

Minerals Plan Consultation

Comments on Policy M4: Aggregates rail depots	
ID No (& name of org)	Comment/issue raised
200 (E Hagbourne Parish Council)	East Hagbourne Parish Council supports the existing and permitted rail depots to be safeguarded for importing aggregates.
442	<p>The Minerals Planning Strategy is defective because it does not examine the case for importing minerals by rail from sources outside the County. As far as I have been able to establish no discussions have taken place with major mineral suppliers about the relevant net costs of supplying minerals through existing or new railheads (eg the Mendips or Cornwall). There would be extra costs involved but there would also be savings, not least in those associated with highway development and maintenance and those associated with subsequent restoration of the sites.</p> <p>Some attempt to forecast these costs should be included as well as the impacts on the areas proposed for abstraction.</p> <p>Sand imported from Cornwall would not be the subject of tax, which amounts to £2.00 per tonne, of freshly extracted minerals from the deposits in the county because Cornish sand is readily available and does not need to be extracted.</p> <p>As a consequence of the defects in presenting the draft strategy for consultation, I would expect to see them remedied in the final strategy.</p>
274 (Cemex UK)	Aggregates rail depots and Policy M4 Principally support
494 (Hinton Waldrist Parish council)	Policy M4. We welcome the encouragement of rail transport for the importing of materials.

568 (VoWHDC)	Supported. Retention of Oxfordshire's existing aggregates depots is important because it allows the importation of crushed rock aggregates from the south west and east midlands. Oxfordshire has relatively limited rock reserves and importation of this material by road would have far greater environmental impacts. The depots are safeguarded in the current Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the continued protection of this infrastructure should be supported. The encouragement of new rail aggregate depots on non-Green Belt sites is also a principle which deserves support.
640 (Surrey County Council)	Policy M4 is supported given the importance of safeguarding existing and permitted rail depots to maintain current longer distance imports of crushed rock and to provide flexibility in terms of supply which will become increasing important in the longer term. This approach is mirrored by SMP Core Strategy Policy MC16 which safeguards the rail depots at Woking and Salfords.
693 (Lafarge Aggregates)	Lafarge Aggregates support the safeguarding of rail depots outlined in Policy M4, specifically the rail depot at Banbury (Hennef Way). Lafarge operate a railhead at Banbury for the importation of granite. The railhead allows for the efficient and sustainable transportation of bulk aggregates, thereby overcoming issues such as road traffic, pollution and noise. The safeguarding of the rail depots set out in Policy M4 will allow for the continued sustainable transportation of aggregates and is in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's stated objective to minimise the distance minerals are transported by road.
701 (MPA) and 712 (OMPG)	The MPA supports this policy safeguarding existing and permitted rail depots.
729 Smiths Bletchington	We support this policy and welcome the encouragement given for establishing new aggregates rail depots at suitable locations for long distance movements of materials.
550 (SODC)	Supported. Retention of Oxfordshire's existing aggregates depots is important because it allows the importation of crushed rock aggregates from the south west and east midlands. Oxfordshire has relatively limited rock reserves and importation of this material by road would have far greater environmental impacts. The depots are safeguarded in the current Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the continued

	protection of this infrastructure should be supported. The encouragement of new rail aggregate depots on non-Green Belt sites is also a principle which deserves support.
420 (Hanson Aggregates)	The proposed safeguarding of existing rail depots is supported. The development of new or replacement aggregates rail depots should not necessarily be restricted to locations outside the Green Belt. Suitable locations are very limited due to the obvious constraints of proximity to the main line rail network and proposals should therefore be assessed on individual merits based on an assessment of their potential environmental impacts.
Comments on Policy M5: Mineral safeguarding	
ID No (& name of org)	Comment/issue raised
111	The policy statement is supported.
169 (PAGE)	12. This policy states that mineral safeguarding areas will be identified in a minerals site allocations document. It is considered that the Lower Thame Valley comprising the sites at Benson, Drayton St Leonard, Shillingford and Stadhampton (sites SG-03, SG- 09, SG-13 and SG-59) should be excluded from the future safeguarding areas given the findings of the 'Preliminary Assessment of Minerals Site Nominations', which records that all these sites are unsuitable on a variety of grounds.
229	Thank you for your consultation on the contents of your draft Minerals Planning Strategy. we wish to comment on Policy M5 which relates to minerals safeguarding. This policy states that 'Mineral resources will be safeguarded for the future and development which would prevent or otherwise hinder the possible future working of minerals will not be permitted, unless it can be shown that: The need for the development outweighs the economic and sustainability considerations relating to the resource; or The mineral will be extracted before development takes place It is noted that the supporting text states in paragraph 4.34 that mineral safeguarding areas will be defined in the minerals sites allocation document. However, the accompanying background paper no.4 on Safeguarding Minerals in Oxfordshire states in paragraph 1.21 of appendix 1 that 'the preliminary conclusions are that for river terrace gravels, the main river valleys resource along the Thames, the Lower Windrush, the Evenlode south of Hanborough and the Thame south of Stadhampton should be safeguarded'. The accompanying map 1.2 on page 17 shows the geographical extent

	<p>of the 'preliminary conclusions on safeguarding sand and gravel'. The map is small scale but it would appear that the whole area around Wallingford and larger villages such as Berinsfield, Benson and Cholsey could potentially be covered by a Mineral Safeguarding Area if the area identified on this preliminary plan was adopted. This would conflict with South Oxfordshire District Council's Core Strategy where the council are proposing a strategic site for development of 555 dwellings at Wallingford (Table 7.3 & policies CSH1 & CSWAL2). A further 1,154 dwellings have also been allocated to the larger villages, which include Berinsfield, Benson and Cholsey (Table 7.3 & policies CSH1 & CSR1) These three villages are also relatively unconstrained in terms of planning constraints such as flood plain and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designations, compared with many of the other larger villages which the council has identified. If South Oxfordshire District Council's housing target is to be achieved development on Greenfield sites in these settlements will need to take place. This is also important in order to meet local housing needs and support the retention of services. However, if the Mineral Safeguarding areas covered or went very close to the edge of these settlements there would be a policy conflict as you quote in paragraph 4.1 from Minerals Policy Statement 1 that: District councils responsible for spatial planning of land defined in Mineral Safeguarding Areas should not normally include policies and proposals in their Local Development documents for non-minerals development in those areas..' It is therefore important that when the detailed safeguarding plans are drawn up that they are not drawn tightly to these settlements but would allow necessary development to satisfy the housing needs of these settlements and enable South Oxfordshire District Council's Core Strategy's proposed housing distribution to be delivered.</p>
275 (Cemex UK)	<p>MSA - Sand and gravel excludes various river deposits that should be safeguarded. There is limited methodology of how the MSA have been drawn up. It should be noted that MPS1 does not preclude the safeguarding of areas that have yet been proven.</p> <p>It would be more appropriate to draft MSA from BGS geological data, remove urban areas and urban infrastructure the remaining area would then be subject to Policy M5. Additional information could then be sought through the planning application process.</p> <p>Mineral extraction is not promoted in National Parks or AONB but they are also not excluded and therefore should be identified on the MSA plan. The main objective of MPS1 is to safeguard mineral resources as far as possible, the proposed MSA does not for fill its potential or national policy guidance.</p> <p>Background paper 3.2 - it is considered appropriate to remove the word "potentially" Table 1 and 2 do not clarify why other areas of non-resources have been excluded - Methodology</p>

	It is considered a 4th option should have been investigated safeguarding mineral resources through the plan period.
287	<p>(vi) Policy M5 needs to make it clear which areas are intended to be safeguarded. It is understood that these relate to areas identified in a Background Report and that these areas are more extensive than the Preferred Strategy Areas. This needs to be clarified, mapped and justified in the final documents you produce. I consider however that if this work is done it may also be necessary to refine some of the areas in the background report to avoid unnecessary blight.</p> <p>Implications: Policies M5 & 6 should be modified to meet the issues raised in this response.</p>
355 (Peter Bennie Ltd)	This policy should refer not only to 'soft sand, limestone and ironstone in existing areas of working' but should include areas that are covered by dormant or other planning permissions where working is not currently taking place. The extent of such permissions should be clearly shown in the Minerals Site Allocations Document.
314	<p>The approach towards safeguarding recognised and broadly allocated resources from any form of development which may have an adverse effect on the viability of potential mineral sites is welcomed and should be agreed in principle.</p> <p>However, specific detail of how "economic and sustainability considerations" will be defined by OCC is likely appropriate along with specifying provision for formally reviewing facts associated with defining propositions likely to encroach upon safeguarded mineral.</p>
495 (Hinton Waldrist Parish Council)	Policy M5. We would request that the area that is defined for soft sand safeguarding must be reduced in size from that shown on fig 7 (see comment 4 above).
569 (VoWHDC)	The safeguarding of mineral resources and the infrastructure required for their movement by rail as opposed to road is important in ensuring their sustainable management and is supported by national minerals planning policy. The safeguarding of mineral reserves in the ground is particularly important as minerals can only be worked where they are found. Should reserves be permanently sterilised through the construction of built development it may mean that resources need to be found from less sustainable locations with increased environmental impacts. The inclusion of this policy in the core strategy will ensure that where commercially viable mineral reserves exist, the possibility of their prior

	<p>extraction and use is addressed as part of any planning application for permanent development, or other land uses which might sterilise the reserves in the future.</p> <p>The policy is supported.</p>
598 (Nuneham Parish Council)	<p>The extent of gravel that might be generated directly as a result of a development is not specifically noted. Development in the middle of Oxford, particularly where deep basements are involved, may generate 'windfall' gravel. Where possible the re-use of any extracted gravels should be encouraged through the planning consents for those buildings. This would reduce the need to extract gravel away from site and the transport involved in carting away excavations and in importing gravel.</p> <p>6. The Plan proposes not to allow development where future sand and gravel resources would be affected. This ignores the potential for a new development site to allow for exploitation of underlying sand and gravel - such a development might increase the viability of extraction on a particular site. Therefore rather than a blanket ban on future development of a site to protect the sand and gravel resource (if this was the only objection to such a development), the County might consider supporting development if it brought forward extraction and preserved resource elsewhere. Consideration might be given to amendment of the proposed policy M5.</p>
670 (Hills Quarry Products)	<p>HQPL broadly supports the safeguarding policies.</p>
694 (Lafarge Aggregates)	<p>2.7.2 Lafarge Aggregates support the safeguarding of mineral resources and rail depots from development, which would prevent or otherwise hinder their possible future operation. This is a particularly important consideration with respect to the possible encroachment of residential development.</p> <p>2.7.3 With reference to their existing quarry and lands at Caversham, Lafarge support the proposal in Policy M5 to define Mineral Safeguarding Areas on a map for those sites identified for future mineral extraction. It is considered that this would prevent any ambiguity that might arise in terms of the identification of the aggregate resources and the future expansion of urban areas.</p> <p>2.7.4 The same principle applies to Lafarge's railhead at Banbury. As outlined with reference to Policy M4, the railhead is of strategic importance to the company and provides for the importation of granite in an efficient and sustainable manner.</p>

702 (MPA) and 713 (OMPG)	The MPA supports this policy. We recommend that the approach to safeguarding and identification of MSAs follows the BGS good practice advice (OR/11/046). We recommend that the approach to safeguarding of rail depots contained in this policy should be in Policy M4.
730 (Smiths Bletchington)	<p>We support this policy objective to ensure that the needless sterilisation of proven mineral resources by non-mineral development is prevented. This is in accord with MPS1. Minerals can only be worked where they are found so it is essential their presence should be flagged up as part of any land use planning decision. The identification of Minerals Safeguarding Areas and Mineral Consultation Areas should provide the means to alert both developers and planning authorities to the presence of mineral resources and to ensure that balanced decisions are reached.</p> <p>6.2 It is recognised that the delineation of MSAs on the ground will be dependent on the geological data available at the time. Impartial data is primarily that held by the BGS, supplemented, where available, by information from "the customary detailed exploration and evaluation undertaken by the industry" (BGS Mineral Assessment Report Series). The meeting between operators and the County Council in March 2011 (Appendix 2 of Background Paper) debated the potential extent of MSAs particularly those areas which may not be economically viable now but which could become of interest in the future. It was also recognised that the current level of knowledge about the soft sand resources within the County was limited.</p> <p>6.3 The MPS 1 Practice Guide advises that MSAs will need to be refined in discussion with industry and other stakeholders and the BGS guide to mineral safeguarding in England (October 2007) states that the delineation of MSAs is a dynamic process. For this reason we recommend that a structured review of geological information for the County is undertaken on a regular basis, (possibly as part of the Annual Monitoring Report) so that the boundaries of existing MSAs can be updated and refined and to determine whether new areas should be identified. This is essential if the objective of Policy M5 is to be delivered with accurate detailed maps of mineral resources protected for future generations.</p>
376 (D K Symes)	<p>The policy as written effectively will act as a blight on all areas on mineral land. Further, the policy is not as flexible as the advice set out in MPS1 which refers to 'proven resources' and that they are not 'needlessly sterilised'. MPS1 recognises that development can take place on mineral resources and encourages prior extraction of the minerals 'where practicable'.</p> <p>In other words MPS1 is seeking to ensure there is a suitable balance between the need for the development and the importance of the minerals that it might sterilise. This flexibility and balance is not translated into policy M5.</p>

551 (SODC)	<p>The safeguarding of mineral resources and the infrastructure required for their movement by rail as opposed to road is important in ensuring their sustainable management and is supported by national minerals planning policy. The safeguarding of mineral reserves in the ground is particularly important as minerals can only be worked where they are found. Should reserves be permanently sterilised through the construction of built development it may mean that resources need to be found from less sustainable locations with increased environmental impacts. The inclusion of this policy in the core strategy will ensure that where commercially viable mineral reserves exist, the possibility of their prior extraction and use is addressed as part of any planning application for permanent development, or other land uses which might sterilise the reserves in the future.</p> <p>The policy is supported.</p>
421 (Hanson Aggregates)	<p>Hanson supports the policy for mineral safeguarding, which accords with MPS1.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, all identified mineral resources for sand & gravel and soft sand should be safeguarded irrespective of the findings of the Preliminary Assessment of Minerals Site Nominations, which require further investigation and evaluation.</p>
Comments on Policy M6: Restoration of mineral workings	
ID No (& name of org)	Comment/issue raised
116	<p>Policy M6 is exceedingly important from the point of view of the environment and the local residents. The strong emphases within this policy for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provision for long-term maintenance of the after-use and enhancement of the environment - environmental improvements, such as new habitats and improved public access, which benefit the local community - Where restoration could assist or achieve the creation of priority habitats and/or Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets, the relevant biodiversity after-use should be incorporated within the restoration scheme. - Where restoration could protect geodiversity and improve educational opportunities this should be incorporated into the proposed restoration scheme. - Where a mineral working site has the potential to provide for local amenity uses, including appropriate sport and recreational uses, these uses should be incorporated into the restoration scheme.

	<p>- Where appropriate, operators and landowners will be expected to contribute towards the management of restored mineral workings for an extended period beyond any formal aftercare period.</p> <p>are very welcome. The last point, the establishment of an aftercare fund is vital, and should be built up from day 1 of extraction, giving local residents security that the future management of the site is assured. Residents should, through the Parish Council, have a presence within any body that administers the fund.</p> <p>In general, most of river-terrace Oxfordshire is high intensity arable or improved meadow land, with a frankly minimal biodiversity value. All sites will have some archaeological potential, but unless already identified on the Sites and monuments Record, this potential will be hypothetical until revealed by excavation. Archaeological evaluation and monitoring of mineral extraction sites is always required, and is teaching us more about the history of land usage than excavation at known settlement sites is likely to provide. In other words, the present situation at such sites is generally not of great biodiversity or heritage value, and this stands to be enhanced by properly managed and funded restoration. The statement that "Because of the generally high water table and 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" is appropriate, but I would ask you to rephrase this as "wetland and water habitats". Complexes of large (eg 2ha) and smaller ponds are of immense conservation value, and generally much liked by walkers.</p>
170 (PAGE)	<p>This policy proposes that, where mineral working is proposed on the best and most versatile agricultural land, it should be restored back to agricultural land if this is practicable. This approach is objected to: the best and most versatile agricultural land should not be used for mineral extraction precisely because it is not always practicable to restore it to its previous value. The best and most versatile agricultural land is a finite resource and should be protected as such, including through the addition of a Core Policy in relation to this matter (see below).</p>
202 (E Hagbourne Parish Council)	<p>East Hagbourne supports Policy M6 for the restoration and after use of mineral workings.</p> <p>Regarding the existing and proposed mineral working areas north of Didcot, these offer significant opportunities for restoration in association with the housing development planned for the Didcot area, such as leisure, recreational, and nature conservation park. In addition, areas with created lakes could act as flood compensation storage or as part of the infrastructure for surface water drainage involved with proposed areas of housing development.</p>
264 (BaCHpoRT)	<p>The consultation draft's emphasis on appropriate restoration is welcome. But BaCHPoRT is concerned that the draft appears to accept that the creation of new bodies of water is the most likely consequence of new quarries alongside the River Thames. It is not clear how this can be reconciled with the statement in 4.43 that restoration should be "sympathetic to the character of the surrounding landscape". The effect of the creation of new bodies of water is more likely to be a radical change in the landscape (see for example the effect of the lakes north of Dorchester, as seen from Wittenham Clumps) and this will be to the detriment of its character and its amenities, and thus its attraction to visitors. For example, if major new gravel workings were sited immediately alongside the River Thames (even if protected by</p>

	<p>bunds) and new lakes were formed in their aftermath, this would severely impair the attractions of the Thames Path. BaCHPoRT would like to see it stated as a priority that restoring the character of the landscape to its pre-extraction state should be a condition of developing new quarries in scenically sensitive areas like the immediate environs of the River Thames or the Oxford Green Belt. Overall guidelines covering such aspects as restoration of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land to its previous condition, and an explicit policy of preserving the character of the Thames Valley, should be clearly set out.</p>
276 (Cemex UK)	<p>Cemex object to the Councils desire to tax future mineral works through a plan policy related to aftercare. The Core Strategy does not provide evidence of failed restoration projects within the County that have led to this policy or data to quantify the costs necessary to complete aftercare schemes. Mineral Companies pride themselves on the restoration projects and understand you are only as good as your last restoration scheme. The desire to secure long term financial funding is unfounded. It is unclear how this mechanism would be implemented and could be construed as a mechanism to include minerals into a similar structure to CIL which is not appropriate. There is no mechanism identified of how any financial security fund would be calculated, managed, spent or reimburse once aftercare has been completed. With regard to restoration schemes it should be noted there are various means of protecting soil quality in addition to agriculture. Restoration to agriculture at original ground levels would normally require inert material (most material is being recycled reducing waste streams to reclaim land to original ground level) and is not always achievable. Each site should be assessed individually.</p>
288	<p>Policy M6 is important in ensuring restoration and maintenance is carried out. However the wording of this policy is also too loose. For example developers should be 'required' rather than merely 'expected' to contribute towards the management of restored mineral workings for an extended period beyond any formal aftercare period. In addition it is considered that there should be greater consideration of the impacts of mineral development on the quality of life local communities affected by them. Local communities should benefit directly from the revenue generated by new developments in their locality. This should be promoted in the overall principles of the plan as encouraged by government policy and made a specific requirement in Policy M6. Implications: Policies M5 & 6 should be modified to meet the issues raised in this response.</p>
356 (Peter Bennie Ltd)	<p>There are concerns relating to the means of securing restoration in the long term, as there are no mechanisms put forward in the Core Strategy document. The restoration background paper give guidance of the County's approach and it is of particular concern. Sections 7.2 and 9.4 cover the subject of funding and has been written as if Oxfordshire's practice is well established and wide ranging; we are only aware of one example and if the fund was set up for this it was done 20 years ago. It has been estimated that it will need 30p/tonne to provide for 20 years of conservation management, however there is no proof to substantiate this figure. This method seems to be an arbitrary one size fits all method, which takes no account of site circumstances</p>

	<p>or detailed requirements. The County Council are to hold the funds and sign off the works, roles that are outside of its remit, experience and competence.</p> <p>This issue will need to be dealt with in detail in subsequent mineral policy documents, where there will be the opportunity for formal consultation.</p>
400 (Grundon)	<p>There is no indication of the status of the background papers and how they are reflected in policy. The restoration one is of particular concern.</p> <p>7.2 and 9.4 cover the subject of funding and has been written as if the practice is well established and wide ranging, we are only aware of one example. It is estimated that 30p/tonne will be required; however there are no costings to substantiate this figure, which is to provide for 20 years of conservation management. This method seems to be an arbitrary one size fits all method which takes no account of site circumstances or requirements for which the County Council are to hold the funds and sign off the works, roles that are outside of their remit, experience and competence. The residue of the funds is to be kindly donated to other nearby BAP projects. There is no mechanism identified of how any financial security fund would be calculated, managed, spent or reimbursed once the normal 5 year aftercare period has been completed. This mechanism seems to be including minerals in a similar structure to that of the CIL which is neither appropriate nor reasonable and was specifically ruled out by the Government.</p> <p>9.1 also deals with BAP saying developments should contribute to this where possible, however this runs counter to Policy C4 that seeks to refuse any application that fails to achieve an improvement in BAP.</p> <p>We cannot support Policy M6 in its method of securing long term management and Policy C4.</p>
311	<p>It should of course be requisite that the restoration of mineral workings be undertaken to a suitably high standing. However, it is not appropriate that overarching policy is overly general and prescriptive. Such an approach would blight the ability to undertake and provide innovative schemes which may serve evolving land use requirements during the plan period. Restoration proposals should be considered and accepted on a site by site basis in accordance with prevailing and reasonably foreseeable land use requirements.</p> <p>With regard to the expectation that extended aftercare requirements are to be provided for, this seems an unduly vague and likely unfairly onerous proposition. The term 'extended' should be clarified.</p>
496 (Hinton Waldrist Parish Council)	<p>The satisfactory restoration of worked-out quarries is a key requirement of minerals extractions. Restoration should be timely. On large sites, we agree that intermediate restoration should be enforced as stated in this policy. No details are given of how this is to be enforced though. We consider that independent advice should be sought (from NFU say) as to the restoration proposals put forward by the minerals operators. Digging a large hole, taking out all the free draining sand and gravel down to a clay core, is not conducive to restoring the land to grade 1 or 2 agricultural land.</p>

<p>859 (Shenington with Alkerton Parish Council)</p>	<p>This policy should be modified to specifically include the local communities. In particular, the policy should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allow local communities to specify appropriate after-use and the requirements for the restoration to be sympathetic to the character of the surrounding landscape and local amenity uses; - ensure that planning permission is not granted until after the proposals for the restoration, aftercare and after-use have been made and approved by the local communities; - define "the long term" to include the management of the finished mineral works until it is fully restored to the satisfaction of the local communities; - enable local communities to identify local amenity uses, including sport and recreational uses which will be incorporated into the restoration scheme; - require operators and landowners to contribute towards the management of restored mineral workings until they are fully restored to the satisfaction of the local communities; - require the provisions of funds, before permission is granted, to the local communities adequate to retain professionals to monitor and evaluate the restoration process and results. <p>The policy refers to the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Plan targets. We think it should be modified to make clear that this includes the Conservation Target Areas.</p>
<p>570 (VoWHDC)</p>	<p>Mineral workings can and must be restored to a very high standard and the restoration should be in keeping with the character of the host area.</p> <p>Where mineral working is necessary, the restoration of sites can be a way to gain significant improvements to biodiversity and the environment. This does require good working in partnership with the minerals industry. The successful 'Nature After Minerals' initiative between the RSPB and Natural England is one such example of a programme to secure ecological enhancements from the restoration of minerals sites.</p> <p>Similarly some excellent agricultural and recreational restorations of mineral sites have been achieved. The restoration of sites from which minerals have had to be extracted represents an important opportunity to then secure longer-term environmental benefits.</p> <p>It is also therefore important that the local community have a significant role in determining the most appropriate means of restoration.</p> <p>The inclusion of policy M6 is broadly supported but after the opening words 'Minerals workings should be restored to a high quality' the following change should be inserted 'and in keeping with the character of the surrounding area'</p> <p>Supplementary text should also be added to set out the role of local communities in helping to determine the most appropriate means of site restoration.</p>

573 (CPRE Oxfordshire)	CPRE welcomes the aims set out in Policy M6 and especially the emphasis given to the need for treatment which is sympathetic to the character of the surrounding landscape.
634 (WODC)	<p>Satisfactory restoration continues to be a key issue for West Oxfordshire in the absence of a comprehensive strategy. Some 400 hectares of land in the Lower Windrush Valley have already been permitted for sand and gravel extraction, the majority of which has been or is being restored to lakes. A new landscape has emerged. OCC must commit to preparation, in partnership, of a detailed strategy for restoration of further mineral workings. Restoration must not be considered in a piecemeal manner otherwise positive long-term benefits for the landscape and local communities are unlikely to be maximised. Improvements for local access and biodiversity gains must have long-term management arrangements in place which may include land transfer to community land/wildlife trusts. It is suggested that Policy M6 should refer to working with local communities to help deliver benefits from restoration.</p> <p>4.6. Restoration schemes should have regard to local landscape assessments, including the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment.</p>
659 (BBOWT)	<p>We broadly agree with this section and policy M6, with the following comments.</p> <p>4.37 We recommend that the period of 'long-term maintenance of the after-use and enhancement' is specified here (usually a period of 25 years).</p> <p>4.41 A further paragraph should be added to clarify that restoration schemes should have a particular primary end-use (e.g. nature conservation, amenity or agriculture) and not include many small parcels of land with different land-uses as this can result in low quality restoration which is difficult and expensive to manage. Although restoration schemes should have a primary end-use, all restoration schemes have the potential to enhance the local landscape for wildlife</p> <p>4.43 Policy M6: Restoration of mineral workings - the words 'where appropriate' should be deleted from the final sentence of the policy.</p>
671 (Hills Quarry Products)	<p>The majority of mineral operators in Oxfordshire restore their sites to high or exemplary standards. HQPL supports Oxfordshire's strategy to require high quality restoration of mineral working to an appropriate afteruse. HQPL is, however, concerned at the suggestion that satisfactory proposals will be required for the means of securing restoration. HQPL does not support the use of financial measures to secure restoration except, possibly, for one instance; where the track record of an applicant shows that a satisfactory restoration is unlikely to be achieved. In all other instances gaining financial contributions, bonds, bank guarantees, insurance etc is time consuming in setting up and managing and very expensive. It ties up money which could be invested in the operation and the restoration. More to the point it is unnecessary.</p> <p>With expectations that, in the long term, more agricultural land will be needed in the United Kingdom to feed a rapidly</p>

	<p>growing population, it is essential that the need for nature conservation, woodland or recreation is carefully balanced against the increasing need for agricultural. It is not solely the best and most versatile land which should be restored to agriculture and agriculture should not be by-passed where otherwise only mediocre bio-diversity aims can be achieved. Exclusion of an opportunity to return land to agriculture may restrict an owner's ability to gain an income from the land after restoration.</p> <p>HQPL supports the creation of priority habitats. However, prime opportunities are becoming more commonly excluded due to the demands of the air industry and Ministry of Defence. The mineral planning authority must ensure that objections from the air industry to bio-diversity schemes are only upheld if they are soundly based and realistic.</p>
680 (RSPB)	<p>Early consideration of restoration is very important and therefore we fully support the Council's requirement for the provision of restoration, after-care and after-use proposals within any application. However, we would greatly welcome the provision of a more detailed masterplan, outlining the design of new habitats, and after-care proposals along with detailed management plans</p> <p>to ensure the delivery and maintenance of priority habitats. By promoting early consideration and integration of biodiversity gains, restoration plans are more likely to be appropriate and successfully delivered. We suggest that this information may be best included within the Sites DPD rather than within the Core Strategy.</p> <p>The RSPB welcomes the recognition in paragraph 4.37 for the need for the provision of long-term maintenance, although it is noted that no definition of 'long-term' is stated within the Core Strategy. The Council's intentions are clearly defined in Background Paper 3 (Restoration), which is helpful, but we think something this important should be clearly defined in the Core Strategy itself. 'Long-term' should be defined either within this paragraph, or potentially within paragraph 4.40. This definition should comprise the 5-year statutory management period, followed by a further 20-year period. This addition not only clarifies the term for the benefit of applicants, but will ensure that any newly created habitats are adequately managed for the benefit of wildlife and people over a substantial period of time.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.38 - We support the recognition in this paragraph that mineral sites provide opportunities for environmental improvements, and strongly welcome that all restorations schemes should include "measures to conserve and protect biodiversity."</p> <p>We do not, however, feel that "consideration should first be given to restoration to the original land-use". This approach does not support the Vision of the Core Strategy which states "The restoration of mineral workings will enhance the quality of Oxfordshire's natural environment and the quality of life for Oxfordshire residents..." Mineral sites present a huge opportunity for the delivery of the UK and Oxfordshire BAP targets³ and as such the Council should aim to maximise net gain from mineral site restorations by promoting the Vision throughout this document.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.39 -</p> <p>Notwithstanding the fact that background paper 3 (restoration) discusses the need to prioritise inert fill towards quarry</p>

restoration projects to achieve high quality after-uses within a reasonable amount of time, the Mineral Strategy is silent on the issue. Having said that, Waste Strategy Policy W7 is helpful on this topic. Given the critical role of inert fill in delivering the Council's policies for mineral site restoration, we think the need to prioritise inert waste use should be mentioned in paragraph 4.39, along with a cross reference to Policy W7, as follows:

"...where restoration relies on infilling with inert waste it may take some years to complete restoration because of shortage of suitable fill material (due in large part to increased recycling). For this reason, inert waste will be directed as a priority towards use in mineral site restoration projects in accordance with waste strategy Policy W7, and particularly for those after-uses where achieving a ground level at or near the original level is important to successful restoration, as in nature conservation or agriculture-led after-uses. Effective phasing of restoration is important..."

Paragraph 4.40 -
This paragraph refers to the expectation that operators and landowners will contribute to an extended period of after-care and management, but as is the case elsewhere in the draft Core Strategy, what constitutes "long-term" is not defined. We encourage the Council to define this important variable (please see our comments above in relation to Paragraph 4.37).

Paragraph 4.41 -
The suggestion that "most" new workings in the river valleys will have to be restored to water bodies does not really recognise the range of possibilities that might be open to landowners and operators to help mitigate the risk of bird strike. The term "water bodies" may also hold negative connotations for some local communities concerned about wholesale changes to the character of their local landscapes. Our suggestion is to re-word the first part of 4.41 as follows (new text is underlined):

"Because of the generally high water table and 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 wetlands of some kind. The issue of risk to aircraft from birdstrike is an important consideration which may restrict the location of workings and affect the design of restoration schemes. Some areas of open water are likely but careful use of inert fill and other engineering techniques can sometimes lead to creation of wetland habitats that offer lower 3 (Please see footnote 1 above) bird strike risk and are also of much greater value in terms of current biodiversity priorities. Most of..." Partly to provide context to Policy M6 (please see our comments on this policy, below) we propose that a short new paragraph should follow 4.41. The issue that concerns us is that the Core Strategy should discourage the approach to restoration that has occurred quite often in the past, where operators read the policies, see that the mineral planning authority

encourages a wide range of possible restoration options (e.g. leisure and recreation, a list of BAP habitats, agriculture, etc) and believes that the restoration design that best meets MDF policies is one that includes a sample of everything mentioned. This has led in the past to over-complex restoration designs that pose serious long-term financial and practical management problems for landowners and site managers. The solution is an MDF that promotes restoration schemes with a primary end-use (e.g. nature conservation focussed on a small number of habitats, or leisure and recreation, or agriculture). The aim of the MDF should be to promote the right mix of after-uses over Oxfordshire as a whole, not a mixture on each individual site. Although restoration schemes should have a primary end-use, even proposals where the end-use is not biodiversity-led have the potential to improve biodiversity, access and the local landscape. Restoration for any purpose should be able to include small amounts of biodiversity gain such as ponds (or pond complexes), new and/or enhanced hedgerows and wildflower margins on land not otherwise needed for the primary end-use. The Council could achieve this with a minor change to Policy M6 (discussed below) plus a new paragraph following 4.41, as follows:

"Policy M6 outlines the approach to restoration desired by the Council. The list of potential desirable after-uses should not be seen as a checklist to be delivered on every individual site. Trying to include many different after-uses on one site can create long-term financial and practical management problems. Instead, operators are encouraged to focus on a primary after-use and consider what other uses might be integrated with it (e.g. agriculture with some biodiversity gain, or nature conservation with quiet amenity use). Biodiversity-led restoration proposals are similarly encouraged to focus on a small number of priority habitats. This is often a simpler long-term management proposition and will usually maximise the nature conservation value of the habitats provided."

Paragraph 4.42 -

We welcome and strongly support the intention to produce a DPD that will form a framework within which site restoration plans will be considered. This, plus a slightly modified Policy M6, could provide the positive, visionary framework for restoration that will deliver a step change in the benefits that mineral restoration proposals provide for Oxfordshire's local communities and wildlife.

Policy M6 - Restoration of mineral workings

We welcome and strongly support references in this Policy for the requirement to achieve high quality restoration, as quickly as possible. We also welcome the specific reference to achieving BAP targets.

The clause relating to treatment of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land does not recognise that in some cases, restoration of a site in a way that preserves the soils (or the potential for their re-use for agriculture) is an

	<p>acceptable alternative to returning the land to agricultural use. We suggest a small addition to this clause to cover this point.</p> <p>Policy M6 clearly defines what forms of restoration are generally encouraged. However, read as a whole (as the policy must be, and will be, by land owners and operators) it does not provide any guidance about what form of restoration is the right one on any given site. For reasons explained above (under our response to paragraph 4.41) we are worried that this will mean Policy M6 is treated as a "checklist" and individual restoration proposals will come forward that try to include a bit of everything - multiple after-uses, even multiple BAP priorities - on each and every site.</p> <p>The Council has already identified a solution, mentioned in paragraph 4.42, to prepare a DPD that will form a framework within which site restoration plans will be considered. We feel very strongly that Policy M6 should include reference to this, and to the desired, strategic approach to restoration that we are sure is the Council's intention. This could be worded as follows (new text underlined):</p> <p>"Policy M6: Restoration of mineral workings Minerals workings should be restored...surrounding landscape and the amenity of local communities. Restoration and after-use should be in accordance with the spatial strategy for the area as outlined in the Sites Development Plan Document. Planning permission will not be granted...</p> <p>Where mineral working is proposed on best and most versatile agricultural land, the restoration should be back to agricultural land if this is practicable or to an after-use which preserves the soils for future use, e.g. nature conservation. Where restoration could assist or achieve the creation of priority habitats and/or Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets, the relevant biodiversity after-use should be incorporated within the restoration scheme. The choice of habitats should be informed by early discussions with the mineral planning authority and other stakeholders but generally should focus on a limited range of targets that can delivered on a significant scale on the site.</p> <p>Where restoration could protect geodiversity... Where a mineral working site has the potential... Where appropriate, operators and landowners will be expected to contribute towards the management of restored mineral workings for an extended period beyond any formal after-care period, especially in the case of nature conservation restoration."</p>
695 (Lafarge Aggregates)	<p>2.8.2 Lafarge Aggregates support the restoration of mineral workings to provide for sustainable after-use, a varied biodiversity and appropriate geodiversity. However, we wish to express concerns regarding Background Paper No. 3, which deals specifically with quarry restoration and its potential relationship with Policy M6.</p> <p>2.8.3 There is no indication of the status of the Background Papers and how they are reflected in policy. However, we are concerned with regard to the</p>

	<p>statements contained in sections 7.2, 7.3 and 9.4 of Background Paper No. 3 and the potential implications for the minerals industry within the County.</p> <p>2.8.4 Section 7.2 of the Backgrounds Paper states that Oxfordshire County Council set up a scheme in 1991 to fund post mineral restoration for nature conservation purposes. This fund is considered in addition to a section 106 agreement and is stated in a manner that suggests it is well established and wide-ranging across the County. However, we are only aware of one area to which the fund applied.</p> <p>2.8.5 Section 9.4 of the Background Paper goes on to state as follows: "For nature conservation after-use, the developer will fund the restoration and the 5 year after care period. The County Council proposes to gain the developer's consent to funding a further 20 year management period. The money to fund the 20 year period will be collected by OCC from the developer on an annual basis at the end of each year in which the quarry has been operational. The amount will be based on a figure per tonne of mineral. The County Council suggests that this figure could be 30 pence per tonne (index linked from 2012), but this needs further discussion. Any money not spent on management of the site by the end of the 20 year period can be spent on enhancements to biodiversity, landscape & access within the Conservation Target Area."</p> <p>2.8.6 It is our contention that there is no justification for this provision for an operator that has such obligations enshrined in a section 106 agreement and who has demonstrated competence in delivering satisfactory aftercare management. We are unaware of any other Authority that takes such an approach. Indeed, we consider this inconsistent with Government planning policy. Lafarge funds restoration and aftercare on an accrual basis as minerals are worked and consider that there is no reason for a Planning Authority to intervene in this way. In light of this, we respectfully request clarification on the role of this statement within the context of the Council's Draft Minerals Strategy.</p> <p>2.8.7 In addition to the points set out above, it is submitted that Policy M6 of the Draft Minerals Strategy should also make reference to the use of inert waste in the restoration of mineral workings. This is a key consideration for the restoration of the landscape and is already recognised in the Draft Waste Planning Strategy (Policy W7)</p>
703 (MPA) and 714 (OMPG)	The MPA supports this policy.

724 (Frobisher Renewables)	<p>These representations are submitted by Turley Associates on behalf of our client Frobisher Renewables Limited. Frobisher's comments are made in relation to the overall strategy and strategic policies set out in the consultation documents and are made against the background of their interest in the site known as Wicklesham Quarry, south of Faringdon. Frobisher Renewables Limited has an interest in the site and is currently reviewing the potential for the use of the quarry site for the purposes of a recycling and renewable energy centre.</p> <p>In light of the information contained within the restoration background paper and the relevance of this to the Wicklesham Quarry site, we have also commented on Policy M6 of the draft minerals strategy relating to the restoration of mineral workings.</p> <p>The policy and its supporting text refer to the importance of ensuring high quality restoration as quickly as possible following the end of the site's use for minerals purposes. Whilst the supporting text acknowledges that restoration programmes should be determined on the individual merits and circumstances of the site, mention is also made of a limited list of „acceptable restoration after-uses? which includes agricultural, woodland and recreation.</p> <p>The list of acceptable after-uses is considered to be too narrow and Frobisher Renewables Limited consider that a greater range of uses should be acceptable. The wording of the policy does not reflect the principle that consideration needs to be given to the nature and circumstances of an individual site when devising a restoration strategy, particularly where constraints, such as retaining access to geological areas, needs to be taken into consideration. On this basis, we would suggest that a sentence is added to the policy relating to the need to consider the individual merits and circumstances of a site when determining the appropriate restoration strategy and to considering a broader range of potential after-uses. This approach would also accord with the Plan for Growth (March 2011) and the Government's commitment to ensure that the planning system does everything it can to secure growth and to encourage local authorities to prioritise development and jobs to support the economy. Beneficial after-use of a minerals site to accommodate waste management and recycling uses can deliver an economic return and can deliver a wide range of social and economic benefits including direct employment, business rates, and CIL funding to be spent in the local area. Nature conservation and bio-diversity enhancements can still be achieved within such an after-use but without unnecessary reliance on the public purse.</p>
731 (Smiths Bletchington)	<p>7.1 The delivery of high quality, phased and progressive restoration of mineral workings to an appropriate afteruse is fully supported.</p> <p>7.2 We also support the opportunities the restoration of mineral workings can deliver for biodiversity and geodiversity within the County, for local amenity benefits and improved public access. The return of best and most versatile agricultural land is also a commendable objective but is likely to be the most dependent of the afteruses on the availability of imported inert materials.</p>

7.3 The Draft Plan and Background Paper 3 recognise the shortage of inert wastes suitable for the restoration of mineral workings. However it should also be noted that the use of inert wastes for this purpose is subject to separate regulation by the Environment Agency which is outside the influence and objectives of land use planning policy. For this reason the restoration options available for any particular site may be more a decision for the EA than an aspiration of the Minerals Plan.

7.4 We strongly support the prioritisation of the use of inert fill in the County in the restoration of mineral workings (Para 8.3) and would welcome policy support to deliver this. There should also be further emphasis to ensure that all planning applications to Districts which involve the use of inert wastes for non mineral related developments should be raised with the County Council in order to "safeguard" this resource for priority mineral related uses.

7.5 We acknowledge the now well established expectation of the County Council for operators and landowners to contribute towards the management of mineral workings restored to nature conservation for an extended period beyond the statutory 5 years of aftercare. However the current wording of the policy is imprecise both in the nature of the afteruse to which the contribution should apply and the length of time involved. This uncertainty is further increased by the statements made at sections 7 -9 of the background paper.

7.6 Funding of the extended aftercare period has not solely been secured by the method described in the Background Paper and such an approach should not be prescriptive in the future.

7.7 If the objective is to ensure that sufficient funds, accessible by both the operator/landowner and the County, are available to meet the annual management requirements then alternate funding mechanisms should also be acceptable. The provision of bonds or insurance policies may also be a suitable mechanism to secure guaranteed funds. Cash held in a low interest account below the level of inflation may not be fit for purpose. The simple objective should be the proper management of the nature conservation interest for the agreed period and how this funding is delivered should be agreed with the operator/landowner on a site by site basis. In the event of any default by the operator/landowner then guaranteed funds should be released to the County Council.

7.8 Also the objective is confused. It is unclear whether the funding is for the extended management of the restored mineral working or as a source of eventual revenue for neighbouring Conservation Target Areas. These two ambitions will be counterproductive in negotiations between the County Council and operators/landowners. In the time period under consideration, 25 years beyond the end of mineral working, the assessment of the level of funding to be generated during active mineral working can at best be guesswork. The policy should encourage the provision of more than adequate fund availability throughout the extended management period. This will not be achieved by the risk that surplus funds will be used by the County Council without reference to the operator/landowner on unrelated projects. This is unacceptable. Once the objectives of the extended management period have been fully complied with any money remaining in the fund should be returned to the operator/landowner.

	<p>7.9 Reference to a funding provision of 30p per tonne (Para 9.4) is made without any supporting evidence related to either the type of conservation management envisaged or to the ratio of the mineral yield and the area of land restored. It is also not clear whether the original figure of 10 per tonne (Para 7.2) established in 1991 is the correct level of provision and whether this has delivered satisfactory levels of extended management at the sites where it has been secured. Therefore the indexed value of 19 per tonne is also uncertain.</p> <p>7.10 It is also not clear, but is assumed with reference to Para 9.4, that the extended management period is solely for nature conservation and not for any other approved afteruse. Extended management may not be not appropriate on other afteruses. The period for extended management for nature conservation is also assumed to be for 20 years post aftercare. This requires clarity in the Draft Plan.</p> <p>7.11 Smiths do not disagree with the need for long term funding but believe that the means by which the actual money is secured is a decision for the operator, submitted for scrutiny and approval by the County Council. We recommend that this matter is researched and discussed further by all relevant parties; the County Council, mineral operators and appropriate NGOs with the aim to come up with a flexible funding mechanism that guarantees the management outcomes for extended periods of aftercare.</p> <p>7.12 We believe that provision for securing funding from an operator should be delivered through a standalone policy which separates it from the overarching aspirations of Policy M6.</p>
740 (Natural England)	<p>Broadly agree with this section and policy M6.</p> <p>4.37 and 4.40 We agree with the comments made by the RSPB that long-term should be defined.</p> <p>4.38 We do not always agree that 'Consideration should first be given to restoration to the original land-use' , and this is not in line with the Vision of the Core Strategy. We welcome the intention of the last sentence, but suggest the following changes: 'Measures to conserve and enhance protect biodiversity should be included in restoration schemes.'</p> <p>Agree with comments made by Camilla Burrow that a paragraph is added after 4.41 to clarify that restoration schemes should have a primary end-use (e.g. nature conservation, amenity or agriculture) and not include many small parcels of land with different land-uses as this can result in low quality restoration which is difficult and expensive to manage. Although restoration schemes should have a primary end-use, all restoration schemes have the potential to enhance biodiversity, improve access and the local landscape. Restoration for any purpose can include small amounts of biodiversity gain such as ponds (or pond complexes), new or gapped-up hedgerows and wildflower margins.</p> <p>4.42 - The proposal to outline restoration proposals in a Sites DPD should be included in policy M6. We support the comments made by Camilla Burrow on this paragraph.</p> <p>4.43 Policy M6: Restoration of mineral workings - suggested amendments Minerals workings should be restored to a high quality..... Restoration and after-use should be in accordance with the spatial strategy for the area as outlined in the Sites</p>

	<p>Development Plan Document.</p> <p>Where mineral working is proposed on best and most versatile agricultural land, the restoration should be back to agricultural land if this is practicable the methods used in the restoration and aftercare should aim to preserve the long term agricultural potential of the land for the future.'</p> <p>Where restoration could assist or achieve priority habitats or species targets the creation of priority habitats and/or Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets, the relevant biodiversity after-use should be incorporated within the restoration scheme.</p> <p>Where restoration could protect and improve geodiversity and improve educational opportunities this should be incorporated into the proposed restoration scheme...</p> <p>Where a mineral working site has the potential to provide for local amenity...</p> <p>Where appropriate, Operators and landowners will be expected to contribute towards the management of restored minerals workings for an extended period beyond any formal aftercare period, especially in the case of nature conservation restoration.</p>
377 (D K Symes)	<p>The text recognises that it cannot always be practical to restore workings in a phased manner owing to a number of factors. Therefore the policy should recognise this by adding the words 'where practical' to allow some flexibility. It is noted that reference is made to extending the aftercare or management arrangements beyond the statutory 5 year period. Advice (MPG7) makes it plain that this can be done by mutual agreement. This advice is not reflected in the policy which is making it clear that a long term arrangement will be required if the policy is to be met.</p>
464 (Environment Agency)	<p>Paragraph 4.38: Within the functional floodplain, using landfill to return the site to its former use would be against the policy contained in PPS25. Similarly, high groundwater levels may present some additional difficulties with landfill though Paragraph 4.41 does recognise this.</p> <p>- Policy M6 should also promote the improvement of flood storage capacity when a site within the floodplain is to be restored and should also ensure that the restoration and aftercare period caters for surface water management.</p>
552 (SODC)	<p>Mineral workings can and must be restored to a very high standard and the restoration should be in keeping with the character of the host area. There are three concerns in respect of the proposed approach, covering the following subjects: safeguarding the character of the host area; the role of the local community and; the adequacy of the information currently available.</p> <p>Where mineral working is necessary, the restoration of sites can be a way to gain significant improvements to biodiversity and the environment. This does require good working in partnership with the minerals industry. The successful 'Nature After Minerals' initiative between the RSPB and Natural England is one such example of a</p>

programme to secure ecological enhancements from the restoration of minerals sites. Similarly some excellent agricultural and recreational restorations of mineral sites have been achieved. The restoration of sites from which minerals have had to be extracted represents an important opportunity to then secure longer-term environmental benefits. It is also therefore important that the local community have a significant role in determining the most appropriate means of restoration.

The inclusion of policy M6 is broadly supported but after the opening words 'Minerals workings should be restored to a high quality' the following change should be inserted 'and in keeping with the character of the surrounding area'.

Supplementary text should also be added to set out the role of local communities in helping to determine the most appropriate means of site 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 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.

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.

Additional work should be undertaken by the county in respect of the overall

	principles for the restoration of any sites worked in the proposed Cholsey Area of Search, in order to determine that the overall impact of the restored sites in the longer term is acceptable, prior to the Area of Search being designated
364 (Bampton Parish council)	Bampton Parish Council strongly supports: 4.41
401 (BEWG)	Bampton Environmental Watch Group (BEWG) strongly supports: 4.4.1
422 (Hanson Aggregates)	<p>The requirement for high quality progressive restoration is supported.</p> <p>However, the mechanism for securing satisfactory restoration, aftercare and afteruse of restored mineral workings requires further clarification. In particular, the circumstances under which operators and landowners are justifiably expected to contribute to long term management require further detailing and discussion. These should concentrate on major schemes for nature conservation where their successful establishment is dependent on a longer period of active management.</p> <p>The Council should not be prescriptive in the mechanism for securing financial provisions for long term management. The source of funding should not be limited to the method described in the background paper, where other options may be available such as bonds and insurance policies.</p> <p>Reference to a fund of 30p/te is not supported by sufficient evidence and should be deleted. Funding should necessarily be geared to the individual size, complexity and characteristics of each site.</p>
1014 (SEAG)	Nowhere in this document is the issue for the potential to increase flood plain capacity addressed. Inert waste like clay, could substantially modify sub ground water flows and the effect of this is not understood, and the effects on flooding therefore not calculable. Restoration with open water probably makes very little increase to flood plain capacity but it will allow the rapid movement of water in the floodplain. In the case of Sonning Eye previous diggings have produced a large expanse of open water up stream allowing rapid transit of water towards the village. Leaving open water downstream

	would allow more rapid translocation of water into the distal floodplain.
441 (Defence Infrastructure Organisation)	<p>It is evident from Background Paper No 3 that MOD safeguarding interests are clearly identified within the draft plan. Chapter 5 outlines the potential birdstrike risk associated with restoration schemes within an MOD safeguarding consultation zone and acknowledges that mitigation will be necessary to reduce the birdstrike risk.</p> <p>I can therefore confirm that the MOD has no objections to the draft plan however it is crucial that the MOD is invited to comment further once specific sites have been allocated to ensure that the birdstrike risk is appropriately addressed.</p>
973	<p>Para 4.38. Whilst the sentiments are acceptable, restoration of the Corallian landscape after large deep holes have been made down to the clay which lies beneath the sand deposits in unrealistic. Because the Corallian Ridge is a special geologic formation any attempt or pretence of restoration should be recognised as at best a tidying up. There can be no true restoration to a previous landform without completely refilling the hole created by taking out the sand layer. This seems to be recognised in para 4.39, but the attempt to avoid the clear conclusion which follows from it by referring to infilling with inert waste is surely inconsistent with the earlier emphasis on the use of recycled aggregates, para 4.1 and Policy M1.</p> <p>Quite apart from the matters of the external landform, it must be equally unrealistic to speak of 'restoration to the original land-use' when this was arable farming - at the bottom of a 5m deep pit on a solid clay base?</p> <p>Policy M6 and para 4.43. Where permissions are given subject to conditions (eg restoration)the conditions may need to be strengthened by s.106 agreements demanding the establishment of a management scheme which involves representation from local communities as well as OCC and the mineral company.</p>
OCC RoW officer	Para 4.37 regarding restoration is supported.
OCC Natural Env team	<p>Broadly agree with this section and policy M6.</p> <p>4.38 Not sure why 'consideration should first be given to restoration to the original land-use'. This is not consistent with the Vision of the Core Strategy that "The restoration of mineral workings will enhance the quality of Oxfordshire's natural environment and the quality of life for Oxfordshire residents." Restored minerals sites have the potential to be restored</p>

for several public benefits – e.g. contributing to Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets¹ for habitat creation and management. Oxfordshire County Council should seek to enhance biodiversity through minerals restoration to meet its duty under the NERC Act to protect and enhance BAP habitats.

4.39 Inert fill is essential in achieving high-quality restoration so suggest amendment as follows

where restoration relies on infilling with inert waste it may take some years to complete restoration because of shortage of suitable fill material (due in large part to increased recycling). For this reason, inert waste will be directed as a priority towards use in mineral site restoration projects in accordance with waste strategy Policy W7, and particularly for those after-uses where achieving a ground level at or near the original level is important to successful restoration, as in nature conservation or agriculture-led after-uses. Effective phasing of restoration is important, to minimise visual intrusion and other local impacts. Where possible, restoration should follow closely behind extraction, to minimise the open quarry area.

4.40 Suggest that the length of the long term management period (a minimum of 20 years) is clarified for applicants and to ensure habitats are managed for the benefit of wildlife & people.

4.41 Suggest amendments to clarify that wetland habitats (rather than open water) are the most likely restoration in areas of high water table.

Because of the generally high water table and 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 wetlands. The issue of risk to aircraft from birdstrike is an important consideration which may restrict the location of workings and affect the design of restoration schemes. Some areas of open water are likely but careful use of inert fill and other engineering techniques can sometimes lead to creation of wetland habitats that offer lower bird strike risk and are also of much greater value in terms of current biodiversity priorities.

Suggest that a paragraph is added after 4.41 to clarify that restoration schemes should have a coherent land-use strategy or set of agreed objectives to ensure that sites do not end up with many small parcels of land with different land-uses as this can result in low quality restoration which is difficult and expensive to manage. The mix of restoration after-uses is what we wish to see over Oxfordshire as a whole, not a mixture on every site. Restoration schemes should have a primary end-use, but we should also be ensuring that all restoration schemes are multifunctional where at all possible, recognising that they have the potential to create or enhance many public benefits at once - e.g. enhancing biodiversity, improving access and the local landscape. On some occasions some functions can be conflicting (e.g. biodiversity for

¹ A M Davies (2006) Nature After Minerals – How mineral site restoration can benefit people and wildlife: the report. RSPB
http://www.sustainableaggregates.com/library/docs/samp/samop_2_38.pdf

species or habitats sensitive to disturbance from the public), in which case one land-use may need to take priority over another. Restoration for any purpose can however have multiple benefits – e.g. including small amounts of biodiversity gain on sites where biodiversity is not the primary objective, such as ponds (or pond complexes), new or gapped-up hedgerows and wildflower margins. The forthcoming Sites DPD should explore this issue further.

Policy M6 outlines the approach to restoration desired by the Council. The list of potential desirable after-uses should not be seen as a checklist to be delivered on every individual site. Trying to include many different after-uses on one site can create long-term financial and practical management problems. Instead, operators are encouraged to focus on a primary after-use and consider what other uses might be integrated with it (e.g. agriculture with some biodiversity gain, or nature conservation with quiet amenity use). Biodiversity-led restoration proposals are similarly encouraged to focus on a small number of priority habitats. This is often a simpler long-term management proposition and will usually maximise the nature conservation value of the habitats provided.

Reference to the restoration and after-use proposals in the Sites DPD should be included in policy M6 as broad restoration and after-use proposals for sites within the mineral workings areas is essential in ensuring a balanced after-use is achieved and clarity is provided for developers, the public and nature conservation bodies. It would also be helpful for further guidance to be provided for developers on what the strategic priority is for restoration and after-use which could be achieved in the Sites DPD. ‘Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan’ should be replaced with ‘priority’ to ensure priority habitats and species can be identified and conserved, even if BAPs are no longer in place.

4.43 Policy M6: Restoration of mineral workings

Support the requirement to achieve high quality restoration quickly and achieve BAP targets for habitat creation and management. Suggested amendments to recognise that nature conservation after-use is acceptable on BMW provided that soils are preserved and to refer to the forthcoming Sites DPD.

Minerals workings should be restored to a high quality as quickly as possible and in a phased manner to an after-use appropriate to the location and the capacity of the transport network and which is sympathetic to the character of the surrounding landscape and the amenity of local communities and enhances both where possible.

Restoration and after-use should be in accordance with the spatial strategy for the area as outlined in the Sites Development Plan Document.

Planning permission will not be granted...

Where mineral working is proposed on best and most versatile agricultural land, the methods used in the restoration and aftercare should aim to preserve the long term agricultural potential of the land for the future the restoration should be back to agricultural land if this is practicable.

Where restoration could assist or achieve priority habitats or species targets the creation of priority habitats and/or Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets, the relevant biodiversity after-use should be incorporated within the

	<p>restoration scheme. The choice of habitats should be informed by early discussions with the mineral planning authority and other stakeholders but generally should focus on a limited range of targets that can delivered on a significant scale on the site.</p> <p>Where restoration could protect and improve geodiversity and improve educational opportunities this should be incorporated into the proposed restoration scheme...</p> <p>Where a mineral working site has the potential to provide for local amenity...</p> <p>Where appropriate, o Operators and landowners will be expected to contribute towards the management of restored minerals workings for an extended period beyond any formal aftercare period, especially in the case of nature conservation restoration.</p>
	Comments on Key Diagram
ID No (& name of org)	Comment/issue raised
21 (N Wessex Downs AONB)	<p>This map illustrates the potential problem associated with the proposed mineral sites SG 33, 57 and 60 at Cholsey. All three sites lie in a narrow gap between the North Wessex Downs AONB to the west and the Chilterns AONB to the east. 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
599 Nuneham Courtenay Parish Council	<p>The Parish Council's only other comment concerns the nature of the online materials. The maps, whilst allowing one to zoom in, can only zoom in once. One cannot see the underlying location information very easily. The maps do not always contain the same underlying information (e.g. the constraints ought to appear under all the maps). Because this phase of the consultation is broad brush the ability to zoom in on detail may not be considered critical - however it does make it difficult to relate the areas for development against other constraints (the final summary map is helpful but underlying geographical detail is omitted). The County might want to consider the sort of layered maps that planning</p>

	authorities, such as Oxford, use for their Core Strategies. These are interactive, allow layers to be turned on and off in relation to various criteria, and also one to move in to examine an area at a very detailed level.
1016	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.
Comments on Implementation and Monitoring Section	
ID No (& name of org)	Comment/issue raised
977	<p>Much of this is a repetition of what has appeared in previous documents and what has appeared in earlier sections of this document. There is little point to any improvement in the ability of the Council to monitor and enforce any conditions it imposes on approvals.</p> <p>Para 6.1 The term 'stakeholders' should be defined and should include voluntary bodies (see comments against Table 1)</p> <p>Para 6.7 The proposed area at Cholsey should be defined.</p> <p>Para 6.8 As commented elsewhere (a) the policy of extension of existing quarries in preference to the opening of new quarries should not lead to the automatic, unconditional extension of existing quarries, for this could lead to the compounding of planning mistakes, (b) Policy M3 on soft sand refers to a much larger area than that covered by existing workings which should be more accurately described.</p> <p>Table 1 Implementation Partners. It is noteworthy that in every case the 'implementation partners' include the minerals industry but that in only one common core policy is a voluntary body listed (C8, Ramblers' Association). A number of other national and regional voluntary have an interest in following compliance with planning conditions (eg BBOWT, The Chiltern Society, CPRE, the Badger Trust, the Woodland Trust, RSPB to name but a few and efforts should be made to involve and list these. The omission of bodies such as these from consideration seems to me to be inconsistent with the approach and commitments of the current DEFRA White Paper entitled 'The Natural Choice; securing the value of nature' (CM 8082, June 2011)</p>

39 (Earthline Ltd)	Para 6.5 states that there is no specific additional requirement for crushed rock, whilst Para 6.9 states that additional provision may be needed towards the end of the Plan Period. Applications to extend Hatford quarry will come forward early in the Plan period to maintain supply of Type 1 aggregate (and sand) and this needs to be reflected in the text. It should be made clear that the Site Allocations document will include provision for quarry extensions to enable continuity of provision throughout the Plan period.
124	Within both Implementation and Monitoring sections , please bring out the importance of meaningful dialogue and consultation with local residents, both in preparation of planning applications, and in monitoring the extraction period. The County Council and the Operators know that local opposition is inevitable, and a transparent process of dialogue, where local people can feel listened to, and can see that their constructive comments are picked up in the applications, will go some way to calming down local opposition.
268 (BaCHpoRT)	The provisions for monitoring in the consultation draft are welcome; they could with advantage be supplemented by the inclusion of provisions for monitoring by the Council of implementation by operators; while this is clearly not part of the remit of a planning department, there should be a commitment by the Council to a monitoring system designed to ensure that planning conditions and other restrictions (eg use of roads limited to 7.5 t maximum) are respected.
280 (Cemex UK)	Structured relationships with District / Borough and adjoining MPA's and Awps
688 (RSPB)	<p>Table 1: Minerals Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Framework</p> <p>We are deeply concerned that the proposed monitoring framework for Policies M6 and C4 will not do the job the Council needs it to, and that some of the targets are not consistent with the clear intent of the Core Strategy. For Policy M6, it would be possible for all restored minerals workings to deliver "local benefits" but no biodiversity gains at all and yet still meet the monitoring target because it is phrased as a choice. The target could be met, for example, if 75% of sites provided some form of public access - no matter the amount or quality of the restoration for biodiversity.</p> <p>The other issue is common to both Policies M6 and C4. Defining a 75% target for achieving biodiversity gains/contributing to BAP targets is inconsistent with the clear and welcome intent of the Core Strategy that all sites should make some contribution to enhancing biodiversity. This intent is apparent from the last sentence of paragraph 4.38, paragraphs 5.22 and 5.23, and most importantly the third clause of Policy C4, all of which we strongly support. Pitching the target at just 75% could also offer some land owners and operators an excuse to argue that their scheme is</p>

	<p>one of the 25% that does not need to provide any biodiversity enhancements or public amenity benefits Biodiversity gain can be achieved on all sites restored for any after-use. Such gains could be as simple as planting up a gappy hedgerow, creating a new pond (or pond complex) or sowing wildflower-rich grassland in marginal areas. We feel local benefits should be monitored separately to achieving biodiversity gain. We propose that the right targets for these two policies are as follows: Policy M6: Restoration of mineral workings - 100% of restoration schemes accord with policy. - 100% of restoration schemes secure net biodiversity gains - X % [75%?] of restoration schemes secure local benefits Policy C4: Biodiversity and geodiversity - No permissions granted without appropriate protection or mitigation measures. - 100% of minerals working permissions contribute to meeting biodiversity targets. Our final comment on Table 1 is that the indicator and target for Policy C8 does not fully reflect the very positive, aspirational intent of the Council to seek general improvements for public access on restored mineral sites through that Policy. We suggest the Council may like to give more thought to the indicator and target for Policy C8 to extend the measure of success beyond just maintaining the existing rights of way network</p>
706 (MPA) & 717 (OMPG)	<p>Paragraphs 6.3-6.4, 6.18: We recommend that the Plan sets out clearly how Oxfordshire intends to co-operate with other Mineral Planning Authorities in ensuring that an adequate and steady supply of minerals is maintained. This should include distant mpas from which crushed rock is supplied as well as neighbouring authorities that may be impacted by Oxfordshire's proposal to dramatically reduce provision for indigenous sand and gravel extraction. Demonstration of discharging the 'duty to cooperate' is likely to be a key test of soundness in the future.</p>
744 (Natural England)	<p>Minerals Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Framework We support the comments made by Camilla Burrow, and suggest the following amendments: Policy M6: Restoration of mineral workings 100% of restoration schemes accord with policy. 100% of restoration schemes secure net biodiversity gains or local benefits. X % of restoration schemes secure local benefits. Policy C4: Biodiversity and geodiversity No permissions granted without appropriate protection or mitigation measures 100% of minerals working permissions contribute to meeting biodiversity targets.</p>

453	Para 6.8 of Implementation and Monitoring appears to be anti-planning leaving supply to be engineered by the operator.
863 (Shenington with Alkerton Parish Council)	6.1 This says that the implementation of the Minerals Planning Strategy will be achieved primarily through the determination of planning applications. There is not sufficient information about the others ways in which it will be implemented. These should be included. 6.17 OCC will continue producing an annual monitoring report. We think this may not be adequate. We recommend that reports should be produced monthly for the benefit of local communities. Furthermore, provision should be made to provide funds to local communities to enable them to carry out their own monitoring which would be independent of commercial interests.
1015 (OCAF)	"Table 1: Minerals Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Framework" contains no targets for enhancement of the rights of way network. The only target listed for rights of way requires simply that existing routes are safeguarded. In an ideal world we would like to see a target for the creation of "x" new public access areas/routes for all users (walkers, cyclists, horse riders, disabled users, etc).
OCC RoW officer	Table 1; policy C8. Suggest deleting 'Ramblers' from the list of implementation partners and change this to 'Minerals & Waste Industries, District & Parish Council' but include Ramblers & British Horse Society as well as local communities on the list of stakeholders for site specific consultations.
OCC natural env team	The target for policies M6 and C4 should be that all restoration schemes secure biodiversity gains to ensure monitoring is consistent with the vision, objectives and policies in the Core Strategy. Biodiversity gain can be achieved on sites restored for any after-use and could be as simple as planting up a gappy hedgerow, digging a new pond (or pond complex) or sowing wildflower-rich grassland. Local benefits should be monitored separately. Policy M6: Restoration of mineral workings 100% of restoration schemes accord with policy, 100% of restoration schemes secure net biodiversity gains or local benefits, X % of restoration schemes secure local benefits. Policy C4: Biodiversity and geodiversity No permissions granted without appropriate protection or mitigation measures 100% of minerals working permissions contribute to meeting biodiversity targets. In terms of indicators (p46), the one you have may be difficult to measure; suggest: Number and area of permissions which would adversely affect the landscape or setting of Oxfordshire's AONBs. Number of planning permissions granted where landscape and restoration conditions have been attached to ensure that landscape concerns that have been raised are addressed and sites are restored to an acceptable after-use.

