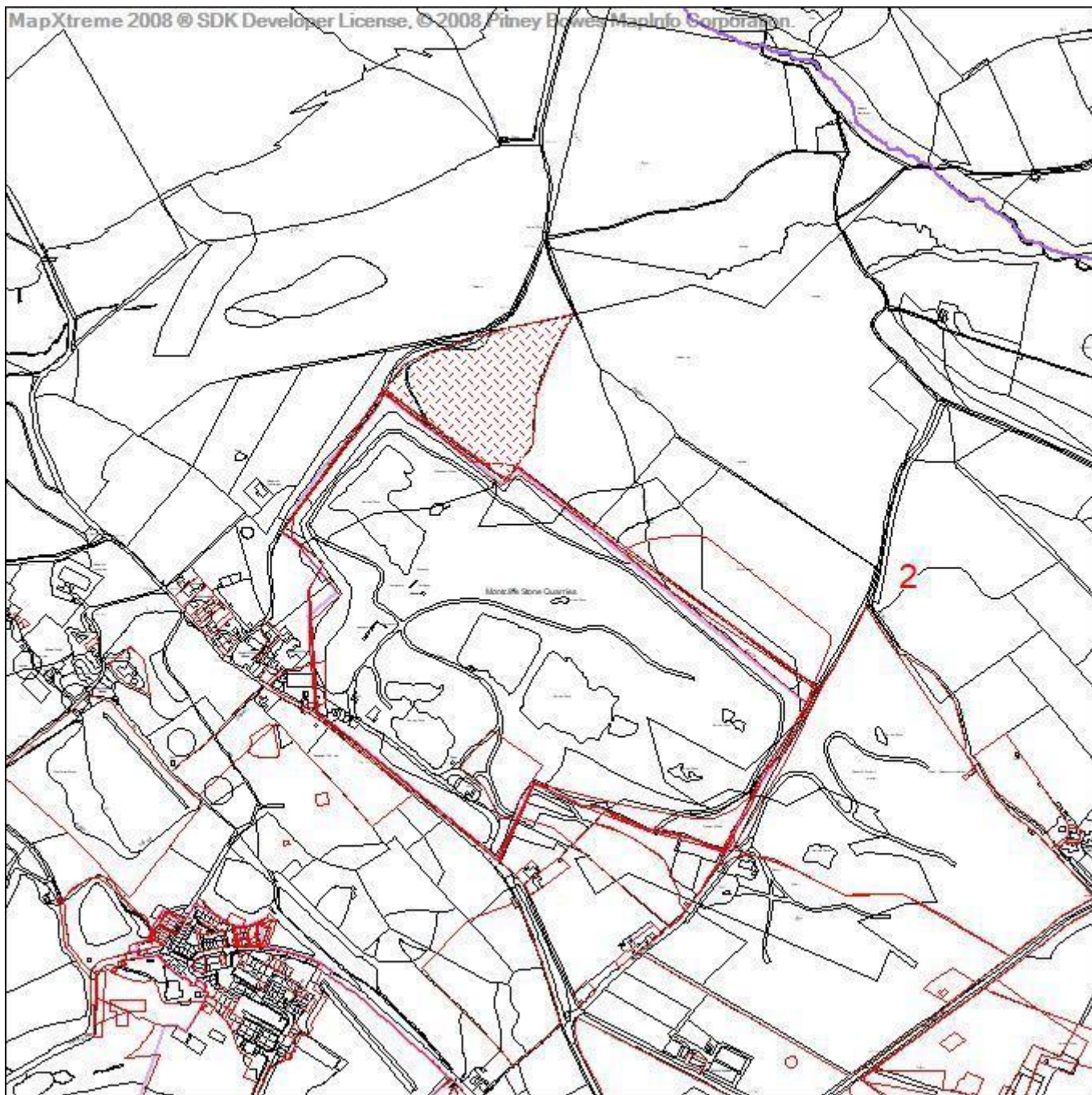


**Application number
05250/19**



**Directorate of Place
Development Management Section**

Town Hall, Bolton, Lancashire, BL1 1RU
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**Bolton
Council**

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Date of Meeting: 04/03/2021

Application Reference: 05250/19

Type of Application: County Matters
Registration Date: 16/01/2019
Decision Due By: 16/04/2019
Responsible Officer: Helen Williams

Location: MONTCLIFFE QUARRY, GEORGES LANE, HORWICH, BOLTON, BL6 6RT

Proposal: APPLICATION FOR A LATERAL NORTHERLY EXTENSION TO THE EXISTING QUARRY IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE EXTRACTION OF GRITSTONE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRODUCING HIGH GRADE STONE AND AGGREGATES

Ward: Horwich North East

Applicant: Armstrongs Aggregates Ltd

Agent : The Mineral Planning Group Ltd.

Officers Report

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

Executive Summary

- * Permission is for an extension of approximately 3.2 hectares to the north west of Montcliffe Quarry. The development would release a further 2.75 Mt of gritstone, for the purposes of producing high-quality dimension stone, with ancillary aggregates.
- * A series of benches would be created and a 3 metre high landscaped screening bund would be constructed along the northern and north western boundaries.
- * The proposed hours of working are 07:30 to 18:00 Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays, which would be within the currently permitted hours of working at Montcliffe Quarry.
- * The proposed (average) 25 HGV movements per day in association with the extended area would be part of the existing permitted movements for Montcliffe Quarry (maximum of 100 in and 100 out per weekday, and 50 in and 50 out on Saturdays) and therefore no additional HGV movements in and out of the quarry are proposed in addition to those already approved.
- * The proposed end-date for mineral extraction within the proposed extension area is 31 December 2039. Upon cessation of the material extraction, restoration would commence. The remnant benches would be regenerated with grass/heath and scrub and lower area of the quarry extension would be infilled with inert and quarry waste to create a low lying, semi-aquatic habitat.
- * The application site is located within an Area of Search for Sandstone within the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plans and within the Council's Allocations Plan (Policy P4). The Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan, which forms part of Bolton's development plan, makes a presumption in favour of sustainable minerals development. Officers consider that "great weight" should be attached in the planning balance to the proposed extraction of mineral.
- * Officers consider that the proposed development would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it is considered, for the reasons discussed in the analysis below, that openness would be preserved and there would be no conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

- * There will be harm to the landscape of the area during the mineral extraction phase of the development. This visual impact is identified within the analysis as being most significant from the public rights of ways on the surrounding moorland and on higher ground towards Rivington Pike. However, following the proposed restoration of the quarry extension the development would better assimilate with the neighbouring landscape, and therefore given the temporary nature of the harm identified, Officers consider that only moderate harm should be given to this impact on the planning balance.
- * Highways Engineers have raised no objection to the proposal. It is considered that highway safety would not be jeopardised or that the proposed development would not have a harmful impact on the capacity of the surrounding road network.
- * For the reasons discussed within the analysis and subject to the suggested conditions, it is considered that the proposed quarry extension would not have any more of an undue harm on the amenity of neighbouring residents than the existing quarrying operations.
- * The proposed development would not have an adverse effect on the neighbouring SSSI. Whilst the operational/extraction phase of the development would temporarily displace habitats, there would be a biodiversity gain following the restoration of the site.
- * It is considered that the proposed quarry extension would not have an adverse impact on hydrology, hydrogeology, flood risk or land stability.
- * Officers consider, in the planning balance, that the great weight to be attached to the proposed mineral extraction outweighs the moderate harm to the landscape and the minor harm to biodiversity during the operational/extraction phase of the development.
- * Members are therefore recommended to approve this application, subject to the suggested conditions.

Proposal

1. Permission is sought for an extension of approximately 3.2 hectares to Montcliffe Quarry, to the north west of the existing quarry.
2. The applicant has stated that the principal aim of the proposed development is to release a further 2.75 megatonnes (2.75Mt) of gritstone in order to, primarily, produce high-quality dimension stone, with ancillary aggregates, which are to be used for construction. The extension area would extract rock from the same geological horizons as currently worked at Montcliffe Quarry.
3. The extraction operations would follow a phased scheme of working, working northwards from the existing quarry face into the northernmost 'corner' of the extension area. A series of benches would be created. No extraction would take place below an elevation of 264 metres AOD, which is in accordance with the existing approval at Montcliffe Quarry (to substantially avoid the water table). The material would be extracted through a mixture of stripping and blasting.
4. Soil stripping operations would be carried out in two phases; phase 1 being the southern half of the site and phase 2 being the northern half. Some of the soils stripped from the working area will be used to form temporary, grassed, screen bunds along the northern and north western site boundaries, 3 metres in height (outer slope of 1:3 and inner slope of 1:2). Other soils and overburden will be stripped and stored within the confines of the existing quarry for use in the final restoration.
5. The applicant anticipates, based on current extraction rates, that materials would be extracted from the proposed extension at a rate of approximately 500 tonnes per day, over a 5.5 day week, totalling approximately 137,500 tonnes per annum. This rate of working would be the same as currently in operation at Montcliffe Quarry.

6. The proposed hours of working are 07:30 to 18:00 Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays, which would be within the currently permitted hours of working at Montcliffe Quarry.
7. It is estimated that the proposed rate of working/extraction rates would require an average of 25 HGV movements in and out per day. The current permitted number of HGV movements for Montcliffe Quarry is a maximum of 100 in and 100 out per day, Monday to Friday, and 50 in and 50 out per day on Saturdays. The proposed (average) 25 HGV movements per day in association with the extended area would be part of these permitted movements and therefore no additional HGV movements in and out of the quarry are proposed in addition to those already approved.
8. HGVs would utilise the existing haul/internal routes within the existing quarry.
9. Fencing is proposed to be erected around the periphery of the proposed extension area to prevent trespassing.
10. The proposed end-date for this proposed extension area is 31 December 2039. The current end-date for extraction at Montcliffe Quarry (the main quarry area) is 20 February 2033 (approval 97782/16) and the current end-date for the north eastern extension to the quarry (approval 93076/14) is 20 February 2021.
11. Upon cessation of the material extraction, restoration would commence, which would occur within the entire extension area as a single, additional phase to the overall restoration of Montcliffe Quarry. It is proposed that the application site would form phase 2B (out of 10 phases) of the overall restoration of Montcliffe Quarry. Restoration would take place on the upper benches first, with the temporary screen bund material being used to restore the remnant benches, which would be regenerated with grass/heath and scrub. The lower area of the quarry extension (southern central part) would be infilled with inert and quarry waste to create a low lying, semi-aquatic habitat. Materials to be used for the restoration would be a combination of retained mineral waste, overburden materials and imported inert waste.
12. The application has been submitted with an accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Site Characteristics

13. The application site measures approximately 3.2 hectares and comprises the north western face of Montcliffe Quarry and land behind it, roughly triangular in shape. The site is rough grazing land, which rises in a north eastern direction from 284m AOD along the southern boundary to 342m AOD in the north eastern corner.
14. The site is located within the Green Belt, Winter Hill and Smithills Moor Site of Biological Importance (SBI) (1 hectare of the site is located within the SBI) and within the Mineral Safeguarding Areas for Brick and Clay, Surface Coal and Sandstone. The application site is also allocated as a Mineral Area of Search for Sandstone.
15. The application site is located in the south-western edge of the Southern Pennines National Character Area and the Upland Moorlands Hill Landscape Character Area.
16. Montcliffe Quarry, which is to the south of the application site, occupies approximately 26 hectares and is currently (and has been historically) utilised for mineral extraction

(sandstone/gritstone aggregate and blockstone). The site has planning permission for its reserves to be fully worked until February 2033 and progressively restored until February 2035 (under approval 97782/16).

17. Neighbouring the application site to the north and east is the West Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): the application site is not located within the SSSI. To the east are the lower slopes of 'Adam Hill' and to the north and west is 'Wilder's Moor'. These surrounding areas have more of a visible moorland character than the application site, and feature blanket bog (which the application site does not).
18. To the west and north west of the site (outside the application site) is the track/road that runs up to the Winter Hill mast and carries public right of way HOR013. This public footpath joins public right of way HOR014 to the north of the site, and HOR014 continues to the east of the application site in a south easterly directly through Adam Hill, then linking to the wider footpath network (HOR060 and HOR015) east of the site. The moorland area adjoining the application site is Open Access Land.
19. The nearest residential properties to the application site are approximately 400 metres away to the south west, on Georges Lane.

Policy

20. Development plan policies

Core Strategy Policies: P4 Minerals; P5 Accessibility and Transport; S1 Safe Bolton; CG1 Cleaner and Greener Bolton; CG3 The Built Environment; CG4 Compatible Uses; OA1 Horwich and Blackrod.

Allocations Plan Policies: P8AP Public Rights of Way; CG7AP Green Belt.

Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan April 2013

21. Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Sections 2. Achieving sustainable development; 6. Building a strong, competitive economy, 9. Promoting sustainable transport, 13. Protecting Green Belt land, 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, and 17. Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals.

National Planning Policy Guidance - Minerals

SPD Accessibility, Transport and Safety

A Landscape Character Appraisal of Bolton (October 2001)

Analysis

22. Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with policies in the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Applications which are not in accordance with Development Plan policies should be refused unless material considerations justify granting permission. Similarly, proposals which accord with Development Plan policies should be approved unless there are material considerations which would justify a refusal of permission. It is therefore necessary to decide

whether this proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and then take account of other material considerations.

23. The main impacts of the proposal are:-

24. principle of the proposed development

- * impact on the purposes and openness of the Green Belt
- * impact on the landscape
- * impact on traffic and the surrounding highways
- * impact on residential amenity
- * impact on biodiversity
- * impact on hydrogeology
- * impact on flood risk
- * impact on land stability
- * impact on archaeology

Principle of the Proposed Development

- * Policy 1 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan makes a presumption in favour of sustainable minerals development. It states that positive consideration will be given to minerals development which accords with the policies set out in the development plan and such development will be considered to be sustainable and will be permitted unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

25. Policy 3 of the Plan states that applications for the extraction and/or processing of sand, gravel or sandstone/gritstone within the Areas of Search will be permitted where the mineral is required to meet the required landbank (at least 10 years for crushed rock), the site contains adequate resources of the mineral in terms of quality and quantity for extraction to take place, and the proposal is in accordance with the key planning and environmental criteria within the Plan.

26. Policy 4 of the Plan states that proposals for the working of natural building stone will be supported provided that this would assist the conservation and repair of historic buildings or structures built of the same or similar materials, or new construction where the use of building stone is specified.

27. Policy P4 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will:

28. Maintain an adequate landbank of aggregates to make a contribution towards the maintenance of Greater Manchester's share of the regional production of aggregates.

- * Identify sites, preferred areas, or areas of search for gritstone mainly in the northern, upland parts of the borough; for sand, gravel and coal they will be identified mainly in the southern lowland parts of the borough.
 - * Safeguard known resources of minerals, and existing and planned infrastructure that supports mineral exploitation including facilities for manufacturing and the handling, processing and distribution of substitute recycled and secondary aggregate material.
- * Montcliffe Quarry is currently, and has historically been, utilised for mineral extraction (dimension stone (sandstone) and ancillary aggregates). The main quarry has planning permission to work until February 2033. Both the quarry and the application site are allocated as being within Areas of Search for Sandstone within Map 2 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan and within the Council's Allocations Plan (Policy P4).

Need

29. Paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that it is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.
30. Paragraph 205 of the NPPF states that, when determining planning applications, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy.
31. The proposed extension would enable the further provision of high-quality building stone. The gritstone unit (the Ousel Nest Grit Unit) worked at Montcliffe Quarry, and underlying the proposed extension area, produces very high quality dimension stone, stone which has previously been extensively used for buildings in Bolton, Turton, Farnworth, Horwich and Blackrod. The applicant considers the production of such dimension stone vital to maintain the continued supply of material for repairs and restoration of local buildings, and to enable new builds to be in keeping with their surroundings (policy 4 of the GM Minerals Plan, and a requirement of area specific policies within the Core Strategy).
32. In addition to the need for a supply of building stones for conservation and new construction, it is acknowledged in the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan that, currently, the vast majority of such material is via imports outside the region. The proposed local supply would improve the sustainability of transporting materials from source to end user. The majority of the material to be exported from the proposed extension area, as with those from Montcliffe Quarry, will be distributed to the surrounding area, within an approximate 30 to 50km radius. The highest demand is expected from Greater Manchester and Lancashire.
33. Greater Manchester Minerals and Waste Unit has been consulted on the proposed development and have stated that whilst the sub-regional landbank currently exceeds the requirement for a minimum of 10 years for crushed rock (Policy 3 of the GM Minerals Plan) - the crushed rock being the ancillary aggregates in this case, not the dimension stone (gritstone/sandstone) - this is not a reason for refusal (the landbank is a minimum requirement, not a maximum). There is no landbank for dimension stone: the requirement for extracting dimension stone is instead based on need.
34. The volume of aggregate ('crushed rock') and mineral waste by-product extracted from the extension area will exceed that of the dimension stone, however the value of the dimension stone far outweighs that of the aggregate and it is the case for all dimensional stone quarries that building stone output will be less than volume of aggregate and mineral waste by-product.
35. In accordance with the second point of Policy 3 of the GM Minerals Plan, the application site is considered to contain adequate resources of the mineral in terms of quality and quantity for extraction to take place. Indeed it is identified as an Area of Search and a Mineral Safeguarding Area, and the adjacent quarry face and nearby boreholes indicate that there is a large sandstone deposit within the application site.

Alternatives

36. There are not considered to be any clear alternatives to the proposal. An equivalently viable resource would have to be identified and proven, as part of the search for any new, alternative site.
37. It is considered that the proposed development supports the objectives of the Greater

Manchester Joint Minerals Plan and is in accordance with Policy P4 of the Core Strategy. In line with paragraph 205 of the NPPF, it is considered that the benefits of the proposed mineral extraction should be given great weight in the determination of this application.

Impact on the Purposes and Openness of the Green Belt

38. The Council's development plan policy concerning Green Belt is Policy CG7AP of the Allocations Plan. This states that the Council will not permit inappropriate development in the Green Belt and that inappropriate development includes any development which does not maintain the openness of land or which conflicts with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, and the erection of new buildings except for in a number of listed circumstances. Paragraph 5.15 of the justification for Policy CG7AP states that, within the Green Belt, there is a presumption against development except for a few limited forms including mineral extraction.
39. Section 13 of the NPPF concerns protecting Green Belt land. Allocations Plan Policy CG7AP reflects the advice contained within this national guidance. Paragraph 146 of the NPPF states that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These forms of development include "a) mineral extraction".
40. Paragraph 133 of the NPPF states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts and that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
41. It is considered that the proposed development would not constitute urban sprawl within the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. In *R (Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) and others) v North Yorkshire County Council* [2020] Lord Carnwath found, "*A large quarry may not be visually attractive while it lasts, but the minerals can only be extracted where they are found, and the impact is temporary and subject to restoration. Further, as a barrier to urban sprawl a quarry may be regarded in Green Belt policy terms as no less effective than a stretch of agricultural land.*"
42. The final landscaped restoration of the quarry following the extraction works is also not considered to be contrary to the purposes of Green Belt, as set out within paragraph 134 of the NPPF.
43. "Openness" of the Green Belt is not defined within the NPPF, but it is recognised that Green Belt designation is predominantly a spatial designation, though it has a visual element. Openness is a planning judgement for the decision taker.
44. No buildings or structures are proposed as part of the development, therefore the openness of the Green Belt would not be affected by the presence of any of these. The proposed extraction of mineral would mainly consist of cutting into the hillside, which is not considered to harm openness in spatial terms, as this part of the development would not project above ground level. 3 metre high screening bunds are however proposed along the northern and north western site boundaries of the site. These bunds are, in part, intended to restrict public views into the quarry extension from the north and west, but it is not considered that the perception of the area's openness (and views across the site, especially views looking southwards and downhill) would be harmed by the presence of these bunds, and the bunds would eventually assimilate into the landscape (become part of the landscape during the extraction period of the development). The bunds are also temporary features, which would be removed (used as part of the restoration

scheme) once extraction had ceased.

45. Longer views of the quarry extraction, from the south, would be in conjunction with the existing Montcliffe Quarry, Pilkington Quarry and the permitted north eastern extension to Montcliffe Quarry. Whilst there would be a visual change (which is discussed in more detail below), it is not considered that this would be to such a degree that would harm the perceived openness of Green Belt.
46. It is also considered that the openness of the Green Belt would be preserved following the landscaped restoration of the site, with views across the site remaining open and with the land being regenerated with grass, heath and scrub to help it assimilate with the surrounding landscape.
47. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt as openness would be preserved and there is no conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

Impact on the Landscape

48. Policy CG3 of the Core Strategy states [amongst other things] that the Council will conserve and enhance local distinctiveness ensuring development has regard to the landscape quality of the area, and will maintain and respect the landscape character of the surrounding countryside and its distinctiveness. Any soft landscaping and landscape enhancement schemes should enhance biodiversity and be compatible with the nearby landscape types identified by the Landscape Character Assessment. Policy OA1.11 refers specifically to development in Horwich and Blackrod and states that the Council will ensure that new development does not harm the landscape setting and protects views from public areas to the surrounding landscape.
49. The application site and the wider area are located within the south western edge of the Southern Pennines National Character Area and within the Upland Moorland Hills Landscape Character Area. The application site covers an area of approximately 3.2 hectares and is rough grazing land. The site rises in a north eastern direction from 284m AOD along the southern boundary to 342m AOD in the north eastern corner.
50. The site is the existing hill above the existing north western face of Montcliffe Quarry. To the south are the operational areas of Montcliffe Quarry and further to the east is Pilkington Quarry. To the north and west is an expansive area of Open Access land which consists primarily of moorland. This rounded moorland upland provides long and expansive views across the lowland areas of the Middlebrook Valley to the south and south east. To the south east are gentler lower slopes.
51. The immediate area is characterised in the main by farmsteads and residential properties in "ribbon development". Approximately 1.4 kilometres to the south west is the more concentrated development of Horwich and the outer areas of Bolton are approximately 2.3 kilometres to the east. Further away are Blackrod and Adlington to the west. Wallsuches Conservation Area is approximately 450 metres to the south west, Horwich Town Centre Conservation Area is approximately 2 kilometres to the south west, Horwich Loco Works Conservation Area is approximately 2.3 kilometres to the south west, and Chorley New Road Conservation Area is approximately 3.2 kilometres to the south east. Smithills Country Park is approximately 80 metres to the north, Lever Park (a registered park) is approximately 2.1 kilometres to the north west and Rivington Terraced Gardens (another registered park) is approximately 2.4 kilometres to the north west.

52. Montcliffe Quarry already influences the landscape of the area and is recognised as an intrusive feature within the landscape character of the area. In addition another quarry, Pilkington Quarry is in close proximity, though Quarry No.1 is currently being restored. Pilkington Quarry No. 2 has an approval for phased extraction and a north eastern extension has been approved to the north eastern face of Montcliffe Quarry. Montcliffe Quarry will be restored in time in accordance with planning permission 97782/16.
53. The proposed development will result in a further extension to the Montcliffe Quarry, with the land being reprofiled into a series of benches. Once the extraction of mineral has been completed the site is to be restored in accordance with the proposed restoration masterplan, to facilitate natural regeneration of grass, heath and shrubs. The proposed restoration is intended to create a final landform and topographic shape that will merge into the adjacent landscape and appear as a natural feature, typical of the locality.
54. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted with the application, which considers nine different surrounding public viewpoints from which visual impacts have been assessed. The cumulative visual effects of the other permitted quarrying works at Montcliffe and Pilkington Quarries have also been considered within the LVIA.
55. The Council's Landscape Officers have confirmed that the most significant visual impact will be from the public rights of ways on the surrounding moorland, which wrap around the top of the application site, and on higher ground towards Rivington Pike, where the removal of a further 'chunk' out of the hillside will be more apparent.
56. More distant views, generally from the west, south west and south (for example, from Horwich, Wingates and Hunger Hill) would also be impacted, but these would be cumulative to the existing view of the quarry faces and Landscape Officers consider that they would have lower impacts.
57. The site is proposed to be restored so that it complements the approved restoration scheme for Montcliffe Quarry. The nature of quarrying processes mean that the visual benefits from the restoration will only be evident in the longer term (rather than in the shorter term), once the extraction works have ceased. Once the final benches have been developed, the upper sections of the site can be restored and then progressively from there on. This means that restoration can take place before the final extraction stage.
58. The proposed north western extension to Montcliffe Quarry will result in the site and Montcliffe Quarry being more visible from surrounding areas, which should be attached some planning harm in the determination of this application. However, it is considered that the main harm caused to the landscape will be temporary in nature and that over time the development will better blend into the adjoining landscape following its restoration. It is therefore considered that the proposed development has regard to the landscape character of the area and will not (over time) harm the landscape setting of the area, compliant with Policies CG3 and OA1.11 of the Core Strategy.
59. Conditions are suggested to ensure the 3 metre high screening bunds are kept in situ during the duration of the extraction operations and that the restoration scheme is carried out in accordance with the submitted details.

Impact on Traffic and the Surrounding Highways

60. Policy P5 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will ensure that developments take into account [amongst other things] freight movements and serving arrangements. Policy S1.2

states that the Council will promote road safety in the design of new development.

61. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
62. Vehicle access to the proposed quarry extension would be via the existing entrance to Montcliffe Quarry and via the existing internal routes within the quarry.
63. It is estimated that the proposed rate of working/extraction rates would require an average of 25 HGV movements in and out per day. The current permitted number of HGV movements for Montcliffe Quarry is a maximum of 100 in and 100 out per day, Monday to Friday, and 50 in and 50 out per day on Saturdays. The proposed (average) 25 HGV movements per day in association with the extended area would be part of these permitted movements and therefore no additional HGV movements in and out of the quarry are proposed in addition to those already approved.
64. The applicant, Armstrongs, keep a record of all HGV movements in and out of the Montcliffe Quarry, which are available for the Council to inspect. The latest records from July to October 2020 (inclusive) show that in July there were approximately an average of 54 vehicles in and 54 out per day, August approximately an average of 51 in and 51 out per day, September approximately an average of 62 in and 62 out, and in October approximately an average of 57 in and 57 out per day. This proves that during this period the HGV movements were well below the movements permitted for the quarry and that any required additional movements on top of that for the extension area would also fall below the permitted movements for Montcliffe Quarry.
65. A Unilateral Undertaking for the quarries (January 2012) restricts the combined number of HGV movements for both Montcliffe and Pilkington Quarries to a maximum of 170 in and 170 out per day, Monday to Friday, and 85 in and 85 out per day on Saturdays. Over the same period as reported above, there were recorded in July approximately an average of 86 in and 86 out per day, August approximately an average of 88 in and 88 out per day, September approximately an average of 77 in and 77 out per day, and in October approximately 74 in and 74 out per day, which again proves that HGV movements are currently a lot lower than permitted.
66. The proposed hours of working would be the same as currently permitted at Montcliffe Quarry, which are 07:30 to 18:00 Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays.
67. A routing agreement for all HGVs entering and exiting Montcliffe and Pilkington Quarries was drawn up by the applicant as part of the requirements of their Unilateral Undertaking (January 2012), which states that "all reasonable endeavours" will be exercised to ensure drivers avoid Horwich Town Centre via Church Street and Lee Lane in the period 30 minutes before and 10 minutes after normal opening time and 10 minutes before and 30 minutes after normal closing time of Horwich C of E Primary School. It is believed that this is adhered to.
68. Vehicles leaving Montcliffe Quarry egress via the wheel wash and are sheeted on departure. In addition to this, a road sweeper is employed to be continuously active along Georges Lane and Makinson Lane. This reduces any mud or debris on the roads.
69. The Council's Highways Engineers have raised no objection to the proposed development. As part of their review of the proposals they have also checked the analysis of the available injury accident data for both Georges Lane and its junction with Chorley Old Road. This revealed no

injury accident record associated with the movements of the HGVs at the quarries over the last five years.

70. Subject to conditions restricting the number of HGV movements in line with those approved already for Montcliffe Quarry, restricting the hours of operation, ensuring vehicles leaving the quarry are sheeting, and ensuring that the wheel wash at the entrance to Montcliffe Quarry remains in use during the lifetime of the permission, it is considered that the proposed development would not jeopardise highway safety or have a harmful impact on the capacity of the surrounding road network. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with Policies P5 and S1.1 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Residential Amenity

71. Policy CG4 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will ensure that new development is compatible with surrounding land uses and occupiers, protecting amenity, privacy, safety and security, and should not generate unacceptable nuisance, odours, fumes, noise or light pollution.
72. Paragraph 144 of the NPPF states that when determining planning applications for mineral extraction, local planning authorities should [amongst other things] ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any blasting vibrations are controlled, mitigated or removed at source, and establish appropriate noise limits for extraction in proximity to noise sensitive properties.
73. The nearest residential properties to the application site are approximately 400 metres away to the south west, on Georges Lane (Montcliffe Cottages, Montcliffe House and 12 to 30 Georges Lane). Amongst other neighbouring properties in the area, the houses on Markland's Road are approximately 550 metres away, Rocky Mount and Hill Crest are approximately 560 metres away, the houses on Makinson Lane are approximately 670 metres away and the houses at Heather Hall, Heather Hall Cottages and Slack Hall are approximately 950 metres away.

Hours of operation

74. The hours of operation for the proposed extraction and restoration works are 07:30 to 18:00 Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays, which are within the existing permitted hours of working at Montcliffe Quarry. No extension of operating hours is therefore proposed. The hours of operation would again be conditioned, should the application be approved.

Noise

75. Noise from all activity within Montcliffe Quarry (including operational noise, blast induced noise and noise from traffic movements, but excluding operations relating to top soil and stripping) is already limited by condition 10 of approval 97782/16, to 55dB as measured from the façade of the nearest noise sensitive properties (over a one hour period). Noise from operations relating to top soil and stripping and other works in connection with landscaping and restoration is restricted to 70dB by condition 11 of approval 99782/16. Both of these noise limits are in accordance with guidance contained within the NPPG. Condition 4 of the approval requires the applicant to submit a quarterly noise monitoring report to demonstrate that these noise readings are being met.
76. The proposed operations within the quarry extension area would also need to adhere to these noise restrictions, as a cumulative noise reading for the wider Montcliffe operations. Conditions setting out the restrictions would be imposed again on any approval, as would a condition for a quarterly noise monitoring report to be submitted.
77. Officers acknowledge that there had been a lengthy period when the applicant had not submitted

the required monitoring reports for Montcliffe Quarry, however these are now again being submitted again (since last year) and they demonstrate that the noise restrictions are not being breached in the areas where the monitoring has taken place.

78. It is again proposed that a condition is attached to any approval to ensure all plant, equipment and other machinery used in connection with both the extraction operations and restoration of the site are equipped with silencing equipment or sound proofing and that the hours of drilling operations and blasting operations are restricted.

Vibrations

79. The hours that blasting can occur and vibration limits to the blasting operations are again proposed to be restricted by conditions, in line with the existing approval for Montcliffe Quarry.

Dust and air quality

80. Dust and air quality are currently already strictly controlled and monitored at Montcliffe Quarry. This latest proposal does not seek to alter the current limits in place, or the previously agreed techniques for controlling air quality. Existing working practices and hours of operations are not proposed to be changed as a result of this proposed development. Quarterly dust monitoring is a requirement of the existing Unilateral Undertaking for the quarries.

81. The Council's Pollution Control Officers have recommended a condition be attached to any approval for a scheme to be submitted and agreed for details of the proposed dust and windblown material suppression for the extended area.

82. It is considered, subject to the suggested conditions, that the proposed north western quarry extension would not have any more of an undue harm on the amenity of neighbouring residents, than the existing quarrying operations, and therefore it is considered that the proposal is compliant with Policy CG4 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Biodiversity

83. Policy CG1.1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will safeguard and enhance the rural areas of the borough from development that would adversely affect its biodiversity including trees, woodland and hedgerows, geodiversity, landscape character, recreational or agricultural value. Policy 13(v) of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan states that in defining the future use for the mineral site, restoration should be geared towards improvement of final landuse and should provide for the enhancement of the quality of the landscape, biodiversity assets, local environment, European sites, ecological value of the site of the setting of historic assets to the benefit to the local or wider community.

84. Section 15 of the NPPF concerns protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

85. The applicant has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, a bird survey and a soils appraisal with their application.

86. 1 hectare of the application site is located within the large Winter Hill and Smithills Moor Site of Biological Importance (SBI), which is listed for its dry modified bog and for the presence of a range of nesting birds. The SBI is Grade A and therefore of county importance. Bridge Street Local Nature Reserve is 1.3km away. Land to the north and east of the application site is within the West Pennine Moors SSSI (the application site is adjacent a SSSI), which supports an extensive mosaic of upland and upland-fringe habitats, including blanket bogs, wet and dry heathland, acid and lime-rich flushes, rush pastures and mire grasslands, acid grasslands, and

wet and dry broadleaved woodlands and scrub.

87. The proposed quarry extension would break into previously unquarried ground, leading to the loss of upland pasture/acid grassland and rock outcrops. The proposal will also lead to the loss of the existing rock face at the north western corner of the existing Montcliffe Quarry.

Birds

88. The neighbouring SSSI contains diverse assemblages of upland moorland, in-bye and woodland breeding birds. Natural England has reviewed the submitted bird survey and concurs that the application site is likely to provide low quality breeding habitat for species listed within the SSSI assemblage.
89. The presence of a raven/peregrine nest on the quarry face has been reported, which would be affected by the extension. Natural England raise no objection, but recommend that a condition be attached to any approval for nest monitoring to be undertaken prior to the commencement of any work to the quarry face or other rock faces that may be or may become suitable for nesting raptors.
90. With regards to bird species on the surrounding moorland Natural England consider, given the current quarrying operations and likely noise habituation of these smaller bird species, as well as the noise insulation properties that the proposed benching design, dry stone wall restoration and screen bunds are likely to provide, the proposed quarry extension would not have a significant displacement effect.

Other fauna

91. No evidence of badgers has been found and the site is considered to be largely poor habitat for reptiles.

Effects on the neighbouring SSSI

92. With regards to the potential for wind-blown (mineral) dust deposition upon the SSSI, the applicant has confirmed that no mechanical or chemical mineral processing (crushing, screening, washing) will take place within the proposed extension area. Mineral processing instead takes place within the existing quarry. Two new dust monitoring 'pads' are proposed around the proposed extension, which, along with existing monitoring pads, would monitor wind-blown material outside the quarry boundary. Natural England have confirmed the acceptance of the pads in the locations they are proposed.
93. Following Natural England's initial comments on the proposal the applicant is proposing to physically remove any potential connectivity between the soil horizons of the site and the neighbouring SSSI, to protect the hydrology of the neighbouring soils and peat. In order to achieve this, a standoff zone (an impermeable trench) is proposed within the site. Natural England has requested input into the design of this, therefore a condition requiring further details of the trench is suggested.

Proposed restoration

94. It is recognised that there will be a temporary displacement of habitats during the life of the proposed quarry operations, and owing to the nature of the proposal, it is unlikely that mitigation can be provided on site. The proposed restoration of the site has been designed to maximise the wildlife value of the completed landform, and this is to include regenerating the site with grass/heath and scrub and creating a low lying, semi-aquatic habitat on the lower area of the site.

95. Natural England has confirmed that they are in favour of the proposed heathland regeneration and that the proposed wet woodland feature in the floor of the quarry extension would add to biodiversity net gain. Greater Manchester Ecology Unit has also stated that the proposed final restoration scheme would provide compensation for the loss of habitat within the SBI in the long term.
96. As with previous approvals for Montcliffe Quarry, officers again suggest that a condition requiring a five year aftercare scheme for the restored site be submitted to and approved by the Council.
97. It is considered that the proposed construction/operational phase of the development will have a minor negative effect on biodiversity, but there will be a biodiversity gain following the restoration of the site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would comply with Policy CG1.1 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Hydrogeology

98. Policy CG4.2 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will [amongst other things] ensure that development does not cause detrimental impacts upon water.
99. The application site is within a Secondary A Aquifer. The groundwater beneath the application site is substantially below the proposed extraction depths. Following the Environment Agency's initial comments on the proposal, additional borehole data has been submitted by the applicant (seven additional borehole logs have been released). This data demonstrates that the proposed extraction operations would not encounter the Secondary A Aquifer, with the proposed maximum extraction depth being over 33 metres above it.
100. Natural England are satisfied that the applicant's hydrology and hydrogeology assessment with regards to boreholes, geological profiles and porosity demonstrates that the proposed development would not lead to water being drawn away from the peatland habitats within the neighbouring SSSI.
101. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on groundwater or the hydrology of the neighbouring SSSI, compliant with Policy CG4.2 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Flood Risk

102. Policy CG1.5 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will reduce the risk of flooding in Bolton and other areas downstream by minimising water run-off from new development and ensuring a sequential approach is followed, concentrating new development in areas of lowest flood risk.
103. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted with the planning application as the application site is greater than 1 hectare in size.
104. The site is located with Flood Zone 1, which is considered to be at low risk of fluvial and tidal flooding. There are no existing natural surface watercourses within the application site.
105. It is not proposed to significantly alter the existing surface water drainage regime of Montcliffe Quarry as a result of the proposed development. The only change that would be made involves a minor redirection of the ephemeral drainage ditch that forms the southern boundary of the site. Water within the ditch currently flows directly into the quarry to collect in an existing lagoon;

the proposed egress point would be simply located approximately 170 metres to the south east. Surface water would then flow to a separate, existing lagoon in the quarry floor.

106. The Council's Flood Risk/Drainage Officers have raised no objection to the proposal.

107. It is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with Policy CG1.5 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Land Stability

108. Policy CG4.3 of the Core Strategy states that development proposals on land that is (or is suspected to be) affected by contamination or ground instability must include an assessment of the extent of the issues and any possible risks. Development will only be permitted where the land is, or is made, suitable for the proposed use.

109. A Coal Mine Risk Assessment has been submitted with the application. The Coal Authority has confirmed that the application site does not fall with the defined Development High Risk Area and therefore they raise no concerns.

Impact on Archaeology

110. Policy CG3.4 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will conserve and enhance the heritage significance of heritage assets and heritage areas, recognising the importance of sites, areas and buildings of archaeological, historic, cultural and architectural interest and their settings.

111. Prior to the submission of this planning application (as part of the EIA scoping consultation), Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) had advised that a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, an archaeological investigation) would need to be undertaken prior to commencement of any development. A condition requiring this is therefore suggested. GMAAS has raised no objection to the proposal.

Other Matters

112. No public rights of way enter the application site and therefore their integrity would not be affected by the proposed development.

113. Aviation safety is not considered to be a consideration for this proposal.

114. Natural England has confirmed that the proposed development would not lead to the loss of the "best and most versatile" agricultural land (paragraphs 170 and 171 of the NPPF).

115. The applicant would need to vary the relevant conditions within planning permission 97782/16 with regards to the restoration of the main quarry, so that the proposed restoration scheme for the main quarry ties in with the proposed restoration for the proposed extension (as the scheme for the main quarry currently retains the north western quarry face). It is expected that this application would be submitted following an approval of this application.

Conclusion

116. The application site is located within an Area of Search for Sandstone within the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plans and within the Council's Allocations Plan (Policy P4).

117. Policy 1 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan (which forms part of Bolton's development plan) makes a presumption in favour of sustainable minerals development. It states that positive consideration will be given to minerals development which accords with the

policies set out in the development plan and such development will be considered to be sustainable and will be permitted unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 205 of the NPPF also advises, when determining planning application, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy.

118. Officers therefore consider that "great weight" should be given in the planning balance to the proposed additional mineral extraction from the application site.
119. Officers consider that the proposed development would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it is considered, for the reasons discussed above, that openness would be preserved and there is no conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.
120. Officers have identified that there will be harm to the landscape during the mineral extraction phase of the proposed development, however this harm will be in temporary in nature, as following restoration the development would better assimilate with the adjoining landscape. Officers therefore consider that moderate harm should be given to the proposal's impact on the landscape.
121. It is considered that the proposed quarry extension would not jeopardise highway safety or have a harmful impact on the capacity of the surrounding road network. Officers also consider, subject to the suggested conditions, that the proposed north western quarry extension would not have any more of an undue harm on the amenity of neighbouring residents than the existing quarrying operations.
122. Officers considered that the proposed construction/operational phase of the development will have a minor negative effect on biodiversity, but there will be a biodiversity gain following the restoration of the site.
123. It is also considered that the proposed quarry extension would not have an adverse impact on hydrology, hydrogeology, flood risk or land stability. A pre-commencement condition is suggested to allow for an archaeological investigation of the site prior to any development.
124. With regards to the planning balance, Officers consider that the great weight to be attached to the proposed mineral extraction outweighs the moderate harm to the landscape and the minor harm to biodiversity during the operational/extraction phase of the development. Members are therefore recommended to approve this application, subject to the suggested conditions.

Representation and Consultation Annex

Representations

Letters:- 49 objections have been received, which raise the following concerns:

125. Encroachment into the Green Belt;

126. The development will not preserve the openness of the Green Belt;

- * The proposed development will be highly visible from surrounding public areas. The hillside can be seen from miles around. Winter Hill is a prominent landmark;
- * The proposals will spoil the visual environment for many years to come;
- * The quarry will become too big and out of proportion with the surrounding landscape;
- * Impact on the landscape character of the area/West Pennine Moors;
- * The countryside must be preserved. It will be a scar on the landscape;
- * Impact on residential amenity. Existing problems local residents experience will increase;
- * Vibrations: neighbouring houses shake when there are blasts at the quarry;
- * Incident of a blast occurring without prior warning (*Officer comment: it is for the applicant to notify neighbouring properties before a blasting event occurs*);
- * Dust in neighbouring gardens, on properties, on cars and on roads;
- * Impact on health from dust pollution;
- * Impact on health through traffic pollution (*Officer comment: as reported above, the proposed development would not result in an increase in HGV movements over that already permitted for Montcliffe Quarry*);
- * Noise from operations/hours of operation. Can be heard afar;
- * Noise detracts from the enjoyment of the surrounding countryside;
- * Armstrongs have little concern for their neighbours (*Officer comment: this concern is noted. The planning conditions attached to the existing permission and those suggested by officers should this application be approved are intended to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring residents*);
- * Increase in HGV movements on Georges Lane and surrounding road network;
- * How will the number of vehicle movements be monitored? (*Officer comment: Armstrongs keep records of daily movements in and out of the quarry, which are available for the Council to review*);
- * Damage to road surfaces through HGV movements (*Officer comment: this would be a matter for the Local Highways Authority*);
- * Mud and debris on local roads;
- * Highway safety at the junction of Georges Lane with Chorley Old Road from HGVs;
- * Highway safety concerns for school children on Chorley Old Road;
- * Speed of HGV drivers and inconsiderate parking (*Officer comment: these would be Police matters and are therefore not a planning matter*);
- * HGVs are using New Chapel Lane as a rat run when it is restricted to 7.5 tonnes (*Officer comment: this is covered under the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, and therefore is not a planning matter*);
- * Conflict with other road users on Georges Lane;
- * Impact on Wallsuches Conservation Area from an increase in HGVs (*Officer comment: traffic is not a material consideration when assessing the impact of proposals on conservation areas, as it would not harm the built form of an area*);
- * Affect on water table and groundwater. Potential contamination;
- * Impact on blanket bog (*Officer comment: as reported in analysis, an impermeable trench is proposed within the site to protect the hydrology of the SSSI*);
- * Impact on Site of Biological Importance;
- * The proposal would conflict with the purposes of the West Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific

Interest;

- * Impact on wildlife from noise, dust and pollution;
- * Impact on habitats;
- * Increase in surface water flooding, to properties to the south;
- * Affect on the surrounding public rights of way;
- * Residents were told that there would be no further extensions to the quarries. They have already extended the quarry (*Officer comment: the applicant is entitled to apply for further planning permissions*);
- * Current activities in the quarries need better policing (*Officer comment: the LPA employs Capita to monitor the quarries on a regular basis, who report back to the LPA should any matters need investigating by the LPA*);
- * Concern additional excavation will be required to achieve the restored levels (*Officer comment: this is not required*);
- * Impact on old mine shafts in the area;
- * How many of Armstrongs' staff are employed locally? Will it actually benefit the local economy? (*Officer comment: a rundown of where staff live has not been provided by the applicant and this is not a requirement for the determination of this application*);
- * Concern about structure of the road to the west following extraction works (*Officer comment: this road is not to be used as part of the development and there will be a stand-off of at least 25 metres between the road and the workable area*);
- * Potential archaeological interest;
- * The aggregate bank for England is full which means there should only be aggregate from the process of block stone extraction. The sub-regional landbank for crushed stone is already exceeded;
- * Use of manege, outside of quarry, for storage in association with the quarry (*Officer comment: the use of the manege by the quarry has ceased and materials have been removed off the site, following enforcement action by the LPA*);
- * Discolouration of several local streams and the reservoirs at Arcon Village from the existing operations (*Officer comment: there is no evidence that the operations at the existing quarries has caused this discoloration and the applicant believes that it may instead be caused by previous mining activity in the area. The applicant has agreed to investigate this further, but it should be noted that the Environment Agency and Natural England have raised no concerns in relation to hydrological matters*);
- * Armstrongs have been in breach of their planning conditions regarding monitoring of existing operations (*Officer comment: the applicant has, since last year and following action by the LPA, been submitting their quarterly monitoring reports, in accordance with their existing planning conditions*);
- * A new access has been created into the quarry, in breach of their planning permissions (*Officer comment: planning application 09801/20 has now been submitted retrospectively to address this*);
- * Vehicles entering the quarry are commonly unsheeted (*Officer comment: this concern is currently being investigated by enforcement officers*);
- * The conditioned working hours at the quarry are commonly not adhered to (*Officer comment: this is currently subject to an enforcement investigation*);
- * Armstrongs' Chorley New Road site must close, to stop HGV traffic along that route (*Officer comment: Armstrongs have now vacated their Loco Works site and have moved their vehicle fleet to land between the quarries, which is subject to retrospective application 08698/20*);
- * Devaluation of neighbouring properties (*Officer comment: this is not a material planning consideration*).

It is considered that the concerns without a specific officer comment are addressed within the

analysis of this report.

Horwich Town Council:- raised an objection at their meeting of 18th February 2021 for the following reasons:

- * Contrary to section 9 of the NPPF due to the negative impact on the Green Belt, West Pennine Moors SSSI and surrounding areas which are sites of biological importance;
- * Negative impact on a site of archaeological importance;
- * A precedent for refusal has already been set in 1991 and 1993;
- * Negative impact on Wallsuches Conservation Area;
- * Continued lack of enforcement of existing planning conditions which has had a detrimental effect on the amenity of local residents (noise and pollution);
- * The ten year supply of crushed rock is already in place;
- * Request full enforcement of existing planning conditions (*Officer comment: there are no current recognised breach of conditions at Montcliffe Quarry. Complaints about working hours are currently being investigated and a retrospective application for the new access into the quarry from Makinson Lane has been submitted*);
- * A Traffic Regulation Order should be implemented to prevent site traffic entering Horwich town centre (*Officer comment: as mentioned above, there is an existing routing agreement within the Unilateral Undertaking for the quarries*).

Chorley Council:- were consulted as the neighbouring authority and raised no objection.

Elected Members:- Cllr. Silvester has objected and raised the following concerns:

- * The proposal will not preserve the openness of the Green, and is contrary to Green Belt policy;
- * It would conflict with the purposes of the West Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest, to protect and enhance the wildlife importance of the area;
- * Detrimental to the objectives of protecting and enhancing wildlife importance;
- * Detrimental to supporting important populations of breeding birds and passage migrants in the immediate area of the SSI and SBI and the Upland Moorland Hills Landscape Character Area;
- * Previous applications for extending the quarry have been refused.

Consultations

Advice was sought from the following consultees: Highways Engineers, Pollution Control Officers, Landscape Officers, Greenspace Officers, Drainage Officers, Public Rights of Way Officer, Minerals and Waste Unit, the Environment Agency, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Natural England, Woodland Trust, Historic England, Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, Coal Authority, Peak and Northern Footpaths Society, Ramblers Association, Open Space Society, United Utilities and the National Planning Casework Unit.

Planning History

Application Site

None.

Montcliffe Quarry

97782/16 - Permission was granted at Committee in January 2017 for the variation of condition 2 on planning approval 86368/11 to extend the deadline for commencement of restoration to allow the remaining permitted reserves within Montcliffe Quarry to be fully worked and site progressively restored. This gave a deadline for mineral extraction until 20/02/33 and quarry restoration until 20/02/35.

86368/11 - Permission was granted in February 2012 for the variation of condition 2 on approval 72520/05 to remove the deadline for the commencement of the restoration to allow the remaining permitted reserves within Montcliffe Quarry to be fully worked and the site progressively restored. This gave a deadline for mineral extraction until 20/02/21 and quarry restoration until 20/02/23.

72520/05 - Permission was granted in July 2006 for the variation of condition 2 on approval 44430/93 to allow additional time to complete mineral extraction by 21/09/2011 and quarry restoration by 21/09/2012.

An application to vary condition 6 on 44430/93, withdrawing permitted development rights for all forms of ancillary development was approved in February 1998 (51995/97).

In May 1997 permission was granted for the erection of a workshop building and store (50494/97).

44430/93 - Permission was granted in September 1995 for the extension of quarrying operations including landscaping and improved vehicular access. The deadline for mineral extraction on this permission was 21/09/2005 and the quarry restoration 21/09/2007.

Application 41404/92 for the extension of quarrying operations including the relocation of weighbridge, weighbridge office and sheeting bays, erection of WC with septic tank, alterations to access and landscaping was refused in February 1992.

Application 39202/91 for the extension of the quarry and associated landscaping works was refused in December 1991.

North eastern extension at Montcliffe Quarry

93076/14 - Permission was granted at Planning Committee in February 2015 for the re-profiling and stabilisation works of the north eastern face of the quarry to alleviate health and safety concerns identified through a quarry regulations appraisal. This extension to the quarry covered an area of 3.4 hectares. The end-date for mineral extraction was 20/02/21.

Applications relating to Montcliffe Quarry currently being considered

08698/20 - Retrospective permission for erection of offices and extension to maintenance sheds, formation of hardstanding and HGV parking and wash areas together with gas/petrol pump and stone retaining walls. This application will be heard before a future Planning Committee.

09801/20 - Variation of condition 14 on planning approval 97782/16 (introduction of an additional access to/from the site). This application will be heard before a future Planning Committee.

09814/20 - Retention of concrete batching plant at Montcliffe Quarry. This application will be heard before a future Planning Committee.

10395/21 - Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 93076/14 to increase the period of time for re-profiling and stabilisation works of the north eastern face of the quarry by 10.5 years. This application will be heard before a future Planning Committee.

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions

Recommended Conditions and/or Reasons

1. The extraction of mineral from the north western face of Montcliffe Quarry, for which permission

is hereby granted, shall cease not later than **31st December 2039** and the site shall then be restored in accordance with the conditions of this permission and in any event within a further period of two years from the cessation of extractive operations, which is the earliest.

Reason

To ensure a satisfactory form of development and control of life of the site.

2. Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)

No development groundworks shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The WSI shall cover the following:

1. A phased programme and methodology of site investigation and recording to include:
 - a detailed topographical survey to locate and record earthworks
 - geophysical evaluation survey
 - targeted evaluation trenching of earthworks and geophysical anomalies
 - where merited by the evaluation trenching, open area excavation.
 - archaeological watching brief of controlled top-soil strip.
 - where merited by the watching brief, open area excavation.
2. A programme for post investigation assessment to include:
 - analysis of the site investigation records and finds
 - production of a final report on the significance of the archaeological, historical and architectural interest represented.
3. Provision for publication and dissemination of the analysis and report on the site investigation.
4. Provision for archive deposition of the report, finds and records of the site investigation.
5. Nomination of a competent person or persons/ organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved WSI.

Reason

In the interests of archaeology and to comply with policy CG3.4 of Bolton's Core Strategy and in accordance with paragraphs 197 and 199 of the NPPF.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: Site investigation works need to take place prior to the start of any extraction work.

3. Nest monitoring

Prior to the commencement of any work on the existing quarry face (the north western face of Montcliffe Quarry) or any work on any other rock faces that may be or become suitable for nesting raptors, a bird nest monitoring survey, to ensure that a nest site has not been established on the face subject to the proposed work, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority. No works shall commence until it has been confirmed that no nest sites have been established or that appropriate measures (to be approved in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority) have been put in place to protect the nests/nesting birds.

Reason

To safeguard the habitats of protected species and to comply with policy CG1 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: Any works on site could harm protected species if not properly managed so details of the matters set out above must be submitted and agreed in advance of works starting.

4. Impermeable barrier along north eastern boundary

Prior to the commencement of development full details of the proposed impermeable barrier to be created along the north eastern boundary of the site, to physically remove any potential connectivity between the soil horizons of the site and the neighbouring SSSI, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority. The approved barrier (trench) shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details, within a timeframe to be agreed with

the Minerals Planning Authority, and shall be retained thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority.

Reason

To protect the hydrology of the soils within the neighbouring West Pennine Moors SSSI and to comply with policies CG1.1 and CG4.2 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: The design of the barrier needs to be known prior to commencement of works as this may impact on how the works are carried out.

5. **Noise assessment**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a site-specific noise assessment, taking into account the potential worst case noise levels of the proposed operational noise (including blast induced noise) and noise from traffic movements upon the closest sensitive receptors to the application site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority.

Reason

To safeguard the amenity of neighbouring residents in regards to noise and to comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: To gain a better understanding of noise related issues prior to commencement of operations.

6. **Dust monitoring pads**

Prior to the commencement of development the two dust monitoring pads, as shown on drawing 200/20 Rev 1.1; "Map of Proposed Dust Monitoring Pads and Ephemeral Stream"; dated 21/03/2019, shall be installed in the approved locations and shall remain until the development hereby approved has been completed, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority.

Reason

To enable monitoring of the effects of wind-blown materials on the neighbouring SSSI through the lifetime of the development and to comply with Policy CG1.1 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: The pads should be installed prior to commencement of development to ensure effective monitoring.

7. **Reasonable measures to control dust**

Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme showing all reasonable measures to be taken to ensure that the operations do not give rise to nuisance by virtue of dust or wind-blown material, which shall include the use of water to suppress dust generated in all operational areas and the collection of windblown materials as necessary and in any event at the end of each working day, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority and shall be implemented in full on commencement of activities. This scheme must also include details of how dust from the haul road and vehicles will be controlled.

Reason

To minimise the impact of wind-blown dust and materials on the general and residential amenity and to comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core Strategy

Reason for pre-commencement condition: The control of dust and wind-blown material should be understood prior to operations first beginning.

8. **Screen bund**

The north-western screen bund shall be constructed and landscaped in full accordance with drawing MC1138-D7 within a timeframe to be agreed by the Minerals Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. The screen bund shall be retained as approved until mineral extraction has ceased, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority.

Reason

To safeguard the character and appearance of the area by screening the development from public views and to comply with Policies CG3 and OA1 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: The timeframe for constructing the bund is required prior to commencement of development, to ensure that it is construction at the appropriate time and that it will serve its purpose.

9. **Detailed landscape scheme**

Within six months of the date of this decision a detailed landscape and restoration scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Mineral Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full and carried out with any approved phasing details, which are to be included as part of the scheme, and subsequently approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason

To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the application site and to comply with policies CG3 and OA1 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

10. **Five year aftercare scheme**

A five year aftercare scheme shall be submitted for the approval of the Mineral Planning Authority not later than one year after the date of this permission and shall specify the steps to be taken and the periods during which they are to be taken. The aftercare plan shall provide for an annual review between the mineral operator and the Mineral Planning Authority at which time such a scheme may be varied as necessary and thereafter implemented in accordance with the agreed scheme.

Reason

To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site and to comply with policies CG1.1, CG3 and OA1 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

11. **Monitoring of blasting operations**

In line with condition 3 of planning approval 97782/16, each blasting operation at the quarry extension shall be monitored and the results recorded to assess vibration propagation. At 3 monthly intervals the results and regression curves of peak particle velocity against scale distance shall be supplied to the Mineral Planning Authority. The regression curves supplied shall be the mean curve and the 95% percentile limit curve.

Reason

To ensure comprehensive monitoring of the blasting operations and to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties, and to comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

12. **Noise monitoring - quarterly report**

In line with condition 4 of planning approval 97782/16, and unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Mineral Planning Authority, monitoring of noise from site operations shall be undertaken once a quarter for a one hour period on any working day, or at a time interval to be agreed with the Mineral Planning Authority at the noise control points at Hill Top, Hill Crest, Rocky Mount and Montcliffe House, Georges Lane, 1 and 2 Grundy Cottages, Makinson Lane, and the properties at Montcliffe Cottages, Georges Lane. The results of the monitoring shall be recorded and submitted to the Mineral Planning Authority on the last working day of each calendar quarter for the duration of the operations and shall include:-

- a) The measured one hour LAeq in dB;
- b) Date and time of measurement;
- c) Description of site activities;
- d) Details of measuring equipment; and
- e) Weather conditions including wind speed and direction.

Reason

To protect neighbouring residential amenity and to comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core

Strategy.

13. **Dust monitoring - quarterly report**

The results from the dust monitoring pads as shown on approved drawing 200/20 Rev 1.1; "Map of Proposed Dust Monitoring Pads & Ephemeral Stream"; dated 21/03/2019 shall be recorded and submitted to the Mineral Planning Authority on the last working day of each calendar quarter for the duration of the approved site operations.

Reason

To protect the neighbouring SSSI from dust and wind-blown material from the quarry extension and to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring residents, through the lifetime of the development, and to comply with Policies CG1.1 and CG3 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

14. **Removal of plant, etc following cessation of operations**

Within a period of 3 months from the cessation of extractive and restoration operations hereby permitted, a scheme for the removal of all plant, machinery and hard surfaced service areas associated with quarrying operations, and subsequent restoration of those areas, shall be submitted to the Minerals Planning Authority for approval. The approved scheme shall be implemented within a further period of 9 months from the date of its approval in accordance with the restoration and aftercare requirements of this permission unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority.

Reason

To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site and to comply with policies CG3 and OA1 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

15. **Hours of working**

No work on the site (including the repair of plant machinery and the movement of such machinery) shall be carried out on the site outside the following hours:-

07:00 to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays
07:30 to 13:00 hours Saturdays

unless previously agreed in writing with the Mineral Planning Authority or specified elsewhere by this permission.

Reason

To safeguard the living conditions of residents and the amenity and character of the area with regard to noise and/or disturbance, and comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

16. **Hours for drilling operations**

No drilling operations shall be carried out on the site outside the following hours:-

07:00 to 17:30 hours Mondays to Fridays
08:00 to 12:00 hours Saturdays

Reason

To safeguard the living conditions of residents and the amenity and character of the area with regard to noise and/or disturbance, and to comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

17. **Hours for blasting operations**

No blasting operations shall be carried out on the site outside the following hours:-

10:00 to 12:00 and 13:00 to 15:00 hours Mondays to Fridays

In the event of a blast being necessary outside those hours the Mineral Planning Authority shall be notified immediately and in any event within 48 hours of the blast occurring.

Reason

To safeguard the living conditions of residents and the amenity and character of the area with regard to noise and/or disturbance, and to comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

18. **Ground vibrations limit**

Blasting operations shall not result in ground vibrations with a peak particle velocity greater than 10mm per second in any plane as measured at the nearest occupied building to such operations and 95% of all blasts throughout the duration of operations shall not exceed a peak particle velocity of 6mm per second.

Reason

To safeguard the living conditions of residents and the amenity and character of the area with regard to noise and/or disturbance, and to comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

19. **Noise limit**

Noise from any activity (with the exception of those relating to top soil and stripping) shall not exceed the equivalent continuous sound level (LAeq, 1 hour) measured over a one hour period of 55dB as measured 3 metres from the facade of those noise sensitive properties located at Hill Top, Hill Crest, Rocky Mount and Montcliffe House, Georges Lane, 1 and 2 Grundy Cottages, Makinson Lane, and the properties at Montcliffe Cottages, Georges Lane.

Reason

To minimise the impact of noise on residential amenity and to comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

20. **Noise limit - top soil and stripping operations**

Operations relating to top soil and stripping and other works in connection with landscaping and restoration shall not exceed an equivalent continuous sound level (LAeq, 1 hour) measured over a one hour period of 70dB as measured 3 metres from the facade of those noise sensitive properties located at Hill Top, Hill Crest, Rocky Mount and Montcliffe House, Georges Lane, 1 and 2 Grundy Cottages, Makinson Lane, and the properties at Montcliffe Cottages, Georges Lane.

Reason

To minimise the impact of noise on residential amenity and to comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

21. **Silencing equipment/sound proofing**

All plant, equipment and other machinery used in connection with the development, operation, maintenance and restoration of the site shall be equipped with effective silencing equipment or sound proofing equipment to the standard of design set out in the manufacturers original specification and maintained in such conditions at all times.

Reason

To minimise the impact of noise on the general and residential amenity and to comply with policy CG4 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

22. **HGV movements**

In line with condition 15 of planning approval 97782/16, not more than 100 heavy goods vehicle (HGV) movements to the site and 100 HGV movements from Montcliffe Quarry (including those to enable the full restoration of the whole areas of the site subject to quarrying) shall take place during any single day Monday to Friday and no more than 50 HGV movements to and 50 from Montcliffe Quarry on Saturdays. There shall be no HGV vehicle movements on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason

In the interests of the amenities of local residents, highway safety and the protection of the surrounding highway infrastructure.

23. **Vehicle sheeting**
All vehicles carrying waste or recycled materials leaving the site shall be suitably netted or sheeted to ensure materials are secure and are not deposited on the highway.

Reason

In the interests of the visual appearance of the locality and highway safety and to comply with policies S1.2 and CG3 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

24. **Imported material**
No material shall be imported onto the site other than to fulfill the final restoration contours.

Reason

For the avoidance of doubt.

25. **Cessation of mineral extraction prior to achievement of final levels**
In the event of a cessation of mineral extraction prior to the achievement of the final levels under the approved scheme, which in the opinion of the Minerals Planning Authority constitutes a permanent cessation, a revised restoration scheme is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented within one year of the date of which minerals extraction operations ceased unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Minerals Planning Authority.

Reason

To ensure a satisfactory restoration scheme in the event that mineral extraction is ceased prior to the approved final levels being achieved, and to safeguard and enhance the landscape character of the area compliant with Policies CG3 and OA1 of Bolton's Core Strategy.

26. **Approved plans**
The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the following approved plans:

200/20-1 Rev 2.2; "Location"; dated 17/12/2018

200/20-2 Rev 3.0; "Site Plan"; dated 03/01/2019

200/20-5 Rev 2.2; "Working Area"; dated 17/12/2018

200/20-6 Rev 2.2; "Phased Scheme of Soil Stripping"; dated 17/12/2018

200/20-7 Rev 2.2; "Phased Scheme of Restoration"; dated 18/12/2018

200/20-9 Rev 3.0; "Benching/Quarry Design"; dated 11/12/2018

200/20 Rev 1.1; "Map of Proposed Dust Monitoring Pads & Ephemeral Stream"; dated 21/03/2019

MC1138-D6v2; "Restoration Masterplan"; dated Oct 2018

MC1138-D7v2; "Details of North-western Screen Bund"; dated July 2019

Reason

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.