



Airfield Quarry

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# Recovery Permit Application

Non-Technical Summary

10<sup>th</sup> October 2023



The Permit is sought for the restoration of a sand & gravel quarry (Airfield Quarry) being restored to a predominantly agricultural and biodiversity after use through recovery, using imported inert waste.

Planning Permission was applied for in April 2021. A Waste Recovery Plan (WRP) was submitted to the EA in October 2021, but was not agreed as the planning permission for the quarry had not been granted. This application for a bespoke Permit is therefore submitted, with the same WRP, as Gloucestershire County Council resolved to grant planning on 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023, copy can be provided when received. The planning process creates an obligation to restore the quarry to the levels shown on the drawings accompanying the WRP. The site has to be restored back to “dry” ground as it is in proximity to RAF Fairford and the MoD will not allow any water bodies to be established such that there can be no increased risk of bird strike to planes using RAF Fairford.

This application is for a bespoke Environmental Permit for that recovery operation of quarry restoration. Following grant of planning permission, the operator is now legally obliged to comply with the approved restoration plan detailed in the planning decision document. That plan will be Plan No. D10\_LAN\_215 Restoration Proposals. This restoration proposal requires importation of an estimated 4,870,000 tonnes of appropriate inert materials to restore the quarry void.

It should be noted that, in keeping with all quarry operations, volumes and tonnages quoted are estimates only, based on a representative number of boreholes across the site. The tonnages specified are subject to fluctuation as they are estimates based on expectations of the amount of mineral based on borehole results and the mineral dig may yield slightly different volumes. As the mineral extraction progresses across the site variances occur and these estimates volumes and tonnages will be subject to change, this does not change the concept of it being a recovery operation.

The restoration using imported inert materials will commence in Phase 1 when the mineral extraction is approximately 50% complete in that phase. Prior to that some inert materials may be brought to site and stored to facilitate a swift commencement of the restoration when sufficient void space is available. Storage of materials may also occur when weather conditions prevent restoration, or to deal with fluctuations in supply. Restoration will follow around the phases of extraction, as approved in the planning permission.

Pre-application discussions with the EA started in April 2019 and have included specific information on the scope of the HRA and confirmation that the site, as it will be restored does not require a further noise assessment or noise management plan for Permitting processing. The site is the subject of planning controls on noise for the wider mineral extraction and processing as well as restoration works. The void

to be restored is in excess of 20m from the nearest sensitive receptor, with a stand off to hedges, soils bunds and the public highway making up the distance. It has been confirmed by the EA that a noise management plan would not be required with this submission and that confirmation is included with the Permit application.

The Hydrogeological Risk assessment (HRA) for the site has included an assessment of the risk of importing the same inert wastes as Permitted on a neighbouring quarry restoration and as directed by pre-application advice from the EA, has included an impermeable liner in the proposals for restoring the quarry with inert materials. This liner will be subject to appropriate CQA, details of which will be agreed post Permit issue and prior to the first waste being deposited in the site.

An ERA and an ESSD also form part of the application submitted, with the site information taken from the EIA work carried out at planning, the assessment of the likelihood and risk arising, the input from a range of statutory consultees and their responses to the EIA process as well as EA guidance and previous approaches to Permitting similar sites. The conclusions of the ERA are dictated by the outcome of the EIA in most instances.

The conclusions of the assessment work in relation to the complete works including the mineral extraction, processing plants and the restoration work confirmed there was no unacceptable risk of dust from the overall site operations and this has been the conclusion in the ERA, when considering only the restoration works that are subject to Permitting controls. Additionally the site is not one of the type listed at [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), where a DMP is required with a bespoke application, therefore a dust management plan has not been included with the application, however the environmental management controls included in the EMS do include an outline of the measures that have been agreed as sufficient to control dust from the site.

A copy of the Habitats Risk Assessment (HRA) carried out by Gloucestershire County Council, as the competent authority and agreed by Natural England is included with this application. This habitats assessment considered the full extent of the development, not simply the placement of imported materials for restoration that is the subject of this application. Additionally the presence of the recently expanded SSSI was considered in carrying out the assessment. Pre-application advice was sought (22-05-2023) to confirm that the EA would accept that HRA has been more than adequately addressed, and no further fee required for it to be done again, but at time of writing, no response had been received.