Ilges Lane, Cholsey. Also, an ancient buried river channel was located in borings for an extension to the Cholsey Sewage works. [S2p10] This area, and much of the rest of the proposed gravel extraction site, has been highlighted as an Area of Archaeological Restraint on maps prepared by county archaeologists for the planning authority [see page 19].

Neolithic monuments are prolific to the north and east of Wallingford and Cholsey, notably in Dorchester and Benson. A bank barrow was located at North Stoke, on the opposite side of the river from Cholsey and at nearby South Stoke, clusters of Neolithic pits were found [S1Booth,p5]. Within Wallingford itself Neolithic Peterborough ware was found near Wallingford School [S1Booth,p5]. To the south west of the town, a Neolithic double ring ditch was identified just north of Bradford's Brook [S1Booth,p6].

During evaluation excavations for a potential development at Winterbrook in 2009, Wessex Archaeology located a single flake of worked flint, (likely Neolithic), two sub-circular 'ring-ditch' features and two east-west aligned ditches of likely pre-historic date. [S6] Close by, south of Bradford's Brook, but north of the bypass, features of a possible henge or causeway enclosure have also been noted. Although these do not lie within the defined gravel extraction area, they, like the other features mentioned, are in close proximity to it and may relate to other features identified within the threatened area (see below).

Bronze Age

There is considerable evidence of Bronze Age activity close to the threatened areas. A middle Bronze Age waterhole was excavated when the bypass was built in 1992 and elements of a field system in the Bradford's Brook area appear to be late Bronze Age. [S3 pp203, 223] A possible Middle/Late Bronze Age ditch was also noted south of Bradford's Brook by Wessex Archaeology [S6] The discovery of a nationally significant high status Bronze Age island in occupation from c900-700BC, lying close to the site of the new Winterbrook Bridge, gave a context to numerous other discoveries of Bronze Age artefacts from the river in the Cholsey area [S3]. Many of these are held in the Thames Collection at Reading Museum, but a few fine specimens are on display in Wallingford Museum. Gravel extraction close to the river and inland from it might be expected to produce other features from this period.

Iron Age

The discovery of a Middle Iron Age settlement in Winterbrook alongside Bradford's Brook [S6] testifies to the early importance of this water source which eventually became established as the boundary between Cholsey and Wallingford (see below). Another major feature of the period is the impressive Grim's Ditch, which lies on the opposite side of the river. The significance of this massive bank and ditch is not yet fully understood but it is widely considered to have marked an important Iron Age tribal boundary. This part of the Thames Valley (which includes the threatened site) is noted as an area where three tribal groupings converge: the Catevellauni, Dobunni and Atrebatas. It is therefore of particular archaeological interest. [S4 p3-6; S5, p365-9]

Roman

Cholsey lies on the route of a known Roman route from Silchester to Dorchester and beyond. Another likely Roman route crossed the Thames close to Wallingford Bridge in a SE/NW direction [S1 Booth p8 & Edgeworth p82-3]. Roman evidence is scarce in Wallingford and the settlement, if any, has yet to be located. Recent LIDAR photographs of the area designated for extraction have revealed evidence of a field system with defined boundary features which could be of Roman origin (personal observation by

Richard Oram, County Planning Archaeologist). Their existence is clear and needs investigation. The proposed gravel extraction would destroy them.

page 17 of 36

Saxon and Medieval

The importance of Cholsey in the Saxon period has been highlighted in the context of the Historic Environment. Bradford's Brook formed its northern boundary with Wallingford by the ninth century [S1 Dewey, p18 and S2 p17, & p236n9]. Cholsey church was founded around 986 and late Saxon work survives in the tower. Domesday Book records large numbers of cottars in Cholsey in 1086 which may suggest that the village had many early outlying settlements. This is reinforced by a wealth of later documentary and map evidence from the medieval period to the 19th century [S2p45-58]. Hill Green and Cox's Farm are two such areas affected by the proximity of designated extraction area. LIDAR images of Cox's Farm reveal features of earlier occupation which deserve investigation and may relate to other indications within the threatened site.

Conclusion

The sites proposed for gravel extraction lie in close proximity to an area which has proved rich in archaeological finds and are divided from it only by a modern bypass which created a false barrier across a landscape that has been integrated for thousands of years. Much of the proposed extraction site has already quite rightly been highlighted as an area of archaeological sensitivity [see map on page 19]. Recent developments in archaeology, particularly the work of the Wallingford Burh to Borough project, have reinforced the importance of considering the hinterland of towns and villages. In this case there is a strong continuity of occupation to the south of Wallingford which is not yet fully understood or investigated. The gravel extraction would obliterate a large tract of this important landscape and destroy both the historic and archaeological environs between Wallingford and Cholsey.

Sources

1. Keats-Rohan, K.S.B. & Roffe, D.R. (Eds) 2009 The Origins of the Borough of Wallingford: archaeological and historical perspectives BAR British Series 494, Archaeopress - includes articles on Archaeology before the Anglo-Saxon burh (Paul Booth), The Wallingford Anglo-Saxon cemetery (Helena Hamerow), The Origins of Wallingford: topography, boundaries and parishes (Judy Dewey), Wallingford in Domesday Book and Beyond, (David Roffe), The Genesis of the Honour of Wallingford (Katharine Keats-Rohan), New Directions in Tracing the Origins and Development of Wallingford: Targets and Results of The Wallingford Burh to Borough Project (Oliver Creighton, Neil Christie Matt Edgeworth and Helena Hamerow) Comparing Burhs: a Wallingford-Bedford case study (Matt Edgeworth)
2. Dewey, J & S 2001 Change at Cholsey - Again! - a thousand years of village life Pie Powder Press. An overview of the origins and development of Cholsey, including details of archaeology, early maps and documentary evidence.
3. Cromarty, A.M., Barclay, A., Lambrick, G. and Robinson, M. 2006 Late Bronze Age Ritual and Habitation on a Thames Eyot at Whitecross Farm, Wallingford: the Archaeology of the Wallingford Bypass 1986-92. Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph 22, Oxford, Oxford Archaeology.
4. Salway, P. 1999 Roman Oxfordshire. Oxoniensia 64.
5. Booth, P., Dodd, A., Robinson, M., and Smith, A. 2007. The Thames Through Time: the Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames. The Early Historical Period 1-1000. Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph 27. Oxford, Oxford Archaeology

6. Wessex Archaeology, 2009. Land West of Reading Road, Winterbrook: Archaeological Evaluation Report

5.3 Listed Buildings

There are two listed buildings affected by the OMPSC proposals:

New Barn Farm

This farm within the SG33 site contains a very fine Grade II listed mid 18th century timber-framed aisled barn PRN 20770. It is substantially intact but semi-derelict with some temporary supports, abandoned and open to intrusion. This building appears to be generally 'at risk' and is clearly put at greater risk of demolition from any advance of the gravel site proposition.

It would be invidious in any way to condone the destruction of a building included on the List of Buildings of Special Historic or Architectural Interest without a full evaluation of the possible consequences. No evidence has been produced that new uses have been sought for this building or any scheme explored that might restore its general beneficial value.

Cox's Farm

This building is a Grade II listed building PRN 10943. It is a 17th century farmhouse, now house, with 20th century alterations. It is surrounded by large earthworks which appear to be partly from other buildings and partly from an extensive garden including ponds and water channels, now mainly dry but giving the house and garden to the west a partially moated appearance. The understanding of its history and development would clearly benefit from further investigation.

The likely impact of gravel extraction as proposed is that this fine building and its historic setting would be rendered less usable, less capable of being 'enjoyed' and similarly its financial value would be likely to be considerably reduced for many years, to the detriment of its interest and viability.

Access to Cox's Farm is through the quarry site.

There is a duty on local planning authorities within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in considering development which affects a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The setting is often an essential part of the building's character, and the economic viability as well as the character of historic buildings may suffer and can be robbed of much of their interest, and of the contribution they make to townscape or the countryside, if they become isolated from their surroundings by new development.

The existing farmland is very much part of the setting to the two affected listed buildings: both a farm house and a barn, and for Cox's Farm the setting would include its access. The introduction of industrial gravel pits would clearly significantly harm this setting.

It is furthermore apparent that an assessment of the impact on both the historic and architectural value of the listed buildings directly affected by the proposed working at Cholsey/Wallingford has not been carried out by the County Council in accordance with its statutory obligation.

6. Effect on Important Recreational & Amenity Use

6.1 The River Thames

Proposed site SG60 lies directly alongside the River Thames in one of the river's most rural and undisturbed stretches. The impact of the gravel workings would be abruptly to change the landscape character of the river bank and to disturb the tranquility of the

totally rural scene. This is the longest reach on the Thames between locks and has been chosen by Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University to train their rowers. It is also recognised as an important corridor for wildlife.

The SODC Core Strategy 2010 states "Policy CSEN 1 - The district's distinct landscape character and key features will be protected against inappropriate development and where possible enhanced... The landscapes and waterscapes of the River Thames corridor will be maintained and where possible enhanced as will the setting and heritage of the river for its overall amenity and recreational use."

The Environment Agency is also actively seeking to increase the recreational use by boaters of the river which is an amenity of national importance. To disturb this stretch would be contrary to both policies.

6.2 Rights of Way

The important and much used Thames Path runs through the length of the proposed site SG60. This is part of a heavily promoted national trail attracting hundreds of walkers to the vicinity each year. This section of the route is particularly noted for its undisturbed rural character.

In addition, well-used rights of way surround and cross the sites SG33 & SG57. These footpaths provide direct routes between Cholsey Church and both Winterbrook and Wallingford, and between Hithercroft and the Wallingford Road. They also form essential parts of several walks featured in the recently revised publication Parish Potters around Cholsey, Pie Powder Press 2011.

6.3 Cholsey & Wallingford Railway

This heritage and tourist railway, which was set up thirty years ago and relies on tourism for almost all its funds, runs for much of its length alongside the proposed gravel pit, on land owned by the Wallingford Town Council. The Railway has advised CAGE that they fear that the proposed gravel pit would threaten their ability to continue operating both by destroying its reputation as an attraction and by causing instability to the railway. They wrote to CAGE on 7 September 2011 making the following points:

"Currently our Railway runs through an extremely attractive rural farming area and while planners say that no-one is entitled to a view, it has to be part of what is making us a successful and growing part of the Thames Valley's tourism. With the gravel pit running for one third of the length of our Railway its impact will be enormous and people will just not come to see an industrial hole in the ground. Part of the extraction submission to OCC mentions that there would be an earth bank constructed alongside the Railway. This would give the effect of the Railway running through a continuous cutting on one side and is not offered as a form of protection for the Railway. It is to give the extraction company somewhere to dump the topsoil that they cannot sell.

"The operation of a gravel extraction plant is going to downgrade our area and make it unattractive to visitors. The Cholsey & Wallingford Railway through its members and supporters have worked very hard and given a great deal of voluntary time since 1981 to save, stabilise and grow this railway so that it is becoming a significant part of Thames Valley Tourism. We are on the threshold of a number of initiatives that will add considerably to the Railway's attraction for visitors from a considerable distance as well as the local population. Heritage Railways are fast becoming a valuable part of the local economy in many parts of the country and we could show many examples of their success.

"All of this effort and potential is under severe threat from this extraction plan and we have very strong reasons to object to the proposal. We do not want to see the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway being forced to close."

The Railway also voiced concern about the effect gravel extraction would have on the stability and potential subsidence to their tracks caused by artificially lowering the water table. This concern may be well justified as Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd state

in their SG33 and SG57 Site Nomination Forms (November 2008) that "The gravels lie below the water table and would be dewatered and worked dry".

6.4 Dame Agatha Christie Trail

Agatha Christie died at her home in Winterbrook in 1976 and is buried in St Mary's churchyard in Cholsey. Her connection with the town and parish attracts people from all over the world. The Dame Agatha Christie Trail [see page 22], part financed by South Oxfordshire District Council and South East England Development Agency, is a circular route from her house to the churchyard on field paths alongside the heritage railway line and then back along the Wallingford Road footpath.

Most of the route is alongside the boundaries of the proposed extraction site, which it effectively encircles and part crosses, and these plans would inevitably destroy this important local attraction.

6.5 Oxfordshire County Council Sponsored Cycle path

The Wallingford Road is a regular route for many commuters travelling daily to Oxford, Reading and London from Cholsey station, and others going the other way to school, work or shopping trips in Wallingford. It is used not just by motorists, but also by cyclists and walkers.

Because of the increase in population, the desire to encourage more sustainable transport, the dangerous nature of Wallingford Road for cyclists and the need of people to access Cholsey Station, OCC approved a cycle route along the Wallingford Road and within the proposed gravel extraction sites SG33 and SG57. This cycle route would run on the quarry site side of the hedge.

A third of the funding is in place and it is anticipated that the balance will be forthcoming within the next five to ten years from Section 106 contributions for infrastructure improvements from developers of new housing in the area. This cycle route should be operational before commencement of any gravel extraction and in consequence would present a difficulty for any site access to be located along the Wallingford Road, and any access along that road would be a major hazard to cyclists. Needless to say, a gravel quarry would inevitably discourage many cyclists and walkers from using the path.

6. Effect on Important Recreational & Amenity Use

6.1 The River Thames

Proposed site SG60 lies directly alongside the River Thames in one of the river's most rural and undisturbed stretches. The impact of the gravel workings would be abruptly to change the landscape character of the river bank and to disturb the tranquility of the totally rural scene. This is the longest reach on the Thames between locks and has been chosen by Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University to train their rowers. It is also recognised as an important corridor for wildlife.

The SODC Core Strategy 2010 states "Policy CSEN 1 - The district's distinct landscape character and key features will be protected against inappropriate development and where possible enhanced... The landscapes and waterscapes of the River Thames corridor will be maintained and where possible enhanced as will the setting and heritage of the river for its overall amenity and recreational use."

The Environment Agency is also actively seeking to increase the recreational use by boaters of the river which is an amenity of national importance. To disturb this stretch would be contrary to both policies.

<p>870 (CAGE) and 873 (CAGE)</p>	<p>Part 2: 6. Effect on Important Recreational & Amenity Use 6.1 The River Thames Proposed site SG60 lies directly alongside the River Thames in one of the river's most rural and undisturbed stretches. The impact of the gravel workings would be abruptly to change the landscape character of the river bank and to disturb the tranquility of the totally rural scene. This is the longest reach on the Thames between locks and has been chosen by Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University to train their rowers. It is also recognised as an important corridor for wildlife. The SODC Core Strategy 2010 states "Policy CSEN 1 - The district's distinct landscape character and key features will be protected against inappropriate development and where possible enhanced... The landscapes and waterscapes of the River Thames corridor will be maintained and where possible enhanced as will the setting and heritage of the river for its overall amenity and recreational use." The Environment Agency is also actively seeking to increase the recreational use by boaters of the river which is an amenity of national importance. To disturb this stretch would be contrary to both policies. 6.2 Rights of Way The important and much used Thames Path runs through the length of the proposed site SG60. This is part of a heavily promoted national trail attracting hundreds of walkers to the vicinity each year. This section of the route is particularly noted for its undisturbed rural character. In addition, well-used rights of way surround and cross the sites SG33 & SG57. These footpaths provide direct routes between Cholsey Church and both Winterbrook and Wallingford, and between Hithercroft and the Wallingford Road. They also form essential parts of several walks featured in the recently revised publication Parish Potters around Cholsey, Pie Powder Press 2011. 6.3 Cholsey & Wallingford Railway This heritage and tourist railway, which was set up thirty years ago and relies on tourism for almost all its funds, runs for much of its length alongside the proposed gravel pit, on land owned by the Wallingford Town Council. The Railway has advised CAGE that they fear that the proposed gravel pit would threaten their ability to continue operating both by destroying its reputation as an attraction and by causing instability to the railway. They wrote to CAGE on 7 September 2011 making the following points: "Currently our Railway runs through an extremely attractive rural farming area and while planners say that no-one is entitled to a view, it has to be part of what is making us a successful and growing part of the Thames Valley's tourism. With the gravel pit running for one third of the length of our Railway its impact will be enormous and people will just not come to see an industrial hole in the ground. Part of the extraction submission to OCC mentions that there would be an earth bank constructed alongside the Railway. This would give the effect of the Railway running through a continuous cutting on one side and is not offered as a form of protection for the Railway. It is to give the extraction company somewhere to dump the topsoil that they cannot sell. "The operation of a gravel extraction plant is going to downgrade our area and make it unattractive to visitors. The Cholsey & Wallingford Railway through its members and supporters have worked very hard and given a great deal of voluntary time since 1981 to save, stabilise and grow this railway so that it is becoming a significant part of Thames Valley Tourism. We are on the threshold of a number of initiatives that will add considerably to the Railway's attraction for visitors from a considerable distance as well as the local population. Heritage Railways are</p>
--	--

page 21 of 36

fast becoming a valuable part of the local economy in many parts of the country and we could show many examples of their success.

"All of this effort and potential is under severe threat from this extraction plan and we have very strong reasons to object to the proposal. We do not want to see the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway being forced to close."

The Railway also voiced concern about the effect gravel extraction would have on the stability and potential subsidence to their tracks caused by artificially lowering the water table. This concern may be well justified as Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd state in their SG33 and SG57 Site Nomination Forms (November 2008) that "The gravels lie below the water table and would be dewatered and worked dry".

6.4 Dame Agatha Christie Trail

Agatha Christie died at her home in Winterbrook in 1976 and is buried in St Mary's churchyard in Cholsey. Her connection with the town and parish attracts people from all over the world. The Dame Agatha Christie Trail [see page 22], part financed by South Oxfordshire District Council and South East England Development Agency, is a circular route from her house to the churchyard on field paths alongside the heritage railway line and then back along the Wallingford Road footpath.

Most of the route is alongside the boundaries of the proposed extraction site, which it effectively encircles and part crosses, and these plans would inevitably destroy this important local attraction.

6.5 Oxfordshire County Council Sponsored Cycle path

The Wallingford Road is a regular route for many commuters travelling daily to Oxford, Reading and London from Cholsey station, and others going the other way to school, work or shopping trips in Wallingford. It is used not just by motorists, but also by cyclists and walkers.

Because of the increase in population, the desire to encourage more sustainable transport, the dangerous nature of Wallingford Road for cyclists and the need of people to access Cholsey Station, OCC approved a cycle route along the Wallingford Road and within the proposed gravel extraction sites SG33 and SG57. This cycle route would run on the quarry site side of the hedge.

A third of the funding is in place and it is anticipated that the balance will be forthcoming within the next five to ten years from Section 106 contributions for infrastructure improvements from developers of new housing in the area. This cycle route should be operational before commencement of any gravel extraction and in consequence would present a difficulty for any site access to be located along the Wallingford Road, and any access along that road would be a major hazard to cyclists. Needless to say, a gravel quarry would inevitably discourage many cyclists and walkers from using the path.

6.2 Rights of Way

The important and much used Thames Path runs through the length of the proposed site SG60. This is part of a heavily promoted national trail attracting hundreds of walkers to the vicinity each year. This section of the route is particularly noted for its undisturbed rural character.

In addition, well-used rights of way surround and cross the sites SG33 & SG57. These footpaths provide direct routes between Cholsey Church and both Winterbrook and Wallingford, and between Hithercroft and the Wallingford Road. They also form essential parts of several walks featured in the recently revised publication Parish Potters around Cholsey, Pie Powder Press 2011.

6.3 Cholsey & Wallingford Railway

This heritage and tourist railway, which was set up thirty years ago and relies on tourism for almost all its funds, runs for much of its length alongside the proposed gravel pit, on land owned by the Wallingford Town Council. The Railway has advised CAGE that they fear that the proposed gravel pit would threaten their ability to continue operating both by destroying its reputation as an attraction and by causing instability to the railway. They wrote to CAGE on 7 September 2011 making the following points:

"Currently our Railway runs through an extremely attractive rural farming area and while planners say that no-one is entitled to a view, it has to be part of what is making us a successful and growing part of the Thames Valley's tourism. With the gravel pit running for one third of the length of our Railway its impact will be enormous and people will just not come to see an industrial hole in the ground. Part of the extraction submission to OCC mentions that there would be an earth bank constructed alongside the Railway. This would give the effect of the Railway running through a continuous cutting on one side and is not offered as a form of protection for the Railway. It is to give the extraction company somewhere to dump the topsoil that they cannot sell. "The operation of a gravel extraction plant is going to downgrade our area and make it unattractive to visitors. The Cholsey & Wallingford Railway through its members and supporters have worked very hard and given a great deal of voluntary time since 1981 to save, stabilise and grow this railway so that it is becoming a significant part of Thames Valley Tourism. We are on the threshold of a number of initiatives that will add considerably to the Railway's attraction for visitors from a considerable distance as well as the local population. Heritage Railways are

page 21 of 36

fast becoming a valuable part of the local economy in many parts of the country and we could show many examples of their success.

"All of this effort and potential is under severe threat from this extraction plan and we have very strong reasons to object to the proposal. We do not want to see the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway being forced to close."

The Railway also voiced concern about the effect gravel extraction would have on the stability and potential subsidence to their tracks caused by artificially lowering the water table. This concern may be well justified as Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd state in their SG33 and SG57 Site Nomination Forms (November 2008) that "The gravels lie below the water table and would be dewatered and worked dry".

6.4 Dame Agatha Christie Trail

Agatha Christie died at her home in Winterbrook in 1976 and is buried in St Mary's churchyard in Cholsey. Her connection with the town and parish attracts people from all over the world. The Dame Agatha Christie Trail [see page 22], part financed by South Oxfordshire District Council and South East England Development Agency, is a circular route from her house to the churchyard on field paths alongside the heritage railway line and then back along the Wallingford Road footpath.

Most of the route is alongside the boundaries of the proposed extraction site, which it effectively encircles and part crosses, and these plans would inevitably destroy this important local attraction.

6.5 Oxfordshire County Council Sponsored Cycle path

The Wallingford Road is a regular route for many commuters travelling daily to Oxford, Reading and London from Cholsey station, and others going the other way to school, work or shopping trips in Wallingford. It is used not just by motorists, but also by cyclists and walkers.

Because of the increase in population, the desire to encourage more sustainable transport, the dangerous nature of Wallingford Road for cyclists and the need of people to access Cholsey Station, OCC approved a cycle route along the Wallingford Road and

within the proposed gravel extraction sites SG33 and SG57. This cycle route would run on the quarry site side of the hedge. A third of the funding is in place and it is anticipated that the balance will be forthcoming within the next five to ten years from Section 106 contributions for infrastructure improvements from developers of new housing in the area. This cycle route should be operational before commencement of any gravel extraction and in consequence would present a difficulty for any site access to be located along the Wallingford Road, and any access along that road would be a major hazard to cyclists. Needless to say, a gravel quarry would inevitably discourage many cyclists and walkers from using the path.

7. Effect on Local Economy & Tourism

7.1 Proximity to 10,000 Population

Wallingford is closely surrounded by a number of individual, distinct settlements such as Cholsey, Crowmarsh and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. Any gravel extraction workings in this area and close to the town of Wallingford are inevitably going to be very close to significant centres of population. Furthermore the prevailing wind is from the southwest and this will bring dust and noise pollution into the very heart of the town. There is a hospital, health centre and housing directly upwind of the site.

The choice of the proposed sites SG33, SG57 and SG60 takes no account of the impact on significant nearby populations. These sites are within a mile of some 10,000 people living in Wallingford and Cholsey, a number that is set to increase by a few thousand during the next decade. Furthermore, 160 new houses are planned at Mongewell Park directly across the river from site SG60. It would seem reasonable to expect that gravel extraction sites, CDE facilities and concrete batching plants, all of which may be located together, should be sited in places which minimise the adverse impact on significant centres of population.

With the pressure for housing, the town and parish councils are working hard to try and preserve the distinctiveness and identities of the surrounding settlements and the separating landscape plays an important part, which would be harmed by these proposed gravel extraction sites.

The Wallingford by-pass was constructed to take traffic away from the centre of the town to overcome the severe problems of narrow roads, fragile historic buildings and sub standard air quality. It is a concern that the significant number of lorry movements anticipated in and out of the sites and along the bypass will deter motorists from using the by-pass and encourage them to again go through the town. This would be contrary to the original objective and damaging to the town.

7.2 Local Economy & Tourism

In the past small market towns such as Wallingford have been self-contained and commercial centres for the surrounding area. The economies of these towns were very much dependent upon, and supported by, the retailers, markets, public houses, cafés and supporting services and the businesses that provided local employment.

In more recent times this has changed. In the retail sector there is now competition from larger nearby towns such as Didcot, Reading and Oxford all easily accessed by public transport or car. Didcot, being only five miles away and designated as an expansion town, poses a very significant challenge not only to retailers but also for leisure activities and work. Due to the decision to expand Didcot, significant public and private sector funding is focused there to the detriment of Wallingford.

The Town Council and District Council have for some years now recognised the changing circumstances and the fact Wallingford has to change to remain a vibrant and prosperous town. Both Town and District Councils share the same vision for the future. This vision in general terms sees:

- the promotion of the town through its nationally recognised historical importance as one of the country's best preserved Saxon towns together with its place at the heart of subsequent English history and with its riverside setting in beautiful countryside

- the expansion of cycle ways, historic walks and the like
- the need and opportunity for small independent specialist retailers who would be complementary to the retail offer in the large towns
- the promotion of good restaurants and use of local food
- the promotion and expansion of local markets

page 24 of 36

- improvements to make the town centre more attractive and visitor friendly

These principles are set out in a number of documents but all with a similar thrust.

In a report prepared by The Civic Trust they note "There are strong assets on which to build: a unique history and heritage, a range of specialist shops, a superb location on the banks of the River Thames. This confirms that Wallingford is a unique town in a superb setting."

The District Council's Core Strategy, currently being subjected to review by a Government Inspector, also states "Wallingford's strengths include its location by the River Thames and proximity to the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs". The Core Strategy also recognises that Wallingford is now "hosting events which draw people to the town including markets, festivals and rowing events".

The Core Strategy goes on to identify that the strategy for Wallingford is:-

- to support measures that improve the attraction of Wallingford for visitors
- to improve local air quality
- to support schemes that enhance the town's environment

The South Oxfordshire Market Towns Action Plan 2010-11, which draws on the Civic Trust and other reports and is referred to in the Core Strategy, includes the following actions in respect of Wallingford:-

- to increase awareness as a destination
- to support the development of activity packages to stay longer and spend more
- to increase awareness of cycling opportunities
- to increase visibility of Wallingford's historical assets (improve physical links between historic sites)
- to develop themed trails such as historic tours and Agatha Christie.
- to support the delivery of a cycle path between Cholsey station and Wallingford

These reports, based on expert consultation, emphasise the need to promote the assets of the town and surrounding area in terms of its history, landscape setting and countryside activities in order to maintain a vibrant and sustainable economy. The future of Wallingford is going to be increasingly dependent upon tourism. This must be developed to compensate for losing retail business to the larger towns and other jobs to Milton Park and Science Vale, now part of an Enterprise Zone. To further stress the importance and significance of tourism in South Oxfordshire it is noted that The Tourism South East Research Unit produced a report in 2009 entitled the 'Economic Impact of Tourism, South Oxfordshire'. This indicated that tourism was worth about £222 million per annum and that 5,000 jobs (9.5% of all employee jobs) were in tourism-related sectors, particularly important to the three towns of Wallingford, Thame and Henley.

The river and surrounding countryside are key elements to the successful implementation of this strategy. Extensive gravel extraction workings within the Parish of Cholsey and close up to the town of Wallingford, specifically impacting on visitor

attractions, would harm this strategy, so essential for the future economies of Wallingford and Cholsey.

8. Ecology & Wildlife

SG33 & SG57 are farmland sites consisting largely of permanent grassland grazed by beef cattle or sheep, except for the northern end, which is arable and is currently a large ploughed field. There are hedges and trees around much of the proposed sites. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species throughout the year. Much of the hedging is mature hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. The Cholsey & Wallingford Railway line (known locally as The Bunk) has various mature trees alongside including oaks and ash and both the Wallingford Road and Wallingford by-pass boundaries to the site are marked by continuous mixed hedging and a few oak trees beside Wallingford Road.

Many of the existing hedge lines are old field margins and remaining evidence of former field systems. Some of the fields to the south west of Green Lane are of historical interest since they were former playgrounds where the village football and rugby teams competed. The stand of willows is an interesting remnant of a withy bed when Cholsey was an important centre for basket making.

Most of its environmental value lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes (not to be confused with urban foxes), roe deer and hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where weasels and stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of otters in recent years. (The otter is coming back to our region.) Such mustelids are generally difficult to see, and have most commonly been spotted emerging from the proposed site before crossing the Wallingford Road. Reports of these sightings may be found in Cholsey's 'The Forty' magazine articles and the Reading & District Natural History Society annual publications of 'The Reading Naturalist'.

Buzzards, tawny owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Mainly in winter kingfishers, snipe and woodcock can be flushed from Hithercroft Brook, whilst that part of Cholsey Brook visible from Wallingford Road hosts moorhen and, in winter, teal with the occasional widgeon.

Lapwings have also nested for the last couple of years in a field next to the Bunk line. Other birds of interest regularly seen from the surrounding footpaths are corn bunting, reed bunting, yellowhammer, linnet, skylark, meadow pipit, song thrush, mistle thrush and green & great spotted woodpeckers. Present in the area are kestrels, little owls, barn owls, and occasionally in winter - short-eared owls. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm. The track to Cox's Farm and The Bunk railway line have proved to be regular stopping places for wheatears on migration. Breeding birds include whitethroat, lesser whitethroat, sedge warbler, blackcap, bullfinch - all have been seen or heard in recent months. A pair of hobbys have frequented the area for years, but their nest site is not known which is not surprising since they are incredibly secretive. 2011 has been notable for the presence of yellow wagtails throughout the summer - this is a seriously declining migrant species, so the presence of about 20 on the proposed site recently is of special interest. Cholsey is privileged to still have breeding populations of swifts; house martins and swallows and all of these are seen hunting for insects over the fields.

The area is not one to have been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. Without the

opportunity to study the area through all the seasons, a full assessment is impossible. To illustrate this point, a single brief evening visit was made this September to the junction of Wallingford Road and Green Lane in search of bats. Within five minutes both serotine and pipestrelle bats were detected flying over the proposed site. Also this September the large noctule bat has been observed feeding over some of the outlying bungalows beside the Wallingford Road. In 2010 noctules were regularly seen flying over the field between the Sewage Works and the Wallingford Road, sufficient to suggest a nearby roost. This spectacle was also reported in an edition of The Forty magazine at the time.

No analysis of the freshwater brooks and their wildlife has been undertaken - Cholsey Brook flows mainly through private land and Hithercroft Brook is much overgrown so both present access problems. Both brooks meet up before reaching Mill Court and the Thames. The flow of Cholsey Brook in particular is used by adjoining landowners for their livestock, or in the case of Mill Court for its amenity value. The examples given of birdlife attracted to the brooks suggests a reasonably rich aquatic food source.

None of the above observations refer to the other Cholsey site SG60 beside the Thames at Whitecross. There has been insufficient time to make detailed comments about this area's ecology, although it should be pointed out that it forms part of a long stretch of undisturbed riverbank that runs all the way from Wallingford to Moulsoford. It is also worth mentioning that much of this area is flooded regularly and may be described as a water meadow with associated wetland plants and wildlife.

Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd suggest in their Site Nomination Form (November 2008) for SG33 and SG57 that there were "opportunities to increase biodiversity from current intensive arable farming..." This is an erroneous and misleading statement. The area in question is not intensively farmed and the inevitable result of gravel extraction would be to damage an area already rich in biodiversity, not enhance it.

9. Site Restoration

9.1 Implications for RAF Benson

We have been informed by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, (DIO), Kingston Road, Sutton Coldfield, that they do not have any record of the proposed gravel extraction site at Cholsey. They say that they therefore assume the proposal is still at a relatively early stage and the DIO will formally comment once the full planning application is in process as they should be consulted under the Town and Country Planning Circular 01/03 (Safeguarded Aerodromes Technical Sites and Military Explosive Storage Areas).

With the Minerals Planning Strategy Consultation Draft - September 2011 being subject to consultation with a closing date of the 31st October 2011 it would seem a major omission if the MOD has not been included as a consultee. It would not seem a sound process if the DIO has not been consulted at the earliest possible stage.

We have been informed via RAF Benson that the main concern of the DIO would be in relation to the creation of large areas of standing open water which can be attractive to large bird species increasing the risk of a hazardous bird strike incident.

We note that there is a significant amount of training and test flying of helicopters and fixed wing trainer planes in the vicinity of RAF Benson. The instruction to pilots is to avoid as much as possible the overflying of built-up areas which results in a considerable amount of air traffic over the proposed gravel extraction site between Wallingford and Cholsey.

This issue was one considered in detail by the Oxfordshire County Council Minerals Working Party as noted in the report dated the 30th March 1987. At that time it was noted that large areas of open water in this area would not be acceptable to the MOD.

9.2 Prospects for Restoration

The question of how the worked out sites would be restored should be a significant issue in the determination of which areas are put forward as part of the draft Strategy. However, it is not apparent that any consideration has been given to this matter by the County Council.

It would be reasonable to expect that mineral workings "should be restored within a reasonable timescale to an after-use appropriate to the location and which is sympathetic to the character of the surrounding landscape. Proposals for restoration, after-care and after-use should be submitted with applications for mineral working and should accord with District LDF policies, including environmental protection, countryside enhancement and noise management." and that planning permission will not be granted unless it can be demonstrated that there is "...a high quality, phased restoration scheme....". These proposed policies were included in the draft OMPSC reported to the County Council's Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group of 9 May 2011, but have been watered down in the first two paragraphs of the current OMPSC Policy M6, excluding mention of District LDF policies and radically changing "high quality" to "satisfactory".

The reason for this lowering of expectations is most probably linked to OCC's recognition in Paragraph 4.41 of the OMPSC that because of "... a local shortage of inert waste material for infilling, most new sand and gravel workings in the river valleys of Oxfordshire will have to be restored to water bodies..."

However, in light of the likely MOD objection, materials would have to be imported to backfill the Cholsey/Wallingford sites, at least to a level to ensure that there were no large areas of open water. Therefore restoration for the Cholsey/Wallingford area, the only "new" working proposed, is unlikely to be agricultural use in character with the surrounding landscape and AONB, but some sort of sunken depressions, which would be wet in winter and dry in summer.

Furthermore as the sites are in the floodplain there would be an Environment Agency objection to the use of any waste materials other than ones that are inert in nature, i.e. naturally occurring soils and stones. Considering site SG33 only, with a proposed general depth of extraction of 6.0 metres and the water table at about 1 metre below ground level, a volume in excess of 3 million tonnes (2 million cubic metres) of material would need to be imported to the site. It is highly questionable whether it would be feasible or desirable to import this level of material to the site, given the distance of the Cholsey/Wallingford sites from the main source of such material (which would be Oxford), and both the extra lorry movements and additional time it would add to the duration of the development.

At the proposed extraction rate of 200,000 tonnes per annum, the mineral working could be expected to last about 25 years. Inert fill could not be sourced and imported at anywhere near that rate, and even given some potential overlap of the operations, the site is likely to be operational well in excess of 50 years until finally restored, with all the consequential ongoing harm to local interests of acknowledged importance, including the District LDF policies and the surrounding AONB.

page 29 of 36

10. Impact on Roads

10.1 Impact on Local Roads and Road Network

The roads in this area of South Oxfordshire are already under great pressure and this will become increasingly so due to:

- Rapidly increasing population as identified under section 7.1 in this submission.
- Traffic generated by nearby Didcot, designated a 'growth town'. Wallingford and its bypass, and the A4130 beyond, form a major east-west route to and from Didcot.
- The designation of Milton Park and Science Vale as an Enterprise Zone means that much of the job creation for new residents of

Wallingford will be in that area. This will result in increased traffic movements to and from Wallingford.

- The close grouping of Wallingford and its neighbouring settlements, all set to be allocated more housing, which in view of their close interdependence will result in increasing traffic in the area.
- Significant 'out of town' planned developments at Mongewell Park (Carmel College) and CABI with 160 and 189 units respectively and with the prospect of housing development on the site of South Oxfordshire District Council offices at Crowmarsh will result in significant increased traffic movements. These are housing developments which will be close to the town but too far away to expect that the car will not be the primary means of transport.
- The District Council's and Town Council's drive to open up this area of South Oxfordshire, and in particular Wallingford, to a greater number of visitors. This is a policy considered essential to the future prosperity of Wallingford and its hinterland.
- The demographic change to smaller average household sizes which will tend to result in a move towards one car per adult rather than in many cases a shared car per family.

In the report to Oxfordshire County Council's Minerals Working Party on the 30th March 1987 [see Appendix III], when on a previous occasion gravel extraction near Wallingford was proposed, David Young, the Director of Planning and Property Services, stated in its Appendix A, Item 5:

"Although the Wallingford bypass would overcome most local access problems the impact of gravel lorries on routes radiating from Wallingford remains a concern. The nearest major roads are the A34 and M40; the A423/A4074 being an Inter-Town route between Oxford and Reading only (see Diagram 1). Eastwards towards M40 and London the direct routes are B4009 through Watlington and Benson; A329 through Warborough, Stadhampton and Little Milton and A423 through Henley. It may be possible by routeing agreements to discourage many of the gravel lorries from using B4009 and A329 to reach M40.

"In sum, therefore, the Wallingford Bypass is likely to overcome local access problems although there remains a concern about the consequences for radiating roads."

The diagram referred to in that report [see Appendix III] very clearly depicts the nature of the road network and, other than the construction of the Wallingford bypass, there is little change to these radial routes. There has however been a dramatic increase in population and traffic movements through this area of South Oxfordshire over the intervening twenty-four years and in consequence the statement in 1987 that "the Wallingford bypass is likely to overcome local access problems" is unlikely now to be valid.

Many of the roads are totally unsuitable for significant heavy lorry movements and a prime example of this is the A4130 between Wallingford and Didcot.

The County Council currently contends that by extracting sand and gravel at Cholsey, this results in the most favourable 'tonne/miles to market'. From this the implication is that lorry

page 30 of 36

movements will be confined to a very local area and therefore will not result in added pressure on these radial routes. We do not consider this will be the case because:

- The County Council has no control over where the sand and gravel will be used. This will be dictated by market prices and developer's decisions.
- The report to the County Council Minerals Working Party in 1987, referred to above, stated that the gravel from this site "is not capable of producing structural concrete without the addition of stone. It does not replace the higher quality gravels at Sutton

Courtenay." This means that it will be transported to locations where there is an appropriate use for this quality of gravel or that it will be used locally in combination with stone brought into the area. Either scenario will mean significant lorry movements on local and radial routes. The statement in 1987 that the Cholsey site could not, due to the quality of gravel issues, replace the Sutton Courtenay site is in total contradiction to the statement in paragraph 11 of the Executive Summary in the current draft Minerals Strategy.

- Even if the gravel were used within, say, a 20-mile radius of the proposed site it would still necessitate the use of many of the radial routes from Wallingford.

The bypass was built with a view to relieving the nationally important historic Saxon town of Wallingford with its narrow streets and poor air quality from excessive traffic. This was largely successful for the years immediately after the construction of the bypass but progressively the traffic levels have been increasing. The bypass is a small two lane road, not designed to take significant heavy lorry movements over a prolonged period. With the hazards, dust, mud and disruption which would be caused by lorries travelling to and from the extraction site it is very likely motorists will be deterred from using the bypass and will again choose to drive through the town thus negating the whole purpose of the bypass.

OCC have already been warned by their own consultants Scott Wilson (August 2011) about the "long term adverse cumulative effects on the environment and on the local communities from sharp sand and gravel working. These include ecological, visual and local landscape impacts, air and noise pollution from HGV movements, traffic congestion, GHG emissions and impacts on the water environment... Cholsey is then (after 2020) expected to experience similar impacts..." Their report also confirms that "there is potential for negative transport impacts along the A4130 and A4074 associated with working in Cholsey". These statements reinforce CAGE's view that gravel extraction would have a totally unacceptable environmental impact on the both the local roads, the two communities of Wallingford and Cholsey and other neighbouring parishes.

10.2 Site Access

For the proposed sites SG33 and SG57 any site access would have to be either onto the Wallingford Road, which runs from Cholsey to Wallingford along the eastern side of the site, directly onto the bypass or on a further road directly off the roundabout.

Wallingford Road is a narrow road with significant fast moving traffic, being the main link road between Cholsey and Wallingford. It is also used by many cyclists and is the route from Wallingford, and other areas north of Cholsey, to the mainline railway station. If the site access were to be onto this road then all the lorries would have to transit onto the bypass via the roundabout at the north end of Wallingford Road. As this roundabout is within 100 metres of a second roundabout at the junction of the bypass with the A329 (a roundabout which is already very busy) this would create a very dangerous convergence of traffic.

An access on the bypass would be equally dangerous. The length of the northern edge of SG33 is relatively short and may be shortened further by the need to retain the access to Cox's Farm. Any access onto the bypass would therefore be very close to the existing 'twin roundabouts' at the end of the Wallingford Road and on the A329.

It is known from discussions with the County Council highways engineers in relation to access points for new housing developments, that a further roundabout would not be acceptable because the impact on traffic would be such as to deter use of the bypass in total conflict with the reason the bypass was constructed. The alternative would be acceleration/deceleration lanes which, so close to the existing roundabout, would be impractical, dangerous and again would deter other traffic from using the bypass.

An access directly off the roundabout at the northern end of the Wallingford Road, with the anticipated number of lorry

movements would make this very dangerous and a traffic bottleneck.
 For the proposed site SG60 any site access by road will be very difficult as such an access would have to be very close to the roundabout on the A329. A river access would be unacceptable due to the attractive nature of the Thames in this area, disruption to the Thames Path and the extensive use of the river for rowing and other leisure activities.

11. Suitability & Selection Process of the Cholsey/Wallingford Sites for Sand & Gravel Extraction

11.1 Questionable Soundness of the Selection Process

Paragraph 4.20 of the Oxfordshire Minerals Planning Strategy Consultation Draft (OMPSC) states that the Sutton Courtenay area is likely to be exhausted by around 2020, and that the Cholsey area is proposed to come into production at about that time, to enable continued local supply of sand and gravel to markets in South Oxfordshire. CAGE wishes to challenge the robustness of this approach. In addition to the many constraints identified in the previous sections of this response, which make the Cholsey/Wallingford sites wholly unsuitable for inclusion within the OMPSC, there are several other factors which cast serious doubt as to whether the Cholsey/Wallingford sites would in fact meet the identified need for a continued local supply, or that they are at all preferable to the other sites nominated for sand and gravel extraction in South Oxfordshire.

11.2 Quality of the Reserve

As set out at sections 4.3 and 4.4 the mineral deposits demonstrate a significant level of clay, silt and fines, which would need to be processed out as a waste product, and the remaining sands and gravels are essentially medium grade sharp sand with gravels of high calcium carbonate content.

As a result the reserve would only be appropriate for limited applications, such as fill, and would be unable to meet the wide range of building applications that local (South Oxfordshire) markets would be demanding. For example it could not meet the strength requirements for structural concrete unless mixed with other high quality stone. As a consequence other higher quality aggregate would have to be imported from elsewhere in any event to meet the need for a continued supply.

11.3 Quantity of Reserve

The site nomination forms identify that the main site, SG33 would generate 4.0 million tonnes (mt) of sand and gravel from a net working area of 52.0 hectares. (The total site area is given as 66.0 hectares). This equates to about 77,000 tonnes of mineral per hectare.

However, having carried out a closer examination of the site it is apparent that the net working area would be more like 44 hectares, which would therefore give a yield of about 3.4 mt. This is based on the following assumptions:

- 15 metre margin either side of gas main running through the site
- 16 metre buffer strip to the banks of main rivers through the site. Note: no buffers have been allowed for other watercourses, which may well be required and reduce the working area further;
- 20 metre buffer alongside the railway boundary, to provide for stability of the line and also to accommodate the sewer pipe that runs along here;
- 200 metre buffer zone to settlements. This is a very minimal distance and more may be required. Note: the historic distance adopted in Oxfordshire has been 350 metres;
- 100 metre buffer zone to individual residential properties (in line with historic distance adopted in Oxfordshire), though in particular for the property and listed building within the site, this distance may be insufficient to protect against nuisance and to prevent harm to the setting of the listed building;

- 5 metre buffer strip inside the hedge line alongside Wallingford Road to accommodate the cycle route, though this may need to be larger, because of amenity/safety issues;
page 33 of 36

- Retention of existing planting alongside roads adjoining the site;

- 10 metre buffer to and retention of access to Cox's Farm, which crosses the northwest corner of the site. The triangle of land in the northwest corner of the site beyond the Cox's Farm access and bordered on other sides by the A4130 and the railway line is therefore assumed to be too small and, with the added complication of transporting mineral across the access to Cox's Farm, not economical to be worked.

It is apparent from the site operator's geological report on the site that many of these constraints have not fully been taken into account in arriving at their estimate of the reserve.

Notably the County Council's report to their Minerals Working Party which considered this site in March 1987 estimated that the yield from the site was approximately 3.0 mt (paragraph 3 of the report at Appendix III) This reduced level of reserve coupled with the poor quality of the material, which would demand a higher level of processing to maximise the potential of the material, and an overall lower return, reduces the economic viability of the site. Significant investment will be required to finance the site infrastructure, such as a new high standard access and a processing plant.

11.4 Deliverability

The proposed site operator of the Cholsey/Wallingford sites (SG33 and SG57), Smiths of Bletchington, has other mineral workings at Gill Mill within the Lower Windrush Valley (LWV), in West Oxfordshire, and in light of the above identified financial implications is likely to wish to work these reserves first, then transfer their Gill Mill processing plant to Cholsey, rather than install a brand new plant.

The existing reserves at Gill Mill are identified at Annex 4 of the County Council's report to Cabinet of February 2011 (at which it was agreed to pursue the draft Minerals Core Strategy) as lasting a further 10 years: The existing Gill Mill complex was granted planning permission in 2001 (no.: 0109/94) until 2010; the other quarry identified in the LWV with a life of 8 years is Hanson's at Stonehenge Farm, Northmoor.

The proposed capacity per year from the LWV (as identified from the table at Annex 4 of the February 2011 Cabinet report) is 500,000 tonnes per annum (tpa). As the Northmoor site has a proposed annual output of 200,000 tonnes (1.55 mt over 8 years), the Gill Mill site has an annual throughput of 300,000 tpa. This volume is consistent with the historical output from Gill Mill, as identified in the original application for the Gill Mill Complex.

The same Annex identifies a total of 14.5 mt of potential further reserves within the LWV through site nominations. Of these potential new reserves 11.6 mt are in land nominated by Smiths, of which 10.9 mt would be worked through Gill Mill. In fact OCC's preliminary assessment tables identify that pre-application discussions are already taking place on site nominations SG21, 22, 23, 24 and 34, which in combination would provide an additional reserve of 8.9 mt. As these sites would be an immediate extension to the existing complex it is very likely that they will go ahead and thus the Gill Mill complex would continue for at least a further 39 years in total (existing 10 years of reserves plus 8.9 mt/300,000 tpa).

As such the Cholsey/Wallingford sites are very unlikely to become operational by 2020 or in fact even by the end of the strategy period.

A further factor to strengthen the conclusion that Smiths would be reluctant to operate their Gill Mill site and the

Cholsey/Wallingford sites concurrently is that, in doing so they would need to significantly increase their sales of mineral. The reserves at Northmoor are expected to last 8 years and there is the potential of a small extension of 0.5 mt (site nomination SG18), which means the supply from this quarry would last until about the 2020 mark. After this point in order to maintain a supply of 500,000 tpa from the LWV (the rate identified in the table at Annex 4 of the February 2011 Cabinet report) the only realistic options are for Smiths to increase their production rate at Gill Mill, or for a new quarry to be created at SG39, 32 and 34. However, whilst SG39 is a Cemex site, it is doubtful that the reserve of 2 mt would be sufficient to support new infrastructure, unless worked in conjunction with the adjoining Smiths land (SG32 and SG34).

In these circumstances the Strategy would have the effect that Smiths would need to provide 70% of the Oxfordshire market supply of sand and gravel, (500,000 tpa from the LWV and 200,000 tpa from Cholsey/Wallingford of a 1.01 mtpa apportionment) which would be a very difficult challenge for a single operator to meet. Even assuming that the contribution by Smiths from the LWV does not rise to 500,000 tonnes per annum, the Strategy assumes that Smiths will be providing 50% of the apportionment, which is still a big challenge. Alternatively it is highly questionable whether it is appropriate for the Mineral Strategy to be having the effect of putting such a large share of the market in the hands of a single operator.

11.5 The Distance to Markets

The main market for the supply of sand and gravel in Oxfordshire is the City of Oxford and the central Oxfordshire settlements. Furthermore, whilst there is undoubtedly demand for supply in South Oxfordshire, for example to proposed housing growth areas in Didcot and Wantage, a significant proportion of the demand for construction materials is not for housing but for roads.

At the stakeholder meeting of 29 September 2011 organised by the Council, the minerals industry confirmed that the destination of sands and gravels will be determined by market forces, probably half going north towards Oxford and a similar amount west towards Didcot and beyond. Furthermore the industry view was that in terms of haulage, the distances between the various nominated sites in South Oxfordshire are not significant. All of the other sites are closer to Oxford than the Cholsey/Wallingford sites, and none of the areas would be materially closer to the market than any other.

Smiths are themselves clear that much of the gravel from the Cholsey/Wallingford sites would go to Oxford. Their site nomination forms appropriately identify a 50%/50% split between Oxford and South Oxfordshire for the destination of the material.

In light of this situation, the promotion of the criterion 'tonne miles to market', which appears to have been important in the site selection process and the perceived benefit of the Cholsey/Wallingford sites as closer to areas of demand for construction materials in South Oxfordshire (see paragraph 19 of the Council's report to Cabinet of February 2011) is not justified.

11.6 Site Selection Process

For this reason and for many others it is apparent that the Council's conclusion that Cholsey/Wallingford is the most preferred area for gravel extraction in South Oxfordshire is not robust.

As mentioned in the introduction to this submission, the County Council has not started with the premise of determining where the sand and gravel resource is within South Oxfordshire, and then proceeding to sieve out highly constrained areas or rank areas by their benefits in order to arrive at a potential new source of supply. Rather they have relied on sites nominated for mineral extraction, and have made a very rudimentary assessment of the sites in order to arrive at the proposed strategy.

The County Council argues that a detailed analysis is not necessary for the Core Strategy, because that is for the site allocations document. Nevertheless, it is the case, and the County Council has confirmed (see point 21 of the note of meeting between CAGE and County Council Officers of 12 September 2011 at Appendix II) that the proposed new area at Cholsey (part ii of Policy M3)

comprises the three sites SG33, 57 and 60, not some broader area. As the new area is so site specific, a more detailed assessment is in fact very necessary in order to confirm the viability of the site, and to ensure that the strategy can be delivered.

11.7 South Oxfordshire Sites Comparison

The attached table: Appendix I, CAGE Sites Assessment (based on OCC's preliminary site areas), provides a more detailed assessment of the potential sites expanding on the Council's preliminary site assessment table (background paper) to include factors that should have been taken into account. This shows that the Cholsey/Wallingford sites are amongst the sites that score the least favourably.

The sites rank in order of most preferable sites as follows (positive scores given in brackets):

1. SG59 Stadhampton (12)
2. SG42 Nuneham Courtenay (11)
3. SG09 Drayton St Leonard (10)
4. SG17 Culham (10)
5. SG13 Shillingford (9)
6. SG41 Lower Radley (9)
7. SG60 Wallingford (9)
8. SG57 Cholsey (8)
9. SG03 Benson (7)
10. SG33 Cholsey (6)

Alternatively if the sites are considered in terms of negative impacts, which includes some additional weighting for important national designations such as AONB and Historic Parks, the sites rank as follows (negative scores given in brackets):

- SG59 Stadhampton (1)
- SG09 Drayton St Leonard (3)
- SG17 Culham (3)
- SG42 Nuneham Courtenay (3)
- SG13 Shillingford (4)
- SG41 Lower Radley (4)
- SG60 Wallingford (6)
- SG03 Benson (7)
- SG57 Cholsey (8)
- SG33 Cholsey (10)

However, it is also worth pointing out a few key issues about some of the sites.

SG13 Shillingford: The main issue that counts against this site according to the Council's preliminary site assessment is archaeology. It is accepted that there is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) within the site and other areas of archaeological importance. However, it should be noted that according to the site nomination forms the estimated yield of 5.3 million tonnes would be derived from about a third of the total site area, and so a considerable amount of the site would not be worked, no doubt to protect the SAM and archaeological interest (as well as provide appropriate buffers/working margins etc). Consequently the site should not be blanket discounted on archaeological grounds. page 36 of 36

SG17 Culham: It is not apparent from the Council's preliminary site assessment table why this site has not been taken forward. However, the Council advised in an email dated 2 August 2011 (see Appendix IV) that it was because of issues with access and the impact of HGVs on congestion and local amenity (even though the site has direct access onto an A road). The same issues are equally applicable to the Cholsey/Wallingford sites.

SG09 Drayton St Leonard/SG59 Stadhampton: Whilst no reason to preclude site SG59 Stadhampton is identified, SG09 is coloured red as not to be considered on archaeological grounds in the preliminary site assessment table. This conclusion is not consistent with the Council's report to Cabinet of February 2011, which states at paragraph 12 and at Part B. 15. h) of Annex 2 that all sites within the Drayton St Leonard-Stadhampton area are potentially deliverable. Notably the Cholsey/Wallingford sites fall within an area of archaeological restraint identified by South Oxfordshire, yet the appropriate level of caution has not been applied to them as has been done for SG09.

SG41 Radley/SG42 Nuneham Courtenay: It is apparent from Part B. 15. d) of Annex 2 to the Council's report to Cabinet of February 2011 that the Radley site has been discounted because it would not be deliverable in the first 10 years of the plan period. This statement is at odds with the nomination forms for the site, which state that there are no known legal or time constraints. Nevertheless, as it is clear from the table at Annex 4 to that report, that the Sutton Courtenay supply is likely to last a further 11 years, this also does not seem to be a justifiable reason for not pursuing this site. It is furthermore apparent from Part B. 15. d) of Annex 2 to the Cabinet report that the archaeological and historic environment is seen as the main factor in discounting the Nuneham Courtenay site. This decision does not sit comfortably with the equally important archaeological environment of the Cholsey/Wallingford sites, where two listed buildings would also be directly affected (a situation which is not the case with any other of the nominated sites), and the impact on the North Wessex Downs & Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which must have at least equal if not more weight than the Historic Park designation and deserve protection.

Appendix 2 to CAGE submission

Present: Alec Hayton (WTC/CAGE)

Mark Gray (CPC/CAGE)

Suzi Coyne (CAGE's Mineral Consultant)

Henry Thornton (CAGE)

Peter Day (OCC)

Lois Partridge (OCC)

Copy to: Patrick Green

South Oxfordshire District Council

Wallingford Town Council

Cholsey Parish Council

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council

North Moreton Parish Council

1. Meeting to discuss the sites put forward for sand and gravel working in South Oxfordshire in OCC's Minerals Planning Strategy Consultation Draft, not the merits of the argument justifying the county quantities or requirements elsewhere in the county.

2. ARCHAEOLOGY - SC suggested that CAGE's investigations indicated that SG33 potentially had significant archaeology and should require a proper investigation before nomination, something already identified by SODC. OCC said that they were advised by the County Archaeologist and would make further enquiries.
3. SC pointed out that the quantities identified for the land at Shillingford (SG13 - 5.3 million tonnes) already took account of the fact that not all of the site could be quarried due to archaeology - although archeology had still been presented by OCC as a reason not to pursue this site. OCC to check this with the promoter Hanson.
4. SC said that a contact, who had previously worked for Hanson, thought that the quality of material at SG33 was poor and that was the reason why they had not pursued the site after all their initial borehole investigations. SC to check with Hanson and ask for borehole data.
5. AVAILABLE RESOURCES - SC explained her analysis of the quantities available from SG33 taking account the constraints within and around the site, reducing OCC's estimated tonnage from 4 million to 3.5 million. Constraints included, watercourses and paths, housing, a listed building, the heritage railway and town sewer and proposed cycle path within the site.
6. SC questioned why the Radley site SG41 had been discounted on grounds of not being deliverable within ten years. She said that the same rationale would probably apply to SG33 as Smiths had reserves in the Windrush Valley which would keep them going for 10/20 years and would be unlikely to move their plant over before then. In any event the Sutton Courtenay site was good until 2020.
7. AONB - CAGE pointed out that SG33 was bordering directly on an AONB, unlike any other site and that it was clearly visible from Cholsey Hill within the AONB and from across the river where new development was planned.
8. LISTED BUILDING - SC pointed out that SG33 was the only site being considered which actually included a listed building.
9. ECOLOGY - Wallingford and Cholsey are separated by just under a mile of arable and grazing farmland, hedges and trees. It was a largely peaceful and undisturbed area, supporting an amazing variety of bird species and wildlife which will be lost if these plans go ahead. CAGE would be submitting a report on the wildlife, which has even included sightings of otters.
10. TOURISM, ECONOMIC AND AMENITY VALUE - SODC and Wallingford TC had their own core strategy to promote the town as a tourist attraction, based on its historic Saxon heritage and rural riverside setting. This would be severely jeopardized by a quarry on its southern edge.
11. CAGE said that a quarry on this site will severely damage the countryside and directly affect the lives of the 10,000 people who live in these two communities, and yet this did not appear to be a criteria in their assessment - why not? There was even a hospital and housing directly upwind of the site.
12. CHOLSEY AND WALLINGFORD RAILWAY - This heritage and tourist railway, which was set up thirty years ago and relies on tourism for almost all its funds, runs for most of its length alongside the proposed gravel pit, on land owned by the Wallingford Town Council. The Railway had advised CAGE that they feared the proposed gravel pit would threaten their ability to continue operating both by destroying its reputation as an attraction and by causing instability to the railway.
13. AGATHA CHRISTIE TRAIL - CAGE will send OCC the guide to the trail sponsored by SODC and others that shows the route alongside the proposed quarry from her house in Winterbrook to her grave in Cholsey Church. They emphasised the importance of Agatha Christie's links to the town, which attracted people from all over the world.
14. ROAD AND CYCLE PATH BETWEEN WALLINGFORD AND CHOLSEY - CAGE raised the importance of the Wallingford Road for commuters travelling daily to Oxford, Reading and London from Cholsey station, and others going the other way to school, work

or shopping trips in Wallingford. OCC had an eco plan for a cycle path just inside the proposed site to encourage commuters and school children to cycle, which would inevitably be jeopardized by these plans. CAGE pointed out that a third of the funding for the cycle path was already in place and the balance should be available during the next 5-10 years from S106 payments from new housing developments in the area.

15. FARMLAND - CAGE asked for the site to be correctly identified as Grade 2 agricultural land, not 2,3 or even 4.

16. MILES TO MARKET - The question as to where the sand and gravel was destined was discussed and OCC agreed with CAGE that the market would decide, some would go west to Didcot, Wantage and Grove and some north towards Oxford. By that criteria CAGE suggested that the sites to the north of Wallingford were therefore closer to their market than SG33.

17. CAGE suggested that SG17 was particularly well placed with access onto the A415 and then the A4074, but with inadequate bridge crossings directly into Didcot. As this site was next to the existing gravel operations in Sutton Courtenay, CAGE asked why a conveyor system could not be rigged up across the river. OCC said that in principle it could as had happened at Bray, but the company that has nominated SG17 is not the same as the operator at Sutton Courtenay. CAGE suggested that OCC could surely exercise some influence in such an important decision.

18. RESTORATION - CAGE asked what the proposal was for restoring the land would be. There were fears that it would not be agricultural as at present but some sort of sunken depressions, which would be wet in winter and dry in summer. It had been assumed that the MOD/RAF would object to water areas being formed although a response from them was still awaited. OCC thought that the MOD might no longer be taking such a firm line on Benson, unlike Brize Norton.

19. CAGE asked why a key criteria for selecting a site was not an agreed and credible restoration outcome, the one factor, which would affect the site in perpetuity.

20. CORE STRATEGY - OCC said that their Core Strategy was not intended as a detailed analysis of sites; it identifies broad areas for future working, within which sites would subsequently be identified. But OCC has used the information on nominated sites that has been provided by mineral companies and landowners to assess the potential deliverability of the areas and check that the proposed strategy is feasible.

21. CAGE said that OCC's draft proposals went much further than that as they actually identified specific sites and relied on the promoters' analysis of them. OCC confirmed that only one area in SODC was being put forward in their Core Strategy and that covered sites SG33/57/60, the Wallingford/Cholsey sites.

22. OCC said that the Core Strategy was not based on specific sites and a fuller analysis will be required to check the detail when the sites are chosen. CAGE made the point that they have already taken forward only one new site area, SG33/57/60, into the current consultation, without having done the detailed analysis. It will put them in a difficult position to reject the only site being put forward at the end of this consultation, even if the evidence weighed in favour of such a decision.

23. CAGE asked why the choice of sites being taken into account was limited to those put forward by promoters and landowners, rather than by a proper appraisal of the most suitable sites in the county. OCC said that this because there had to be reasonable certainty that the strategy would be deliverable within the plan period.

24. CAGE questioned why it was not possible to sign up a properly selected site in such a long timeframe, as landowners would probably cooperate. *(SC had previously mentioned that when OCC was having problems finding a source for soft sand and had done an independent appraisal and approached landowners direct, they had been warmly welcomed).*

25. CONSULTATION MEETING - CAGE were invited by OCC to send a representative to a Draft Minerals Strategy discussion group

	(20 people) at Oxford Town Hall on Thursday 29th September, 10am to 12.45pm. CAGE said that the parish and town councils were concerned that they had not been properly consulted in 2010. This was noted. Appendix 4 to CAGE submission
--	---

Suzi Coyne

From: Partridge, Lois - Environment & Economy - ESPCC [Lois.Partridge@Oxfordshire.gov.uk]
Sent: 02 August 2011 09:24
To: Suzi Coyne
Cc: Day, Peter - Environment & Economy - ESPCC
Subject: RE: CAGE

Suzi,

Thanks for your email; I'll try to go through each bullet point.

SG-17 Land at Culham has not been taken forward because of the issues with access from the site. If HGVs turn right out of the site and go through Clifton Hampden to reach the A4074, they would be contributing to congestion and there would be a significant impact on local amenity. If HGVs turned left, they would have to either go through Abingdon town centre or go over the bridge to Sutton Courtenay and go through Sutton Courtenay village, with a similar impact on local amenity. The preliminary site assessment does not highlight the more subjective criteria of impact on local communities particularly well, the only transport criterion being proximity to the main road network.

The archaeological report for SG-09, prepared by Hugh Coddington, is attached. It describes the presence and extent of the archaeological assets on the site and highlights the presence of assets which are of equivalent significance to scheduled sites.

I attach scanned nomination forms for SG-09, SG-13, SG-17, SG-41, SG-42, and SG-59, as requested.

We don't have a copy of the borehole investigations carried out by D K Symes in 1992, but I have written to Martin Layer at Smiths to request a copy for our records and to forward to you.

As you are probably aware, a minerals sites document was published in 2007. Cholsey parish council submitted a response to the inclusion of two sites, SG-33 and SG-46. SG-46, which was land identified by the council as having potential resources but no nomination, has since been withdrawn from the potential list of sites available. Both of the parish council's responses were submitted by Gill Williams, on behalf of Ian Miles. The council was advised at that time that the proposed strategy was not sufficiently spatial and therefore, following the publication of the revised PPS 12 guidance in 2008, work started again on development of the options during 2008 and 2009.

Cholsey parish council was invited to attend both of the workshops which we held for parish councils to discuss our development of the mineral strategy options. The first invitation was issued in December 2009 to Mr Miles, the clerk to Cholsey PC; Mr Mark Gray attended the workshop at Benson in March 2010. This was a facilitated workshop at which officers gave a presentation on the initial set of draft options for minerals extraction. Delegates then had the opportunity to comment on these options; these comments were captured by the facilitators and a full report of the workshop was prepared. This is on our website:

[http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicsite/councilservices?
WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=http://apps.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Intern](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicsite/councilservices?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=http://apps.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Intern)

832	<p>Our objections come under the following headings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Traffic 2) Dust and filth 3) Unsightly in a beautiful place 4) Noise 5) Just so close to two interdependent centres of population <p>1) TRAFFIC</p> <p>The traffic on the Wallingford by-pass is already very heavy at the business peaks. It is already very dangerous leaving Brightwell-cum Sotwell by car. Many children cycle to school, shops, cinema and clubs from Cholsey and Brightwell in and out of Wallingford. The dangers would be massively increased. The rest of our objections are obvious to any right thinking person. We just cannot believe that this is even being considered .</p>
720	<p>I object to the proposal for gravel extraction at Cholsey - Wallingford Road and Reading Road. My reasons are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This will irreparably spoil an area of sensitive countryside which forms part of the rural and attractive setting to Wallingford. - Wallingford is one of the most important small historic towns in the country and this setting is an integral part of Wallingford and Cholsey's historic character. - The area of extraction will specifically spoil the setting for the Agatha Christie walking trail, the heritage 'Bunk' railway, the Thames path - all of which contribute to the area's character and tourist 'offer'. - The extraction is too close to the existing settlements of Cholsey and Winterbrook/ Wallingford and would harm the amenity and environment of the area. - The amount of extraction being planned for is more than should be - more sustainable methods of construction/ conservation of resources are possible and should be built into the Council's plans. <p>I strongly urge the County Council to reconsider and reject this application</p>
721	<p>2. The Board considers the Strategy to be generally sound.</p> <p>3. Policy M3 (strategy for the location of mineral working) - the Board considers that the potential sand and gravel sites at Cholsey (sites SG-33, SG-57 and SG-60) all lie in the narrow gap between the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs and therefore within the setting of both AONBs and that the site at Caversham (SG-11) lies within the setting of the Chilterns AONB. The Board's preference is for all of these sites to be deleted from the Strategy because of the likely impact on the AONBs and their settings. Failing this the sites should not proceed any further until detailed landscape and visual impact assessments have been prepared to assess the potential impacts on the settings of the two AONBs.</p> <p>4. The Board is increasingly concerned about such developments and has recently adopted a Position Statement on 'Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB'. A copy of this is attached to this representation.</p>
728	<p>Smiths welcome the emphasis that minerals can only be worked where they are found. This simple statement must underpin the basis for where future mineral working should take place.</p> <p>4.2 We support the proposed spatial strategy for sand and gravel, soft sand and crushed rock in the County. For sharp sand and gravel we specifically support the identification of resources in the Lower Windrush Valley, at Eynsham/Cassington/Yarnton and at Cholsey and confirm that these sites remain deliverable within the Plan period.</p> <p>4.3 We support the preference to be given to extensions to existing soft sand and crushed rock quarries.</p>

	<p>4.4 We do not support the current wording in Policy M3 regarding the overall level of mineral extraction or lorry traffic. Past and current output rates from existing plant sites are not provided to define the base line for this proposal and it is unclear from the broad sweep of the statement whether lorry traffic associated with ancillary and added value operations on the mineral sites are included. Smiths Gill Mill site does not have a production limit set by the planning permission. Similarly it does not have a limit on lorry movements as in addition to added value operations it provides a very well used public weighbridge service for lorries. The wording of this part of the policy is far too vague. If necessary and appropriate we may support a form of words that stated that the Windrush Valley should not significantly increase its overall permitted contribution of sand and gravel to the County. However the overall contribution figure would still need to be defined and should be based upon permitted operations and a sufficient number of years to properly reflect pre and post recession economic activity.</p>
700 (MPA) and 711 (OMPG)	<p>The MPA recommends that the locational strategy be more flexible. The strategy should continue to identify the principle locations for production of sand and gravel, but we are aware from operators that while there appear to be adequate resources, there are issues of productive capacity at some sites. If there are delays or sites do not come forward as envisaged there would be no productive flexibility, hence additional areas or policy flexibility is required. The policy seeks to refuse working outside of the identified areas unless the required provision cannot be met from within those areas. However this will not be known until the end of the Plan period. We therefore recommend that the policy is amended to provide for greater flexibility for applications elsewhere to be treated on their merits and granted permission if they are environmentally acceptable and meet other Core Policies.</p> <p>We are aware that operators are concerned that the only additional new area identified for sharp sand and gravel is Cholsey. In order to provide a greater degree of flexibility as outlined above, we recommend that other sites that have been precluded (based on outcome of the Preliminary Assessment of Minerals Site Nominations) should not be ruled out at this stage, particularly on grounds of potential archaeological interest.</p>
795	<p>As a resident of Wallingford, I am writing to express my concern over the proposed sites for sand and gravel extraction between Wallingford and Cholsey, particularly SG33. The sites are upwind of a large number of houses in Wallingford (including my own) which will suffer from dust and noise if the proposal goes ahead. I am also concerned about the impact of many extra lorries on the roads - as a frequent cyclist or pedestrian on the road to Cholsey, I think that the extra lorries will make that route significantly more dangerous and less pleasant. The area is currently home to a wide range of wildlife that can be enjoyed from the paths in the area, but I doubt either will survive if this site is developed. In short, I can see several drawbacks with this site that would not appear to affect some of the other sites on your list.</p>
796	<p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. The size and volume of these lorries that will take over the road that runs between Wallingford and Cholsey will add extra danger to all motorists, cyclist and pedestrians.</p> <p>With the understanding from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead. Plus the added loss of areas that have habitats of many fauna and flora, also of Archaeological interest.</p>

797	<p>This comment on the minerals consultation focuses on the plan to extract gravel next to the Wallingford Road in Cholsey. In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway.</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.</p> <p>Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.</p> <p>The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be</p>
-----	--

undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

Para 6 & 7

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.

Para 8

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.

I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years

	<p>ago.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p> <p>I urge you to exclude the damaging plan to extract gravel from Cholsey from the local mineral plan.</p>
798	<p>I write to object to the proposed Gravel Pit for the site between Cholsey and Wallingford, on the grounds of environment, transport, disruption and unsightliness in a rural area enjoyed by thousands.</p> <p>I find it inexplicable why OCC would approve this site, and not seek another site that does not affect so many people.</p> <p>The Wallingford Road is a very busy road for commuters and families moving between Cholsey and Wallingford, and Gravel Pit lorries would not be a welcome arrival from a health & safety perspective.</p> <p>Furthermore, the site is a prominent site of historical importance (Agatha Christie's footpath to Cholsey Church passes across it), the much loved Cholsey-Wallingford train runs alongside the proposed site (development here from area of natural beauty to a wasteland would ruin this volunteer-led enterprise which brings in tourists to the area) and this area is a beautiful place to go walking and spot wildlife.</p> <p>Wallingford and Cholsey are intrinsically linked, with Cholsey housing the town's closest rail station. Adding traffic to this busy road seems an odd decision, and certainly the scenery would be destroyed forever.</p> <p>I urge OCC to reconsider and prevent a local disaster for South Oxfordshire.</p>

800	<p>I would like to register my objection to be considered as part of the consultation for the minerals extraction to include Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>I would like to raise my objections of four grounds</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The consideration is regardless of the quality of the minerals, which I understand to be of very poor, so much so a previous contractor withdrew. 2 It is being considered from a pool of only one and has been done at short notice. 3 The nominations were put forward by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. 4 The size of the site and its proximity to two communities seems not have been taken into account, or its current character, amenity and setting, nor the wildlife or its restoration <p>Why from such a large county is there only one site being considered? How can it be a consultation if there is nothing to compare with? It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, and no minerals strategy either.</p> <p>Both Cholsey and Wallingford are tight knit and thriving communities, a working example of the big society in practice. It is an area where children still feel safe to play outside and regularly do so. However the choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the proximity to what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy and even hazardous, affecting the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. The sheer size of the site and volume of heavy goods vehicles that will service it will mean that local children (and adults) will no longer be able to cycle or walk between Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This seems to go against all of the coalition governments initiatives, we are a working example of the big society, our children play outside so are at a lesser risk of obesity, this instead seems the to harp back old fashioned Conservative "cash for" scandals (questions/houses/ internships and now gravel)</p>
801	<p>The proposed plans for the gravel extraction site in Cholsey concerns me greatly and as such I would like to register my objection for the consultation process. There are so many negatives and few positives that it is hard to see why such plans are being considered at all. The Core Strategy put forward by Oxfordshire County Council is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down</p>

	<p>guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site, Cholsey, has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options. This is exacerbated by the fact that the gravel quality in this area is extremely poor, a fact that ended plans by a previous contractor 20 years ago.</p> <p>The site plan completely fails to consider the impact on the local community both in the short and long term. A destructive, noisy and polluting gravel extraction pit in close proximity to primary schools, farms, parks, and residential areas clearly has no objective to integrate with its surroundings for mutual benefit or even minimal disruption. Long term the site cannot be restored as a lake due to the proximity of the Thames and for the same reason cannot be used for landfill. A hazardous, devastated and ultimately useless landscape will remain. Another needless legacy of the capitalist conservative bulldozer, obliterating greenbelt land to line the pockets of those least affected.</p>
802	<p>I would like to register my objection to a gravel pit in the Cholsey Wallingford area.</p> <p>Main reasons are traffic on roads that i cycle on contradiction with building cycle path on that route, problem with Visitors and site of agatha christie house with extra noise and traffic</p> <p>noise and dust pollution</p> <p>spoiling our countryside</p> <p>impact on CandW railway</p> <p>too near residential houses where there are lots of young families and elderly people</p> <p>This does not appear to be the best site, especially when new housing is being proposed in the area.</p>
803	<p>I am writing to ask that OCC reconsider their proposal to site a Gravel Pit between Cholsey and Wallingford.</p> <p>A South-Wallingford resident myself, I regularly drive/cycle to Cholsey along the Wallingford Road, to attend Childrens Groups there, call into the Tesco Express or to catch a train.</p> <p>I was appalled to learn that OCC want to site a Gravel Pit on such a beautiful patch of greenbelt land. As a family, we often enjoy a walk along the footpath across this site, enjoying the beautiful scenery and spotting the wildlife in it. In fact, one of our favourite days out is to walk this route alongside the Cholsey-Wallingford railway into Cholsey and catch the train back (on days when it is running). Not only would this be impossible in future, but I fear for the future of the railway itself, as the view would be ruined. This would be a terrible pity as so many families enjoy this volunteer-run attraction and it draws in tourists to the area.</p> <p>As a mum, I am also concerned that the lorries would be an unwelcome addition to the traffic on the Wallingford Road - surely the Gravel Pit should be sited somewhere a bit more off the beaten track??</p> <p>Please reconsider before it is too late.</p>
804	<p>I wish to lodge my objections to the proposed Gravel Pits at Cholsey and along the banks of the River Thames south of Wallingford. I must point out that the latter, our last true water meadow is of extraordinary beauty and the home to a multitude of life, including rare newts, frogs and toads, lapwing, golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. I have recently seen several pairs of the rare Little owls, also barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. I would suggest you each spend a silent morning on the proposed site, and I'm confident, if you do, you will realise the importance of this</p>

	<p>beautiful area and be conscious of the unfortunate mistake you have been proposing. I do hope you have not invested too much time in this thoughtless proposal.</p>
811	<p>I wish to object to the proposal to authorise gravel and sand extraction on land between Wallingford and Cholsey. The farmland between Wallingford and Cholsey is greenbelt land that should be protected as such. With the construction of hundreds of houses around the perimeter of Wallingford and also in Cholsey and Didcot the addition of sand and gravel trucks will block the roads with traffic just as the quantity of cars on the roads is increased by the new housing.</p> <p>I am also concerned that this heavy industrial process so close to Wallingford and the villages of Cholsey and Brightwell will allow further blight close to the town because once an area is ruined there is then a tendency to use the pits for landfill and to site other unpleasant land uses next to it. This will divide the parish of Cholsey, affect local tourism (the Agatha Christie trail) and so close to the town will create a health hazard of flies and other scavengers like rats and gulls. It may also cause pollution of the groundwater and seepage into the Thames which remains a main source of local water supply and supplies for London.</p>
812	<p>We accept that the Oxfordshire economy requires a local supply of aggregates to minimise 'sand and gravel miles' and, although we regret the damage to a historic landscape with high amenity value, we also appreciate that aggregates need to be excavated where they occur. We would, however, like the comments below to be taken into consideration during the consultation if the proposal is accepted.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The site map of the Cholsey-Wallingford proposal shows that there is scope to keep the aggregates off local roads almost completely by upgrading the Bunk line to Network Rail standard, installing a rail-truck loading facility and re-connecting the Bunk to the main line at or near Cholsey station. The upgrade cost could be borne by the gravel business, the Bunk would still be able to run at weekends and bank holidays and a high quality asset would revert to the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway Preservation Society when gravel is eventually exhausted. The bunk line might even be able to "leverage" some immediate, opportunist benefits from the gravel business, such as a station upgrade and creation of an environmental trail along the track enabling observation (by public and school parties) of botany and wildlife at a half-way stop along the line. 2. Transport of aggregate by HGV should be kept to a minimum. The Association is particularly anxious that HGVs do not travel through Streatley. Currently weight limits apply to the A329 and the A417 from near the village boundary and the community would expect these to be retained and respected. 3. If the proposal does go ahead, mitigation of the impact of extraction must be prioritised. The extraction company should be required to agree with the local community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · noise control measures during extraction and means of sound proofing if necessary e.g. soil embankments; · minimal numbers of vehicle movements, their timing and routes; · measures to landscape the site when sand and gravel is exhausted.
814	<p>I would like to add my comments to your Minerals Strategy Consultation and express my objection to the proposed Cholsey-Wallingford gravel pit. Having gathered as much information as I can on the impact the gravel pit might have on our community, the environmental angle jumps out at me.</p> <p>I lived in Brussels for 10 years, working alongside the European Union where environmental protection is paramount. Of all the new environmental laws, protection of biodiversity is one of the most important issues being legislated in the EU. Only in May this year, the European Commission adopted another communication concerning biodiversity strategy.</p>

	<p>I fully understand that the proposed Cholsey-Wallingford gravel pit is a local - not a European - issue. However, it is difficult for me to ignore the contradiction I see between senior level political commitment to biodiversity protection and the sad possibility that in my own back garden an area of vibrant wildlife might be lost to a gravel pit for the next quarter of a century. I am deeply upset that we risk losing such a valuable part of our local landscape to the proposed gravel pit. I would like to know whether a full environmental impact assessment has been carried out on the area, as without this, no concrete information can exist concerning the extent to which a pit might destroy local wildlife and their habitats.</p> <p>The biodiversity angle should not be underestimated. The proposed gravel site covers an area of our local environment rich in wildlife - wildlife that is dependant on a well established, unspoiled and undisturbed habitat. I believe many bird species live in the hedges and trees in and around the proposed site, and that animals such as deer, hares, stoats and weasels are native to this area. From the map available, I saw that part of the proposed site runs directly alongside the river Thames. Environmental organisations have spent years trying to re-introduce animals, such as otters, to parts of the Thames. What damage will this gravel pit have to long-standing efforts to protect and restore wildlife and their natural habitats? I am hoping you can provide answers.</p> <p>For my part, I sincerely hope the gravel pit proposal does not go ahead, and despite this being a local issue I feel I must consult with my European colleagues for their opinion or advice on the matter. In the meantime, I would like your full assurance that a thorough environmental impact assessment has been or will be carried out on the proposed site. And then I would very much like to see the results. I look forward to your response.</p>
815	<p>I am a resident of Cholsey and live on the edge of Wallingford and I am horrified to hear about the proposed plans for gravel extraction in this area. I strongly oppose for the following reasons: 1. The proposed area is a heritage asset and the land, the reed beds, the watercourses and the field patterns have been undisturbed for many hundred years. With the proposed gravel pit this beautiful graze land will be lost forever and the unspoilt character of an area, which surroundings are quite built up, will be gone. We need to treasure our green spaces and all its wildlife and not destroy it. The quality of life for those living in this area (10,000) will be seriously threatened; the noise and the dust will be intolerable. 2 The site was considered about 20 years ago and it was found not suitable and withdrawn because the quality of the gravel was poor. 3 In Wallingford and Cholsey we have worked so hard and spend considerable sums of money to attract tourism and encourage people to leave the car at home and many positive things have been put in place to support this i.e the Wallingford Cholsey Steam Railway (which will be running right through the gravel pit), new smart sign posting in Wallingford, improving the museum, adding mooring places on the river, designing an Agatha Christie trail which is a walk from the museum in Wallingford via her home in Wintergrook to her grave in Cholsey, and a long overdue cycle path between the two villages. The walk and cycle path will run along the Wallingford Rd, the main road connecting the two villages and therefore exactly along the full length of the gravel pit. With endless lorries coming and going this will be thoroughly spoilt and will have serious safety issues. Please, Please, please stop the gravel pit.</p>
941	<p>I write to express my concern at the choice of the Wallingford Road site as the preferred option for gravel extraction. The proposal to sanction a gravel pit in the settlement of Wallingford with the consequent effects of pollution, noise, traffic etc in this particular pleasant and historic area is ill-conceived.</p> <p>At a time when Wallingford is seeking to increase its attraction to tourists the effect of a gravel pit on the Cholsey and Wallingford railway and the Agatha Christie trail would be disastrous.</p>

	In recent years Wallingford has become internationally known because of the archaeological work which has been in progress and it is probable that the disruption of the proposed area could destroy further evidence of the mediaeval settlement. I urge you to reconsider the decision.
982	I write to object to the gravel extraction planned for the Cholsey area near Wallingford. This I object to because I feel the surrounding areas are very small yet highly populated, such a small area would not copy well with the high volume of heavy vehicles on the small roads, this along with the debris and dust carried in the air great distances for I believe to be 25 years of work would greatly impact on the environment also destroying the wildlife and air quality.
847 (W Berks Council)	With respect to the minerals we would particularly like to be kept informed over the proposed mineral extraction area around Cholsey. It is understood that this area is being promoted as a potential mineral resource area to replace the deposits at Sutton Courtney once they are exhausted, however there are concerns about potential heavy good vehicle traffic impacting upon the road network in West Berkshire should minerals from this area travel outside Oxfordshire.
877	<p>I am writing to oppose the proposed gravel pit between Cholsey and Wallingford. Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village of Cholsey.</p> <p>The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists.</p> <p>This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to</p>

wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.

Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.

	<p>It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
755	<p>I object to the siting of a gravel pit between Wallingford and Cholsey because of the following consequences: Reduction of property value. Dust, noise and congestion generated by the extraction. Added danger to pedestrians and cyclists travelling</p>

	<p>between Cholsey and Wallingford from the extra heavy traffic. The impact of the work on the landscape and wild life. Traffic congestion during the work involved in upgrading the roads necessary to provide access to the site. The flow of the drainage ditches which service areas of outstanding beauty and provide drainage for arable land on the opposite side of Cholsey to Wallingford will be affected.</p> <p>Cholsey & Wallingford separated by just under a mile of arable and grazing farmland, hedges and trees. It is a peaceful and largely undisturbed area, supporting an amazingly wide variety of bird species and wildlife. The mining of sands and gravel will mean the loss of this natural landscape forever and the well-trodden footpaths, including the Agatha Christie Trail from Winterbrook to Cholsey Church, will be ruined. The Wallingford Road is also an important thoroughfare for many commuters travelling daily to Oxford, Reading and London from Cholsey station, and others going the other way to school, work or shopping trips in Wallingford. Apart from wrecking the scenery, the extraction of gravel and heavy lorry traffic will bring danger, noise and dirt for all cars, pedestrians and cyclists.</p>
766	<p>It is with great worry that I hear about the proposals for gravel extraction between Cholsey and Wallingford. Cholsey is currently a pretty and vibrant village in Oxfordshire and the road between Cholsey and Wallingford is used by a large number of people both going from Wallingford to Cholsey mostly to catch a train and in the opposite direction to access the shops and other amenities or work in Wallingford. Already the road is dangerous and uncomfortable for cyclists and pedestrians. The increased traffic and noise caused by the large trucks needed for the gravel extraction activities would only make this worse. The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.</p> <p>It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>You refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." in your briefing document. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting of the landscape and the Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are</p>

largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.

The proposal would destroy the Agatha Christie from her home in Winterbrook to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard as well as the attractive Cholsey and Wallingford Railway, which has been run by volunteers for over 30 years.

A number of listed buildings are near the site and the development would impact on them and all the other residences nearby in a negative way.

The fields are currently used for grazing adding to the rural character of the area and are frequented by a rich diversity of wildlife including rare species. Tawny Owls, red kites and buzzards nest here and many other birds such as golden plover, grey herons, lapwing, fieldfare, redwing, roosting, little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls have been spotted.

Immediately next to the site is an archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames Valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.

I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.

I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.

I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will

	<p>ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>With best regards and hope of (re-)consideration of this matter.</p>
777	<p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting...". Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.</p> <p>Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.</p> <p>The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be</p>

undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi- industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.

I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.

I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.

I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have

	<p>been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
<p>779 (Cholsey & Wallingford railway)</p>	<p>I am authorized by the Board of the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway to register the enclosed objections to the Gravel extraction proposals SG33 and SG57 (New Barn Farm, Cholsey).</p> <p>Gravel extraction from these sites would have a serious and detrimental effect on Wallingford and Cholsey districts. In addition without special protective measures financial guarantees for funding trackwork maintenance and reconstruction and measures to avoid the intensive HVG traffic damaging our visitor appeal, any consent for extraction will destroy the work and financial support of the many people organizations that have worked to reinstate this charity run railway and result in its closure. If you would like to discuss aspects of how our Railway would be affected please contact the writer on 01635278495/07946021835/ nhtr@btinternet.com</p> <p>We are a local charity that is restoring and has re-opened the railway branchline from Cholsey mainline station into Wallingford. We have spent many years and a vast value of man hours in this work and we provide a growing leisure activity and tourism attraction for the area. We have also received many donations and grants from both private individuals and local authorities. We are trying to expand our appeal and range of interesting activities through new projects live learning for schools to use our facilities for a range of curriculum subjects, steam locomotive driving day courses for special birthday gifts, and we have just secured a diesel train that would be suitable for regular daily commuter travel.</p> <p>Digging a 10 metre deep pit along one third of our Eastern boundary will generate a groundwater flow that will wash out material from the soil forming the bed of our Railway. The resulting subsidence will progressively distort our trackwork and render it unusable. This will cause the closure of our Railway and we must object to the proposal in the strongest term:-</p> <p>Objections to gravel extraction proposal</p> <p>1. Destruction of our Amenity.</p> <p>Closure of our tourism based railway due to continues damage to its foundations caused by the deep excavations close by. A little way below the surface of any land groundwater is encountered (the water table). There is only very slow lateral movement of groundwater resulting from wet and dry season weather and gradual run off into water courses.</p> <p>The approx 10 metre deep gravel pit excavation would result in groundwater from the surrounding area moving rapidly to fill the void of the excavation to balance the water level across the area. This swift movement of water will carry large amounts of small soil particles with it, undermining the strength and stability of our land and track.</p> <p>Our total yearly income enables us to pay bill maintain our rolling stock and assets, and spend a little on investigating in our future. We have no surplus to spend on rebuilding and stabilizing our trackbed to make good the subsidence that the gravel extraction will cause.</p> <p>This is not a vague concern but a real risk. In the past 5 years two major heritage railways have suffered prolonged closures and</p>

	<p>major reinstatement expense due to unexpected damage by water (Seven valley railway and the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire railways).</p> <p>The cast increase in HGVs in the locality will tend to intimidate private motorists and dissuade them from trying to reach our railway. This, coupled with the unattractive appearance of the land between the Cholsey - Wallingford Road and one third of the length of our Railway will persuade many of our potential visitors to go to attractions in more welcoming areas and not to support us and our local economy.</p> <p>3. Road Safety</p> <p>A very large additional number of HGV movements will be generated if the gravel extraction is authorized. If the quoted average extraction rate of 200,000 tonnes per annum is maintained there will be an average of 38 additional loaded Lorries leaving the site every working day. Added to this will be further 38 movements per day of the Lorries returning empty for re-loading. Added to this will be smaller vehicles used by employees, engineers and others travelling to and from the site.</p> <p>A conservative estimate is an extra 120 additional vehicle movements a day due to this proposal.</p> <p>On a journey from Didcot to Wallingford last week I was following a number of cars being slowed down by ready mixed concrete lorry. This is a minor main road with few safe opportunities to overtake. A number of near misses occurred when a car drivers ran out of patience and tried to pass the lorry. It has been said that a large percentage of the extracted aggregates are going to be used in and around Didcot. Based on these observations it seems inevitable that during the projected life of the gravel pit it will be a contributing factor in many serious and fatal road traffic accidents in the area.</p> <p>4. Road damage</p> <p>It has been said that a loaded HGV causes 250.000 times more damage to a road than a car. While this seems a far fetched statistic it is obvious that a lorry will have a more damaging effect. Many of us are familiar with the tram track damage caused to the nearside lanes of motorways by the continual pounding of HGVs. This tends to be followed by lengthy periods of delay and frustration while the carriageways are coned off and closed for repairs.</p> <p>At today's prices the gravel pit operator will sell about £175 million worth of aggregates during it's life. It is unlikely that the operators will make a financial contribution towards the accelerated need for road re-building they will cause, but the costs will fall mainly on the private taxpayers who will already be suffering from a variety of new burdens if this proposal is authorized.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The Gravel Extraction plan would cause a major change to our local area and way of life it goes ahead. For the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway it would bring a high risk of closure through erosion of our trackbed that we could not afford to repair and the loss of visitors who will go to other heritage railways in more attractive areas. The local population will suffer many years of disruption to their way of life and many will not live long enough to see the eventual end of extraction landscaping of the decimated area to, perhaps, an attractive wetland, and a return to normal life.</p>
770	<p>I am writing to protest about the council's plans to allow the development of the gravels pits between Cholsey and Wallingford. These plans will blight the area and permanently ruin the environment reducing tourism and forcing many local businesses and services to close.</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "Safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." There is considerable historical significance in the Parish of Cholsey with this beginnings in 986 and its mention in the Domesday Book. The 1695 map of Cholsey shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along Wallingfor road contains reed beds, water-courses and field patterns</p>

which remain largely unchanged today. As such this particular area along the Wallingford road must be deemed to be a heritage Asset as defined in your plan.

Given this, it is quite impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character environment and setting of a largely unspoilt landscape sited on the outskirts and bounded on one side by the major access road to the village of Cholsey which is already a very dangerous road.

The Agatha Christie trail runs from her former home in Winterbrook, where she lived for more than forty years, to her grave in St Mary's church in Cholsey. A recent letter in the Wallingford herald sited that the association with Agatha Christie is the number one attraction of this area. Agatha Christie is the world's best selling author and currently attracts visitors to Cholsey from around the world. The Agatha Christie trail would be completely destroyed if the construction of the gravel pits were to go ahead. This surely is an act of wanton cultural vandalism.

The gravel sites would have a completely negative impact on nearly all aspects of life in Cholsey and Wallingford. It will be an eye sore with increased pollution.

Regarding the choice of this site put forward by the OCC. There seems to have been no thought into account of the distance between a disruptive, dangerous, noisy eye sore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn from weither end of the proposed zone encompasses the whole of Cholsey and two thirds of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

Please would you tell me how it is possible for the County Council to put forward just one site for the location of these pits? Selection from a choice of one is bizarre to say the least I would like to think that our elected leaders, using the resources from the taxes which we all pay, would seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal before offering them up for long term mining operations. Please would you explain to me the process by which this site was chosen and what other sites were considered in this case?

I believe this site was previously considered and withdrawn twenty years ago and one of the reasons was due to the poor quality of the gravel which I'm sure hasn't improved. Please would you tell me why, given this, the site is being considered again?

The proposed site would also completely preclude the development of the Wallingford to Choosey cycle path an amenity for which both communities have long campaigned and which is now fully coasted and part funded by the County Council. The Wallingford Road as I have previously mentioned is long, narrow and dangerous. There have been a number of cyclist deaths along this stretch of road over the past few years. Please would you tell me how the introduction of a large number of Lorries travelling to and from the site will improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists?

Finally, I am also concerned that there is no plan for the final use and restoration of the site once extraction has finished. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to its proximity to the river and cannot be used as landfill for the same reason. It appears that we will simply be left with a dangerous depression.

I firmly believe that these proposals are wrong. They would bring no benefit to any of the local communities and would severely damage local tourism, trade and businesses. In fact I would go as far as saying such a development would further endanger lives on the road.

I would urge you not to select this site for these extraction pits and I look forwards to your reply.

806	<p>I am writing on behalf of my Council to oppose the gravel pit proposed for the edge of our village and to lend our support to the CAGE submission that will be delivered at the same time as this letter.</p> <p>Your proposal has united the villagers of Cholsey in opposition to it and I understand that our opposition has resulted in several hundred letters landing on your doormat. I have lost count of the conversations I have had with people who are worried, upset or angry about the proposal and I trust that you will reconsider.</p> <p>As you will now be aware there are many good reasons - ecological, archaeological, geological to name but a few - why this gravel pit should not be sited so close to a major village and on the door step of Wallingford.</p> <p>Along with the population of my village and armed with the facts contained in the CAGE submission, I ask you to reconsider your proposal.</p>
808	<p>I am writing to express my disapproval for the proposed gravel pit in Cholsey. I have been a resident in Cholsey for 29 years, not once have I ever heard of such a silly idea. There are so many disadvantages it will bring to the village and surrounding areas.</p> <p>There is no benefit for the proposed gravel pit. The dust is one of my main concerns as I have a family who suffer from Asthma, two children and a partner. The gravel pit would be a health risk to them all. My children are only one and four and are unable to control the asthma themselves. You would be making them suffer unnecessarily as you could quite easily find another site that would not have such a big impact on a local population. You also need to think about the traffic, noise the disruption and also the wildlife, there are so many different types of birds, foxes, deer, hares and so many more. You would be destroying their habitat. You need to reconsider the site to be put somewhere else, think about all the disadvantages it will bring to so many people and wildlife.</p>
813	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to this taking place. There are a variety of archaeological arguments which will no doubt be brought to your attention.</p> <p>My personal objection is based on part of the site being adjacent to Thames Path, in an area where it is particularly beautiful and peaceful. A gravel pit would be intrusive in a number of ways. It would impinge visually, and also be noisy, and result in an increase of heavy traffic. This is an area where people choose to walk for recreation, being easily accessible from both Wallingford and Cholsey. Such sites are important to quality of life, not just in terms of their financial potential.</p> <p>I have yet to see information about alternative sites, and I am not convinced by arguments that after 25 years the site will be restored. 25 years is a long time to deprive people of a facility which they value. Trees take a long time to grow, and hedges to re-establish.</p>
823	<p>With regard to the proposed Gravel Extraction in between the Parish of Cholsey and town of Wallingford, we would strongly like to oppose this plan. We feel that there are many reasons against this site not least of all its proximity to the houses, homes and work places of over 10,000 people! To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. A large number of tourists and walkers visit this part of the Thames valley by the AONB, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. We also consider that the existing highway structure is totally inadequate for the amount of heavy traffic movements that the gravel pit would bring to the area. Please consider our thoughts in this matter.</p>
819	<p>I write to register my opposition to the proposed gravel extraction scheme near to Cholsey in Oxfordshire in the strongest possible way.</p> <p>I moved to the area in 2009 and was attracted by the tranquillity and beauty of the area which in my view is unsurpassed. I was</p>

therefore horrified to learn about the proposals which amount no more than an act of rural vandalism, conducted for short -term financial gain without regard to our nature environment or the legacy which our descendents could rightly expect us to preserve for them.

There are many reasons to object to the proposals and no doubt many which I am not aware of which will be made by other residents with a more extensive knowledge of the area than me. I feel that the loss of amenity which will result from realisation of the proposals is far too high a cost for what essentially will be the reward of a huge pile of stones (most of which might do more damage elsewhere in damaging our treasured countryside with even more buildings and retail parks of which we already have a surplus!)

It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape. This notion is simply incredulous as the proposals for this activity over such a long period will do exactly the opposite and to the extent residents of the area to believe otherwise is both insulting to our intelligence and patronising.

In addition to the general concerns regarding the visual impact environmental damage and traffic concerns there are specific losses which need to be taken into account in preventing this madness:

The destruction of the recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St Mary's Church graveyard.

The impact on the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway which will result in them being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. This will of course reduce their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. Another possible loss of amenity and attraction purely to line pockets which are probably already overflowing!

The impact on houses close to the site, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks.

The possible disruption and damage to an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is a known medieval settlement area. Therefore, since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history consideration of disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly.

The destruction of an area close to the River Thames which is popular with tourists and residents alike both of whom are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural beauty, which surrounds this site, the Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford. What also may be overlooked is the detrimental effect that the riverside activity would have on the tranquillity of the Carmel College site to the extent that the current owners could be deterred from advancing their development proposal. The resulting development blight needs to be taken into account.

I am also very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. There is therefore a very high risk that the area would become simply a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.

817	<p>I am responding to the public consultation on the proposed construction of a gravel pit in the village of Cholsey. I would like to lodge my strongest possible objection to the proposed pitch.</p> <p>If it goes ahead the pit will destroy one of the most important assets of both the village of Cholsey and the town of Wallingford i.e. beautiful countryside. This will have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the area for both residents and tourists. The decline in local tourism will, of course, have a severe knock-on effect to the local economy.</p> <p>I simply cannot understand why the Council would contemplate establishing such a pit so close to a residential area. The pit will also result in air and noise pollution to the local community with consequent impact on health. The road traffic, already dangerous along Wallingford Road, will become more dangerous. The impact of heavy axle weigh vehicles on the local roads will also be significant. Roads which villagers taxpayers pay for (and not the developers).</p> <p>The only 'winners' out of this process will be the developers who will see the value and profit potential of the land increase significantly as a result of the rezoning of farm land to industrial. Selecting a gravel pit based on submissions from developers does not seem to me to be a very sensible method for selecting a pit sit. The developers are likely to have only one motivation; making profit. Surely the council should firstly identify potential suitable sites based on social and environmental impact studies and they seek submissions from landowners and developers.</p> <p>Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals'. I do not believe that these obligations have been met in the current consultation document.</p> <p>I would urge the council to reverse its decision to include Cholsey as a proposed site and find an alternative site that is already in an industrial or semi- industrial area within the county.</p>
830	<p>This letter is to register my disapproval for the proposed gravel site in the village of Cholsey. As a resident of Cholsey I am concerned with the impact this will have on the community. The site is surrounded by many houses which includes listed buildings. The fields where the site is proposed is the natural unspoilt habitat of many wildlife. What is to happen to the Cholsey and Wallingford steam Railway? this proposed site covers more than half of their operating site. The Agatha Christie Trail will also be destroyed by this proposal; in fact many walkways will be destroyed. This choice of site also seems to ignore the fact that housing is very close by, in fact up to 10,000 people are going to be affected by noise, dust and disruption. The amount of lorries that have been estimated to need to access the site on a daily basis is going to have a huge impact. Please reconsider using Cholsey for the gravel pit site, it is going to have such a negative impact on our community. Yours faithfully</p>
828	<p>I am writing to register my disapproval of the proposed gravel pit site in Cholsey. There are many reasons this should not go ahead, below I list the main concerns I have: 1 The natural habitat of many wild animals will be destroyed, as well as the lovely walkways and Cholsey/Wallingford Railway line. 2 Many people live within a mile of the proposed gravel pit site; we will all be subjected to a lot of disturbances and noise. 3 the safety of people walking and biking to Wallingford along the Wallingford Road footpath could be compromised with all lorries that are expected to use that road to access the gravel pit. 4 The dust that can be expected from this gravel pit, it will have a huge impact on village life. Our school encourages outdoor learning and students spend a lot of time out of doors, the noise and dust is going to have a huge impact on this. Please reconsider this site and find one that will have less impact on the local population. Yours faithfully</p>
787	<p>I don't want the gravel pit because there will be too much mud and dust. I am worried about my Mummy who rides her bike to Wallingford. Please stop the gravel pit in Cholsey.</p>

894	<p>I am writing to register my disapproval of the proposed Gravel Site in Cholsey. As a resident of Cholsey, I am absolutely astounded that you could even consider this beautiful village as a gravel pit site. as an asthma sufferer, I, along with all other asthma sufferers in the village are going to be greatly affected by the huge amount of dust created. This along with destroying the natural habitat, footpaths, Cholsey/Wallingford Railway line and changing the ambience of this fantastic village is a devastating prognosis. House prices within this village will fall dramatically affecting many householders. The amount of traffic that will travel within the village and outside roads will expand rapidly and cause more potholes and a danger to both pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike. I really hope that this ridiculous proposal will be halted. Yours sincerely</p>
888	<p>I was very unhappy to hear that a gravel pit site is to be developed along Wallingford Road in Cholsey. I have lived in this village for many years and cannot believe that OCC would even consider such a thing. Cholsey is home to many families who are extremely happy to be able to bring up their children in a safe, clean environment. The gravel pit is going to have such a negative impact on the village, our school is not far from the site and I hate to think how disruptive the noise and dust will be to them, let alone the rest of the village. Lots of villagers walk and cycle to Wallingford along the Wallingford Road. This is going to be far too dangerous if many lorries are accessing the site each day. The wildlife are going to have their habitat destroyed, walkways lost forever and the Wallingford/Cholsey Steam Railway lose half their track. Please do not go ahead with putting the gravel pit in Cholsey, there must be other locations where not nearly as many thousands of people are affected. Yours sincerely</p>
946	<p>I wish to object to sudden and frankly inexplicable decision to make Cholsey a preferred site for sand and gravel extraction. Amongst the more serious practical implications of this plan are the totally inadequate local roads for a major increase in heavy traffic which will divert light traffic back into Wallingford, a situation the bypass was designed to avoid. The extension of the bypass road into Didcot is the jokingly named A4130, which is a notoriously dangerous road totally unsuitable for the heavy traffic it already takes. This is of serious concern to residents at this end of Wallingford where far too much heavy traffic is already being diverted, to the increasing peril of local people including primary school children and the elderly and disabled such as myself.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10000 people currently set to rise within a few years - well before any scheduled works would start - to some thousands more. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two communities and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>In excess of 10000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundreds live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put the gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, eater -courses and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a</p>

largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to the thriving village. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, running from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook to her burial site in St Mari's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the leading attraction of our area is Agatha Christie -the world's best-selling author. It would be madness to destroy this attraction.

The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel working will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact of their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".

The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm and other older houses such as Brook House that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.

In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment as mentioned above the site includes historic reed beds, water courses, and field patterns which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourse are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.

I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers.

Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hitchercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.

Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and occasionally in winter short eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system. It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also a known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is a part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of this site should not be undertaken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed. This will add considerably to the cost of any such workings - and it is far from evident that the quality of the gravel is worth it. Many other sites in the same area have been rejected as poor quality and Cholsey was until as recently

as the end of last year, not on the list of preferred options.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's cartilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals'.

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefits and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey -has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either. The whole process is highly suspect in terms of the self-contradictions between previously outlined policies and the present 'rabbit out of the hat' designation as preferred option.

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Minerals extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/ or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. Again, we come back to abuse of process and lack of regard for the local residents, all of whom have funded the various and endless consultation exercises and Local Plans which had come up with good solutions to the problems facing Wallingford in particular.

I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.

I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer. This situation is made plain in earlier consultation documents, but like so much else, has now been conveniently and mysteriously tidied away.

I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot, and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in his area will have

	<p>been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
948	<p>Living on the southern edge of Wallingford we begin to feel as if we're living under siege. First we have spent endless hours trying to fight off speculative developers from building up to 800 houses in the field behind us and now we have the even worse prospect of gravel pits between the south of Wallingford and Cholsey. Has the Council gone collectively mad? Life will be absolute hell for the residents of this lovely area because: 160 (probably more) lorries a day on the totally unsuitable access roads in and out of Wallingford and Cholsey will cause huge problems for anyone trying to get to work, school, hospital etc. The dust and noise will be a hazard to the health of us all, especially children. The disruption will totally kill off businesses and shops in Wallingford as people decide to go elsewhere to avoid the mayhem. All in all, this is a crazy idea. Do you as the Council have the courage to put a stop to this plan before it goes any further?</p>
958	<p>I wish to record my objection to planned work with regard to the proposed quarry between Wallingford and Cholsey on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In your briefing document you refer to @safeguarding the character, amenity and setting...@ Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986AD. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, ater-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a @Heritage Asset@ within the definition of your Plan. 2. The Cholsey and Wallingford steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through @noise, dust and odour@. 3. The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based. 4. I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. 5. The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed. 6. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to

	<p>'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals'.</p> <p>7. The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>8. In excess of 10k,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>9. I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>10. I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on the roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>In summary; It is not the best site in the County It will blight the local economy of Wallingford has low grade aggregates The community has not been adequately consulted nor informed The heavy trucks will have a huge impact on the entire surrounding area, including school runs, work runs, general traffic from small villages such as ours to the towns as well as through traffic through our small villages that have no footpaths, increasing the danger to parents and small children walking around their homes and home environment It will be a monstrous eyesore that is surrounded by designated areas of outstanding natural beauty.</p>
988	<p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 AD. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains historic reed beds, water-courses, rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area along the Wallingford Road must be</p>

deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan.

Destruction of the Character of Wallingford and Cholsey

The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

Likely Impact on local Economy

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals'.

The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. It is widely recognised that Agatha Christie is the number one attraction of our area. In addition, tourists come to the area for its rich history, the serenity of the River Thames and the diversity of the landscape.

Poor Economic Decision - A Poor Decision for the Community

It is understood that this the only new site under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area and was proposed by Smiths of Bletchington, the very quarrying company who has an option over the land and stands to gain the most if permission is granted. This is neither a reasonable nor an acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality.

This site is the only new site proposed within the Minerals Strategy, yet there is no evidence that it is the best site for the job. There is no evidence that the site has been adequately appraised and yet it is the ONLY site being put forward by the Council. It has no local support outside of the vested interests of the landowners

Only very limited research has been conducted to date on the site SG33 to test the quality of the minerals. The results of the bore holes drilled reveal that the aggregates are low grade and will require to be mixed with other stone before they could be used by the building industry. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.

Transport Issues - a major increase in trucks on the road

I completely understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and New Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been

	<p>completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>If the aggregates are sold locally they will need to be mixed with other stone or if there is no local market it will have to be sold to developers in Reading and Wantage. Either way there will be a massive increase in miles travelled by heavy trucks. This is one of the council's key parameters dictating any potential location.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the long-term. We implore the Council to re-visit the proposal to put the site at Cholsey forward for planning as follows:</p> <p>It is not the best site in the County It will blight the local economy of Wallingford It has low grade aggregates It will be a monstrous eyesore that is surrounded by designated areas of outstanding natural beauty The community has not been adequately consulted The heavy trucks will have a huge impact on the entire surrounding area</p>
979	<p>As a Cholsey resident I am writing to strongly protest about the proposed plan to extract gravel from Cholsey. Why has only 1 site been put forward for consultation? there seems to be no choice if this is so. It seems maybe a fete accompli is what you desire.....The proposed site was dismissed last year as the quality of gravel is poor.</p> <p>The site is opposite major residential housing, whose quality of life will be hugely affected by lorries driving up and down Wallingford Road. Hundreds of people who live opposite the site will be affected, let alone the thousands who live within a mile of the area. I also understand that - in order to save money - there will be no separate site entrance along the bypass. Maybe this will be offered as a sop when all the letters opposing the site are responded to.</p> <p>Another major concern is the fact that the pit - if it goes ahead - will not be filled in or replaced by a lake. Cholsey has amazing wildlife. As I live on Wallingford Road I have seen roe deer, weasels and stoats myself - and the old hedges are a natural source of food and shelter. The area will be an eyesore for many years to come. Would you wish to live in such a place?</p> <p>The pavement - often walked upon on visits to Wallingford - will be very dangerous for children and the elderly as lorries thunder along.</p> <p>And what will happen to the proposed cycle path? This path will prevent further death on Wallingford Rd - as people still drive too fast. Many people cycle into Wallingford School and to and from the station daily. The Wallingford Road has also recently been superbly resurfaced - what will 60-80 lorries daily do to this?</p> <p>Old Cholsey maps show the area concerned to contain reed beds and water courses. Not to mention the burial place of Agatha Christie nearby - a tourist attraction in this area. Surely we should be encouraging tourists to visit Wallingford and Cholsey - not present them with an eyesore?</p> <p>At present Cholsey is a peaceful village, with occasional heavy traffic and light users - mostly in the rush hour - heading to and from the station.</p> <p>Wallingford Railway has delighted tourists and local children for many years - and their volunteering will be completely undone - should this crazy plan go ahead.</p> <p>How long will the gravel extracted from Cholsey last? How long term is the quantity going to be available for? I have already mentioned the quality - not as good as you may reasonably desire.</p>

	<p>I hope you take into account all my points raised and I look forward to hearing from you in due course - Cholsey village does not want a gravel extraction site on its doorstep.</p>
980	<p>I would like to lodge in writing my formal objection to the proposed gravel pit in Cholsey. As a resident of Cholsey, I have many reasons to object to this plan, the following being my main concerns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The housing around the area, up to 10,000 residents who will be impacted by the noise, dust and disruption 2. Safety issues with the amount of lorries traffic that will access the site each day 3. The wildlife that is to loose their natural habitat, food and water supply gone forever 4. Natural walkways destroyed forever, including the Agatha Christie Trail 5. Listed buildings that surround the site 6. The Cholsey/Wallingford Steam Railway will loose half their track 7. The Wallingford to Cholsey footpath will now be extremely risky for those who walk to the village each day, as will the road for cyclists. <p>I urge you to please reconsider this plan, there were many other sites on the list for the proposed gravel site but suddenly we are the only one left on it, with no explanation why!!!! Yours faithfully</p>
983	<p>I write in opposition to the County's plan to extract gravel at Cholsey.</p> <p>I have written to my MP about the underlying reason why Cholsey has been selected by the County as the preferred site for gravel extraction. It is not geological. In the written version of that letter, I include website links to substantiate the allegations made. If you proceed with the current plan, Gravel-gate will eventually attract sufficient media interest and/or legal challenge to force you to withdraw the minerals strategy. It is a waste of public funding to persist with a plan that is technically unsound as well as politically flawed.</p> <p>Nevertheless, I wish to record the other reasons why I consider Cholsey the wrong site for this gravel extraction. Please be sure to note and consider each of the points made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed gravel extraction is entirely within the parish of Cholsey. It will greatly disrupt life in the parish, and blight other development. 2. The proposed site is directly upwind of Wallingford. There will be health implications for those living and working in the town, and possibly for villages to the NNE such as Benson and Warborough (PAGE parishes that may mistakenly believe that they have escaped by the preference shown for Cholsey). 3. I suggest that you study Asthma: the facts by Donald J Lane and Anthony Storr (Galaxy Books, 1983). Dr Lane was based in Oxford and was the consultant who treated my son's asthma in the 1980s when we lived close to Sutton Courtenay. 4. The Cholsey site has considerable landscape and natural history value. This is not my particular area of environmental expertise but the only time I have seen a group of small deer in the Cholsey area was at dusk on this site. 5. There is no clear plan for restoration of the site. The plan cannot proceed without one. 6. The preference shown for Cholsey refers to a new site at Cholsey had been added with good links to Didcot, and the Wantage and Grove area. Several queries arise from this: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do those who commute along the A4130 consider it a good link? b. How will gravel & rubble lorries manage the Haddon Hill area? c. How will gravel & rubble lorries access the A4130

	<p>d. Will the demand for gravel and recycling of building materials be concentrated in Didcot within the timeframe planned for gravel extraction?</p> <p>e. Is HS2 to be re-routed through Didcot?</p> <p>7. With regard to the A4130 near the proposed site:</p> <p>a. Are you aware of the inherent structural weakness of the western approach embankment to the A4130 crossing of the Thames at Winterbrook?</p> <p>b. Are you monitoring the subsidence? It is most evident in levels on the cycle-path.</p> <p>c. Why did OCC not insist on Galliford Midland rebuilding the western approach embankment when it slipped in January 1994, six months after Wallingford Bypass was opened in July 1993? What professional advice did the County take? Did OCC heed it?</p> <p>8. Why is it acceptable for two such large communities as Wallingford and Cholsey to be unlinked by cycle-path?</p> <p>a. When will the Callingford-Cholsey cycle-path be built?</p> <p>b. Where will it be built?</p> <p>c. Are you aware of the fatalities and serious injuries to cyclists on the so-called "straight mile"? I am a regular cyclist but never use that route from Cholsey to Wallingford. It is simply too dangerous. I have avoided it throughout my 18 years cycling around Cholsey. Cyclists will not co-exist with gravel & rubble lorries on Wallingford Road for very long: the risks to cyclists will be too great.</p> <p>d. In a survey on Wednesday 19th October 2011, 44 cycle movements were counted in 10.5 hours. Almost 3,000 car movements were counted in the same period. Forty-four is a scarily high number given the inherent danger to cyclists posed by the straightness and narrowness of the road. It is unlit.</p> <p>9. What will happen to the heritage railway line; the Cholsey Wallingford Railway?</p> <p>10. What will happen to the Agatha Christie Trail from Wallingford Museum, through Winterbrook to St Mary's Graveyard in Cholsey?</p> <p>11. What will the effects be on tourism, especially in Wallingford?</p> <p>12. An Oxfordshire County Councillor alleges that there is an unacceptable concentration of gravel extraction in West Oxfordshire</p> <p>a. What basis is there for this statement? One would have to site gravel extraction immediately adjacent to Witney or Carterton for as many people to be directly affected in West Oxfordshire as will be affected if the Cholsey site proceeds.</p> <p>b. Why is a gravel site slap in the middle of the Wallingford-Cholsey conurbation considered an appropriate site?</p> <p>c. To whom is the Cholsey site more acceptable than a rural site in West Oxfordshire?</p> <p>The whole of Cholsey and Wallingford is impacted and blighted by the plan. Please reject this politically dodgy and technically unsound plan now. Yours sincerely</p>
991	<p>I would like to raise my concern over your plans to site a gravel pit on farm land between Wallingford and Cholsey. The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the</p>

constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

Para 6 & 7

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefit and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then it is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection from a choice of one is not selection and the council has left itself with no other options.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector is found lacking? The County Council will be left with not just no site, but no minerals strategy either.

Para 8

It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.

I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.

I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for the disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.

I completely understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.

There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of

	extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.
978	Duplicated with ID 958
1000	<p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their being unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover ore than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that the OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space left in which to manoeuvre.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>I implore you to re-think your planning decision.</p>

503	<p>I would, first of all, comment on your web site regarding the proposals.</p> <p>It is extremely difficult to find relevant information to assist one in coming to a sensible decision regarding any particular proposal. It would have been better for each proposal to have its own dedicated page with a map, proposer's name, OCC's opinion and what the gravel company proposes to do with the site after completion of the gravel extraction. How deep will the workings be? Will the workings fill with water immediately or after a period of time?</p> <p>Whether your decision on the siting of gravel pits is decided by which local group shouts "Not in our back yard" the loudest I have no idea. There is a vociferous group in the Cholsey/Wallingford area which is making a lot of noise at the moment and asking local residents to object.</p> <p>I take a more pragmatic view. We need gravel and sand for roads and buildings and so gravel pits have to be dug somewhere. Despite not having a clear idea of what is proposed I have the following comments on the three proposals affecting Cholsey parish:</p> <p>SG60</p> <p>This site is not too close to any large group of houses (at the moment), but I am concerned (on behalf of others) about the route gravel lorries will take. Any increase in traffic on the A329 southbound will have a deleterious effect on the villages of Moulsoford, Streatley, Pangbourne and Tidmarsh. In fact whichever way the lorries travel they will create extra noise and pollution and increase wear and tear on the roads.</p> <p>If this site is chosen I would trust that OCC will insist that what is left following the work is not just one large lake taking up all the space indicated on the map but will be a series of smaller lakes with an island or two (or three) which will become a nature reserve. (See my later comment regarding proposal SG33.)</p> <p>SG37</p> <p>This site is far too close to the village of Cholsey and will create an unacceptable increase in traffic on the Wallingford Road to the Wallingford by-pass. I must object to this proposal in the strongest of terms.</p> <p>SG33</p> <p>The least objectionable of the three proposals in Cholsey parish.</p> <p>However, any work allowed by OCC must have strict provisos:</p> <p>No gravel lorries allowed to travel through Cholsey village (and I am still concerned about the increase of traffic on other local roads). Why not insist on the gravel being taken out by the trainload via the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway? The track and some culverts would have to be upgraded to take the weight of heavy wagons and a new junction would have to be built to the north-west of Cholsey railway station. The only drawback might be the possibility of the railway being used to bring in rubbish (as is done near Appleford). This must not be allowed to happen.</p> <p>The digging of one large lake up to the boundary of the proposed area must not be permitted. A series of smaller lakes with islands and properly landscaped with appropriate trees would eventually become a haven for wildlife and could have picnic areas, a cycle way from Cholsey to Wallingford perhaps, and would finish up as a great asset to be enjoyed by future generations. Work could start at the southern end of the proposed area and by the time work reached the northern end the first area worked would be well on the way to becoming an asset for the community.</p> <p>I would draw your attention to what was done some decades ago when gravel was extracted from the area near the River</p>
-----	---

	<p>Loddon to the south-west of Twyford railway station in Berkshire - the area was landscaped with sloping banks, islands were created in the middle of the lake and trees were planted. It has become a beautiful area and a haven for wildfowl and, no doubt, mammals.</p> <p>There is no point in being a "NIMBY", but if SG33 were to be picked, the area MUST finish up being an area which can be enjoyed by future generations of local people.</p>
812 (Goring & Streatley Community Assoc)	<p>We accept that the Oxfordshire economy requires a local supply of aggregates to minimise 'sand and gravel miles' and, although we regret the damage to a historic landscape with high amenity value, we also appreciate that aggregates need to be excavated where they occur. We would, however, like the comments below to be taken into consideration during the consultation if the proposal is accepted.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The site map of the Cholsey-Wallingford proposal shows that there is scope to keep the aggregates off local roads almost completely by upgrading the Bunk line to Network Rail standard, installing a rail-truck loading facility and re-connecting the Bunk to the main line at or near Cholsey station. The upgrade cost could be borne by the gravel business, the Bunk would still be able to run at weekends and bank holidays and a high quality asset would revert to the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway Preservation Society when gravel is eventually exhausted. The bunk line might even be able to "leverage" some immediate, opportunist benefits from the gravel business, such as a station upgrade and creation of an environmental trail along the track enabling observation (by public and school parties) of botany and wildlife at a half-way stop along the line. 2. Transport of aggregate by HGV should be kept to a minimum. The Association is particularly anxious that HGVs do not travel through Streatley. Currently weight limits apply to the A329 and the A417 from near the village boundary and the community would expect these to be retained and respected. 3. If the proposal does go ahead, mitigation of the impact of extraction must be prioritised. The extraction company should be required to agree with the local community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · noise control measures during extraction and means of sound proofing if necessary e.g. soil embankments; · minimal numbers of vehicle movements, their timing and routes; · measures to landscape the site when sand and gravel is exhausted. <p>Thank you for your attention.</p>
809	<p>I am writing to object to proposals to develop gravel pits on land between Wallingford and Cholsey on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sites lie between and adjoining lands where at present, say, eight to ten thousand people live (and more will soon), and will cause an industrial nuisance where none exists at present. The nuisance would include wind blown dust, noise and heavy traffic. It would destroy some of the breathtaking space of the inhabitants. 2. Particularly I object to site SG60, for the gravel pit would be contiguous with the Chilterns area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, being alongside the River Thames, which here is a significant feature of the area.
950	<p>You wouldn't like it if everyone destroyed your home. Its just the same as the animal homes. Animals live where you want to put the gravel pit. Also lots of people live near by so they wont want lots of lorries or noisy machines near their house. We do not want lots of lorries coming onto our road and it is dangerous for bike riders. You need to think if it would be the same for you if you were one of those people that will have to be disturbed in the night and in the day.</p>

	We know you need gravel to build houses and roads but find somewhere else where no one lives and there are no animals near by.
930	<p>I am writing to voice my considerable concerns at the plan to develop gravel extraction facilities at three sites on the Wallingford / Cholsey border.</p> <p>The idea of siting these noisy, very dirty and polluting facilities in an area where over 10,000 people live in very close proximity is completely preposterous for the following health reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gravel extraction produces a considerable amount of dust. This will be blown either towards Cholsey or Wallingford, depending on wind direction and so will be breathed in by all residents, including those who already have breathing difficulties. This has severe health implications. 2. The area that will be swallowed up by the sites is currently pleasant and rural and is used by residents for walking and cycling. It also will destroy the Thames footpath bordering the site. There are currently limited walking facilities from the town of Wallingford and this proposal will remove a large chunk of them. <p>Given the proposed housing developments for Wallingford are bordering this site it will ensure misery for an increasing number of people.</p> <p>There will be many places in the country where gravel can be extracted and which are not sited near centres of population - please ensure that one of these is used.</p>
934	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed siting of a gravel extraction pit between Wallingford and Cholsey.</p> <p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn 1 mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for the consideration in the planning strategy.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science Vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>I trust that the County Council will see sense and find another site for the extraction of gravel, rather than spoiling an area of natural beauty, environmental importance so close to so many residencies.</p>

949	<p>I am writing to register my great disapproval for the proposed gravel pit in Cholsey.</p> <p>In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundreds live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other sites available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put a gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?</p> <p>There are also a number of new housing developments which will put additional strain on our local infrastructure and do not need more pressures in the shape of hundreds of lorries collecting and delivering gravel.</p> <p>In addition to this there is a significant amount of wildlife that inhabit this area. Foxes, roe deer and hares are often seen here as well as weasels and stoats and there have been sitings of otters in recent years.</p> <p>Buzzards, tawny owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include lapwing, golden plover, fieldfare, redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and occasionally in winter, short eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.</p> <p>I understand that gravel needs to be extracted for use in the building industry but I urge you to reconsider this site and find one that will have less impact on the local population.</p>
951	<p>I write to object most strongly to the proposal to create three very large gravel pits between Wallingford and Cholsey. Whilst I appreciate gravel/sand is needed it is surely a very high price that residents of this area will pay for a negative return over 25 years. This proposal goes against the District Councils "Core Strategy" and will have a large affect on the well being of some 10,000 people. I read there are other sites in South Oxfordshire better suited, so I urge you, please do not proceed.</p>
935	<p>I would like to sharply object to the proposal for sand and gravel extraction in the Cholsey / wallingford area as set out in your consultation care strategy.</p> <p>I have lived in the area for nearly 30 years and know the site well. I live in the North Wessex Downs AONB and have beautiful views across the site towards the Chilterns AONB from our house. These views will be destroyed. The area is not intensively farmed and it is rich in wildlife and it is a joy to walk the footpaths.</p> <p>I fully support the submission by CAGE on behalf of the local Community.</p> <p>I trust the County Council will reconsider its plans and ensure that sand and gravel extraction is located in less sensitive areas.</p>
957	<p>I am writing to protest in the strongest possible terms about the councils plans to allow the development of three gravel pits between Cholsey And Wallingford. I firmly believe that this plan is a mistake as it will blight the area permanently ruining the environment, reducing tourism and forcing many local businesses and services to close. I have lived in Cholsey with my family for fifteen years and part of its attraction is its setting which, if these plans are accepted will be completely obliterated.</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting...". There is considerable historical significance in the parish of Cholsey with its beginnings in 986 and its mention in the doomsday book. The 1695 map of Cholsey shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford road contains reed beds, water courses and field</p>

patterns which remain largely unchanged today. As such this particular area along the Wallingford road must be deemed to be a Heritage Asset as defined in your plan. Given this, it is quite impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, environment and setting of a largely unspoilt landscape sited on the outskirts and bounded on one side by the major access road to the village of Cholsey.

The Agatha Christie trail runs from her former home in Winterbrook, where she lived for more than forty years, to her grave in St Mary's Church in Cholsey. A recent letter in the Wallingford Herald sited that the association with Agatha Christie is the number one attraction to this area. Agatha Christie is the worlds best selling author and currently attracts visitors to Cholsey from around the world. The Agatha Christie trail would be completely destroyed if the construction of the gravel pits were to go ahead. This surely is an act of wanton cultural vandalism.

There is also a steam railway running between Cholsey and Wallingford run entirely by volunteers which again attracts a large number of visitors. The operators of this railway have said that it is unlikely they would be able to continue to run as the gravel workings would cover more of their operating area. This would inevitably lead to the railways closure after more than thirty years of voluntary work. The railway was recently featured in a television programme about war time evacuees as it was a route that a number of them, including the actress Sheila Hancock travelled along to their temporary war time residence.

The gravel sites would have a completely negative impact on nearly all aspects of life in Cholsey and Wallingford. It will be an eyesore visible from many miles around and there will be increased pollution from dust, noise and light in winter.

The choice of this site put forward by OCC is puzzling and seems to take absolutely no account of distance between a disruptive, dangerous, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn from either end of the proposed zone encompasses the whole of Cholsey and two thirds of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the planning strategy.

Please would you tell me how it is possible for the County Council to put forward just one site for the location of these pits?

Selection from a choice of one is bizarre to say the least. I would like to think that our elected leaders, using the resources from the taxes which we all pay, would seek out sites in advance and subject these to a proper appraisal before offering them up for long term mining operations. Please would you explain to me the process by which this site was chosen and what other sites were considered in this case?

Also what will happen if this site is found to be unsuitable? Please would you tell me how the selection of this site fits with the County Councils minerals strategy?

This site was in fact previously considered and withdrawn twenty years ago and one of the reasons was due to the poor quality of the gravel. Please would you tell me why, given this, the site is being considered again?

The proposed site would also completely preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey cycle path, an amenity for which both communities have long campaigned and which is now fully costed and part funded by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, narrow and dangerous. There have been a number of cyclists deaths along this stretch of road over the past few years. Please would you tell me how the introduction of a large number of lorries travelling to and from the site will improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists? I understand that the council needs to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will be used but the proposed site will not start operating for ten years by which time most of the new housing developments in the area will have been completed.

	<p>Finally, I am also concerned that there is no plan for the final use and restoration of the site once extraction has finished. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to its proximity to the river and cannot be used as landfill for the same reason. It appears that we will simply be left with a dangerous depression that will need to be fenced off and which will fill with water in winter and become a dustbowl in summer.</p> <p>I firmly believe that these proposals are wrong. They would bring no benefit to any of the local communities and would severely damage local tourism, trade and businesses.</p> <p>I would urge you not to select this site for these extraction pits and I look forward to your reply.</p>
993	<p>It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns on the Wallingford Rd and Coxs farm, and other older houses, such as Brook house, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>The choice of site put forward by OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplaces of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of the town of Wallingford. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the planning strategy.</p> <p>In terms of unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors... The proposed site along the Wallingford Rd is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, the site includes historic reed beds, watercourses and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the area of outstanding natural beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, the historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi industrial development which further expands the towns curtilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the minerals planning strategy the authorities are obliged to "consider the social, economic and environmental" effect of their proposals.</p> <p>The recently adopted Agatha Christie trail, that runs from her former home for more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site at St Marys church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. It is widely recognised that Agatha Christie is the number one attraction of our area.</p> <p>In addition tourists come to the area for its rich history, the serenity of the river Thames and the diversity of the landscape. To dig a quarry so close to Wallingford and alongside the Thames has to be an act of folly. It will be an eyesore on the entire landscape as viewed from all of the surrounding hills that form an area of outstanding natural beauty. The effect of similar development can be seen at Sutton Courtenay where the area has been destroyed forever. The only saving grace about Sutton Courtenay is that habitation is not nearby where as the Cholsey proposals will adversely affect present and proposed areas of</p>

	<p>housing.</p> <p>It is understood that this is the only new site under consideration by OCC for mineral extraction in this area and was proposed by Smiths of Bletchington, the very quarrying company who has an option over the land and stands to gain the most if permission is granted. This is neither a reasonable or acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality.</p> <p>This site is the only new site proposed within the Minerals Strategy, yet there is no evidence that it is the best site for the job. There is no evidence that the site has been adequately appraised and yet it is the only site being put forward by the council. It has no local support outside the vested interest of the land owners.</p> <p>Only very limited research has been conducted to date on this site SG33 to test the quality of the minerals. The results of the bore holes drilled reveal that the aggregates are low grade and will be required to be mixed with other stone before it could be used by the building industry.</p> <p>The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered 20 years ago.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County Council has to move gravel extraction closer to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new science vale development. However the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for 10 years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel to Reading, Oxford or even further afield. The local community, as ever, will gain nothing other than as a recipient of waste from the metropolis and the ensuing problems which will forever blight the area. Future generations will curse us for this lack of foresight.</p> <p>If the aggregates are sold locally they will need to be mixed with other stone or if there is no local market it will have to be sold to developers in Reading and Wantage. Either way there will be a massive increase in miles travelled by heavy truckers further damaging a poor road infrastructure. This is one of the Councils key parameters dictating any potential location.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer term.</p> <p>We implore the council to revisit the proposal to put the site at Cholsey forward for planning.</p> <p>it is not the best site in the county it has low grade aggregates the heavy trucks will have a huge impact on the entire surrounding area the community has not been adequately consulted the community will never be adequately compensated for permanent damage done it will blight the economy of wallingford it will be a monstrous eyesore that is surrounded by designated areas of outstanding natural beauty.</p>
1006	<p>recently attended a public meeting at Cholsey primary school to discuss the County Councils proposal to allow the siting of a gravel extraction business in Cholsey. More than 10,000 people live within a mile of the proposed site. I am truly shocked that the OCC can countenance allowing a gravel pit in this location, knowing that it will seriously blight the lives of so many people, exposing them to dust, noise and disruption on a daily basis.</p>

Alarming, I understand that currently the Choosey site is the only new site under consideration in the area, as OCC has limited its focus to those places nominated by gravel quarrying companies and/or landowners, on whose property minerals are to be found. Can I please point out, as it has clearly bypassed OCC that the motives of gravel companies and land owners are purely commercial, with no heed paid to the resultant devastating effect on local communities. How can this constitute a responsible strategy for site selection? Indeed, it seems to me to show a callous disregard on the part OCC for a large section of the community it is supposed to serve and is simply not acceptable!

As a ratepayer/taxpayer I expect OCC to seek out a number of options independently and subject them to rigorous appraisal, adopting as a guiding principal the need to minimize the impact on community and environment. Clearly this has not happened in this case.

I understand from a number of sources that the mineral found in this site is believed to be of poor quality and that that is one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from the site 20 years ago. Clearly the quality of the material has not changed in the intervening period! Surely then OCC's strategy should be to search elsewhere, and find material of a suitable quality for the job in hand?

I understand to that in 10 years time when it is proposed that the Cholsey extraction site starts to operate much of the new development planned for the area will already be completed. In that case, the extraction company is likely to have to look to other outlets to sell the gravel produced. Oxford? Reading? Further field?

All of which will mean lots of heavy Lorries traveling long distances. This cannot be seen as ecologically efficient. The OCC needs a well thought through and joined up strategy, and currently it is found wanting in this regard.

I am concerned too that the proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey cycle path. The Wallingford Road, as OCC should know, is fast, straight, narrow and very dangerous, a combination of factors which has led to both death and serious injury over the years. To allow the gravel pit to proceed will increase heavy traffic in the area, and mean that the cycle path doesn't happen. A double whammy further endangering peoples lives. Again irresponsible!

We have to consider too the impact the local environment, wildlife, landscape and heritage. If the gravel pit goes ahead, the Cholsey and Wallingford railway will be likely to close, (who wants to pay £8 to ride past an industrial facility). Wildlife habitats will be destroyed, and what exactly will be left when the extraction stops? I understand that there is in fact no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. Really? So again OCC's "plans" seem to be poorly thought through and are incomplete and unacceptable.

I cannot understand why only one site is under consideration?

I cannot understand why OCC considers it acceptable to blight so many lives for such a long time.

	<p>I cannot understand why OCC is prepared to base it "strategy" on the commercial interests of land owners/extraction companies?</p> <p>I cannot understand how this scheme can be ecologically efficient?</p> <p>I cannot understand how this can constitute a well considered, professional and joined up plan?</p> <p>I wish to register my formal objection to these proposals and I look forward to your considered response to all the points raised.</p>
1007	<p>I have considered the above consultation document and certain supporting documents (eg URS "non-technical" summary of the minerals preferred strategy) on the County Councils website but as these are voluminous and many are highly technical I have not been able to consider them all.</p> <p>The consultation document seeks comments from the public but there is no structure to invited responses nor are there specific questions or issues on which responses are requested.</p> <p>The document sets out the proposed strategies and policies and then makes proposals for specific areas of mineral working and these are set out in a minerals key diagram at fig 8. In my view the document fails to provide the essential link between the strategies and policies and the proposals for working areas. Indeed fig 8 appears on a separate page with no explanations and no comments.</p> <p>In particular, a proposed new area of gravel extraction at Cholsey is introduced without consideration in the document of all other potential sites and there is no explanation or justification of why this one has been chosen as the proposed new working area.</p> <p>It is clear that many essential considerations have not been addressed so that it is difficult to see how any preferred site can be supported at this stage. For example, policy C3 requires that the impact on local residents can be considered but paragraph 5.15 makes it clear that this issue cannot be considered until more detailed information is available.</p> <p>One of the stated objectives is to minimise the distance that minerals are transported by road and the use of unsuitable roads. However, there is nothing in the document which gives any information how this key issue has been addressed.</p> <p>Another objective is for high quality restoration of mineral workings "to an appropriate after-use". This is likely to be fulfilled differently depending on the site but there is no information provided showing how this restoration would be made for the chosen Cholsey site. Proposals for aftercare and after use are needed to enable proper consideration of chosen sites.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.12 of the document states that the impact of any proposals for minerals development on water quality and pollution prevention has not yet been considered. Again, I consider that this means that limiting proposed new gravel sites to one is premature.</p> <p>In paragraph 5.26 the document states that where development is proposed within or in proximity to an AONB the assessment should be informed by the relevant AONB Management Plan. All the Cholsey sites are in proximity to AONB's but there is no information about a management plan in the document.</p> <p>In my view the consultation process is seriously flawed because, as illustrated above, proposals are advanced where the required issues have not been addressed or set out in the document and it does not indicate how the decision to favour a new minerals working area at Cholsey has been arrived at. Consequently, respondents are unable to consider how the minerals strategy, and in</p>

particular the proposed sites, has been implemented.

Proximity of the proposed new area of gravel extraction at Cholsey to the population centres of Wallingford and Cholsey. I consider that a key consideration (not addressed in the consultation document) is that the proposed Cholsey site is very close to the town of Wallingford and the village of Cholsey. This, and the effect on local populations, is not mentioned in the consultation paper. In practice, there will be a considerable adverse impact, possibly to human health, resulting from dust, exhaust fumes, noise, visual impact and deprivation of the enjoyment of tranquil countryside and riverside. These matters are recognized in the URS report.

Wallingford is making strenuous efforts to develop tourism on the back of its historical background (including its Anglo-Saxon fortifications and the site of the Norman castle - a scheduled monument), its attractive town centre and the amenity and beauty of its River Thames frontage and local walks in Areas of natural beauty. Much of this would be lost with unsightly gravel workings on the river and beside the ring road, together with a huge increase in lorry traffic and dust.

The privately run Cholsey and Wallingford railway is dependent on offering views of the beautiful countryside (see attached page from its website) but a large part of its route runs along the boundary of the proposed SG-33 and SG-57 sites. I understand that the operators have said that the proposed mineral workings would force the closure of the railway and I believe that that would be a logical decision. The railway is an important tourist attraction for Wallingford.

Similiarly, the Agatha Christie connection is being developed for tourism but the published trail from Winterbrook to cholsey, which crosses the proposed gravel pit area and runs close to much more of it, would be ruined. Numerous businesses in Wallingford, reliant on tourism, would also be adversely affected.

Cholsey would be almost overwhelmed with the workings so close to the village and the upheaval on the narrow road to Wallingford. There would be a major impact on the present close relationship between Cholsey and Wallingford. URS refer to mineral working as a highly disruptive activity - this in my view, should not be permitted so close to large populations. I make additional comments below about the specific proposed mineral sites.

Sites SG-33 and SG-57

I understand that SG-33 was rejected in 1987 on the basis that the gravel was considered to be of poor quality. How can that have changed?

I note that in a consultation in 2007 there were extensive negative responses to SG-33 and this site was not proceeded with. I anticipate that all the objections then raised would still apply. In my view the suggested actions to mitigate at that time failed to address the problems raised. I do not consider that the potential after-use suggested in the response document would be satisfactory.

There are considerable concerns concerning traffic movements to and from sites SG-33 and SG-57. I assume that lorries would have to enter and exit the site from Wallingford Road. This is a narrow road and is already the main access between Wallingford and Cholsey, it is also the access route for traffic from Wallingford to the A34 South and the M4. I consider that the volume of site traffic would be unacceptable on such a narrow road and would be very dangerous, especially lorries having to cross the flow of traffic. There would also be the danger to pedestrians walking along Wallingford Road, and to cyclists.

Site traffic on Wallingford road would have to join the A4130 at the roundabout and the volume of traffic in both directions would cause considerable congestion. I understand (mineral key program) that traffic flows would be in the direction of Didcot. Although the Wallingford ring road could probably cope with the likely traffic volumes I consider that the narrow winding road from the

	<p>roundabout near Brightwell could not do so satisfactorily and this would be dangerous and cause substantial traffic congestion. The only alternative transport exits from the site would appear to be either direct onto the A4130 ring road or at the roundabout at the junction of the A4130 and Wallingford Road. It appears that both would be dangerous and cause substantial traffic congestion.</p> <p>The site is very close to the North Wessex downs AONB and would have a substantial detrimental effect on it. The site would also be an eye sore from high ground around in both the North Wessex Downs and Chiltern AONBs.</p> <p>There are existing rights of way across the site and it is difficult to see how these could be satisfactorily diverted.</p> <p>Site SG-60</p> <p>As far as I am aware this site has not been previously identified as a potential one for mineral extraction. In my view it is completely inappropriate. I cannot believe that this site is seriously considered as being suitable for gravel extraction. Much of it directly adjoins the River Thames and would be a considerable eyesore to all river traffic as well as from the opposite bank, where, I understand, a housing development is contemplated. The east bank is in the Chilterns AONB and mineral workings opposite would be a considerable detraction from it.</p> <p>The proposed site would directly interfere with the Thames Path national Trail, which runs along the same bank of the river as the proposed gravel pit.</p> <p>The site would have considerable negative repercussions on river wildlife. For example, kingfishers regularly nest on the opposite bank.</p> <p>In my view this site would have catastrophic implications for the enjoyment of river amenities by the population of Wallingford, tourists and other visitors to the town, boat operators, commercial river steamers, fishermen, walkers and nature lovers.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>I recognise the need for gravel extraction in Oxfordshire and, of course, this has to be from where gravel is located. However, I consider that the minerals plan at this stage has been misdirected in identifying only one new site and without adequate consideration of the relevant issues. Further, I consider that the consultation document is unsatisfactory as it does not explain why the Cholsey sites are preferred for new mineral extraction or why other sites have been rejected.</p> <p>In my view the Cholsey sites are inappropriate for mineral extraction.</p>
1008	<p>I am writing to you in complete dismay over these plans to have a gravel pit between Cholsey and Wallingford. This will decimate the area and it is completely outrageous for the County Council to only put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplace of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of Wallingford town. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.</p> <p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area long the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a</p>

largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.

The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".

The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns of the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.

In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.

I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.

Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include: lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system, It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of the site should not be taken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,

	<p>which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, this historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's cartilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
1009	<p>In your briefing document you refer to "safeguarding the character, amenity and setting..." Cholsey is a Parish of considerable historical importance, with its recognised beginnings in 986 A.D. The 1695 Cholsey map shows that the area proposed for gravel extraction along the Wallingford Road contains reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which are largely unchanged today. As such, this particular area long the Wallingford Road must be deemed to be a "Heritage Asset" within the definition of your Plan. It is impossible to see how the proposed extraction sites can possibly safeguard the current character, amenity and setting, of a largely unspoilt natural landscape, sited on the outskirts and bounded to one side by the major access road to our thriving village. The recently adopted Agatha Christie Trail, that runs from her former home of more than forty years in Winterbrook, to her burial site in St. Mary's Church graveyard, will be destroyed by these proposals. I understand from a recent letter to the Wallingford Herald that the number one attraction of our area is Agatha Christie - the world's best-selling author - to destroy this attraction would be an act of folly.</p> <p>The Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway have said that these plans will result in their unable to operate as the gravel workings will cover more than half of their operating area. They are concerned that the impact on their income from paying passengers could lead to the closure of the railway. This would be an ignominious end to more than thirty years of voluntary work. All of these will be directly impacted by the proposed gravel extraction sites, which will have a severe adverse impact visually as well as through "noise, dust and odour".</p> <p>The site is surrounded by many houses, including a number of listed buildings, notably the barns of the Wallingford Road and Cox's Farm, and other older houses, such as Brook House, that are significant local landmarks. It must be wrong to destroy forever the setting in which these buildings are based.</p> <p>In terms of "unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, residential amenity and other sensitive receptors..." The proposed site along the Wallingford Road is shown as abutting directly onto existing residential development. In terms of environment, as mentioned above, the site includes historic reed beds, water-courses, and field patterns, which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. These fields and watercourses are also rich in wildlife and afford an unspoilt natural habitat.</p> <p>I understand that the proposed site has not been subjected to intensive study in the past, so the short notice provided of the proposal has not allowed more than a brief assessment to be made based largely on recent observations by local naturalists. This is largely a permanent grazed farmland site with hedges and trees around much of the boundary. Those bordering Green Lane are of particular interest, being well established and supporting a wide range of bird species. Much of the hedging is mature Hawthorn and to the north east of Green Lane there are also broken lines of mature hedging that are probably of greater value to</p>

wildlife than as field dividers. Most of its value probably lies in the lack of disturbance. This may explain why it is an area where it is easy to see creatures that require space away from humans. Foxes, Roe Deer and Hares are often seen here. Hithercroft Brook, alongside Green Lane, is where Weasels and Stoats are seen, and beside which there have been sightings of Otters in recent years.

Buzzards, tawny Owls and red kites nest here and the fields are much used by flocks of birds in winter especially. These birds include: lapwing; golden plover; fieldfare; redwing and roosting grey herons. Little owls, barn owls and, occasionally in winter, short-eared owls can be seen. In recent years barn owls have been mainly concentrated around Cox's Farm.

The site lies immediately to the south of a complex archaeological area which has evidence of occupation from the Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. The by-pass is a false modern dividing line to what should be viewed as a contiguous site and features have been identified suggesting an early field system, It is an area that is highly likely to contain significant archaeological material. The area around the listed building Cox's Farm is also known medieval settlement area. Therefore since the area is part of the hinterland of a major medieval town, with a long continuity of earlier settlement history disruption of the site should not be taken lightly. Proper, deep archaeological investigation must be undertaken if the archaeological potential of this area is not to be totally destroyed.

A large number of tourists and walkers are drawn to this part of the Thames valley by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which surrounds this site. The Thames and Ridgeway paths, this historic town of Wallingford and the ancient settlement of Cholsey are all key to the enjoyment and attraction of the region. Any semi-industrial development which further expands the town's cartilage must have a detrimental effect on their natural beauty and consequently the economic viability of the district. Under the Minerals Planning Strategy the authorities are obliged to 'consider the social, economic and environmental effect of their proposals.'

The choice of site put forward by the OCC for this consultation seems to take very little account of the distance between what is potentially a disruptive, dusty, noisy eyesore and the homes and workplace of up to 10,000 people. A circle drawn one mile from either end of the proposed zone would encompass the whole of Cholsey village and two-thirds of Wallingford town. At present this area of farmland is all that separates the two settlements and the imposition of these works can contribute nothing to the obligations set out for consideration in the Planning Strategy.

In excess of 10,000 people live within a mile of this site, and many hundred live around it. To subject so many people to the constant noise, disruption and dust is not acceptable. With several other site available in South Oxfordshire why has the County Council opted to put gravel pit that brings ten years of economic blight followed by a further ten years of disruption so close to so many people?

The Core Strategy put forward by OCC is not site specific. Its main purpose is to lay down guidelines and provide information to those seeking to extract minerals in Oxfordshire. This means that the site of operation will be decided upon without a full analysis of its merits, benefits and drawbacks. If the position remains that only one new site - Cholsey - has been nominated then its is not going to be possible to withdraw the decision in the event that the site is deemed unsuitable. Selection form a choice of one is selection and the council has left itself with on other option.

It is bizarre for the County Council to just put forward one site for the imposition of this gravel pit. What will happen if this site, when subjected to public examination by a government inspector, is found lacking? The County Council will be left with no site, but no minerals strategy either.

	<p>It is understood that the sites under consideration by OCC for Mineral extraction in this area are limited to those nominated or proposed by gravel quarrying companies and/or the landowners on whose property the minerals are to be found. Does this sound like a reasonable and acceptable basis on which to impose such a massive upheaval on our locality? One can assume that the interest of local people is not a priority to large commercial companies or those who stand to benefit from hefty land sales. I would like to think that our elected leaders would use the resources that we all pay for in our rates and taxes to seek out sites in advance and subject these to proper appraisal prior to offering them for long-term mining operations. If we were to take a cynical view on the matter we might think that OCC had backed itself into a corner over the matter and had little time and space in which to manoeuvre.</p> <p>I understand from a number of sources that the material found in the site is believed to be of poor quality. The poor quality of the gravel is said to be one of the reasons that a previous contractor withdrew from this site when it was considered twenty years ago.</p> <p>I am very concerned that there is no long term plan for the final use and restoration of the site. I understand that the site cannot be restored as a lake due to issues with proximity to the River Thames and that these same issues preclude the site being used for landfill. Further, the possibility of the site being used for disposal of inert building waste is unlikely as nowadays such waste tends to be recycled and re-used at source. So we are to be left with a depression that will seasonally fill with water, become a marshy area in spring and autumn and a dust bowl in summer.</p> <p>I am really concerned that these proposals will preclude the development of the Wallingford to Cholsey Cycle Path. People in both communities have long campaigned for this amenity and a fully costed, part funded proposal has been developed by the County Council. The Wallingford Road is long, straight, narrow, fast and dangerous; over the years there have been a number of cyclist deaths and injuries on it. I understand from the Parish Council that funds from future housing development in Wallingford and new government money will enable the development of this route in the next five to ten years. Unfortunately the route runs for the full length of the gravel pit site. The funds that come from developers are time limited and will be lost if your scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>I completely understand the desire that the County council has to move gravel extraction close to the point at which it will ultimately be used. Your plan is aimed at moving extraction away from West Oxfordshire and putting the large lorries on to roads nearer to areas where houses are being built in Wallingford, Didcot and the new Science vale development. However, the proposed Cholsey site is not due to start production for ten years, by which time much of the house building in this area will have been completed. There is also nothing to stop the developers of the site, for whom this will be a commercial direction, selling the gravel in to Reading, Oxford or even further afield.</p> <p>There is no evidenced schedule of proposed development activity for the time period in question, to justify the proposed levels of extraction required. I would have expected details of all proposed development in South Oxfordshire to have been documented within the Consultation document.</p> <p>Cholsey is a small site, which will not meet the stated development requirements in the longer-term. There is no mention within the Consultation document of other sites which would far better meet the development requirements in the longer term.</p>
1010	<p>NO to the gravel pit sites A and B in Cholsey. Last time it reared its ugly head, I was a local correspondent for Wallingford, Oxford and Reading newspapers</p> <p>1.</p>

A, Two of the many reasons for the rejection of the site was then:
The poor quality of the gravel, it was not viable to bring rock to mix with the gravel, or transport it to a depot in order for the gravel to be mixed with other rock. FUEL HAS NEVER BEEN SO HIGH IN HISTORY.

B, Secondly RAF Benson objected due to the attraction of land and sea water birds, interfering with their flights, as the pits would be inline with their flight paths. They haven't been consulted yet. Last time when the project ended, it was to be turned into nice lakes, this time we are being left with a lunar landscape. Due to the water table from the downs collecting along the Wallingford Road and both areas flood when the River Thames is high, the pits will soon fill up, still attracting many waterfowl and thus causing havoc with the traffic from RAF Benson.

2. Since the last rejection of the gravel pits in Cholsey some years back, the sewage plant has expanded and considering its close proximity to the proposed site at Wallingford Road site, sewage leakages are inevitable and being on the water shed from the downs, sewage will leak into the pits, especially after the pits are closed.

3. We now come to access:
A, The Wallingford Road is only two way traffic, which has had a number of serious and fatal injuries.
B, The Wallingford by pass connects the A329 from Reading to Didcot, and the new bridge connects these roads to the A423 Henley to Oxford and the road to Caversham, all at the glasses roundabout at the top of the Wallingford road. There is going to be a huge increase of traffic onto these roads due to 300 homes at Cholsey Meadows, 200 homes at Carmel college, 900 homes around Wallingford. These will be competing with large slow lorries and at 7 and a half minute intervals, or every 3 minutes approximately if rock has to be brought in to mix at Cholsey pits, spilling out water and sludge onto the roads causing or adding to jams and making the roads more dangerous.

C, Site A will cross the proposed cycle track from Wallingford to Cholsey station, thus abandoning the track, due to safety and having to ride alongside a gravel pit.

D, How will you prevent some lorries from taking a short cut through the village?

Pollution
A, The air quality will be poor the chemical dust bad for lungs causing problems to Cholsey, Wallingford and Cholsey Meadows depending on wind direction. Who will foot the compensation bill for health problems relating to the dust?
B, Noise pollution, sound already echoes and carries in the ground as well, it will be to noisy.

Devaluation of property: Local solicitors and estate agents say at least 10% will be slashed off house prices e.g £30,000 off a £300,000 house. Are you going to compensate us?
1400 new homes are being built in Wallingford, Carmel college and Cholsey Meadows, people will not want to buy with gravel pits nearby and builders will have to slash prices to be able to sell and it could cause the bulders to go into liquidation, especially in this financial climate.

Tourist Industry
Wallingford is an historical town and Cholsey is famous for its Agatha Christie trail, to the grave at Cholsey Church and had lived in Cholsey. Hoards of Japanese and other visitors roam around the village. The steam engine carries many of the visitors from Wallingford to Cholsey, this would pass right beside the gravel pit site A, and would be seen from Cholsey Church. It would ruin the steam railway business. Others might cycle on the new track, which also runs alongside Wallingford road site, this would be abandoned. Pit B would be I a beautiful part of the Thames river, where many people hire boats. No one wants to visit ugly gravel

	<p>pits. There was a consensus at the village meeting: is there a hidden agenda, due to the poor quality gravel, almost negligible consultations, the speed of the closing date and Cholsey is the prime site?? We vote you in to serve our best interest. This is not in the best interest of the inhabitants of Cholsey, Cholsey Meadows and Wallingford.</p>
1017	<p>I have just looked at the proposal outline for gravel extraction near Cholsey. This will clearly have a greatly detrimental effect on the residents and communities of Cholsey & Wallingford. The road network is not geared up for this kind of traffic. The loss of natural habitat would be tragic. The proposal is sited too close to AONBs. It will adversely affect people's enjoyment of what is at present an area used by cyclists, walkers, steam train enthusiasts. The people have a right to expect to be able to use this land for pleasure. PLEASE DON'T MAKE OUR TOWN UGLY!</p>
1018	<p>I have just heard that fairly substantial pits are planned between Cholsey and Wallingford and, as a resident of Wallingford, I am concerned for the following reasons: It appears that the relevant papers on the pit were only published by OCC on 2nd September and the deadline for the consultation is 31 October 2011. This strikes me as insufficient time for residents and other interested parties to respond to the information contained within these papers and makes me wonder why so little time has been provided by the council. From what I have read so far it is unclear to me what the impact of this pit will be on the Cholsey and Wallingford communities including; the local transport infrastructure, the environment around the pit and the wider area, the substantial length of time it will be operational; what will happen to the area when it is decommissioned, the local railway and local tourism. I do appreciate that we do need to get our aggregates from somewhere but what adds to my concern is that I have only just heard something that is happening very close to me with little time to respond to it.</p>