

MAES Y DROELL QUARRY EXTRACTION OF INDUSTRIAL SAND

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Silica Sand Mold Limited

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Document history

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Silica Sand Mold Limited (hereafter 'the Applicant') is seeking full planning permission for the proposed winning and working of industrial sand and associated minerals with progressive restoration to nature conservation after use at Maes y Droell Quarry, Graianrhyd, Mold, Denbighshire.
- 1.1.2 The application boundary is presented in **Figure 1: Site Location Plan** and **Figure 2: Aerial Context Plan**. The area which it encompasses is hereafter referred to as 'the Site', which encompasses the whole of the existing quarry site.
- 1.1.3 The Site falls within the administrative area of Denbighshire County Council (DCC).
- 1.1.4 The Proposed Development comprises the:
- 'Recommencement of mineral extraction involving the winning and working of high-grade industrial sand from a previously operational quarry that has lay dormant for several years, incorporating a previously consented northern extension, utilising modern plant, equipment, and working practices.*
- The progressive restoration of the quarry, from the outset of the recommencement of work. Restoration will involve the creation and management of a range of habitats to support an abundance of species. This will occur as phases of the quarry are completed and is therefore progressive. On final restoration, the former quarry would be an established site of high nature conservation importance subject to appropriate aftercare management secured by planning conditions.'*
- 1.1.5 Silica Sand Mold Limited is the owner of the Site. The high-grade industrial sand and fine clay are suitable for a number of important industrial end uses, including porcelain products. The maximum annual output from the quarry will be 300,000 tonnes, although actual throughput is likely to be lower and will vary according to market demand. The industrial sand mineral reserve is equivalent to approximately 15 years of production, taking account of these variables.
- 1.1.6 The Site is currently a partially worked quarry, comprising a mixture of quarry working, aggregate stockpiles, and predominantly immature woodland. The proposal involves the recommencement of working within the quarry in 4 phases to win high-grade industrial sand and fine clay, as well as consolidating the complex planning situation.
- 1.1.7 The Site lies in two parts, separated by Denbighshire Bridleway 515/17. The northern part of the Site is referred to as the 'north site', and the southern (larger) part of the Site is referred to as the 'south site'.
- 1.1.8 Areas of both the north site and south site have previously been worked, and the Site has a complex planning history with a range of previous and extant permissions. Various owners have at differing times sought to agree new planning conditions pursuant to the Planning Acts. The Acts require modern working conditions and practices that take proper regard to the environmental effect of operations; these have been successful to a greater or lesser extent.

- 1.1.9 The intention is that the current proposal will consolidate operations under a single consent, with a single set of planning conditions. This includes land where mineral working operations have permanently concluded, and the Site requires a more comprehensive restoration solution.
- 1.1.10 It is intended to rework some of the mineral which has been previously processed, using modern equipment, and to create a final landform that is both safe and supportive of a range of diverse habitats.
- 1.1.11 The northern part of the Site lies within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape (formerly the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)). This Planning Statement refers to the designation as a National Landscape, reflecting current terminology, although the Denbighshire Local Development Plan still refers to land as an AONB.
- 1.1.12 The Applicant has sought pre-application advice, and this has been followed by a request for a formal Scoping Opinion from Denbighshire County Council which has been received. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) that has been compiled to satisfy the Town and Country Planning EIA (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended) using appropriately qualified and experienced experts.

1.2 The Applicant

- 1.2.1 Silica Sand Mold Limited is a UK-registered family-run private limited company specialising in the extraction, processing and treatment of minerals including industrial sand. The wider portfolio of operations includes agricultural business operations.
- 1.2.2 The Applicant has over 20 years' experience managing minerals and waste sites including transportation across the North West and North of England into North Wales.
- 1.2.3 The business has a strong track record of:
- Fulfilling planning and environmental requirements;
 - Working positively with local authorities and regulators; and
 - Engaging with local communities and quarry liaison committees.

1.3 The Application

- 1.3.1 This planning application includes the following suite of plans and documents, which should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement. These are the:
- Planning Application Form and Certificates;
 - Environmental Statement (ES), comprising:
 - Volume I – Non-Technical Summary;
 - Volume II – ES Chapters, comprising ;
 - Volume III – Technical Appendices; and

- Volume IV – Figures.
- Standalone Reports, comprising:
 - Planning Statement (this document);
 - Agricultural Land Classification Report;
 - Flood Consequences Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy (FCA);
 - Green Infrastructure Statement;
 - Pre-Application Report;
 - Terms of Reference for a Quarry Liaison Committee;
 - Arboricultural Survey, Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Report;
 - Welsh Language Statement; and
 - Phase 1 Desk Study (Contaminated land)

Plans and Figures

1.3.2 The accompanying plans and figures form **ES Volume IV**. Those referenced as part of this Planning Statement are listed below in **Table 1-1**.

Table 1-1: Accompanying Plans and Drawings

Plan / Drawing Number	Title
Figure 1	Site Location Plan
Figure 2	Aerial Context Plan
Figure 3	Phase 1 Indicative Quarry Development Plan
Figure 4	Phase 2 Indicative Quarry Development Plan
Figure 5	Phase 3 Indicative Quarry Development
Figure 6	Phase 4 Indicative Quarry Development Plan
Figure 7	Restoration Indicative Quarry Development Plan
Figure 8	Sections Indicative Quarry Development Plan

2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 EIA Scoping

- 2.1.1 A formal request for a Scoping Opinion (15/2025/0412/SCO) was submitted to Denbighshire County Council (DCC) in March 2025 under Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 ('the EIA Regulations'). The request was supported by a Scoping Report, which provided information about the proposed development and identified the environmental topics to be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The Scoping Report is included within **ES Volume III, Appendix 1.2: EIA Scoping Report**.
- 2.1.2 DCC consulted with internal and external consultees.
- 2.1.3 DCC issued its Scoping Response on 27th May 2025, together with responses received from consultees. The Scoping Opinion is included within **ES Volume III, Appendix 1.3: EIA Scoping Response**.

2.2 Environmental Statement

- 2.2.1 The planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) which provides a full appraisal of the environmental baseline conditions of the Site and surrounding area and an assessment of the potential 'significant' environmental effects of the Proposed Development when considered against, and in combination with, the environmental baseline.
- 2.2.2 The ES also provides, where necessary, recommendations for mitigation measures to ensure the residual environmental effects of the Proposed Development are acceptable.
- 2.2.3 The ES comprises four parts:
- Volume I: Non-Technical Summary;
 - Volume II: ES Chapters;
 - Volume III: Supporting Technical Appendices; and,
 - Volume IV: Figures.
- 2.2.4 The content of the ES is listed within the DNS Document Register, which accompanies the application.

3 THE SITE

3.1 Site Location

- 3.1.1 The location of the Proposed Development is identified in **Figure 1: Site Location Plan** and **Figure 2: Aerial Context Plan**. The Site is located approximately 6.5 km south of Mold and 12 km west-north-west of Wrexham, at Grid Ref SJ 218565, with postcode CH7 4QW.
- 3.1.2 The Site is within the Llanarmon-yn-Ial Community Civil Parish, which is itself in Denbighshire. This makes Denbighshire County Council the relevant Mineral Planning Authority for the Site.
- 3.1.3 The Site covers an area of 22 hectares (ha). It predominantly occupies a disused quarry in the south area, and the northern area comprises several ponds, grassland, vegetation and woodland. The eastern most corner of the Site is grassland.
- 3.1.4 Access to the Site is at Grid Ref SJ216565 on the minor road from Graianrhyd to Eryrys. This point is 375 m to the north of the junction of the minor road with the B5430 Ruthin to Minera road.
- 3.1.5 Graig limestone quarry is between 800 – 1,000 metres to the west. Where appropriate, this operation has been considered as a development that could have cumulative impacts and has been assessed as part of the associated ES.
- 3.1.6 There is also a ‘quarry buffer zone’ around the entire Site, and a sand and gravel mineral safeguarding area designated to the south of the Site. These will be material considerations in the determination of planning applications within the identified zones.
- 3.1.7 The majority of surrounding land is farmland or moorland, with dry-stone walls or overgrown, vegetated field boundaries. There are drainage ditches on either side of the Site, and overhead 400 kV power lines approximately 600 m to the east.

3.2 Surroundings

- 3.2.1 There are small farmsteads surrounding the Site, as detailed below.
- 3.2.2 Residential and tourism receptors in the vicinity of the Site include:
- Woolly Experiences therapy farm is adjacent to the Site to the east.
 - Agm Tree Surgery is adjacent to the Site to the east.
 - Llys Onnen North Wales Holiday Cottages is adjacent to the Site to the east.
 - Maes Y Droell Farm is to the west, with residential dwellings and a farm located between the Site boundary and 100 m from the Site to the west.
 - The Rose & Crown pub is adjacent to the south of the Site.
 - Maes Gwyn residential cluster is approximately 190 m west of the Site.

- Residential dwellings are adjacent to the Site and approximately 230 m to the southeast along Graianrhyd Road.
- Farm is approximately 280 m east of the Site.

3.2.3 Nearby settlements within 3 km of the Site include:

- Treuddyn, located approximately 3 km northeast of the Site.
- Eryrys, located approximately 1.8 km northwest of the Site.
- Pant-y-ffordd, located approximately 2 km northeast of the Site.
- Rhydtalog, located approximately 2 km southeast of the Site.
- Parc Farm Holiday Park/Vale holiday Parks located approximately 2 km southwest of the Site.
- Llanarmon-yn-Ial, located approximately 2.6 km west of the Site.

3.3 Site Area

3.3.1 The Site extends to approximately 22 ha, is partially worked, and is most easily described by the areas which are, respectively, north and south of the Denbighshire Bridleway ref. 515/17, which runs East-West between Eryrys Road at the west and Llynwern Road at the east. For the purposes of this application, the northern part of the Site is called 'north site', and the southern (larger) part of the Site is called the 'south site'.

North Site

- 3.3.2 The Site's northern section spans approximately 8.04 ha and is roughly square-shaped, featuring a natural landscape with vegetation, shrubs, trees, and several ponds crossed by a few tracks or footpaths. Adjacent to the Site is a cemetery (Mynwent Maes y Droell Cemetery) and several mature trees. The easternmost corner of the Site is grassland.
- 3.3.3 Bridleway ref.515/17 ref bounds the southern part of the northern site; here the ground rises from before plateauing further to the north.
- 3.3.4 Footpath ref. 515/18 exits the southern boundary of the north site heading north and, once past the cemetery, forks into two paths continuing northwards.
- 3.3.5 The northern part of the Site lies within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB), which runs from Prestatyn in the north to Llangollen in the south. The National Landscape largely lies in Denbighshire, but its eastern fringe is in Flintshire and southern extent in Wrexham.
- 3.3.6 There are four distinct waterbodies at the upper level along with other depressions in the ground. Ecological interest in the north has been established, to date, as Great Crested Newt (GCN) are in the ponds. These ponds are understood to have been formed to support the previous mineral working.

- 3.3.7 In the southeast corner of the northern area there is historic evidence of mineral working, potentially shallow shafts sunk to investigate the potential for lead mining, but the operations appear to have been short-lived, and there is now no above-surface evidence.

South Site

- 3.3.8 The southern area is approximately 13.96 ha and comprises a mix of worked and exhausted quarry features including deep, flooded quarry pits in its south, vegetated spoil heaps in its east, as well as an area of meadow, hardstanding and redundant buildings. To the west are settling pond. The quarried central and southern areas are dissected by internal roadways and tracks associated with past extraction.

3.4 Environmental Designations

- 3.4.1 The presence/absence of designations in the vicinity of the Site that are relevant to the Site are summarised below. Designation information is sourced from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) DataMap Wales data base, unless otherwise stated.

Landscape

- 3.4.2 The Site falls within the National Landscape Character Area (NLCA) 12: Bryniau Clwyd/Clwydian Range (NRW, 2023).
- 3.4.3 The Clwydian Range is characterised by its extensive upland ridge characterised by rounded, heather-clad hills, dramatic limestone outcrops and summits. The area is distinguished by Iron Age hillforts, long-standing mineral landscapes, and a strong blend of Welsh and English cultural influences shaped by its historic position between the Vales of Clwyd and Llangollen.
- 3.4.4 The northern part of the Site lies within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB which was designated in 1985), which runs from Prestatyn in the north to Llangollen in the south. The National Landscape largely lies in Denbighshire, but its eastern fringe is in Flintshire and southern extent in Wrexham.
- 3.4.5 The northern area of the Site will fall within the proposed Glyndwr National Park, which is based on the existing Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape. At the time of writing, the proposed National Park is not currently designated.
- 3.4.6 At the local level, as set out in the Conwy and Denbighshire Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy Development, the majority of the Site is located within the B1: Gritstone Hills (Graianrhyd) landscape unit, with the western edge of the Site falling within the C2: Limestone Farmlands (Llandegla to Maeshafn) landscape unit. The B1: Gritstone Hills (Graianrhyd) landscape is described as a medium-scale landscape characterised by a gently undulating landform, a mosaic of pasture and broadleaved woodland, and notable human influences, including scattered settlements, pylons and quarrying activity. In contrast, the C2: Limestone Farmlands (Llandegla to Maeshafn) landscape is described as a medium to large-scale, strongly undulating upland limestone landscape comprising farmland, wooded hillsides and small dispersed settlements.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 3.4.7 There are three internationally designated statutory ecological designations located within 10 km of the Site:
- Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains (Berwyn a Mynyddoedd De Clwyd) Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located approximately 1.1 km south of the site boundary at its closest point.
 - Alyn Valley Woods/Coedwigoedd Dyffryn Alun SAC is located approximately 5.5 km north of the Site.
 - Two of Deeside and Buckley Newt SAC Sites lie approximately 10 km northeast from site.
- 3.4.8 There are no RAMSAR sites, nor Special Protection Areas (SPA) within 10 km of the Site.
- 3.4.9 There are four nationally designated statutory ecological designations located within 2 km of the Site:
- Bryn Alyn SSSI approximately 1.4 km northwest of Site.
 - Glaswelltiroedd Eryrys (Eryrys Grasslands) SSSI approximately 1.3 km northwest of Site.
 - Graig, Llanarmon-yn-Ial SSSI approximately 1.2 km west of Site.
 - Llandegla Moor SSSI approximately 1.3 km south of Site.
- 3.4.10 There are no National Nature Reserves, nor Local Nature Reserves within 2 km of the Site.
- 3.4.11 There are twenty-four Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) located within 2 km of the Site boundary. These are set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA).
- 3.4.12 Parcels of Ancient Woodland are present within 2 km of the Site. The nearest areas of ancient semi-natural woodland are located approximately 700 m to the west, 850 m to the south-west and 950 m to the east. An area of restored ancient woodland is also located approximately 750 m to the north-east of the Site.

Cultural Heritage

- 3.4.13 There are no World Heritage Sites (DataMapWales, 2021), Registered Historic Parks and Gardens within 2 km of the Site (DataMapWales, 2022).
- 3.4.14 There are three Scheduled Monuments (DataMapWales, 2021) within 2 km of the Site;
- Nercwys Mountain Cairn located approximately 1.9 km north of Site.
 - Pentre round barrow located approximately 2 km northeast of Site.
 - Llyn Cyfnwy Round Barrow located approximately 1.4 km south of Site.
- 3.4.15 There are eight Listed Buildings (DataMapWales, 2021) within 2 km of the Site;

- Mine Chimney at Castell (Grade II) 200 m west of Site.
- Barn and Stable Range at Bryn Ffynnon (Grade II) located approximately 700 m west of Site.
- Bryn Ffynnon (Grade II) located approximately 700 m west of Site.
- Cartshed Range at Bryn Ffynnon (Grade II) located approximately 700 m west of Site.
- Graig Farmhouse and Outbuildings (Grade II) located approximately 1.2 km west of Site.
- Plas Du (Grade II) located approximately 1.7 km west of Site.
- Chimney at the former Nant Lead-mine (Grade II) located approximately 1.8 km northwest of Site.
- Engine House at the former Nant Lead-mine (Grade II) located approximately 1.8 km northwest of Site.

3.4.16 The closest Conservation Area is Llanarmon-yn-Ial however this falls past 2 km west from the Site (DataMapWales, 2025).

Water

3.4.17 The nearest watercourses comprise small streams located to the west and east of the Site. Land immediately south of the Site lies within Flood Zone 3, whilst a number of existing surface water features within the Site are identified as Flood Zones 2 and 3.

3.4.18 The Site does not fall within or near a TAN 15 Defended Zone (NRW, 2025).

3.4.19 The entire Site lies within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (DataMapWales, 2017).

3.4.20 The Site does not lie within a Source Protection Zone (DataMapWales, 2026).

3.4.21 The Site is not located within a Drinking Water Protected Area (groundwater) that is at risk (DataMapWales, 2024).

3.4.22 The Site borders a Secondary A and Secondary undifferentiated superficial deposit aquifer to the south of the Site; the Site also lies in a small section of Unproductive aquifer in the northern parcel where the net benefit for biodiversity will take place. The entire Site lies within a Secondary A bedrock aquifer (NRW, 2023).

Air Quality

3.4.23 There are no Air Quality Management Areas within the Site or within the vicinity (Air Quality in Wales, accessed 2026).

Public Rights of Way

3.4.24 There are no National Cycle Networks within 2 km of the Site.

- 3.4.25 The Offa's Dyke Trail passes within approximately 4.5 km to the west.
- 3.4.26 Three Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross into the Site, including:
- 3.4.27 Bridleway ref. 515/17 traverses the Site east–west, connecting Eryrys Road to the west with Llynwern Road to the east, and divides the Site into distinct northern and southern areas.
- 3.4.28 Footpath ref. 515/18 leaves the southern boundary of the north Site heading north and, once past the cemetery, forks into two paths continuing northwards.
- 3.4.29 Footpath ref. 515/15 crosses the southern part of the Site. The history of Public Footpath 515/15, including whether it was formally diverted, is unclear. However, it is considered reasonably certain that no separate diversion order was secured outside the area covered by the planning permission. The footpath can no longer be reinstated along its original alignment. Furthermore, the currently signposted route has become heavily overgrown with bramble and holly and is impassable in places.
- 3.4.30 Numerous additional footpaths are located near the Site. Footpath 515/99 starts adjacent to the Site in the west and heads west. Footpaths 515/87 and 515/16 begin next to the site boundary in the west before heading west away from the Site.

Geology

- 3.4.31 The Site falls entirely within the Cefn-y-fedw Sandstone bedrock. To the south of the boundary lie superficial deposits of alluvium, clay, silt, sand and gravel and till, Devensian-Diamicton, of which the aquifers identified above align (British Geological Society, 2026).

Access

- 3.4.32 The access into the Site is taken from the unnamed road that links Graianrhyd and Eryrys. It is a 'bellmouth' style opening, 375 m north of the junction with Graianrhyd Road, with double-width gates at a point where the carriageway widens to 9 m over a length of 60 m. The entrance surface is hard bound for a minimum distance of 30 m into the Site. There is adequate space for parking for several Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) as well as light vehicles used by employees and visitors.

Other Matters

- 3.4.33 There are no Historic Landfill Sites within 2 km of the Site (DataMapWales, 2024)
- 3.4.34 The Site does not fall within a Green Belt.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1.1 Quarrying has taken place at Maes y Droell for well in excess of 100 years. Maes y Droell Quarry was established in 1880 by J Stoddard and Sons Ltd. The main operations at the Site have included quarrying and processing of industrial sandstone; and the manufacture of high-quality industrial sands for specialist markets.
- 4.1.2 The principal historic consents comprise an Interim Development Order (IDO) permission for industrial sand quarry workings (ref. P11/107, dated 1947), a mineral permission for the winning and working of minerals with associated accesses (ref. 11/290, dated 1950), and a further permission for mining operations (ref. 11/355, dated 1951). New conditions were issued in respect of the IDO permission in 1996 (ref. 15/384/96).
- 4.1.3 A Review of Old Mineral Permissions (ROMP) application (ref. 15/877/98) was submitted in respect of the 1950 consent; however, this did not result in the approval of a comprehensive modern working, restoration or aftercare scheme.
- 4.1.4 More recently, proposals to extend or modify quarry operations have been considered, including an application for an extension to the quarry, which was refused in 2008 (ref.15/2006/1371) and the importation of inert waste materials for recycling and use in restoration of quarry workings, which was also refused in 2013 (ref.15/2011/0692).
- 4.1.5 The Site's planning history is complex, with several historic permissions relating to mineral extraction.
- 4.1.6 Pre-application advice was received in March 2024 and included commentary on the complex planning position. The response acknowledged that the Site's fragmented development and historic consents have left it without a comprehensive and acceptable approved restoration scheme. The pre-application response accompanies the planning application.
- 4.1.7 In response to this situation, to move forward with clarity and without undue complexity in respect of the planning application process, the proposal seeks a consent that would in effect consolidate the Site's planning permissions into a single modern consent with a single set of planning conditions. This would provide a clear and consistent approach to mineral extraction and a detailed, holistic restoration scheme across the Site.

5 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section provides a comprehensive description of the Proposed Development, the proposed method of working, and relevant operational details. It summarises the proposed mineral extraction operations, associated infrastructure, and the restoration strategy.
- 5.1.2 Quarrying has taken place at Maes y Droell for over a century, and the Site has been subject to a number of historic mineral planning permissions, resulting in a complex and fragmented planning position. The quarry is currently inactive, with parts of the Site worked, exhausted, or only partially restored in accordance with earlier permissions.
- 5.1.3 The Proposed Development comprises the extraction of high-grade industrial sand, in tandem with the progressive restoration of the Site. Full planning permission is sought for the winning and working of industrial sand and associated minerals, together with the restoration of the Site to a nature conservation focussed end use. The Site extends to approximately 22 ha and encompasses the entire quarry.

5.2 Development Proposals

- 5.2.1 The proposals are presented in **Figure 1: Site Location Plan** and **Figure 2: Aerial Context Plan**.
- 5.2.2 The phased quarry development scheme has been devised to enable the extraction of industrial sand through a progressive, phased approach. The various working phases are shown in **Figures 3 to 6** as appended to this Planning Statement. These figures illustrate the position of the access, the plant locations, the evolving haul roads and the working sequence.
- 5.2.3 The Proposed Development also incorporates progressive restoration, as shown in **Figure 7: Restoration Indicative Quarry Development Plan**. This progressive restoration will ensure that worked areas are restored in a timely and coordinated manner alongside ongoing extraction. The proposals would deliver areas of nature conservation value in compliance with Net Benefit for Biodiversity requirements. The accompanying Green Infrastructure Statement demonstrates how the Proposed Development and restoration strategy have applied the green infrastructure principles set out in Planning Policy Wales Edition 12.

Mineral Reserves and Timescales

- 5.2.4 Site investigations by a specialist engineering company have identified a significant reserve of industrial sand at the Site, with approximately 960,000 tonnes of recoverable mineral. In addition, there is likely a further 160,000 tonnes of mineral underlying the silt lagoons, demonstrating the presence of a substantial mineral resource capable of supporting a long-term extraction operation.
- 5.2.5 There are also likely potential reserves of sand within the tips and infilled areas in the northern part of the quarry, which could be processed to produce saleable construction or industrial sand products. These areas have been tipped previously and have not been the subject of a formal restoration scheme.

- 5.2.6 In summary, the Proposed Development would likely allow for a maximum annual output of up to 300,000 tonnes taking account of site infrastructure. It is anticipated that actual output would more realistically be 125,000 – 150,000 tonnes per annum, taking account of operational constraints and market fluctuations. Temporary quarrying operations and restoration, when allowing for mobilisation on site and periods of quarry development would place over a period of between 15 to 20 years.

Site Preparation Works and Access

- 5.2.7 Ecological mitigation will be carried out early in the development, particularly in the eastern and southern areas of the Site. This will include measures to protect birds and bats, including the retention of appropriate habitat, as well as the creation of additional GCN ponds at the outset of operations. Further habitat creation and ecological improvements will be delivered progressively as restoration advances.
- 5.2.8 Where present, soils will be stripped and stored separately, with topsoil and subsoil placed in dedicated storage bunds.
- 5.2.9 Advance planting and gap planting of trees and shrubs along the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the south Site would take place. The intention would be to filter and further screen views of the Site and Proposed Development from surrounding residents and public rights of way.
- 5.2.10 Vegetation within the Site will be cleared in phases, starting in previously tipped areas and progressing from south to north. As set out above, most boundary vegetation will be retained and enhanced to maintain screening. A managed route will be provided to accommodate the Bridleway (ref. 515/17) crossing between Phases 3 and 4.
- 5.2.11 Surface water and groundwater drainage will be installed during site preparation to direct water to the southern part of the Site and ensure surface runoff remains within the quarry.
- 5.2.12 Circa 4 m high noise screening bunds along parts of the eastern and north-western boundaries of the south Site would be formed, in line with advice stemming from environmental studies undertaken during the application preparation phase. The soil storage mounds will assist in minimising any potential visual and noise impact of the operation on sensitive receptors.
- 5.2.13 Permanent earth screening bunds would be formed along the southern boundary of the north Site adjacent to the cemetery, in order to mitigate close-range views (to be implemented during initial operations in the south Site). The bund would be seeded and advance planted, meaning as vegetation establishes on the bund, the activity visible and views of the Site generally would be reduced.
- 5.2.14 Lighting is to be minimised across the Site, designed to ensure minimal light-spill when in use during working hours only. This would be primarily in the processing area or would be task-specific lighting.
- 5.2.15 The quarry plant area in Phase 2 will be cleared and levelled to around 325 m AOD, with utilities connected from the existing services on the western side of the Site.
- 5.2.16 The proposed processing plant will require up to 30 cubic metres of water per hour when operating at full capacity. To supply this water, the applicant proposes to install a borehole in

the northern part of Phase 3, where previous groundwater investigations have confirmed that a sufficient water supply is available, associated with underground fault zones.

- 5.2.17 Progressive restoration would be carried out throughout the proposed phased operations to minimise the extent of operations within the landscape.
- 5.2.18 Access from the plant site onto the local highway network will continue to be via the established quarry access at the entrance to the Site at Grid Ref SJ216565 on the minor road from Graianrhyd to Eryrys.

Mineral Winning and Working

- 5.2.19 As set out above, the various working phases are shown in appended **Figures 3 to 6**. These figures illustrate the position of the access, the plant locations, the evolving haul roads and the working sequence. They also show how progressive restoration would be undertaken to achieve the overall restoration detailed in **Figure 7: Restoration Indicative Quarry Development Plan**.

Phases

Phase 1

- 5.2.20 Phase 1 will take place in the southern area of the Site and will involve reworking previously disturbed ground, including the removal of stockpiles and tip material. Excavation will extend down to approximately 300 m above ordnance datum (AOD). Works will include constructing a new internal access ramp and progressively backfilling voids with residual material.
- 5.2.21 Restoration will be completed in sub-phases and will include grading, seeding and planting along sensitive boundary treatment. Planting will focus on native woodland and acid grassland areas to improve biodiversity and provide visual screening. The existing waterbody at the southern end of the Site will be retained and incorporated into the final design.

Phase 2

- 5.2.22 Phase 2 focuses on the central area of the Site and will involve deepening the excavation from approximately 335 m AOD to 325 m AOD. Partial restoration will follow, with material placed back into the void. Once material is extracted, the permanent processing plant will be located in this area.

Phase 3

- 5.2.23 Phase 3 includes a series of excavations to progressively lower the ground level from 330 m to 315 m AOD. This phase also includes the construction of new access ramps and the excavation of the previous access road. Materials extracted include both high-quality sand and silt, and restoration will be carried out progressively as areas become available.

Phase 4

- 5.2.24 Phase 4 is the final extraction phase and takes place in the northernmost part of the Site. It involves the removal of sand and silt. Restoration will follow immediately after extraction, using residual materials. The final landform will include water bodies and marginal vegetation, designed to support biodiversity and integrate with the surrounding landscape, particularly with the nearby Clwydian and Dee Valley National Landscape. Planting will

include native woodland and acid grassland, alongside wetland scrapes to improve hydrology and ecological resilience.

- 5.2.25 The diversion of the footpaths associated with Phase 4, which would run around the western edge of the Site, will be implemented at the commencement of soil stripping operations within Phase 3. This phased approach will ensure that alternative routes are established and available for use well in advance of extraction activities commencing within Phase 4, maintaining continuity of access for users of the Public Rights of Way network.
- 5.2.26 All soils stripped will be handled in accordance with the prevailing Institute of Quarrying Guidance (or equivalent) for the handling of soils to ensure soil resources are protected and retained for use in the restoration of the Site. Where restoration areas have reached their approved final landform, soils will be placed directly onto those areas. Where this is not possible, soils will be temporarily stored on land located between the newly diverted footpaths and the Phase 4 extraction area, around the periphery of the cemetery.
- 5.2.27 These soil storage areas will be used to facilitate the establishment of advance screen planting. The proposed planting will provide both visual and environmental benefits, helping to integrate the development into the surrounding landscape and creating a vegetated buffer between the diverted footpaths and future quarry operations. Importantly, the planting will be established several years before extraction commences within Phase 4, allowing sufficient time for vegetation to mature and provide effective screening for footpath users and nearby receptors.

Plant and Equipment

- 5.2.28 The operational plant and equipment required for the quarry would be procured following the grant of planning permission. The indicative plant list set out below has been developed using typical quarry plant assumptions for the type of operation proposed and associated sound power data derived from BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014, *Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites*. Any plant brought onto the Site would be selected and operated to ensure compliance with the relevant noise limits and guidance contained within MTAN 1 and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 11: Noise.
- 5.2.29 An indicative schedule of the anticipated plant and equipment is provided below.

Table 5-1: Assumed Operational Plant and Equipment

Operational Activity	Plant type
Mineral Processing (Phases 1-4)	Loading Shovel
	R Series / AGGMAX / HYDROGRADE
	EVOWASH / GMAX
	Sand Stockpile Conveyors
	Feed Conveyor
	AQUACYCLE
	Static Screen
	Chemical Dosing Plant
	Overband Magnet

	Control Cabin
	Agitators
	Filter Press
	Sludge Pump
	Cloth Wash Pump
	Carbon Filters
HGV Movements (Phases 1-4)	Lorry
Excavation (Phases 1-4)	Tracked Excavator
	Articulated Dump Truck
	Articulated Dump Truck (tipping fill)
Backfilling / Restoration	Tracked Excavator
	Articulated Dump Truck
	Articulated Dump Truck (tipping fill)
	Dozer

- 5.2.30 Further details on the assumed operational plant and equipment in relation to Noise can be seen in **ES Volume II, Chapter 06: Noise** produced by Noise Consultants (Logika Group).
- 5.2.31 A wash plant would be installed to process re-worked tipped material and virgin sand. The maximum throughput of the proposed wash plant would be approximately 120 tonnes per hour (tph), enabling the efficient processing of industrial sand extracted from the quarry. The plant would have a power requirement of around 750kW, reflecting the specialist nature of industrial sand processing and the need to operate a number of high-capacity pumps and associated equipment. Water throughput is anticipated to be between approximately 20 - 30 cubic metres per hour, with water playing an important role in the washing, classification and separation of the mineral product.
- 5.2.32 All mobile and relevant fixed plant operating on-site would be fitted with modern 'white noise' reversing alarms. These alarms are designed to provide a more localised and less intrusive warning signal than traditional tonal alarms, thereby assisting in reducing potential disturbance to nearby receptors whilst maintaining high standards of site safety.

Operational works

- 5.2.33 The Site is proposed to operate for up to 50 weeks per year, with a two-week shutdown period.
- 5.2.34 The sand will be extracted by surface extraction methods only, without the need for blasting; no blasting is therefore proposed at the Site. Sand will be excavated from the quarry by a front-wheel-loading shovel and transported by a dump truck to the processing plant located within Phase 2. A maximum of three dump trucks would operate on-site at any one time.
- 5.2.35 At the processing plant, oversized material will be crushed where necessary, and the extracted material will be washed and graded into different size fractions. Fine material not retained by the filter press will be discharged to on-site settlement lagoons. Processed product will be stored within stockpiles in Phase 3, adjacent to the Site entrance, to minimise

internal HGV travel distances. Aggregate bays will be used where necessary to ensure adequate management of airborne dust. A network of internal haul roads will provide access between the extraction, processing and restoration areas.

- 5.2.36 Permission is sought for an annual maximum output of 300,000 tonnes. This is the theoretical maximum output that can be achieved with the plant complement proposed, but the actual output, below this figure, will be determined by the market demand for the mineral.

Control over Noise and Dust

- 5.2.37 Controlling the generation of noise and dust and reducing their effects to a minimum is a key component of effective quarry management. As such, limitations and control measures are embodied in mineral planning policy, best practice guidance and any grant of planning permission by way of detailed planning conditions.
- 5.2.38 The sand at the Site is typically damp so should not regularly create fugitive/nuisance dust to a level that causes any wider nuisance or significance. Management focus would therefore be during periods of dry and windy weather to tailor activities and mitigation, accordingly, e.g. utilising a water bowser to dampen haul roads during dry periods.
- 5.2.39 Noise and dust management will continue to be undertaken under a management procedure supervised by the appointed quarry manager and will continue to be the subject of planning conditions pursuant to the grant of any planning permission issued by the DCC.
- 5.2.40 Respirable crystalline silica is not considered to give rise to significant effects on public health in the context of the Proposed Development, which is for the extraction of sand and rudimentary processing by way of washing and screening before onwards transportation. This is consistent with Health and Safety Executive guidance, which confirms that no cases of silicosis have been documented amongst members of the general public in Great Britain and indicating that environmental exposures to silica dust are not sufficiently high to cause this occupational disease (Source: Health surveillance for those exposed to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) - Supplementary guidance for occupational health professionals (amended May 2026). Occupational workplace control measures and worker protection would be provided by the operator, in line with pre-existing and any evolving health and safety requirements.

Hours of operation

- 5.2.41 Mineral extraction and export would take place between:
- 07:00 – 19:00 Monday to Friday;
 - 07:00 – 14:00 Saturdays.
- 5.2.42 No mineral extraction or export would occur on Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays.
- 5.2.43 Processing operations would be undertaken during approved working hours in accordance with the planning permission.

Water Environment and Supply

- 5.2.44 Silica Sand Mold Limited proposes to excavate the upper sandstone above the groundwater table, which, based on groundwater level monitoring, is considered to be at a sufficient depth to allow initial quarrying to proceed without the need for dewatering. Therefore, no dewatering is proposed, with excavations to remain above the water table.
- 5.2.45 To facilitate the proposed water supply, monitoring boreholes would be installed using a small, temporary drilling rig over a period of approximately six weeks. Following completion of the drilling works, the rig would be removed from the Site, and no permanent above-ground infrastructure would remain.
- 5.2.46 One or more boreholes would provide a long-term water supply for quarry operations, including the wash plant and wheel wash facilities. The installation of the boreholes constitutes development and is therefore addressed as part of this planning application, while water abstraction would be regulated separately through the abstraction licensing regime.

Transport (Output) and Routing

- 5.2.47 The operator anticipates that there will be, at full production, be up to 60 HGV deliveries from the Site on a full working day. It is proposed to operate a six-day working week (Monday to Saturday).
- 5.2.48 Sand would be exported in 20 tonne loads. This level of transport equates to a maximum annual output of 300,000 tonnes per annum.
- 5.2.49 All vehicular access from the public highway will use the existing access. This will be upgraded internally to ensure that there is adequate HGV and light vehicle parking and that the swept path enables easy access to the new haul road as shown on the Phasing plans. All vehicles will arrive at the access from, and depart towards, the south.

Public Rights of Way

- 5.2.50 The Proposed Development has been designed to maintain public access wherever practicable whilst ensuring safe quarry operations.
- 5.2.51 Where Public Rights of Way are affected by mineral extraction activities, temporary diversions will be provided to maintain public access and ensure safe separation from operational areas.
- 5.2.52 Bridleway No. 515/17 runs east–west across the Site, dividing it into northern and southern sections. The bridleway will remain open throughout the quarry’s operational life. The route will continue to provide connectivity across the Site, with appropriate management measures implemented as required to ensure user safety.
- 5.2.53 Footpath No. 515/18 will be temporarily diverted around the perimeter of the Site during Phase 4 mineral extraction activities. The diversion will maintain connectivity whilst avoiding active working areas.
- 5.2.54 Footpath No. 515/15 will be formally diverted along its current alignment to the south of the Site, rejoining its original emergence point to the east of the application area. The route will

be cleared to a minimum width of 1.2 metres and, where necessary, will be fenced and provided with a suitable unbound surface to ensure safe and convenient public use.

Quarry Liaison Group

- 5.2.55 The Applicant has extensive experience in operating mineral and waste sites across the North West of England, as well as associated transport haulage, working collaboratively with local authorities, regulators and local communities. As part of this commitment in conjunction with this planning application, it is proposed that a Quarry Liaison Committee could be established to provide a regular forum through which residents, the Community Council and the County Councillor for the ward and staff members of DCC can be updated on activities at the Site and raise any matters of interest or concern. The proposed terms of reference for the committee are included within the application. The Terms of Reference for a Quarry Liaison Committee can be seen in **Standalone Document No. 6**.

Restoration and Aftercare

- 5.2.56 Restoration would be undertaken progressively alongside mineral extraction and completed following the cessation of quarrying operations. Habitat creation areas are proposed in the far east and south of the Site.
- 5.2.57 The restoration scheme has been designed to deliver substantial biodiversity and landscape enhancements through the creation of:
- Native broadleaved woodland;
 - Heathland and acid grassland habitats;
 - Wetland features and ephemeral ponds;
 - Scrub and mosaic habitats; and,
 - Ecological connectivity across the Site.
- 5.2.58 Whilst restoration obligations may arguably remain in respect of some previously permitted areas, these are generally based on historic planning conditions that may no longer reflect current best practice and may not provide a comprehensive restoration outcome. The Applicant therefore proposes to incorporate all previously worked areas within a single restoration strategy, delivering a coordinated and comprehensive scheme for the whole Site and securing environmental benefits on a greater scale in perpetuity.
- 5.2.59 A concept restoration scheme is presented at **Figure 7: Restoration Indicative Quarry Development Plan**. It is anticipated that the detailed restoration design will be developed and submitted for approval on a phased basis as extraction progresses and final landform contours are established, in accordance with the requirements of any planning conditions attached to the permission.
- 5.2.60 There is no proposal to import fill material to raise levels on the Site.
- 5.2.61 Following restoration, the Site would enter an aftercare period to ensure successful habitat establishment and long-term management.

Employment

- 5.2.62 The quarry currently employs no one. At full production, it is expected to employ 6-7 (full-time equivalent) staff across a variety of roles associated with the extraction of minerals and their subsequent processing and sales. In addition, the scheme will help to ensure the continuation of employment for connected and downstream industries as well as suppliers.

6 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement reviews the key national and local planning policies that directly relate to the Proposed Development, assesses its compliance with the Development Plan, and considers other material considerations that should be taken into account during the determination process.

6.2 Planning Legislation

- 6.2.1 Planning legislation is enshrined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA), as amended by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015. This sets out the plan-led approach to planning in Wales and includes the development of a National Development Framework (known as Future Wales 2040) which provides an integrated and comprehensive national planning vision and policy framework.
- 6.2.2 The TCPA sets out the primacy of the Development Plan in the decision-making process. Section 70(2) of the TCPA requires that:
- “...in dealing with an application for planning permission or permission in principle, the authority shall have regard to – (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application”.*
- 6.2.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the Local Development Plan system in Wales and made other reforms to development management provisions in the TCPA. Section 38(4) of the Act states that:
- “For the purposes of any area in Wales the development Plan is a) the National Development Framework for Wales, b) any strategic development plan for an area that includes all or part of that area and c) the local development plan for that area”.*
- 6.2.4 The Act also requires that the most recent development plan policy takes precedence over a previous development plan policy in the event of a conflict between them (Section 38(5)). The Local Development Plan must also:
- “Be in general conformity with the National Development Framework for Wales” (Section 62.3A). Furthermore, applications for planning permission should be determined: “...in accordance with the plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise” – Section 38(6).*
- 6.2.5 These legislative provisions are reiterated within Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (PPW12) where it is stated at Paragraph 1.22 that:
- “Plans at all levels of the development plan hierarchy must be prepared in accordance with national planning policies. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.*
- 6.2.6 The adopted Development Plan (LDP) applicable to the Proposed Development comprises:
- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (adopted February 2021);

- The Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (Adopted June 2013)

6.3 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

- 6.3.1 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Future Wales) is the Welsh Government's national development framework and forms the highest tier of the statutory development plan in Wales.
- 6.3.2 Future Wales establishes the three-tier development plan system comprising Future Wales, Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs). It requires that LDPs are in general conformity with Future Wales and any relevant SDP and emphasises the importance of keeping development plans up to date to ensure the planning system operates effectively.
- 6.3.3 Future Wales recognises that the policies and content of all tiers of the development plan are informed by Planning Policy Wales (PPW), which sets out the Welsh Government's national land use planning policies and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 6.3.4 Whilst Future Wales recognises the importance of safeguarding and making best use of Wales's mineral resources, it does not contain specific minerals planning policies. Instead, detailed minerals planning policy is provided through PPW, with Future Wales establishing the overarching spatial strategy and sustainability framework within which development proposals should be considered.

6.4 Local Development Plan Policy

- 6.4.1 Local Development Plans (LDPs) also form part of the Development Plan and require due consideration. The Site is located within the administrative boundaries of DCC, as such the LDP covering the Site is:
- Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (Adopted June 2013).

Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006-2021 (2013)

- 6.4.2 Relevant policies from the Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006-2021 include:
- Policy RD1 Sustainable development and good standard design
 - Policy RD5 The Welsh language and the social and cultural fabric of communities
 - Policy BSC3 Securing infrastructure contributions from Development
 - Policy PSE15 Safeguarding minerals
 - Policy PSE16 Mineral buffer zones
 - Policy PSE17 Future mineral extraction

- Policy VOE1 Key areas of importance
- Policy VOE2 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Outstanding Beauty
- Policy VOE5 Conservation of natural resources
- Policy ASA2 Provision of sustainable transport facilities

Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) update: June 2026

- 6.4.3 The replacement Local Development Plan 2018 - 2033 is under preparation. The Council is currently reviewing the remaining work required to move the replacement Local Development Plan forward, and the resources needed to do so. Therefore, at this time of writing, the adopted LDP 2006 - 2021 and Future Wales 2040 The National Framework remain the development plan for Denbighshire until a replacement LDP is adopted.

6.5 Material Considerations

Planning Policy Wales: Edition 12 (February 2024)

- 6.5.1 Future Wales sets out that whilst Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is not part of the Development Plan it has substantial weight in the determination of planning applications, as the principal statement of national planning policy.
- 6.5.2 PPW Edition 12, published in February 2024, sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government. It is supplemented by Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Welsh Government Circulars and Policy Clarification Letters which together with PPW provide the overall national planning policy framework for Wales.
- 6.5.3 The primary objective of PPW is to help ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation.
- 6.5.4 Paragraph 1.9 of PPW states that:
- “PPW should be read as a whole, as aspects of policy and their application to a particular development proposal could occur in several parts of the document. Where ‘must’ is used in the document it reflects a legislative requirement or indicates where action is needed now to make changes in practice over the long term to achieve strategic outcomes. Where ‘should’ is used it reflects Welsh Government expectations of an efficient and effective planning system”.*
- 6.5.5 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the Welsh Government's national land use planning policy framework, establishing the main principles for sustainable development and placemaking in Wales. PPW was first published in 2018 and was last updated in July 2024 (Edition 12).

Minerals within Planning Policy Wales: Edition 12

- 6.5.6 Minerals development is specifically addressed under Section 5 (Distinctive and Natural Places). Section 5.14 of PPW, titled ‘Minerals’, includes several subsections covering

development proposals related to minerals: a summary of the relevant parts of this section is provided below:

6.5.7 PPW states that in paragraph 5.14.2:

“The role of the planning authority in relation to mineral extraction is to balance the fundamental requirement to ensure the adequate supply of minerals with the protection of amenity and the environment. The key principles are to:

- *provide positively for the safeguarding and working of mineral resources to meet society’s needs now and in the future, encouraging the efficient and appropriate use of high-quality materials;*
- *protect environmental and cultural characteristic of places, including those highly cherished for their intrinsic qualities, such as wildlife, landscapes, ancient woodlands and historic features, and to protect human health and safety and general well-being;*
- *reduce the impact of mineral extraction and related operations during the period of working by ensuring that impacts on relevant environmental qualities caused by mineral extraction and transportation, for example air quality and soundscape, are within acceptable limits; and*
- *achieving, without compromise, a high standard of restoration and aftercare so as to avoid dereliction and to bring discernible benefits to communities, heritage and/or wildlife, including beneficial after uses or opportunities for enhancement of biodiversity and the historic environment.”*

6.5.8 The need/exceptional circumstances for the mineral are considered below in **Section 8: Planning Balance**. The potential effects on local amenity and the environment have been assessed within the accompanying ES and are also summarised below. It is recognised that some impacts may arise from minerals development; however, the role of the planning system is to ensure that these are kept within acceptable limits.

Areas of Future Working

6.5.9 PPW at Paragraph 5.14.19 highlights the requirement to provide a clear guide for suitable areas for non-energy mineral extraction, which protect sensitive environmental designations or historic features as well as securing environmental and resource protection. The Site is shown on the Proposals Map accompanying the Statutory Development Plan in its entirety, within a buffer protection zone for minerals development.

Other Minerals

6.5.10 The approach to industrial sand operations (or silica sand as it is also commonly known) is set out at paragraph 5.14.31 and states:

“Historically minerals such as fireclay, silica sand, chert and metalliferous minerals all contributed to a diverse mineral extraction industry.... If applications for development do come forward the criteria-based policy applicable for the extraction of aggregates should be applied.”

Protecting Special Characteristics and Qualities of Places

6.5.11 This sub-heading sets out the approach for managing mineral development within designated landscapes. The landscape was recognised as being of value and then

designated after the original IDO permission and main planning permission. The northern part of the Site lies within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB).

6.5.12 At paragraph 5.14.35; PPW states:

“Minerals development should not take place in National Parks and AONB except in very exceptional circumstances. All mineral applications must therefore be subject to the most rigorous examination and all major mineral developments demonstrated to be in the public interest before being allowed to proceed. Consideration will include an assessment of:

- *the need for the development in terms of UK considerations of mineral supply;*
- *the impact on the local economy of permitting the development or refusing it;*
- *whether alternative supplies can be made available at reasonable cost, and the scope for meeting the need in some other way;*
- *the detrimental effect of the proposals on the natural and historic environment and local community and landscape and the extent to which that can be moderated, and/or the detrimental effect of the proposals on the nature conservation interest of the site in terms of habitat, protected species and biodiversity; and*
- *in the case of extensions to existing quarries and other mineral extraction sites, the extent to which the proposal would achieve an enhancement to the local landscape and provide for nature conservation and biodiversity.”*

6.5.13 This is further explored in paragraph 5.14.36, which states that:

“Development adjacent or close to these areas may have a significant detrimental effect on their special qualities. Minerals development proposed adjacent or close to a National Park or AONB that might affect the setting of these areas, should be assessed carefully to determine whether the environmental and amenity impact is acceptable or not, or whether suitable, satisfactory conditions can be imposed to mitigate the impact.”

6.5.14 The exceptional circumstances required by this guidance are explained in **Section 8: Planning Balance** below. The need is expressed in Circular 58/85 and the Minerals Planning Factsheets (BGS) Silica Sand and Industrial Sand future markets (2025), which together explain and demonstrate the rarity of this mineral, at the purity found at Maes y Droell Quarry, which make it a nationally important mineral resource. It is notable that despite being published 40 years apart, the relative rarity of silica sand as an accessible commodity for society and its importance to the national economy remain largely unaltered.

Reducing the Impacts of Mineral Extraction and Related Operations

6.5.15 This sub-section recognises the need for mineral applications to ensure that they do not have an unacceptably adverse impact on the environment and the amenity of nearby residents. Applications must address issues including:

- Access and traffic, and transport routes;
- Noise in terms of limits, type and locations;
- The control of dust;

- Blasting controls;
- Groundwater resources;
- impact on sites of nature conservation, geodiversity and historic assets;
- Restoration, aftercare and after-use; and
- Cumulative impacts from nearby working; and restoration, aftercare and after-use.

6.5.16 **Section 6: Planning Policy Context** of this Planning Statement provides an assessment of the key policy considerations relevant to the determination of this application. **Section 7: Assessment of the Proposed Development** provides an assessment of the key material considerations relevant to the determination of this application.

Quarry Extensions

6.5.17 Applications for extensions to a site should be considered in the same manner as applications for new sites. Paragraph 5.14.48 states:

“The presence of an existing quarry should be a material consideration when considering a proposal for an extension. There may be benefits to extending a site in terms of shared infrastructure, for instance, as opposed to working a new greenfield site.”

Restoration and Aftercare

6.5.18 This section highlights the need for mineral sites to be restored to a high standard following the completion of extraction. Planning conditions should ensure that land affected by mineral working is restored in a satisfactory manner and is suitable for its intended after-use. Restoration proposals should be designed to deliver lasting environmental, landscape and community benefits, while ensuring that the Site can be effectively managed in the long term.

After-Use

6.5.19 Consideration of the Site's after-use is an important part of the application process and should form an integral element of any restoration scheme. Suitable after-uses may include agriculture, forestry and woodland creation, nature conservation, heritage interests, public open space, recreation, or other appropriate forms of development.

6.5.20 In addition, Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on public authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. Planning Policy Wales further states that, whilst development must often take place, the planning system should ensure that proposals deliver a net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Restoration and after-use proposals should therefore seek not only to restore the land but also to provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and wider environmental gains.

Financial Guarantees

6.5.21 This paragraph states that planning conditions must ensure mineral sites are properly restored and managed, with operators providing sufficient funds for restoration and aftercare.

Technical Advice Notes

6.5.22 PPW12 is supplemented by several Technical Advice Notes (TANs). Those which are considered relevant to the Proposed Development are detailed in **Table 6-1**.

Table 6-1: List of Technical Advice Notes

TAN Reference Number	TAN Title	Summary
TAN 5	Nature Conservation and Planning	Provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. It seeks to demonstrate how local planning authorities, developers and key stakeholders in conservation can work together to deliver more sustainable development that does not result in losses to natural heritage but instead takes opportunities to enhance it.
TAN 6	Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities	Sets out the Government's policies for supporting rural communities. The TAN provides guidance on how the planning system can contribute to sustainable rural economies, rural housing, rural services and sustainable agriculture.
TAN 11	Noise	Provides advice on how the planning system can be used to minimise noise impact without placing unreasonable restrictions on development. It outlines some of the main considerations which local planning authorities should consider when drawing up development plan policies and when determining planning applications for development which will either generate noise or be exposed to existing noise sources.
TAN 12	Design	Provides advice on design considerations and asks for a holistic approach to design, moving away from reliance on prescriptive standards, and encouraging innovation and creativity. Design responses should respond to local context, through the lifetime of the development (from procurement to construction through to completion and eventual use).
TAN 15	Development and Flood Risk	Provides technical guidance which supplements the policy set out in PPW in relation to development and flooding. It provides a framework within which risks arising from both river and coastal flooding and from additional run-off from development in any location can be assessed. The TAN has been updated in response to the effects of climate change and utilises the Flood Map for Planning. TAN 15 categorises development based on vulnerability and directs development to certain zoned land based on flood risk.
TAN 18	Transport	Provides guidance on how transport considerations should be integrated into the planning process. It supports the policies set out in Planning Policy Wales by promoting sustainable transport, reducing reliance on the private car, and ensuring that developments are accessible by a range of transport modes. TAN 18 also advises on the assessment of transport impacts and the provision of safe and suitable access arrangements for new development.

TAN 20	Planning and the Welsh Language	Provides guidance on how the Welsh language should be considered within the planning system. It supports the policies set out in Planning Policy Wales by promoting the use of the Welsh language and ensuring that planning decisions take account of their potential effects on Welsh-speaking communities. TAN 20 advises on when Welsh Language Statements or Welsh Language Impact Assessments may be required and seeks to ensure that development contributes towards the creation of sustainable communities where the Welsh language can thrive.
TAN 23	Economic Development	Provides guidance on how economic development should be considered within the planning system. It supports the policies set out in Planning Policy Wales by encouraging sustainable economic growth, investment and job creation.
TAN 24	The Historic Environment	Provides guidance on how the historic environment should be considered within the planning system. It supports the policies set out in Planning Policy Wales by promoting the conservation and enhancement of historic assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, and archaeological remains. TAN 24 advises on the assessment of potential impacts on the historic environment and seeks to ensure that the significance of heritage assets is properly understood and taken into account in planning decisions.

Minerals Technical Advice Notes (MTANs)

- 6.5.23 The Welsh Government has set out technical notes that outline the approach to dealing with minerals. The most relevant technical note is the Minerals Technical Advice Note (MTAN) Wales 1: Aggregates, which acknowledges the role of sand within the mineral industry.
- 6.5.24 MTAN 1 recognises the importance of maintaining an adequate supply of minerals to support economic development and construction activities. Whilst primarily focused on aggregates, it provides relevant guidance on balancing the need for mineral extraction with environmental protection, amenity considerations and high-quality restoration.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- 6.5.25 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is a means of setting out more detailed topic or site-specific guidance on the means in which the policies of LDPs will be applied. SPGs do not have full statutory weight but these are a material consideration for the determination of planning applications and are to be afforded 'substantial weight'. The SPGs that relevant to this application are summarised in **Table 6-2** below.

Table 6-2: Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Title	Summary
Archaeology Supplementary Planning Guidance Note	The Denbighshire Archaeology Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides guidance on how archaeological and historic environment considerations should be addressed through the planning process. The SPG supports Local Development Plan

	policies by seeking to protect archaeological remains and their settings from inappropriate development. It advises applicants on the need for desk-based assessments, field evaluations and other archaeological investigations where appropriate.
Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	The SPG, was produced jointly by Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham County Councils, as well as the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape Partnership. It aims 'to heighten awareness of the importance of the National Landscape, and, in so doing, raise the standard of new development and landscape design'. It provides some general design principles for proposed development within or indirectly affecting the National Landscape
Planning for the Dark Night Sky Supplementary Planning Guidance for lighting in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	This SPG8 was also produced jointly by Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham County Councils, as well as the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape Partnership. It provides 'guidance to lighting design for the protection of the dark night sky of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB. The Guidance enables developers and planners to design, submit and assess lighting schemes that are appropriate to the landscape, whether planning permission is a requirement or not'.
Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity	The Denbighshire Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides guidance on protecting and enhancing biodiversity through the planning process. It supports national policy and the Local Development Plan by promoting the conservation of habitats, protected species and wider ecological networks.
Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning and the Welsh language	The Denbighshire Planning and the Welsh Language Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides guidance on how the effects of development on the Welsh language should be considered through the planning process. The SPG supports Policy RD5 of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan by seeking to protect and strengthen the Welsh language and the social and cultural fabric of local communities. It advises when a Welsh Language Statement or Welsh Language Impact Assessment may be required and identifies the matters that should be considered as part of the assessment.
Trees and Landscaping SPG	This SPG provides guidance on the incorporation of existing and new trees and other landscape treatments within new developments.

Circular 58/85 – Guidelines for the Provision of Silica Sand in England and Wales

- 6.5.26 The Circular was originally published as a joint document covering England and Wales. In England it has been superseded by Minerals Planning Guidance Note 15 and, subsequently, Planning Practice Guidance. However, it remains extant in Wales, and the guidelines remain valid.
- 6.5.27 The Circular provides guidance on the planning and supply of industrial sand. It recognises industrial sand as a scarce mineral resource of national importance and an essential raw material for a range of industrial processes. At paragraph 2.3 it states:

“In contrast to construction sand, quarries producing silica sand have a more restricted choice of location for geological and economic reasons. In addition, the plant required to process and treat silica sands to the necessary specifications is more complex and costly. In

practice, these factors have led to the establishment of a limited number of production units, most of which have been in existence for many years, and which will often have a long-term future”.

6.5.28 Whilst produced a number of decades ago, the geological context remains unchanged, and it is still the case that high purity industrial sand requires more complex and onerous processing to achieve the specifications demanded by the end-user markets.

6.5.29 The Circular seeks to ensure that an adequate and steady supply of industrial sand is maintained while balancing environmental, landscape and amenity considerations. It also emphasises the importance of high standards of working, restoration and aftercare in the determination of planning applications for industrial sand extraction.

Minerals Planning Factsheets (BGS) Silica Sand and Industrial Sand future markets (2025)

6.5.30 The BGS Minerals Planning Factsheet for Industrial Sand identifies industrial sand as an important mineral resource used in a range of specialist industrial processes, including glass manufacturing, foundry casting and ceramics production. The factsheet highlights the limited distribution of suitable industrial sand deposits and the importance of maintaining an adequate and steady supply to support economic activity. It also recognises the need to balance mineral extraction with environmental protection and appropriate restoration of worked sites.

6.5.31 The factsheet identifies that large permissions for specific Industrial Sand may be masking more nuanced supply issues nationally.

6.5.32 The factsheet confirms that:

“Whilst trends in increased recycling may reduce pressure on virgin raw materials there are significant drivers that would suggest demand for primary industrial sand is likely to increase in the short to medium term.”

6.5.33 In terms of continued supply, the factsheet states that:

“The combination of high demand and the limited number of quarries capable of meeting stringent sand specifications may increase the risk of supply shortages and associated price increases. Such risks impact downstream industries and associated UK manufacturing capacity.

Well-established consumers of industrial sand, such as glass manufacturers, along with users in low-volume, high-value sectors such as precision casting, fibre-reinforced plastics and silica-based chemicals, play a significant role in the UK’s industrial landscape. These applications depend on a stable and locally sourced supply of industrial sand.”

North Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (NWRAWP)

6.5.34 The North Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (NWRAWP) is a technical advisory group that monitors the supply, demand, and reserves of construction aggregates across seven mineral planning authorities in North Wales, helping guide sustainable regional planning and mineral policies.

7 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides an assessment of the key planning policy matters and material considerations relevant to the determination of this application. It considers the technical assessment work undertaken and presented within the ES which accompanies the application and appraises that against the relevant planning policy frameworks set out in **Section 6: Planning Policy Context** of this Planning Statement.

7.1.2 The assessment of the Proposed Development has been grouped into the following key matters:

- The principle of development; including mineral extraction
- Consideration of specific matters, including:
 - Impact on the Amenity of Neighbours;
 - Air Quality and Dust;
 - Noise;
 - Cultural Heritage and Archaeology;
 - Ecology and Biodiversity Net Benefit;
 - Statutory Designated Sites and Non-Statutory Designated Sites;
 - Hydrology, Flood Risk and Drainage;
 - Landscape Character and Visual Amenity;
 - Trees;
 - Public Rights of Way;
 - Welsh Language and the Social and Cultural Fabric of Communities;
 - Traffic and Highway Safety;
 - Agricultural Land Classification;
 - Ground Conditions and Contaminated Land; and
 - Restoration and Aftercare.
- Planning Balance and Conclusion

7.2 The Principle of Development

- 7.2.1 The principle of mineral extraction at Maes y Droell is firmly established. Much of the Site benefits from existing planning permissions or is influenced by the legacy of historic mineral working.
- 7.2.2 The quarry has operated for many years under successive planning permissions, reflecting the Mineral Planning Authority's long-standing acceptance of industrial sand extraction at this location. This position has been reaffirmed through the pre-application process.
- 7.2.3 Maes y Droell Quarry, as defined by the application red line boundary, lies within the Quarry Buffer Zone identified in connection with Policy PSE16 of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan.
- 7.2.4 The adopted Denbighshire Local Development Plan (2006–2021) and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 form the development plan for the area. Relevant policies and national guidance, including Planning Policy Wales and Circular 58/85 *Guidelines for the Provision of Silica Sand in England and Wales*, recognise:
- the strategic importance of industrial silica sand to the national, regional and local economy. The industrial sand resource at Maes y Droell is of particular importance due to its relative rarity and specialist industrial applications. Industrial sand possesses specific chemical and physical characteristics that cannot readily be substituted by alternative materials and is used in a range of well-established sectors;
 - the relative scarcity of silica sand resources of appropriate quality and composition for specialist industrial uses;
 - that workable resources can only be extracted where they naturally occur;
 - a preference for the continued working and extension of existing sites in preference to developing new greenfield quarries; and
 - the need to maintain an adequate and sustainable supply of industrial minerals from environmentally acceptable and responsibly restored sites.
- 7.2.5 National and local policy therefore support the continued operation and extension of existing mineral workings where environmental impacts are acceptable, and appropriate restoration can be secured. For those parts of the Site that lie within the National Landscape, policy requires the demonstration of exceptional circumstances.
- 7.2.6 At Maes y Droell, the Site is characterised by a legacy of historic quarrying, including disturbed land, restoration shortcomings and areas currently providing limited ecological value compared with the long-term restoration outcome proposed. The development would facilitate the progressive reworking of historic tips alongside the extraction of proven industrial mineral reserves, whilst delivering phased restoration and aftercare from the outset. The long-term objective is the creation and management of an extensive nature conservation resource.
- 7.2.7 Exceptional circumstances exist in relation to the limited area of the Site located within the National Landscape. The proposal relates to a nationally important silica sand resource that can only be worked where it occurs. The resource forms part of an existing quarry complex

with established infrastructure and a long history of mineral extraction. Continued working would support the ongoing supply of an essential industrial mineral, contribute positively to the local economy in line with wider Local Development Plan policy and make efficient use of an established extraction site rather than requiring the development of a new quarry elsewhere. Furthermore, the proposal would secure comprehensive restoration and long-term ecological enhancement across the site, including continued public access to the existing rights of way network.

- 7.2.8 The Planning Statement and accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment demonstrate that the proposed development can be undertaken while maintaining appropriate environmental controls and implementing effective mitigation measures. Where necessary, such measures can be secured through the imposition of planning conditions.

7.3 Consideration of Specific Planning Issues

Impact on the Amenity of Neighbours

- 7.3.1 The potential effects of the Proposed Development on residential amenity, including noise, air quality and dust, have been assessed in the relevant chapters of the ES. These assessments consider the likely effects on nearby receptors and identify any mitigation measures necessary to ensure that impacts remain acceptable. A summary of these assessments is provided below in the respective sub-sections.

Air Quality and Dust

- 7.3.2 Policy PSE 17 of the Denbighshire LDP regarding future mineral extraction states in subsection iv) that applications that accord with the above criteria will be permitted provided that all the following criteria are met, including

“e) Measures to reduce the impact of dust, smoke and fumes are implemented”

- 7.3.3 A dust assessment has been produced by Air Quality Consultants as part of the Logika Group (**ES Volume III, Appendix 6.1: Noise Assessment**). Air Quality Consultants are a national, independent environmental consultancy with considerable experience in preparing air quality assessments and advising clients involved in potentially dust-generating activities on best-practice control methods.
- 7.3.4 As set out above in **Section 5: The Proposed Development** industrial sand will be extracted using surface mining methods only. No blasting is proposed at the Site. Material will be excavated by loading shovel and transported to the processing plant within Phase 2, where it will be washed, graded and, where necessary, crushed. Processed material will be stored within aggregate bays adjacent to the Site entrance in Phase 3, with a network of internal haul roads linking the extraction, processing and restoration areas.
- 7.3.5 The assessment considered the potential for dust impacts arising from the Proposed Development, including dust emissions from mineral extraction, handling, processing, restoration and internal haulage, as well as road traffic emissions associated with vehicle movements to and from the Site.
- 7.3.6 The main pollutants of concern related to road traffic are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

- 7.3.7 As set out above, respirable crystalline silica is not considered to give rise to significant effects in the context of the Proposed Development.
- 7.3.8 Eight sensitive receptors were identified within 250 metres of the Site and were assessed to determine the likely effects of the development. The location of these receptors can be viewed in **ES Volume III, Appendix 7.1: Minerals Dush and Air Quality Assessment**.
- 7.3.9 The Air Quality Assessment concluded that the Proposed Development would not give rise to significant dust or air quality effects.
- 7.3.10 The dust assessment indicates that potential effects would be limited to a small number of nearby receptors and would vary throughout the operational phases of the quarry. The greatest effects are predicted at properties closest to the eastern boundary (HR1, HR7 and HR8) during Phases 1 and 2, and at HR4 during Phase 1, with impacts generally assessed as slight adverse at worst. For all other receptors, dust effects are predicted to be negligible.
- 7.3.11 Overall, the assessment concludes that dust impacts would be limited, localised and capable of being appropriately managed through the embedded mitigation measures, including a phased extraction and restoration to limit exposed ground and reduce dust, locating extraction and processing activities within the quarry void and the agreement of a dust management plan, which can be agreed via a planning condition.
- 7.3.12 In summary, the assessment concluded that background PM10 concentrations are low and well below relevant assessment thresholds, indicating negligible effects on human health. In addition, the level of HGV traffic generated by the development falls below the recognised screening thresholds for a detailed road traffic air quality assessment and therefore impacts on local roadside air quality are considered to be insignificant.
- 7.3.13 As such, the Proposed Development is acceptable in relation to Policy PSE 17 of the DCC LDP.
- 7.3.14 Additionally, it is proposed that any day-to-day concerns relating to air quality and dust from the local community once the Site is operational can be directly and effectively addressed via the Quarry Liaison Committee.

Noise

- 7.3.15 Policy PSE 17 of the Denbighshire LDP regarding future mineral extraction states in subsection iv) that applications that accord with the above criteria will be permitted provided that all the following criteria are met, including
- “d) Noise is kept to an acceptable level;”*
- 7.3.16 In paragraph 88 of MTAN1 it is stated:
- “Noise limits should relate to the background noise levels, subject to a maximum daytime noise limit of 55 dB(A) where background noise levels exceed 45 dB(A). 55 dB(A) is the lower limit of the daytime noise level where serious annoyance is caused. Where background noise is less than 45 dB(A), noise limits should be defined as background noise levels plus 10 dB(A). Night-time working limits should not exceed 42 dB(A) at noise sensitive properties. Daytime working is defined as 0700-1900 hours and night-time as 1900-0700 hours. Noise limits should be set in terms of LAeq,T over a 1-hour measuring period. LAeq is the noise index used to describe the “average” level of noise that varies with time (T) and should be measured “free-*

field”, that is, at least 3.5 metres away from a façade to prevent reflection of noise by any façade that faces the source. During temporary and short-term operations, higher levels may be reasonable but should not exceed 67 dB(A) for periods of up to 8 weeks in a year at specified noise sensitive properties.”

- 7.3.17 A detailed Noise Impact Assessment (**ES Volume III, Appendix 6.1: Noise Assessment**) has been undertaken by Noise Consultants, part of the Logika Group, to assess the potential effects of the proposed reopening and operation of Maes y Droell Quarry on nearby noise-sensitive receptors. The assessment considers operational noise associated with mineral extraction, processing activities, mobile plant and equipment, construction activities, and HGV movements associated with the Proposed Development.
- 7.3.18 The proposed operations would use plant, equipment and operations that comply with modern standards and would be in accordance with the *BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 ‘Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites – Part 1: Noise.’* This would be necessary to ensure compliance with assessed standards. An indicative list of the proposed plant used in the assessment assumptions is set out in **Section 5: The Proposed Development**. The plant and equipment chosen to reflect modern standards and is readily available for use, for the operations detailed in the planning application.
- 7.3.19 Noise-sensitive receptors were identified within 300 metres of the Site and were assessed to determine the likely effects of the development. The locations of these receptors are detailed in **ES Volume II, Chapter 06: Noise**.
- 7.3.20 The assessment identified that the predicted noise levels without mitigation at receptor 3 (‘R3’) (Property 3 – Ffordd Cae Newydd) during Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4 operations are expected to result in a magnitude of impact of ‘Moderate’. It also demonstrated that the predicted noise level at R5 (Maes-Y-Droell Farm) during Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 4 are expected to result in a magnitude of impact of ‘Moderate’.
- 7.3.21 The Noise and Vibration Assessment identified that traffic associated with the Proposed Development would result in a minor increase in traffic noise on most road links, with a greater increase predicted on one section of the local road network. While two nearby properties are predicted to experience a moderate noise impact under peak traffic conditions, this assessment is based on a worst-case scenario using maximum operational traffic flows. In practice, typical traffic levels are expected to be lower, resulting in reduced noise effects that would not be considered significant in EIA terms. Overall, significant traffic-related noise effects are limited and only identified under peak operational assumptions.
- 7.3.22 To address these effects, the Proposed Development incorporates embedded mitigation measures, including 4-metre-high screening bunds along some of the eastern and north-western boundaries of the southern quarry area, together with a permanent landscaped bund along the southern boundary of the northern extension area adjacent to the cemetery. These measures will provide both acoustic and visual screening benefits. Permanent bunds will be seeded and planted with native trees and shrubs to ensure it integrates into the surrounding landscape over time. Section drawings detailing the indicative proposal are provided in **Figure 8: Sections Indicative Quarry Development Plan**.
- 7.3.23 The assessment concludes that, following implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, predicted noise impacts at all identified receptors would reduce to either negligible or minor adverse levels during all phases of operation. Accordingly, no significant residual noise effects are anticipated.

- 7.3.24 The assessment also concludes that absolute noise levels at the NSRs during all operational phases are expected to be lower than the 55 dB(A) maximum daytime noise limit as advocated within MTAN1.
- 7.3.25 Noise will be managed using best practicable means, including the appropriate maintenance and operation of plant and machinery, careful management of haul routes and material handling activities, and ongoing engagement / management changes in dialogue with affected residents through the Quarry Liaison Committee.
- 7.3.26 The Noise Impact Assessment therefore demonstrates that, subject to the proposed mitigation measures, the development can operate without giving rise to unacceptable effects on residential amenity and accords with national and local planning policies relating to environmental protection and amenity. Accordingly, the Proposed Development accords with Policy PSE 17 of the DCC LDP.

Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

- 7.3.27 Policy VOE1 Denbighshire LDP recognises that cultural heritage assets and archaeology should be protected from development that adversely affects them. Further guidance regarding the historic environment is provided in the DCC supplementary planning guidance note for archaeology and the Historic Environment TAN.
- 7.3.28 A Cultural Heritage Assessment (**ES Volume III, Appendix 8.1: Cultural Heritage Assessment**) has been undertaken by Andrew Josephs Associates, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Consultancy. The assessment has been carried out following the guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), the Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment 2014, revised 2021.
- 7.3.29 A desk-based assessment, covering an area of 1 km beyond the boundary of the proposed workings was undertaken alongside a walkover survey within the Site.
- 7.3.30 The results of the survey have confirmed that there are no designated heritage assets that would be affected by the Proposed Development. The nearest listed structure lies within 500 m of the Site, a Mine Chimney at Castell (Grade II), on private land circa 210 m west of the northern part of the Site. The 19th-century chimney is associated with a former lead mine. It is concluded that there is no intervisibility with the Site due to topography and no effect upon setting due to distance.
- 7.3.31 Within the Site, the survey has identified three non-designated HER assets. These comprise one modern quarry, a potential mine shaft, and a 19th-century lead and silver mine. No above-ground evidence of these features was identified during the walkover survey. Additionally, the southern area of the Site has been extensively disturbed by mineral extraction throughout much of the 20th century. The northern area has experienced smaller-scale sand extraction, therefore confirming that there is no evidence of existing archaeological features within the Site.
- 7.3.32 There is the potential for archaeological features and deposits to survive within previously undisturbed areas of the Site. To ensure that any such remains are appropriately identified, recorded and safeguarded, a programme of on-site mitigation is proposed, comprising a phased scheme of archaeological investigation undertaken in advance of, and alongside, development activities. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) would be prepared and agreed with DCC, setting out the scope, methodology and timing of the required works. The

implementation of the WSI would be secured through a planning condition, ensuring that archaeological interests are appropriately managed throughout the life of the development.

- 7.3.33 The proposal is therefore deemed acceptable in relation to the historic environment and accords with the policy requirements of the Policy VOE1 of the DCC LDP and other supplementary planning documents.

Ecology and Net Benefit for Biodiversity

- 7.3.34 The ecological effects of the Proposed Development have been assessed having regard to Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5: Nature Conservation and Planning, and specifically Policies RD1, VOE1 and VOE5 of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan, and supplemented by the Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance. A Green Infrastructure Statement has also been prepared.
- 7.3.35 Policy VOE1 (Key Areas of Importance) seeks to protect designated environmental assets from unacceptable harm. There are no statutory designated sites within the application site.
- 7.3.36 Policy VOE5 (Conservation of natural resources) seeks to protect the natural environment and requires mitigation measures to be undertaken to offset potential adverse effects.
- 7.3.37 The ecological value of the Site has been established through detailed site surveys, and this has informed the preparation of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA). The results of this assessment are contained within **ES Volume II, Chapter 11: Ecology**.
- 7.3.38 **ES Volume II, Chapter 11: Ecology** assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development on habitats, protected and notable species, ecological networks and designated sites of nature conservation importance. The detailed assessment of effects is set out within the EclA, including **Table 8**, which summarises the predicted impacts, mitigation measures and residual effects associated with the Proposed Development.
- 7.3.39 A summary of the principal ecological considerations and conclusions is provided below.

Statutory Designated Sites and Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 7.3.40 The ecological assessment confirms that there are no internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites within 1 km of the Site. A number of LWSs are present within 2 km, including several that lie wholly or partly within the application boundary. The assessment concludes that, with the implementation of the embedded mitigation and management measures incorporated into the proposed scheme, the development would not result in significant adverse effects on these designated sites.

Species

Great Crested newts

- 7.3.41 A medium population of Great crested newts (GCN) have been identified across the whole site. A peak count of 9 in the northern ponds and a peak count of 14 in the southern ponds. The Site provides a connective habitat throughout and adjacent to the Site; as such, the population should be classed as an overall metapopulation.

- 7.3.42 As such, a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence will be required to facilitate the phased relocation of Great crested newts ahead of mineral extraction.
- 7.3.43 Suitable terrestrial and aquatic habitats will be created in advance of quarrying works and thereafter retained, ensuring that the population can be accommodated within the Site throughout the operational and restoration phases.
- 7.3.44 A detailed Great Crested Newt Conservation Strategy and Long-Term Management Plan will accompany the licensing process and will secure the long-term conservation of the species through habitat creation, management and monitoring. The proposed phased extraction and restoration scheme would fully facilitate the achievement of the strategy and plan subject to detailed agreement with Natural Resources Wales as part of the licencing process. The preparation and implementation of this strategy can be secured by a planning condition.

Bats

- 7.3.45 Bat activity recorded during surveys was generally low, and suitable foraging habitat, including grassland, standing water and retained tree lines, will remain available throughout quarrying operations.
- 7.3.46 A number of trees with bat roost potential will require removal, including some needed to achieve the Site access visibility splay. However, the eastern tree corridor, which provides the most suitable bat habitat, will be retained.
- 7.3.47 Whilst quarrying will result in some habitat loss and may affect flight lines and foraging opportunities, research has shown that restored quarries can provide enhanced habitats for bats in the long term. Any effects are therefore expected to be temporary and can be appropriately managed through mitigation measures and the long-term restoration and after use proposals.
- 7.3.48 A building within the Site has been identified as supporting a bat roost used by two species. The building is not proposed for removal as part of the current application.

Summary

- 7.3.49 A number of embedded mitigation measures are proposed which will avoid and reduce the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on the habitats and species known to exist at the Site.
- 7.3.50 Overall, the EclA demonstrates that the Proposed Development would not adversely affect the integrity or ecological value of designated sites, and any residual effects would be negligible and not significant.
- 7.3.51 Additionally, the restoration strategy has been designed to deliver significant biodiversity and landscape enhancements across the Site in the long-term. This would include the establishment of native broadleaved woodland, heathland and acid grassland habitats, wetland features and ephemeral ponds, scrub and mosaic habitats, and improved ecological connectivity. Collectively, these measures will contribute to the long-term restoration of the quarry, enhance habitat diversity and support the delivery of biodiversity net benefit.
- 7.3.52 The biodiversity benefits arising from the Proposed Development, including the delivery of Biodiversity Net Benefit, are set out in the accompanying Green Infrastructure Statement.

- 7.3.53 As such, the proposals accord with the objectives of TAN 5 and Policies RD1, VOE1 and VOE5 of the DCC LDP and other supplementary planning documents.

Hydrology, Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.3.54 A detailed Flood Consequences Assessment (**Maes y Droell - Standalone Document No 2 - Flood Assessment (FCA)**) has been prepared by Envireau Limited in accordance with Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development and Flood Risk and Policy VOE6 (Water Management). The policy framework seeks to ensure that development protects water resources, maintains water quality, appropriately manages surface water runoff and does not increase flood risk.
- 7.3.55 The assessment identifies and evaluates flood risk from all potential sources, including rivers, surface water, groundwater, reservoirs and sewer infrastructure and includes a surface water drainage strategy setting out how the Site would be managed during the operational and restoration phase of the Proposed Development.
- 7.3.56 The assessment confirms that the Proposed Development is classified as a mineral extraction site and associated processing facility, which falls within the category of 'Less Vulnerable Development' under TAN 15.
- 7.3.57 The Flood Map for Planning data confirms that the Site is not situated in an area that has been recorded as flooding in the past from rivers, the sea.
- 7.3.58 The Flood Map for Planning indicates that the majority of the Site lies within Flood Zone 1, representing less than a 0.1% annual probability of flooding from surface water or small watercourses. Areas shown within Flood Zone 3 comprise existing quarry waterbodies and localised depressions associated with historic workings. There are no significant surface water flow routes across the Site and, therefore, the Site is considered to be at very low risk of flooding from surface water and small watercourses.
- 7.3.59 There is no risk of groundwater flooding at the Site. Reservoir flood risk is assessed as very low, with only a small area (approximately 0.08 ha) along the southern boundary lying within a theoretical reservoir breach extent (the worst-case scenario).
- 7.3.60 During quarry operations, rainfall and surface water runoff will largely infiltrate into the underlying permeable sandstone. During extreme rainfall events, runoff will be directed to a series of quarry sumps, providing substantial on-site attenuation capacity. No dewatering is required, and all run-off will be contained within the Site. Water will be used for the processing of sand, in connection with the use of the wash plant.
- 7.3.61 In the northern area, in the unlikely event that the sump reaches the overflow level, runoff will be directed into the southern area of the Site. The proposed drainage strategy will maintain existing off-site flow paths whilst ensuring surface water is retained and infiltrated within the quarry, thereby avoiding any increase in downstream flood risk. There is sufficient attenuation storage available within the quarry sumps during the proposed operational phase to attenuate runoff for infiltration to then occur.
- 7.3.62 In summary, the Flood Consequences Assessment demonstrates that the Proposed Development can be undertaken safely without increasing flood risk either on-site or elsewhere. The Site is located within an area of very low flood risk, extraction will remain

above the groundwater table, no dewatering is required, and surface water will be managed through natural infiltration and substantial attenuation within the quarry voids.

- 7.3.63 Additionally, the restoration proposals will deliver long-term hydrological and ecological benefits through the creation of wetland habitats, enhanced water retention, and improved biodiversity value. Consequently, the proposal accords with the objectives of TAN 15 and the objectives of Policy VOE6 of the DCC LDP and other supplementary planning documents.

Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

- 7.3.64 The landscape considerations associated with the Proposed Development are principally addressed in accordance with Policy VOE1 (Key Areas of Importance), Policy VOE2 (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/National Landscape) and Policy PSE17 (Future Mineral Extraction). These policies are supplemented by a range of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents, which provide detailed guidance on the protection of landscape character, visual amenity and the special qualities of designated landscapes.
- 7.3.65 Policies VOE1 and VOE2, together with relevant elements of Policy PSE17, seek to protect landscapes of recognised importance, including the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape and its setting, from development that would cause unacceptable harm.
- 7.3.66 A portion of the Site is within and immediately adjoining the National Landscape and is subject to historic mineral planning permissions, granted before the designation of the area as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in July 1985. The land has previously been worked, including for lead. This and the wider quarry complex has operated for several decades and remains a long-established feature within the local landscape.
- 7.3.67 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (**ES Volume III, Appendix 9: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**) has been prepared by Stephenson Halliday's Chartered Landscape Architects. The full assessment accompanies the application and should be read alongside this Planning Statement.
- 7.3.68 The LVIA defines the existing landscape and visual baseline environments; assesses their sensitivity to change; describes the key landscape and visual-related aspects of the Proposed Development; and describes the nature of the anticipated changes and assesses the effects arising during quarrying and restoration.
- 7.3.69 The Proposed Development would be confined to the existing quarry and the extent of the historic planning permissions, however the LVIA acknowledges that the Proposed Development would result in landscape and visual changes during mineral extraction, primarily within the Site and its immediate surroundings.
- 7.3.70 The most pronounced effects would occur within the Site itself and in close proximity to the Site boundaries, where quarrying activity, changes to landform and the removal of existing vegetation would be apparent, but these would rapidly reduce with distance due to landform, vegetation screening and the influence of existing quarrying features.
- 7.3.71 Adverse effects would largely be limited to nearby receptors, including adjacent public rights of way and local residents. Effects on the wider landscape, including views from the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape, would generally be small and not significant.

- 7.3.72 Whilst some localised significant adverse effects would occur during extraction, particularly within the Site and up to around 250m from its boundaries, these would not extend across the wider landscape or undermine the special qualities of the National Landscape.
- 7.3.73 Whilst the proposals would inevitably result in changes to landform, these changes are seen in the context of an established mineral site and are unlikely to be viewed as the introduction of a new form of development within the National Landscape.
- 7.3.74 The Proposed Development would facilitate the progressive restoration of the Site to a condition that is more sympathetic to the character and qualities of the designated landscape. The restoration strategy would deliver long-term landscape and visual benefits, improving the appearance of the Site and enhancing views from within the National Landscape compared with the current unrestored condition of the southern part of the Site.
- 7.3.75 Following restoration which would be progressive from the outset of the scheme, landscape and visual effects would reduce substantially. Progressive restoration, including backfilling, landform regrading and habitat creation, would successfully integrate the Site into the surrounding landscape, resulting in neutral to beneficial effects.
- 7.3.76 The nature of the Proposed Development is such that any significant adverse landscape and visual effects would be localised and temporary. Following restoration which would be progressive from the outset of continued operations, the Site would be capable of accommodating the development without significant long-term landscape or visual harm. The proposals would not therefore result in unacceptable impacts on landscape character or visual amenity and are consistent with the objectives of Policies VOE1, VOE2 and PSE17 of the DCC LDP other supplementary planning documents.

Trees

- 7.3.77 An Arboricultural Survey, Impact Assessment and Tree Protection report has been prepared by Lowther Forestry Group Ltd. The report can be seen at **Standalone Document No. 7 – Arboricultural Survey, Impact Assessment and Tree Protection**.
- 7.3.78 In order to facilitate the development four Category C groups will need to be removed in their entirety. These consist of immature self-seeded trees on the roadside (G5), on disturbed ground (G13, G14), and on open ground (G19). Goat willow are the predominant species in these groups.
- 7.3.79 There are 10 groups, four Category B and six Category C, which will require partial removal to facilitate the continuation of quarrying. To achieve a suitable visibility splay from the quarry entrance, roadside trees from groups G4 and G6 are recommended to be removed. G6 in particular is a line of thirteen Leyland cypress, of which the two or three trees nearest the roadside might would need to be removed for sight lines.
- 7.3.80 To facilitate a new quarry access track from the southern to the northern land parcels approximately 20 m will need to be removed from the eastern ends of both groups G16 & G22. These two groups are located along the public right-of-way dividing the land parcels. In addition, the western end of group G17 (up to 30 m) will require removal for the same access route to be created and also quarrying activities.
- 7.3.81 Reinstatement of quarrying will require the partial removal of groups G7-10 where land is to be removed, with the retention of their roadside edges.

- 7.3.82 In summary, the assessment concluded that the majority of trees and hedgerows can be retained. Limited tree removal and pruning will be required in specific locations to facilitate quarry operations, improve visibility at the site entrance and create the proposed access route between the northern and southern parts of the site.
- 7.3.83 The report confirms that there are no Tree Preservation Orders or Conservation Area designations affecting the site. Measures including protective fencing, exclusion zones and buffer areas around retained trees will be implemented during quarry operations. It is expected that specific tree retention and protection measures can be secured via planning conditions.

Public Rights of Way

- 7.3.84 Policy PSE 17 of the Denbighshire LDP regarding future mineral extraction states in subsection iv) that applications that accord with the above criteria will be permitted provided that all the following criteria is satisfied:
- c) Final reinstatement of public rights of way should be close to their original alignment with intermediate reinstatement where possible.*
- 7.3.85 The Proposed Development has been designed to maintain public access wherever practicable whilst ensuring safe quarry operations. Where public rights of way are affected by mineral extraction activities, temporary diversions will be provided to maintain public access and ensure safe separation from operational areas.
- 7.3.86 A combination of fencing, vegetation retention, dust suppression and regular maintenance will be implemented to ensure the routes remain safe and convenient for public use.
- 7.3.87 Bridleway ref. 515/17 traverses the Site east–west, connecting Eryrys Road to the west with Llynwern Road to the east, and divides the Site into distinct northern and southern areas. The bridleway will remain open throughout the operational life of the quarry.
- 7.3.88 Where the quarry plant crosses the bridleway, a dedicated crossing point with appropriate signage, visibility splays and traffic management measures will be provided.
- 7.3.89 Footpath No. 515/18 would be diverted around the perimeter of the Site during Phase 4 mineral extraction activities. The diversion will maintain connectivity whilst avoiding active working areas and will then return to the definitive route once the works have been completed.
- 7.3.90 Footpath No. 515/15 will be formally diverted along its current alignment to the south of the Site, rejoining its original emergence point to the east of the application area. The route will be cleared to a minimum width of 1.2 metres and, where necessary, fenced and provided with a suitable unbound surface to ensure safe and convenient public use. This will improve access for users of the footpath, which is currently narrow and, in places, restricted by adjacent thorny vegetation.
- 7.3.91 In summary, the Applicant is committed to ensuring that Public Rights of Way remain open and accessible wherever practicable throughout the life of the development. Where this is not possible, suitable safe alternative routes or temporary diversions will be provided to maintain public access. The Applicant is also committed to restoring and reinstating Footpath 515/15 as part of the Site's restoration, ensuring it remains available for public use. Accordingly, the

Proposed Development is considered to accord with Policy PSE 17 of the DCC LDP and other supplementary planning documents.

Welsh Language and the Social and Cultural Fabric of Communities

- 7.3.92 The Proposed Development is not anticipated to have any significant or detrimental effects on the Welsh language.
- 7.3.93 The Site is an existing quarry, and the proposal largely relates to the continuation and consolidation of mineral extraction, rather than a form of development, for example housing, that could result in substantial population growth or demographic change. As such, the development would not have a detrimental effect on the Welsh language, introduce a large non-Welsh-speaking workforce or be significant in terms of inward migration.
- 7.3.94 A Welsh Language Statement accompanies this application (**Standalone Document No. 8 – Welsh Language Statement**). The Statement considers the likely effects of the Proposed Development on the Welsh language and demonstrates how the proposal accords with relevant national and local planning policies relating to the protection and promotion of Welsh-speaking communities. The Proposed Development is therefore acceptable in relation to Policy RD5 of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan.

Traffic and Highway Safety

- 7.3.95 The Transport Assessment at **ES Volume III, Appendix 10.1: Transport Assessment**, has assessed the likely impact of the annual maximum anticipated output from the quarry of 300,000 tonnes. This is considered to be a 'worst case' scenario. Data has been collected with respect to existing vehicle numbers and accidents over the previous five years.
- 7.3.96 The assessment has appraised the existing access and highway conditions, providing swept path analysis to determine the acceptability of manoeuvring into and out of the Site. Visibility splays have also been considered at the access and at the junction with the wider road network to the south.
- 7.3.97 The assessment concludes that there are no material highways impacts that would prevent minerals development at the scale proposed being continued, subject to securing necessary visibility splays and hours of operation.

Agricultural Land Classification

- 7.3.98 A desk-based Agricultural Land Classification survey has been undertaken to determine the quality of agricultural land within the application area (**Standalone Document No. 1 - Agricultural Land Classification Report**). The assessment considered published information relating to climate, topography, geology, soils and the Welsh Government's Predictive ALC mapping.
- 7.3.99 The assessment concludes that the site's climate characteristics, including altitude, rainfall and growing conditions, limit the land to no better than Subgrade 3b. The site is also characterised by sloping topography and areas of previous mineral extraction, which further constrain agricultural capability. Geological information indicates that the site is underlain by limestone and sandstone formations.

- 7.3.100 Importantly, the Welsh Government's Predictive ALC Map identifies the site as comprising a mixture of Subgrade 3b, Grade 4 and Grade 5 agricultural land. As a result, the site does not include Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, which is defined as Grades 1, 2 and Subgrade 3a.
- 7.3.101 The report concludes that, because the site is not predicted to contain Grades 1, 2 or 3a land, a detailed field-based ALC survey is not required under Welsh Government guidance. Consequently, the proposed development would not result in the loss of BMV agricultural land and does not conflict with national policy objectives relating to the protection of Wales' highest quality agricultural resource

Ground Conditions and Contaminated Land

- 7.3.102 A preliminary contamination risk assessment has been undertaken for the Site by RSK Geosciences. The assessment identifies the most likely sources of contamination as made ground associated with the quarry's historic industrial activities, together with the potential presence of asbestos-containing materials and residual fuels, oils or chemicals within existing site structures.
- 7.3.103 At the point of application, no significant contamination constraints have been identified, and any risks can be appropriately addressed through proportionate further site investigation and remediation measures secured through planning conditions, where necessary.

Restoration and Aftercare

- 7.3.104 A key benefit of the Proposed Development is the opportunity to secure comprehensive restoration of Maes y Droell Quarry through a coordinated, landscape-led scheme delivered progressively alongside mineral extraction.
- 7.3.105 The site is unrestored and there is no comprehensive restoration solution. The proposals provide a modern restoration strategy that integrates previously worked areas into a holistic scheme for the entire quarry that would deliver long-term management and aftercare, resulting in a site of high nature conservation value in the long-term.
- 7.3.106 The proposal is therefore a coordinated and comprehensive scheme for the whole Site and is capable of securing significant environmental gain and biodiversity enhancement at a significant scale.
- 7.3.107 The restoration scheme would bring about the creation of:
- native broadleaved woodland,
 - heathland,
 - acid grassland,
 - wetland habitats,
 - ephemeral ponds,
 - scrub mosaics.

- 7.3.108 Collectively, these features will enhance biodiversity, strengthen ecological connectivity and contribute positively to the character of the local landscape.
- 7.3.109 The biodiversity benefits arising from the Proposed Development, including the delivery of Biodiversity Net Benefit, are set out in the accompanying Green Infrastructure Statement (**Standalone Document No. 3 – Green Infrastructure Statement**) submitted in support of the planning application.
- 7.3.110 Restoration of each phase will be followed by a statutory five-year aftercare period, during which the restored land and habitats will be actively managed, monitored and maintained to ensure the successful establishment of the approved restoration scheme and long-term biodiversity objectives.

8 PLANNING BALANCE

8.1 Existing Site Conditions and Planning History

- 8.1.1 The planning history of the Site, together with the current condition of the land, are relevant material planning considerations.
- 8.1.2 The Site is a longstanding mineral operation with an established planning history.
- 8.1.3 Separately but very relevant to this position is the Review of Old Mineral Permission (ROMP) process that operates in England and Wales. The ROMP process was introduced to review and modernise the planning conditions attached to existing mineral permissions, recognising that mineral developments often operate over extended timescales.
- 8.1.4 The relatively complex nature of the planning history is, in the Applicant's view, an impediment to an effective site-wide scheme of working and restoration. Therefore, rather than proceeding from a procedural perspective with a multifaceted approach combining potentially varied or amended applications, alongside ROMP review as well as potentially fresh planning applications, the Applicant is submitting a single planning application, the subject of its own application fee and process.
- 8.1.5 The approach being adopted will simplify the application process, improving understanding for all involved in the consultation process and producing a single site-wide consent. Such a consent would be more straightforward to understand, comply with, and, from the Mineral Planning Authority's perspective, monitor.
- 8.1.6 Paragraph 5.14.2 of PPW is particularly relevant to the Proposed Development and the procedural approach in this respect, in stating that:

The role of the planning authority in relation to mineral extraction is to balance the fundamental requirement to ensure the adequate supply of minerals with the protection of amenity and the environment.

8.2 Exceptional Circumstances and Benefits

- 8.2.1 The Local Development Plan at Policy PSE17i and the PPW at paragraph 5.14.35 refer to the requirement for 'very exceptional circumstances' to be demonstrated in respect of continued mineral working within the National Landscape.
- 8.2.2 It is a fact that the northern part of the Site lies within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape. The proposal must therefore be assessed against the Local Development Plan and paragraph 5.14.35 of PPW, even though quarrying at Maes y Droell commenced before the National Landscape designation and parts of the Site benefit from historic mineral permissions.
- 8.2.3 This requirement is over and above a consistent approach for the wider proposals of:
- the proposals being acceptable in principle in accordance with local and national policy requirements; subject to,

- assessment in accordance with a criteria-based approach to assessing the likely impact of minerals operations upon the environment and relevant receptors.

8.2.4 In this respect, the assessment framework is no different to that for other minerals (aggregates) development. The key differences being the site-specific circumstances and the relevant material considerations in each case.

8.2.5 As detailed in full elsewhere in this statement, paragraph 5.14.35 requires the proposal to demonstrate exceptional circumstances in respect of:

- the need for the development in terms of UK considerations of mineral supply;
- the impact on the local economy of permitting or refusing the development;
- whether alternative supplies can be made available at reasonable cost, and whether the need can be met in another way;
- the detrimental effects on the natural and historic environment, local community, landscape, habitats, protected species and biodiversity, and the extent to which those effects can be moderated; and
- for extensions to existing quarries and other mineral extraction sites, the extent to which the proposal would enhance the local landscape and provide for nature conservation and biodiversity.

8.2.6 The very exceptional circumstances case does not rest on any single consideration. It arises from the combined effect of the following site-specific circumstances that are detailed in this Planning Statement including:

- the presence of a scarce, high-purity industrial sand resource capable of serving specialist and strategically important manufacturing uses;
- the limited geographical distribution of deposits capable of meeting the necessary chemical and physical specifications;
- the established history and presence today of mineral working at Maes y Droell;
- the opportunity to use an existing quarry rather than open a new greenfield site;
- the current fragmented and partly unrestored condition of the quarry;
- the ability to consolidate the existing complex planning position into a single modern permission, subject to comprehensive controls;
 - the positive contribution that the proposals would make to local employment, contractors, suppliers and downstream industries; and
 - the opportunity to secure progressive restoration, long-term landscape enhancement, biodiversity net benefit and coordinated management of the whole Site.

8.2.7 In addressing the exceptional circumstances test, the following section of the statement is structured to reflect the requirements of PPW paragraph 5.14.35.

Need for the Development

8.2.8 Industrial sand is an essential raw material used in glass, ceramics, foundry products, water filtration, leisure and other specialist manufacturing processes. Unlike construction sand, it must meet strict chemical and physical specifications.

8.2.9 Circular 58/85 recognises silica sand as a scarce mineral of national importance. It also confirms that suitable deposits have a restricted geographical distribution and can only be worked where they occur. The BGS Factsheet provides a contemporary view of the national need for industrial sand, its relative scarcity and its key market applications.

8.2.10 Testing by OTB Engineering and Lucideon undertaken on behalf of the Applicant reaffirms that the Maes y Droell resource is high in silica, low in impurities and suitable for specialist uses, including glass and ceramic manufacture.

8.2.11 The proposal would therefore continue to:

- contribute to Welsh and UK supplies of an important industrial mineral;
- support specialist manufacturing sectors;
- use an established quarry rather than create a new greenfield site; and
- bring the Site under a single modern planning permission.
- There is consequently a clear need for the development in terms of UK mineral supply.

8.2.12 In the circumstances, the need for industrial sand at a national level is well document by authoritative sources. There is no policy impediment to an oversupply of industrial sand, not that one exists.

Impact on the Local Economy

8.2.13 The development is expected to support approximately six to seven full-time equivalent jobs at the Site. It would also support indirect employment in haulage, plant maintenance, contracting, technical services and downstream manufacturing.

8.2.14 Local businesses would have opportunities during site preparation, operation, restoration and aftercare. These are likely to include fencing, vegetation clearance, electrical work, plant servicing and land management. There would also be the payment of relevant rates and taxes, as well as general expenditure by those working at or visiting the quarry.

8.2.15 Refusal would prevent these benefits from being realised and would reduce the opportunity to secure a coordinated restoration scheme for the whole Site. This would in turn make the site in the long-term a less valuable and attractive location, including for the visitor economy.

8.2.16 The development would therefore make a positive contribution to the local and wider economy.

Alternative Supplies

- 8.2.17 High-purity industrial sand is rare and can only be worked where suitable geological deposits occur. Ordinary construction sand is not an alternative because it does not meet the technical specifications required by specialist industries.
- 8.2.18 There are currently no identified active sources of comparable high-purity industrial sand in Wales. Welsh demand must therefore be met from elsewhere in the UK or overseas.
- 8.2.19 Recycled materials may reduce the need for primary minerals in some markets, but they cannot fully replace primary industrial sand where purity, colour and consistency are critical.
- 8.2.20 Alternative supplies would therefore involve:
- reliance on more distant UK or overseas sources;
 - additional transport and supply-chain costs;
 - increased exposure to interruptions in supply; and
 - transferring the effects of mineral extraction to another location.
- 8.2.21 The need cannot reasonably be met by ordinary sand, recycled material or another readily available source at a comparable economic and environmental cost. There is no national strategic policy that promotes specific industrial sand extraction sites. Nor is there a policy impediment to an oversupply of industrial sand, not that one exists either in Wales or the United Kingdom.

Environmental, Landscape and Community Effects

- 8.2.22 The proposal would cause some localised and temporary effects during continued extraction, particularly in relation to landscape, visual amenity, noise, dust and nearby public rights of way. These must be weighed against the situation as it exists today, that is, an unrestored industrial landscaped and temporarily paused extraction activities.
- 8.2.23 These localised and temporary effects would be reduced through:
- phased extraction and progressive restoration from the outset of quarrying recommencing including:
 - advance planting and retention of boundary vegetation;
 - landscaped screening and acoustic bunds;
 - modern plant and equipment;
 - noise and dust management measures;
 - restricted operating hours;
 - habitat creation before disturbance;

- protected-species licensing and management securing net biodiversity gains;
- archaeological investigation;
- highway and access controls; and
- continued community engagement through a Quarry Liaison Committee.

- 8.2.24 The environmental assessments conclude that wider effects on the National Landscape would generally be small and not significant. Although some localised significant landscape and visual effects would occur during extraction, these would be temporary and would reduce as restoration progresses.
- 8.2.25 The proposal would not affect any designated heritage assets. Potential effects on archaeology, Great crested newts, bats and other ecological features can be appropriately mitigated and controlled.
- 8.2.26 Subject to the proposed mitigation and planning conditions, the development would not result in unacceptable long-term effects on the environment, landscape or local community. Instead, there are likely very positive long-term landscape and biodiversity enhancements to be delivered as discussed below.

Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement

- 8.2.27 The Site is an established quarry that is partly worked, disturbed and partly restored. Previous permissions have not delivered a comprehensive restoration scheme for the whole Site.
- 8.2.28 The proposal would secure progressive restoration alongside extraction, including the creation of:
- native broadleaved woodland;
 - heathland and acid grassland;
 - wetlands and ephemeral ponds;
 - scrub and mosaic habitats;
 - habitats for protected species; and
 - improved ecological connections.
- 8.2.29 Restoration would improve the appearance of the quarry as seen in the wider landscape and integrate the final landform more appropriately into the surrounding landscape. It would also deliver a net benefit for biodiversity and place restored areas under aftercare and long-term management.
- 8.2.30 The proposal would therefore provide significant landscape and nature conservation benefits compared with leaving the Site in its present condition.

Conclusion

- 8.2.31 It is demonstrated that ‘very exceptional circumstances’ exist because the proposal would:
- work a scarce and nationally important industrial mineral;
 - contribute to Welsh and UK industrial mineral supplies;
 - see operations continue an established quarry, which benefits from historic mineral permissions;
 - support local employment and wider manufacturing supply chains;
 - avoid the need for a new greenfield quarry;
 - control environmental effects through mitigation and planning conditions; and
 - secure comprehensive restoration, landscape enhancement and biodiversity benefits.
- 8.2.32 Taken together, these considerations demonstrate that the Proposed Development is in accordance with relevant Local Development Plan policy and PPW. Moreover, and as demonstrated in the following sections of this Planning Statement, the mineral supply, economic, restoration and long-term environmental benefits outweigh the localised and temporary effects arising during temporary extraction operations.
- 8.2.33 The proposal therefore satisfies the five considerations in paragraph 5.14.35 of Planning Policy Wales, subject to appropriate planning conditions, restoration obligations and long-term management.

9 ENVIRONMENTAL AND AMENITY ISSUES

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 This section of the planning statement provides a concise review of the environmental and amenity findings assessed in detail in **Section 7: Assessment of the Proposed Development** and the subject of detailed technical assessments in the accompanying ES Volume II. It summarises the principal environmental topics, embedded mitigation and residual effects.
- 9.1.2 The key potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Development are considered in **ES Volume II** accompanying this application. The ES examines the following issues in detail:
- Noise;
 - Air Quality (Dust);
 - Archaeology and Cultural Heritage;
 - Landscape and Visual Impact;
 - Traffic and Transport;
 - Ecology and Biodiversity;
 - Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Flood Risk;
 - Community / Socio-economic; and,
 - Cumulative Effects.
- 9.1.3 The Environmental Impact Assessment of the Proposed Development demonstrates that the environmental effects of the scheme are acceptable, including when taking account of relevant planning policy and guidance. For summaries on these matters, refer to **ES Volume II, Chapter 15: Summary of Effects, Proposed Mitigation and Conclusions**.
- 9.1.4 The impacts of the development can be appropriately managed where necessary through mitigation measures, the majority of which are embedded within the scheme design. These measures include:
- The proposed working methods,
 - Selection of modern plant and machinery,
 - Quarry layout and operational controls,
 - Together with the phased restoration and long-term management of the Site.
- 9.1.5 The EIA confirms that, following the implementation of these measures, residual environmental effects are not expected to be significant and that the Proposed Development accords with the objectives of the Local Development Plan and Planning Policy Wales.

10 PLANNING BALANCE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1.1 The Proposed Development seeks to recommence the extraction of industrial sand at Maes y Droell Quarry, an established mineral site with a long and well-documented planning history.
- 10.1.2 The proposal would consolidate a complex series of historic permissions into a single modern planning permission, providing clarity over future operations, restoration and environmental management. In principle, the development accords with Policies PSE15 and PSE17 of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan (LDP), Future Wales 2040 and Planning Policy Wales (PPW). Collectively, this decision-making framework recognises the importance of safeguarding and maintaining supplies of economically important mineral resources.
- 10.1.3 The Site contains a high-quality industrial sand resource of national importance. Evidence submitted in support of the application demonstrates that the mineral is suitable for a range of specialist uses, including glass manufacture, ceramics and other industrial processes. The resource can only be worked where it naturally occurs and contributes to maintaining the supply of an important industrial mineral for Wales and the wider UK, consistent with PPW, MTAN 1 and Circular 58/85.
- 10.1.4 The Environmental Statement accompanying this planning application demonstrates that the environmental effects of the proposal have been comprehensively assessed and the design of the scheme appropriately informed by the EIA process. Technical assessments confirm that impacts relating to landscape and visual amenity, ecology, cultural heritage, hydrology, flood risk, air quality, noise, traffic and public rights of way can be appropriately mitigated through embedded design measures, operational controls and planning conditions. Following mitigation, residual environmental effects are not predicted to be significant.
- 10.1.5 Particular weight should be afforded to the restoration proposals. The Site is currently only partially restored and lacks a comprehensive restoration strategy. The proposal would secure progressive restoration from the outset of operations, delivering native woodland, heathland, acid grassland, wetlands, ponds and other habitats, together with a Biodiversity Net Benefit and long-term aftercare management. The scheme would therefore provide significant environmental enhancement compared with the existing condition of the Site.
- 10.1.6 The proposal satisfies the exceptional circumstances test in paragraph 5.14.35 of PPW and Local Development Plan policy in relation to minerals development within the National Landscape. It would continue the operation of an established quarry, maintain supplies of a nationally important mineral, support employment and local economic activity, avoid the need for a new greenfield quarry and secure substantial long-term landscape and biodiversity enhancements.
- 10.1.7 Overall, the benefits of the Proposed Development clearly outweigh its localised and temporary impacts. The proposal accords with the Development Plan when read as a whole, is supported by national minerals policy and other material considerations including the BGS Factsheet relevant to Industrial Sand demand/supply requirements and represents a sustainable form of minerals development. Planning permission should therefore be granted, subject to appropriate planning conditions and restoration obligations.