
MINERALS RESOURCE SUMMARY – MILTON HILL, CLAPHAM

Wardell Armstrong LLP (WA) was commissioned to undertake a Minerals Resource Assessment to support the promotion of a new housing development within the Neighbourhood Development Plan, for a site at Milton Hill, Clapham, Bedfordshire. This document provides a summary of the assessment undertaken and an overview of the findings and recommendations.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF SITE

Geologically, a distinction is made between “superficial geology” and “solid geology”. The superficial geology comprises deposits such as sand and gravel which are found at the surface. The solid bedrock beneath the superficial deposits is called the “solid geology”.

Published geological plans for the area show that the superficial geology on the site comprises river terrace sand and gravel, a very small amount of glaciofluvial sand and gravel, boulder clay, and a small area of head deposits. Both types of sand and gravel on the site are safeguarded in the Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The solid geology consists of mudstone of the Peterborough Member and sandstone and siltstone of the Kellaways Sand Member. Neither of these are safeguarded.

MINERAL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The site is in the administrative area of Bedford Borough Council which is the Mineral Planning Authority (MPA) for the area. The current planning policy for minerals is the Bedford Borough Council’s joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Strategic Sites and Policies (MWLP) which was adopted in January 2014. Mineral resources are safeguarded through the provisions of the MWLP. This is an important consideration for developers when non-minerals development is proposed within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA).

The relevant mineral safeguarding policy is contained in “Mineral Strategic Policy MSP 12”. The policy states that surface development will only be permitted within a Mineral Safeguarding Area where it has been demonstrated that:

- The mineral concerned is proven to be of no economic value as a result of undertaking a Mineral Resource Assessment;
- The development will not inhibit extraction if required in the future;
- There is an overriding need for the development and prior extraction cannot reasonably be undertaken; or
- The mineral can be extracted prior to the development taking place.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The sand and gravel on the site is already indirectly and directly sterilised by the proximity of existing residential development and the A6. Furthermore, extraction would not be commercially viable due to the size and distribution of the sand and gravel deposits. Therefore, there is no realistic prospect of these deposits being extracted. Consequently, the proposed development would not cause any additional sterilisation, so it is considered that there is no reason for the application to be refused on the grounds of mineral sterilisation.