

**Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan
Part 1 – Core Strategy**

Submission Document

Topic Paper

**Non-Aggregate Minerals
(including Oil and Gas)**

Revised April 2016

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General Background to Topic Papers

The Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy (the Core Strategy) was submitted to the Secretary of State on 30 December 2015 for examination by a government appointed Inspector. The Core Strategy is Part 1 of the new Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. It provides the planning strategies and policies for the development that will be needed for the supply of minerals and management of waste in Oxfordshire over the period to 2031. This new Plan will replace the existing Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan which was adopted in 1996.

Further information on the Plan and the background to its preparation can be found in other documents published on the County Council website at:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/minerals-and-waste-core-strategy>

A number of Topic Papers (previously termed Background Papers) were first published to support consultation on draft Minerals and Waste Planning Strategies in September 2011. Some of these were revised and further papers were prepared to support a Proposed Submission Draft Minerals and Waste Core Strategy in May 2012, which was then submitted for examination in October 2012 but was subsequently withdrawn, in July 2013. These papers include baseline data that has informed the development of policies and provide an explanation of how relevant parts of the plan have been developed.

Some of the Topic Papers are now being further updated, and some new Topic Papers introduced, to assist in the examination of the Core Strategy. Their purpose remains the same – to provide background data and information to show how specific parts of the plan were developed up to publication of the Proposed Submission Document in August 2015. In some cases they also include information that has become available since the Core Strategy was published.

This paper has been updated to support the submission of the Core Strategy for examination. This update of the paper:

- Identifies relevant National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) policy and the implications of those policies.
- Demonstrates a link between the NPPF policies and the strategies/policies in the plan to provide justification for those strategies and policies.
- Includes an update of the outcome of the 14th round of Onshore Oil and Gas Licensing.
- Provides cross references to data used in other documents in the Council's evidence base.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides information on the presence and production of non-aggregate minerals in Oxfordshire and shows how national and local planning policies and consultation responses have informed the submitted Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy. The paper discusses all the non-aggregate minerals which have been worked in the past in Oxfordshire and focuses particularly on building stone as this is still worked in the county. Oil and gas development (conventional and unconventional) has now been included in this Topic Paper.
- 1.2 Section 2 provides a description of the building stone resources in Oxfordshire and identifies sites where building stone is currently extracted. Building stone is dealt with separately in this paper because it is a homogenous material; dealing with it separately enables a fuller description of the range of types of stone to be provided. Section 3 also notes the importance of local building stone to the character of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to the local vernacular of conservation areas in Oxfordshire.
- 1.3 Section 3 provides a description of other non-aggregate minerals which have been worked historically or are present in the county; it covers chalk, clay and Fuller's Earth.
- 1.4 Section 4 describes oil and gas development in Oxfordshire, including updates to exploration in Oxfordshire in light of the results of the 14th Round of Onshore Oil and Gas Licensing. It includes coal-bed methane.
- 1.5 Section 5 of the paper describes the former national, regional and local planning policies which were current when work on the Local Plan commenced. It also sets out the updated national and local planning policy context for working and safeguarding non-aggregate minerals and reviews relevant local planning policy on building stone. Tables 1 and 2 show the linkage between the policies in the submitted Core Strategy and both former planning policies and the current national policy in the NPPF.
- 1.6 Section 6 of the paper reviews the responses received on the different versions of the Core Strategy, from September 2011 to August 2015.

2. Building Stone

Building Stone in Oxfordshire

- 2.1 The geology of Oxfordshire is diverse. The outcrops of rock progress across the county, with the oldest rocks of Lower Jurassic age in the north, and the youngest of Upper Cretaceous age in the south. A table showing building stone resources in Oxfordshire is at Appendix 1. In 2009, English Heritage published the Strategic Stone Study – Building Stone Atlas of Oxfordshire¹.
- 2.2 The oldest stone is marlstone, also known as Hornton Stone or Banbury Ironstone. It is an iron-rich limestone which weathers to a golden orange/brown colour. Many cottages in villages such as Great Tew, Deddington, Adderbury and Bloxham are built from marlstone. It was also used in the construction of stately homes such as Broughton Castle and Chastleton House and for ornamental work on the Christ Church Buildings in Oxford. It is still worked for building stone in Oxfordshire, at Great Tew and Wroxton.
- 2.3 Clypeus Grit is a coarse grained, pale buff oolitic limestone which only occurs in the west of the county and thins to the east; it is no longer worked in Oxfordshire.
- 2.4 Chipping Norton limestone is a medium to coarse grained oolitic limestone; historically it has been quarried extensively around Chipping Norton and Charlbury. Many cottages in the Chipping Norton area are built of this stone, which is still worked in the county at Castle Barn Quarry, Sarsden.
- 2.5 Taynton stone is an oolitic limestone which is strong and durable and was quarried for hundreds of years from quarries around Taynton village, near to Burford. It has been used in many of the Oxford colleges and has also been transported and used in buildings such as Windsor Castle and St Paul's Cathedral. It is no longer quarried in Oxfordshire.
- 2.6 Other types of building stone that have been quarried in the past in Oxfordshire include Stonesfield slate, Bladon stone, Forest Marble and Headington stone. Stonesfield slate is a flaggy grey sandstone found in a limited area around Stonesfield. It can be split into thin tiles and was widely used for the roofs of Cotswold cottages and Oxford colleges until the mid 18th century. It has now been almost completely worked out. Bladon stone was used in building the 14th century Merton College Library in Oxford and in walling in 19th and 20th century buildings. Forest Marble is a richly fossiliferous limestone which was quarried in the Wychwood Forest area for building stone, walling stone roofing tiles and ornamental stone. Headington stone was used during the 18th and 19th centuries in the construction of the Radcliffe camera and the gate pillars of County Hall.
- 2.7 Further south in the county, Upper Portland stone was once quarried around Great and Little Milton and Great and Little Haseley, south of Thame. Chalk block was quarried in the 17th century from a small area in south west

¹ *Strategic Stone Study: Building Stone Atlas of Oxfordshire* (2009) English Heritage, Oxfordshire Geology trust, British Geological Survey, Department for Communities and Local Government.

Oxfordshire and can be seen in buildings around Ashbury, Uffington and Woolstone. A less durable chalk clunch is seen in buildings along the base of the chalk escarpment, at Wallingford, Watlington and Benson. It is quite friable and flakey due to its tendency to absorb water.

- 2.8 Two quarries currently produce only building stone in Oxfordshire; they are Great Tew quarry which has planning permission to extract and sell approximately 95,000 tonnes marlstone to be worked by 31st December 2017 and Castle Barn quarry, Sarsden which has planning permission to extract and sell between 3,300 and 5,000 tonnes limestone per annum until 2020. Other limestone & ironstone quarries which mainly produce aggregates but also produce some building or walling stone include Burford, Dewars Farm, Rollright, Alkerton and Wroxton.

Building Stone in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 2.9 Much of the oolitic limestone in the north west of the county lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Cotswolds Management Plan 2013-2018² notes in its Natural Resources section that:

'Seams of high quality limestone occur within the AONB and have been quarried extensively for building for centuries. It is important to maintain supplies of high quality building stone to ensure that repairs and new buildings can be constructed in a way that is in keeping with their distinctive surroundings, particularly within the Cotswolds area itself, but also at important locations elsewhere.'

- 2.10 The AONB Landscape Character Assessment 2004³ identifies vernacular stone buildings and their settings as one of the eight principal elements that contribute to the unique character and quality of the Cotswold landscape.

Building Stone in Oxfordshire's Conservation Areas

- 2.11 A Conservation Area is defined as an *'area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.'*⁴
- 2.12 The use of local building stone is characteristic of many buildings and historic places in Conservation Areas. There are 200 Conservation Areas in Oxfordshire, distributed between the Districts as follows: Oxford City – 16; South Oxfordshire– 24; Vale of White Horse – 52; West Oxfordshire – 50; Cherwell – 58.
- 2.13 Many of the Conservation Areas are linked to local geology. For example, the designation of many of the villages in Cherwell and West Oxfordshire as Conservation Areas is related to the stone from which their buildings are constructed. A diagram showing building stones used in villages is at Appendix 2.

² http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/management_plan/index.html

³ http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/landscape_character_assessment/index.htm

⁴ Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

2.14 Large quantities of waste stone are often generated, particularly in the initial phases of extraction of building stone. Waste stone can potentially have a use as aggregate; the use or disposal of it needs to be considered on a case by case basis at the planning application stage.

3. Other Non-Aggregate Minerals

- 3.1 Maps showing the locations of chalk, Fuller's Earth and clay can be found in the mineral profile sections in the earlier paper on Safeguarding Mineral Resources, April 2012 (Examination doc. 10.3c).

Chalk

- 3.2 Chalk outcrops in the south of the county in a broad band running from east to west. The chalk is divided into two categories; low purity and high purity. Low purity (the grey chalk subgroup) has a relatively high clay content. It is about 60m thick in Oxfordshire and is found along the escarpment of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs. High purity chalk (the white chalk sub group) contains bands of flint and is about 150m thick in Oxfordshire. Chalk was used chiefly in the cement industry, but also in small quantities as agricultural lime. There are permitted reserves of chalk at Ambrose Quarry in Ewelme, but these are not currently being worked. There is currently no demand for the working of chalk in Oxfordshire but it may constitute a resource for which there is a demand in the future.

Fuller's Earth

- 3.3 Fullers Earth is a term covering a wide variety of clays which are able to absorb grease, oil and water. It was originally used for cleansing or 'fulling' woollen cloth. Fullers Earth occurs in a limited area in south west Oxfordshire, within the Lower Greensand formation to the south of Faringdon. It was extracted at one site at Baulking until 2006 in a form known as calcium montmorillonite. It is a nationally relatively scarce and potentially important mineral but extraction at the Oxfordshire site was no longer able to compete economically with imports from abroad. A further area that was permitted near Baulking (Moor Mill Farm) has not been worked and the permission granted in 2000 was not implemented.
- 3.4 The British Geological Survey published research in 1991⁵ which found that Fuller's Earth resources were limited and that the best prospects of finding potentially economic reserves of Fuller's Earth were in areas of existing or former working.
- 3.5 The BGS Mineral Planning Factsheet⁶ on Fuller's Earth notes that:
'reserves of Fuller's Earth with planning permission are confined to a small satellite deposit at Moor Mill Farm, about 2km from the plant at Baulking. The deposit...contains the equivalent of about 300,000 dry tonnes of product.'
- 3.6 There seems no likelihood of a renewed demand for the working of Fullers Earth in Oxfordshire in the foreseeable future but the deposits of this mineral in Oxfordshire are part of a nationally scarce resource for which there could be a demand in the longer term.

⁵ *An Appraisal of Fuller's Earth Resources in England and Wales* (1991) British Geological Survey.

⁶ *Fuller's Earth; Mineral Planning Factsheet* (2006) British Geological Survey & Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Clay

- 3.7 Clay is used as construction fill and for lining and sealing landfill sites. Clay is found in many of Oxfordshire's sand and gravel quarries (below the sand and gravel deposits) and there can be benefits both environmentally and economically if the two minerals are worked concurrently. Clay is permitted to be worked at Gill Mill and Dix Pit, both being sand and gravel quarries in the Lower Windrush Valley to the south west of Witney and at Sutton Courtenay sand and gravel quarry (North of Didcot). Permission for clay extraction has also been granted at Finmere in the north east of the county for on-site landfill engineering purposes and at Stonehenge Farm, Northmoor for on-site restoration purposes. All these permissions are for the production for clay for use to line and cap landfill sites. Clay may also be used in the manufacture of bricks and roof tiles. There are no longer any brick or tile manufacturing sites in Oxfordshire. However, clays that are, or have been exploited for such use in Oxfordshire or other counties with similar geology, including Oxford Clay, Kimmeridge Clay, Gault Clay, Reading Formation and clay with flints, are also present in Oxfordshire and may constitute a resource for which there is a demand in the future.

Peat

- 3.8 Deposits of peat form in lowland areas, where vegetation does not completely decay, typically in wet areas such as bogs and fens. Peat is generally considered a non-renewable resource, as the scale of extraction far outweighs the rate of deposition. The NPPF prohibits the permitting of new sites or extensions for peat extraction⁷. There are no known deposits of peat in Oxfordshire and therefore the possibility of extraction of peat in the county is very unlikely to arise.

⁷ NPPF para. 144

4. Oil and Gas

Oil and Gas Development in Oxfordshire

Conventional (oil and gas) and Unconventional (shale gas) Hydrocarbons

4.1 Most conventional oil and gas is found in capped reservoir rock that is both porous and permeable. The three main sources of "unconventional" hydrocarbons⁸ are outlined below.

- The first involves recovery of methane from:
 - a) active coal mines, known as coal mine methane (CBM);
 - b) abandoned coal mines, known as abandoned mine methane; or
 - c) undisturbed coal seams, known as coal bed methane (CBM).
- The second source is found in shales and mudrocks that have so far been too impermeable to mine for their natural gas. Fracking or 'Hydraulic Fracturing', can be used to access unconventional hydrocarbons such as shale gas, and can be used to increase the flow of other gases such as CBM for gas-bearing coal seams.
- Thirdly, it is possible to combust gas in underground coal seams via a process termed 'underground coal gasification', which produces a syngas that can be used to power gas turbines.

Oil and Gas in Oxfordshire

4.2 Oil and gas have not been commercially produced in Oxfordshire and are not currently being explored or produced in the county, and the County Council is not aware of any proposals to do so. The BGS report on mineral resources in Oxfordshire⁹ noted that between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s, much of Oxfordshire was explored for hydrocarbons. However, no oil or gas fields have been discovered to date, although gas had been encountered in minor amounts in a few of the holes drilled, mainly from the Lower Lias and deeper strata.

4.3 Based on information currently available from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC),^{10,11} the Department of Communities and Local

⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and British Geological Society (BGS) (2011), *Alternative Fossil Fuels, Mineral Planning Factsheet*. Available at:

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/planning/mineralPlanningFactsheets.html>

⁹ British Geological Survey and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004), *Mineral Resource Information in Support of National, Regional and Local Planning Oxfordshire*. Keyworth: Nottingham

¹⁰ Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) (2012) *The Unconventional Hydrocarbon Resources of Britain's Onshore Basins – Shale Gas*. Available at:

https://www.og.decc.gov.uk/UKpromote/onshore_paper/UK_onshore_shalegas.pdf

¹¹ Andrews, I.J. (2013). *The Carboniferous Bowland Shale gas study: geology and resource estimation*. British Geological Survey for Department of Energy and Climate Change, London, UK. Available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/209021/BGS_DECC_BowlandShaleGasReport_MAIN_REPORT.pdf

Government (DCLG) and British Geological Survey (BGS),¹² it seems unlikely that Oxfordshire is prospective for Shale Gas. The DECC (2012) report titled '*The Unconventional Hydrocarbon Resources of Britain's Onshore Basins – Shale Gas*' identifies geological formations of interest for shale gas potential.

- 4.4 Although some of these formations, including the Oxford and Kimmeridge Clays and the Lias are shown to pass through Oxfordshire, they are unlikely to be prospective for Shale Gas because 'basin centres', which are considered to be most prospective for Shale Gas in the UK (DECC, 2013), do not lie within Oxfordshire.
- 4.5 Concealed coal measures underlie much of the northern and western parts of Oxfordshire, at depths of between 300 and 1,500 metres. A map showing the location of deep coal resources can be found in the mineral profile sections in the earlier paper on Safeguarding Mineral Resources, April 2012 (Examination doc. 10.3c). The coal seams are thin and are of no current economic interest. The Coal Measures succession in Oxfordshire is not considered to be economically viable for CBM because of its low gas content.

Petroleum Exploration and Development Licencing in Oxfordshire

- 4.6 Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences (PEDLs) are awarded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) in a system based on Licencing Rounds. A licence is required before any exploration or production can take place. There are no current licences in Oxfordshire.
- 4.7 DECC has undertaken a 14th round of Onshore Licensing which included a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) covering any area that may potentially contain conventional and/or unconventional hydrocarbon bearing strata in the UK. This included some parts of Oxfordshire. Figure 1 below shows the parts of Oxfordshire that were included in the SEA. It should be noted that many of the blocks under consideration for inclusion in the licensing round were only marginally prospective, and that a proportion were not expected to be applied for or, following evaluation, explored further (DECC 2010).
- 4.8 DECC has now announced the results of the 14th Licensing round for onshore oil and gas exploration. None of the areas for which licences have been offered are within Oxfordshire or include any part of the county. A map of the locations where licenses have been offered is at Figure 2 below. In light of this, it is not considered necessary for the Core Strategy to include detailed policy on oil and gas.

¹² Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and British Geological Society (BGS) (2011), *Alternative Fossil Fuels, Mineral Planning Factsheet*. Available at: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/planning/mineralPlanningFactsheets.html>

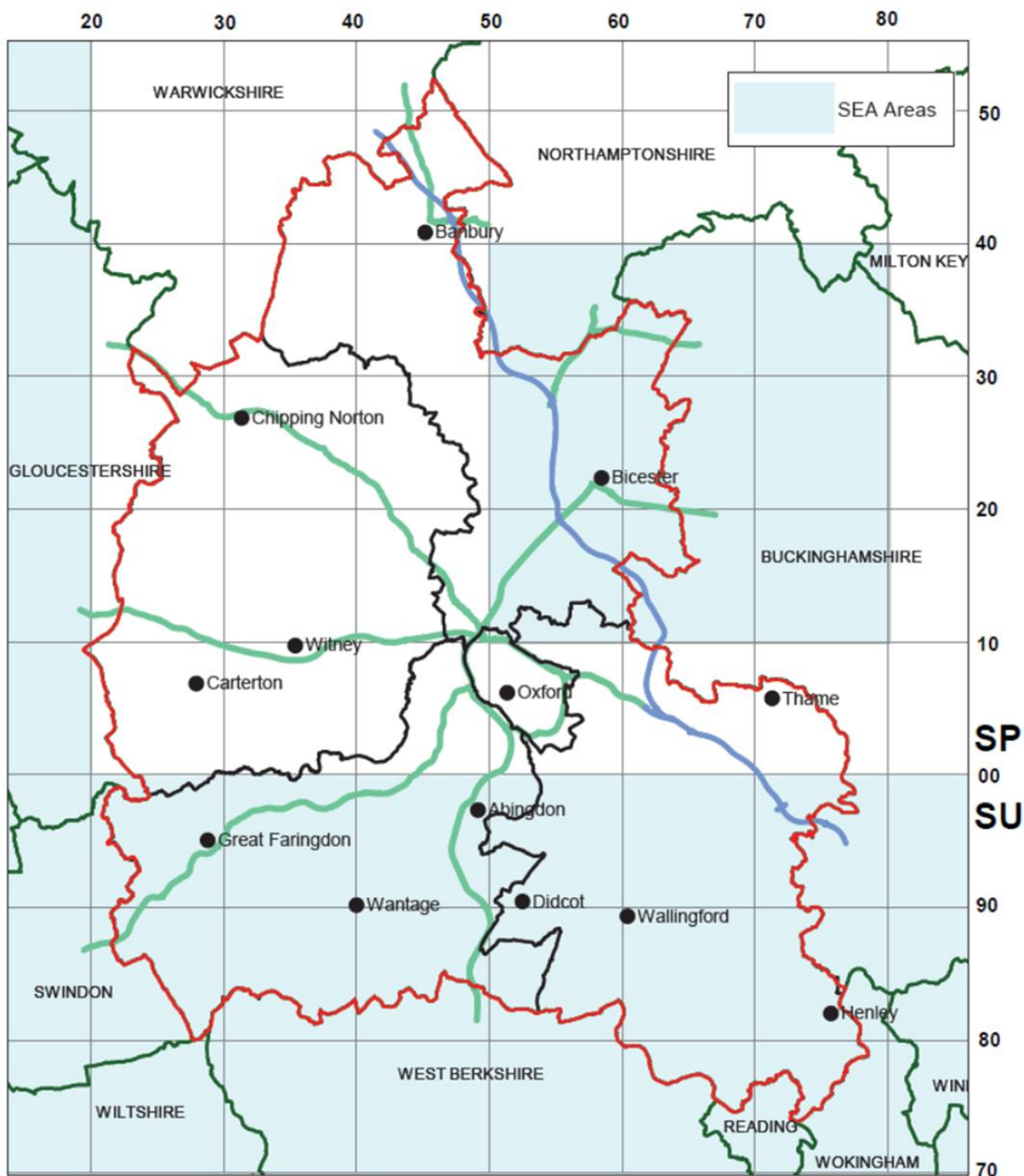


Figure 1: Areas in Oxfordshire subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment for the 14th Round of Onshore Oil and Gas Licensing (blue)

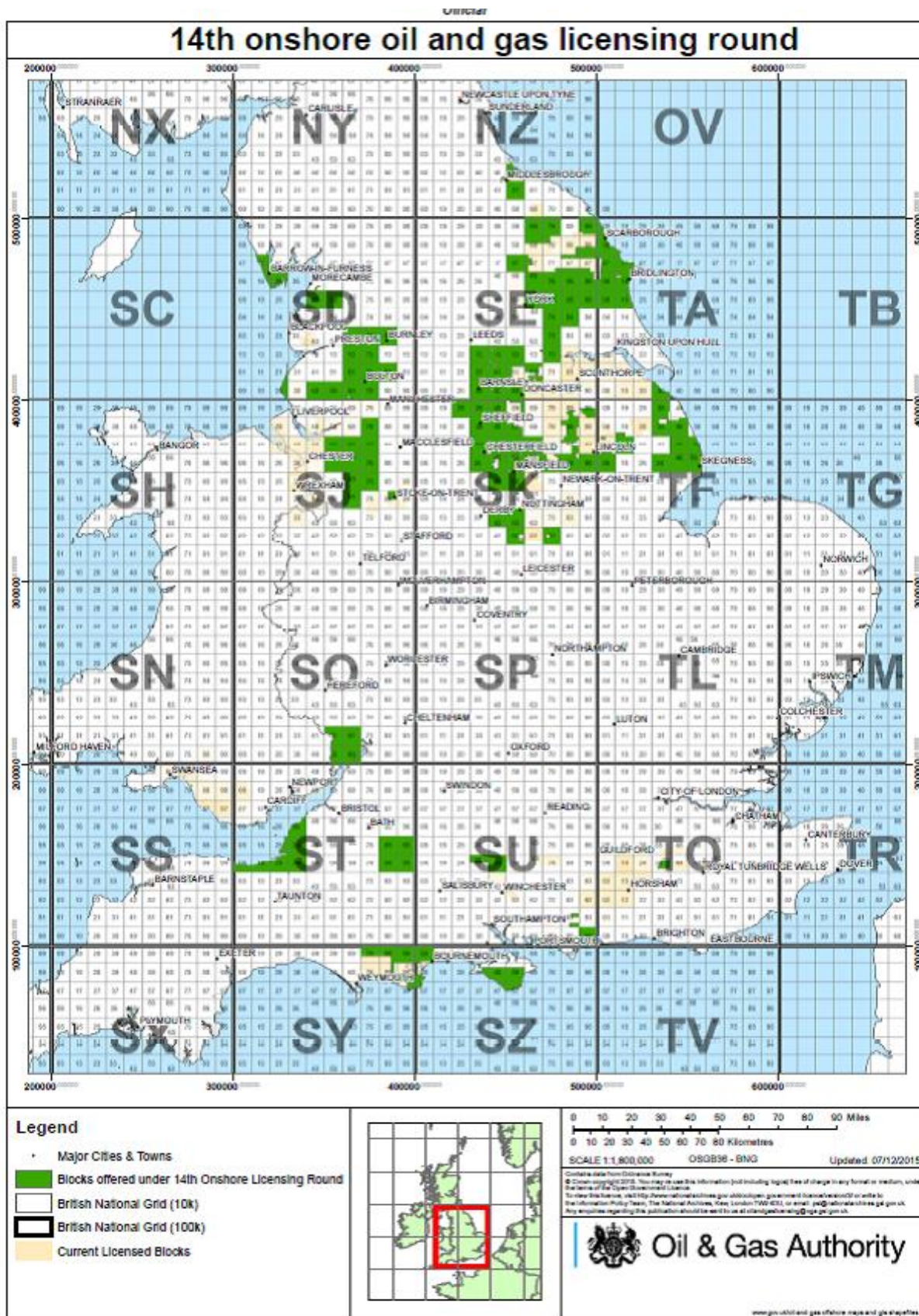


Figure 2: Areas for which licenses have been offered in the 14th Round of Onshore Oil and Gas Licensing

Legislation and Planning Policy

- 4.9 This section identifies legislation, planning policy and guidance relevant to oil and gas in the context of planning for minerals and waste development.

Legislation

- 4.10 There are a number of European Directives which set the context for national and local policy on energy minerals development; in particular the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and its daughter Groundwater Directive, the Mining Waste Directive (2006/21/EC), and the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU).
- 4.11 In England and Wales, the Water Framework Directive and Groundwater Daughter Directive are transposed through the Water Resources Act and Environmental Permitting Regulations, thus enabling the Environment Agency to regulate discharges to groundwater (including the requirement to disclose relevant chemicals).
- 4.12 The Environmental Permitting Regulations in England and Wales govern the regulation of the disposal of used fracking fluid through the Environment Agency (linked with transposing certain requirements of the Mining Waste Directive). Permits issued by the Environment Agency also control abstraction of water used in fracking (linked with the Water Resources Act).
- 4.13 Minerals planning authorities (MPAs) play a particularly important role in the implementation of the EIA Directive which is important in the consideration of proposals that may have a significant impact on our environment.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.14 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out minerals planning policy for onshore oil and gas in England. The NPPF stipulates that minerals planning authorities should identify and include policies for extraction of mineral resource of local and national importance in their area. This includes both conventional hydrocarbons and unconventional hydrocarbons such as shale gas and CBM. It also expects mineral planning authorities to ensure that mineral extraction does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the natural or historic environment or human health.

National Planning Practice Guidance on Planning for Hydrocarbon extraction (2014)

- 4.15 The National Planning Practice Guidance confirms that exploratory, appraisal or production phases of hydrocarbon extraction can only take place in areas where DECC have issued a PEDL. It encourages mineral planning authorities to make appropriate provision for hydrocarbons in mineral local plans and expects plans to include Petroleum Licence Areas on their proposals maps and include criteria-based policies for each of the exploration, appraisal and production phases of hydrocarbon extraction. Further, it states that these policies should set clear guidance and criteria for the location and assessment of hydrocarbon extraction within the Petroleum Licence Areas. Given that there

are currently no Petroleum Licence Areas within Oxfordshire and that no economic hydrocarbon resources have been identified in the county, it is not considered necessary or appropriate to include such provisions in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1996)

- 4.16 Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1996) Policy SD6 stated that applications for oil and gas would be considered in the light of national policies. This policy was not 'saved' under the Secretary of State's Direction dated 25 September 2007.

Oil and Gas Policy in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 4.17 Given that there are currently no Petroleum Licence Areas within Oxfordshire and that no economic hydrocarbon resources have been identified, the inclusion of a specific policy on oil and gas within the Oxfordshire Mineral and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy document is not considered necessary or appropriate. Policy relating to oil and gas development is included within Policy M7: Non-aggregate mineral working in the submitted Core Strategy:

Excerpt from Policy M7: Non- aggregate mineral working

Oil and Gas (conventional and unconventional)

Proposals for the exploration and appraisal of oil or gas will be permitted provided arrangements are made for the timely and suitable restoration and after-care of the site, whether or not the exploration or appraisal operation is successful.

The commercial production of oil and gas will be supported in the following circumstances:

- **A full appraisal programme for the oil or gas field has been successfully completed; and**
- **The proposed location is the most suitable, taking into account environmental, geological, technical and operational factors; and**
- **For major development in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it is clearly demonstrated that the proposal is in the public interest, including in terms of national considerations.**

5. Planning Policy

- 5.1 Work on the previous version of the Core Strategy that was withdrawn in July 2013 commenced when planning policy statements, minerals policy statements, the regional spatial strategy and saved policies from the Minerals and Waste Local Plan formed the policy context. The suite of national planning policy statements and minerals policy statements was replaced by the NPPF in March 2012, which was supplemented by the NPPG in 2014. The Government announced its intention to revoke the regional spatial strategies in 2010; the South East Plan was partially revoked on 25th March 2013. Some policies of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1996) have been ‘saved’ by the Secretary of State¹³ until such time as they are replaced by new policies in the Minerals and Waste Plan although the weight they are given in determining planning decisions will be dependent on how well they conform with the NPPF.
- 5.2 The following sections set out the national and regional planning policy documents which were relevant when work on the plan commenced, followed by a section setting out the current planning policies contained in the NPPF. Tables 1 and 2 show the links between the former and the current policies set out below and the relevant parts of the submitted Core Strategy, thereby providing explanation for inclusion of the policies in the submitted Plan.
- 5.3 Previous versions of the policies on non-aggregate mineral working and safeguarding mineral resources policies and the current Policies M7 (Non-Aggregate Mineral Working) and M8 (Safeguarding Mineral Resources) in the submitted Core Strategy are set out in Appendix 3 for reference.

Provision for extraction of non-aggregate minerals

Former National Policy

- 5.4 To ensure the continued supply of building stone, paragraph 3.6 of MPS 1¹⁴ stated that: *‘MPAs and LPAs should have regard to the local, regional and national need for certain building and roofing stones for the conservation and restoration of England’s historic built environment where their use is specified’.*
- 5.5 Planning policy on clay extraction for the purpose of landfill engineering was formerly included in Annex 2 to MPS 1. Paragraph 3.4 of Annex 2 noted that: *‘When developing planning policies, MPAs... should take account of the need to recognise the potential for sales of clay for other uses, particularly engineering purposes, such as lining, daily cover and capping material for landfill sites.’*

Former Regional Policy

- 5.6 Policy M4 of the South East Plan stated that: *“Future provision should be made in local development documents for clay (and) chalk. . . as regionally significant minerals of national importance.”*

¹³ Letter dated 25 September 2007 from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

¹⁴ Minerals Policy Statement 1 (2006) Planning and Minerals

Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1996)

- 5.7 Policy SD3 is a 'saved' policy. It states that:
'Planning permission will not normally be granted for new limestone and chalk quarries.....' This applies to quarries which use limestone and chalk for aggregate purposes. However, the policy goes on to state that for non-aggregate uses, *'Very small quarries to supply traditional local building stone to the immediate area may be permitted as an exception to this policy.'*
- 5.8 The supporting text (paragraph 2.24) to this policy also noted that: *'there may be cases where a very small quarry to supply traditional local building stone is acceptable, even possibly within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).'*
- 5.9 Policy SD5 of the Local Plan stated that clay extraction would normally be permitted in association with sand and gravel extraction at three locations: Sutton Courtenay, the Lower Windrush valley and the Cassington-Yarnton area.

Cotswolds Management Plan 2008-2013

- 5.10 Other local relevant guidance is included the Cotswolds Management Plan 2008-2013 which noted in its Natural Resources section that:
'Seams of high quality limestone occur within the AONB and have been quarried extensively for centuries. These represent a very valuable resource. It is important to maintain supplies of high quality building stone to ensure that repairs and new buildings can be constructed in a way that is in keeping with their distinctive surroundings, particularly within the Cotswolds area itself, but also at important sites elsewhere.'

District Design Guides

- 5.11 Several District design guides acknowledge the importance of building stone in maintaining the architectural and landscape character in their area.
- 5.12 West Oxfordshire Design Guide¹⁵
Paragraph 2 of the 'Local Characteristics' section notes that;
'The architectural and landscape character of West Oxfordshire is chiefly determined by the local oolitic limestone underlying much of the District.'
- 5.13 South Oxfordshire Design Guide¹⁶
Paragraph 5.7.1 states that 'As a result of its varied geology, South Oxfordshire has a mix of traditional walling materials, including limestone. Where possible, use local materials and design details in order to reinforce local identity and maintain the character of different parts of the district.'
- 5.14 Vale of White Horse Residential Design Guide¹⁷
Paragraph 2.2 of this document notes that in the northern part of the Vale, on the Corallian ridge 'Settlements are typically limestone villages built of locally sourced, hard Corallian Ragstone.'

¹⁵ West Oxfordshire Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted September 2006.

¹⁶ South Oxfordshire Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document, adopted 2008

¹⁷ Vale of White Horse Residential Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document, adopted 2009

5.15 Cherwell District Council Countryside Design Summary¹⁸

The Countryside Design summary noted the importance of limestone and marlstone for walling and building generally in the district.

5.16 Oxford City Public Realm Strategy¹⁹

The colour and nature of the stones used in Oxford have been fundamental to the development of its character. For the architecture there appears to have been a consistent selection of local materials in favour of warm coloured limestone and sandstone.

Safeguarding non-aggregate minerals

5.18 This section sets out planning policy which was relevant to the preparation of the policies and supporting text on safeguarding non-aggregate minerals in the earlier version of the Core Strategy. Table 2 demonstrates the links between the former and current policies and the relevant parts of the submitted Core Strategy, thereby providing explanation for inclusion of the policies in the submitted Plan.

Former National Policy

5.19 National planning policy on minerals safeguarding was set out in Minerals Policy Statement 1 (MPS 1) Minerals and Planning, 2006. This was accompanied by a Good Practice Guide to help planning authorities and other interested parties interpret Government policy at the more local level.

5.20 Paragraph 9 of MPS 1 stated that one of the Government's objectives for minerals planning was to safeguard mineral resources as far as possible. Paragraph 10 went on to state that to achieve this objective, Mineral Planning Authorities should: *'define Minerals Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) in LDDs, in order that proven resources are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development, although there is no presumption that resources defined in MSAs will be worked.'*

5.21 Annex 2 of MPS 1 noted in para 2.1 that an objective of the document was *'to safeguard and where necessary, stockpile supplies of clays'*.

5.22 Para 3.1 of Annex 3, Natural Building and Roofing Stone of MPS1 stated that: *'Regional planning bodies (RPBs) ... should set out policies in their Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) ... for safeguarding nationally, regionally and locally significant building stone resources.'*

5.23 Para 3.2 of Annex 3, Natural Building and Roofing Stone of MPS 1 stated that: *'English Heritage and the industry are encouraged to make mineral planning authorities (MPAs) aware of important sources of building and roofing stone that they consider should be safeguarded from other forms of development through policies in their local development documents (LDDs). Safeguarding*

¹⁸ Cherwell District Council Countryside Design Summary, Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted 1998.

¹⁹ Oxford City Public Realm Strategy, background study, 2000

will be most appropriate where stone is believed to be of suitable quality, and is:

- *scarce in terms of its technical properties and/or aesthetic characteristics; or*
- *has been identified as having characteristics which match those required for repair and preservation purposes, including those related to individual, or groups of culturally important buildings.'*

Former Regional Policy

5.24 Policy M5 of the withdrawn South East Plan stated:

'Existing mineral sites, and proposed sites and 'areas of search', should be identified in mineral development documents for the extraction and processing of aggregates, clay, chalk, silica sand and gypsum. These should then be safeguarded in local development documents.'

5.25 Paragraph 10.90 explained that clay was important for brick and tile production and that chalk was important for cement manufacture.

5.26 Para 10.91 stated: *'It is recognised that there are other minerals worked in the region... which have no significant workings but provide a geological resource (notably Fuller's Earth.) The contribution of these minerals should be dealt with appropriately in mineral development documents.'*

5.27 Para 10.98 stated: *'While there is no specific regional policy regarding Fuller's Earth, it is important that mineral planning authorities with such resources within their area consider these as part of their preparation of mineral development documents.'*

Current Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

5.28 NPPF Paragraph 144 states that:

'Local Planning Authorities should consider how to meet any demand for small-scale extraction of building stone at or close to relic quarries needed for the repair of heritage assets, taking account of the need to protect designated sites' and that they should: 'recognise the small-scale nature and impact of building and roofing stone quarries and the need for a flexible approach to the potentially long duration of planning permissions reflecting the intermittent or low rate of working at many sites.'

5.29 NPPF Paragraph 60 states that:

'Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles and particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.'

5.30 NPPF Paragraph 147 states that;

'Mineral Planning Authorities should also encourage capture and use of methane from coal mines in active or abandoned coalfield areas.'

5.31 NPPF Paragraph 143 states that:

'In preparing Local Plans, local authorities should define Mineral Safeguarding Areas and adopt appropriate policies in order that known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development, whilst not creating a presumption that resources identified will be worked.'

5.32 There are no references in the NPPF to the extraction of clay for engineering purposes on landfill sites.

Local Plans

5.33 Other updated guidance to which this section refers includes the revised Cotswold Management Plan 2013-2018 and Oxfordshire District Local Plans. The Local Plans and emerging new local development plan documents provide the local planning policy basis for development and investment for the five districts within Oxfordshire. The active building stone quarries are in Cherwell and in West Oxfordshire Districts. The latest plans for these districts have been reviewed but they do not have any policies specific to building stone.

Cotswold Management Plan 2013-2018

5.34 A key issue for the updated plan is:

'To ensure continued supply of high quality building stone and in recognition of the basic principle that those minerals can only be worked where they occur, existing quarries within the AONB must continue to operate effectively, but aggregate production should be a by-product, not the primary purpose of such quarries.'

Table 1: Links between former planning policy on provision of non-aggregate minerals, NPPF policies and policies in the submitted Core Strategy (2015)

Former national, regional or local planning policy	Current NPPF policy	Submitted Core Strategy: Non-aggregate minerals	Implication for OCC policy
Building Stone			
<p>Paragraph 3.6 of MPS 1 had regard to the local, regional and national need for building and roofing stone for the conservation and restoration of England’s historic built environment</p> <p>Policy SD3 of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1996 made provision for small scale quarries to provide traditional local building stone to the immediate area, even if the quarry is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p> <p>All the Oxfordshire district councils recognise the role that local stone plays in the architectural and landscape character of their respective districts in their design guidance.</p>	<p>Paragraph 144 of the NPPF refers to local planning authorities meeting the need for small scale extraction of building stone: ‘<i>Local Planning Authorities should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>consider how to meet any demand for small-scale extraction of building stone at, or close to relic quarries needed for the repair of heritage assets...</i> - <i>Recognise the small-scale nature and impact of building and roofing stone quarries, and the need for a flexible approach to the potentially long duration of planning permissions reflecting the intermittent or low rate of working at many sites.’</i> 	<p>Objective iv of the submitted Plan seeks to: ‘<i>Enable a continued local supply of limestone and ironstone for building and walling stone for the maintenance, repair and construction of locally distinctive buildings and structures....’</i></p> <p>Policy M7 states that ‘<i>permission will be granted for extensions to existing quarries and new quarries for the extraction of traditional local building stone where a need for the material has been demonstrated and the proposed quarrying is small-scale’.</i></p> <p>Policy M7 makes provision for small-scale building stone extraction by extensions to existing quarries or new quarries, to meet a local need for the material. This allows a flexible approach to provide for local</p>	<p>Objective iv conforms to current NPPF policy by seeking to meet demand for building stone.</p> <p>Policy M7 is compliant with NPPF policy.</p>

		building material in locations where quarrying is already, or has been undertaken in the past, or in other locations where the need is identified.	
Cotswold Management Plan 2008-2013 recognised the importance of maintaining sources of high quality building stone in the Cotswolds and in the surrounding areas.	Paragraph 144 of the NPPF notes the need for building stone for the repair of heritage assets and paragraph 60 recommends that planning policies and decisions should promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.	Paragraph 4.52 of the MWLP-CS recognises the importance of small scale building, roofing and walling stone extraction in rural areas for the conservation and restoration of historic buildings and to maintain local distinctiveness in new development. The plan specifically highlights the importance of limestone for maintaining the built environment in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy M7 then provides for the small scale extraction of building stone where there is a demonstrated need.	Policy M7 and the supporting text on building stone is compliant with the relevant NPPF policies.
Clay			
Paragraph 3.4 of Annex 2 to MPS 1 made provision for clay for landfill engineering. Policy M4 of the South East Plan stated that LPAs should make provision for clay extraction, although it referred to clay for brick and tile production which does not take place in Oxfordshire.	Paragraph 146 of the NPPF requires Mineral Planning authorities to take account of the need for provision of brick clay from a number of different sources to enable appropriate blends to be made.	Policy M7 makes provision for the working of clay in specific locations and in other areas where this would meet a local need for clay or there would be overall less environmental impact.	Policy M7 permits clay extraction from a number of identified locations where sand and gravel is being worked to allow for continuation of supply but it also allows for extraction from other areas where a local need is proven. Paragraph 146 of the NPPF

			refers to the provision of clay for brick-making, which does not take place in Oxfordshire. Instead, clay is produced for the lining and capping of landfill sites. If in the future, the use of clay for brick making does occur in Oxfordshire, Policy M7 does comply with the NPPF to provide for brick clay from a number of different sources.
Chalk			
Policy M4 of the South East Plan stated that LPAs should make provision for chalk extraction, although it referred to chalk for cement production, which does not take place in Oxfordshire.	There is no specific NPPF policy on chalk.	Policy M7 states that applications to work chalk for agricultural or industrial use will be permitted provided working is small-scale, and that extraction of chalk for wider purposes (eg aggregate or large scale engineering) will not be permitted unless it is the most sustainable of all alternative options.	In the absence of national policy on chalk extraction, Policy M7 provides for small-scale working of the mineral for agricultural and industrial purposes. Wider scale extraction will not normally be permitted.
Fuller's Earth			
Policy M4 of the South East Plan noted the importance of Fuller's Earth as a scarce mineral of national geological importance.	There is no specific NPPF policy on Fuller's Earth extraction.	Policy M7 states that the working of Fuller's Earth will be permitted providing there is a national need for the mineral.	In the absence of national policy on Fuller's Earth extraction, Policy M7 permits the working of Fuller's Earth, provided there is a national need for it.

Table 2: Links between former planning policy for safeguarding non-aggregate minerals, NPPF policies and policies in the submitted Core Strategy (2015)

Former national, regional or local planning policy	Current NPPF policy	Safeguarding non-aggregate minerals in the submitted Plan	Implication for OCC policy
Non-Aggregate Minerals			
<p>Paragraph 9 of MPS 1 required MPAs to define Minerals Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) in LDDs in order to prevent proven resources from being sterilised by non-mineral development.</p> <p>Policy M4 in the South East Plan: <i>'Future provision should be made in local development documents for clay, chalk, silica sand and gypsum as regionally significant minerals of national importance. Where practicable, ... high quality reserves should be safeguarded for appropriate end uses...'</i></p>	<p>NPPF Paragraph 143 requires local authorities to define Mineral Safeguarding Areas for minerals resources of local and national importance and to adopt appropriate policies in their plans to safeguard those resources.</p>	<p>Objective xi seeks to: <i>'Safeguard important known resources of sharp sand and gravel, soft sand, crushed rock and Fuller's Earth to ensure that those resources are not needlessly sterilised and remain potentially available for future use and are considered in future development decisions.'</i></p> <p>Policy M8 seeks to safeguard areas of these resources in specific locations. Development that would sterilise the working of these minerals will not generally be permitted.</p>	<p>Objective xi is compliant with NPPF policy; it seeks to safeguard proven resources of non-aggregate minerals (Fuller's Earth) in locations where these are known to exist.</p> <p>Policy M8 is compliant with the NPPF, as it defines areas where minerals of local and national importance are to be safeguarded (safeguarding areas) and protects these resources from being sterilised.</p>
Clay			
<p>Annex 2 of MPS 1 stated in paragraph 2.1 that an objective of the document was 'to safeguard and where necessary, stockpile supplies of clays'.</p> <p>Policy M4 in the South East Plan required that where practicable,</p>	<p>The NPPF does not address the issue of safeguarding clay resources.</p>	<p>Clay resources found at existing sand and gravel quarries will, by default, be safeguarded with those sand and gravel resources.</p>	<p>Clay is not safeguarded in the submitted Plan; this conforms to the NPPF which only requires that known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance are safeguarded.</p>

<p>high quality reserves of clay are safeguarded.</p>			
<p>Building Stone</p>			
<p>Para 3.2 of Annex 3 to MPS 1 stated the importance of building and roofing stone to the historic environment and of safeguarding these resources for future use.</p>	<p>Current policy requires known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance to be safeguarded.</p>	<p>The submitted Plan does not propose to safeguard building stone resources because they are extensive and variable in quality.</p>	<p>Building stone is not safeguarded in the submitted Plan; this conforms to the NPPF which only requires that known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance are safeguarded.</p>
<p>Fuller's Earth</p>			
<p>Policy M4 in the South East Plan does state that high quality reserves of non-aggregate reserves such as <i>clay, chalk, silica, sand and gypsum should be safeguarded, but it does not require Fuller's Earth to be safeguarded.</i></p>	<p>The NPPF does not recognise Fuller's Earth as a nationally or locally important mineral (as defined in the glossary to the NPPF).</p>	<p>Policy M8 identifies Fuller's Earth in the Baulking – Fernham area to be safeguarded.</p>	<p>Fuller's Earth is safeguarded in Policy M8 because of its recognition as a scarce geological resource in the South East Plan and because it is recognised as an important mineral by the BGS.</p>

6. Consultation responses

- 6.1 The relevant parts of policies on non-aggregate minerals and safeguarding in the 4 different versions of the plan produced in September 2011, October 2012, February 2014 and August 2015 are set out in Appendix 3.

Minerals Planning Strategy Consultation Draft, September 2011

- 6.2 Provision in this document for non-aggregate minerals was made as part of Policy M3, Strategy for the Location of Mineral Working. Only one response was received, which commented that Policy M3 'is excessively complicated and loose in its wording' but there were no responses to the policy on non-aggregate minerals specifically.

Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document, May 2012

- 6.3 Four responses were received to the consultation on Policy M5 on non-aggregate mineral working and the supporting text. All respondents supported the draft policy; three of the respondents also added brief comments. The Environment Agency noted that 'where site allocation occurs, we would expect a sequential test of individual sites to ensure that the activity is located in an area of least risk.' The Environment Agency response also noted that Flood Zone 3a is the highest category of flood risk in which clay working should take place.
- 6.4 Other respondents supported paragraph 4.34 of the supporting text for the retention of local distinctiveness which is due largely to locally sourced materials and is an important component of the sense of place and the character of historic settlements; it is also consistent with paragraph 60 of the NPPF. There was support for clay only being worked as part of sand and gravel quarry operations.

Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy Consultation Draft February 2014

- 6.5 Only two responses were received on policy M6 on non-aggregate mineral working. English Heritage sought protection of important heritage assets from clay extraction. The other response sought clarification that the restriction on quarrying in the Cotswolds AONB does not apply to building and walling stone. No comments were received on policy M7 on safeguarding mineral resources specifically concerning non-aggregate minerals.

Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document (August 2015)

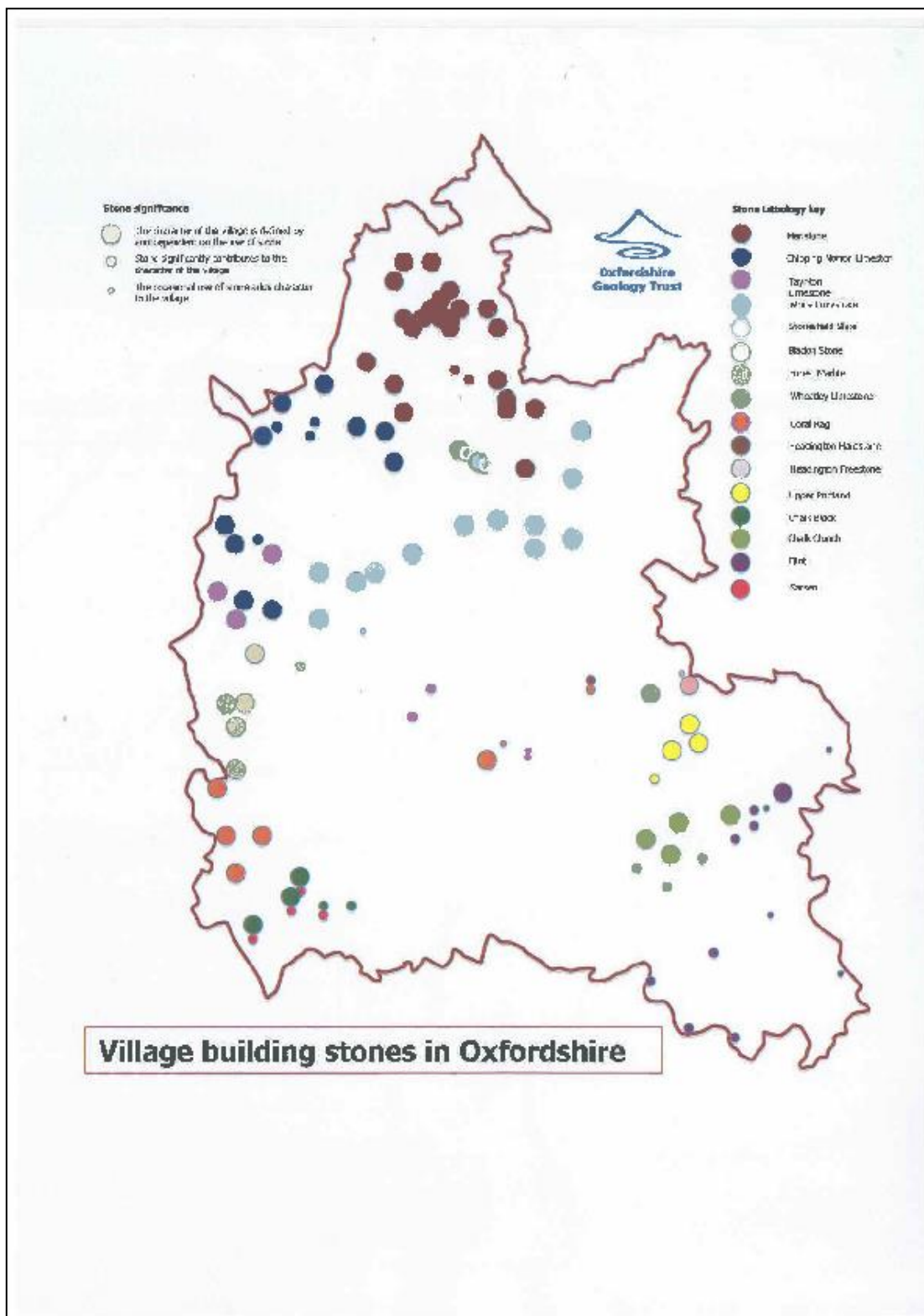
- 6.6 Ten responses were received on Policy M7 regarding the extraction of non-aggregate minerals, and eight were received on Policy M8 regarding the safeguarding of mineral resources including non-aggregate minerals.

- 6.7 Responses to Policy M7 included general support for the policy, however several minerals operators regarded that the term 'small-scale' should be justified and defined. Chilterns AONB Board submitted that the major developments test in the NPPF should be fully applied to the policy, and Kent County Council considered that a more comprehensive policy on oil and gas should be developed.
- 6.8 Regarding the last point, and since the preparation of the submitted Core Strategy, the government has announced the results of the 14th Licensing round for onshore oil and gas exploration. None of the areas where licences have been offered are located in Oxfordshire. In light of this, no revision to the policy on Oil and Gas is considered necessary.
- 6.9 Responses to Policy M8 included general support for the policy. One respondent also thought the strategic areas that safeguarding areas are based on should be better defined, and that other development should be allowed where extraction in a safeguarded area is proven to be unviable. One mineral operator considered a clause was needed to allow for prior extraction on sites already allocated for alternative development in a local plan.

Appendix 1: Table of Oxfordshire's Main Building Stones

Geological Period	Geological Name	Examples of local stone names
Upper Cretaceous	Chalk	
Upper Jurassic	Corallian Group	Headington Hardstone
Middle Jurassic	Great Oolite Group	Forest Marble Bladon Stone Taynton Stone Stonesfield Slate Chipping Norton limestone
	Inferior Oolite Group	Clypeus Grit
Lower Jurassic	Middle Lias	Marlstone/Hornton Stone/Banbury Ironstone

Appendix 2: Village Building Stones in Oxfordshire



Appendix 3: Relevant excerpts from Non-Aggregate Mineral and Mineral Safeguarding Policies

Minerals Planning Strategy Consultation Draft (September 2011)

Policy M3: Strategy for the location of mineral working

The working of clay will normally be permitted only from areas where sand and gravel is being worked in the following locations:

- Lower Windrush Valley;
- Eynsham/Cassington/Yarnton; and
- Sutton Courtenay.

Planning permission will not be granted for mineral working outside the locations identified above unless the required provision cannot be met from within these areas.

Applications to work Fullers Earth, oil, gas, coal or any other minerals not currently worked in the county will be considered in the light of national and development plan policies.

Permission will be granted for extensions to existing quarries and new quarries for extraction of building stone where a local need for the material has been demonstrated and provided that the quarrying is at a scale appropriate to the locality and will not harm the environment or local amenities.

Policy M5: Mineral safeguarding

Mineral resources will be safeguarded for the future and development which would prevent or otherwise hinder the possible future working of minerals will not be permitted unless it can be shown that:

- The need for the development outweighs the economic and sustainability considerations relating to the mineral resource; or
- The mineral will be extracted prior to the development taking place.

Mineral Safeguarding Areas will be defined, and identified in detailed maps, and will include the following mineral resources:

- Sand and gravel in the main river valleys and in other areas where there is a proven resource;
- Soft sand, limestone and ironstone in existing areas of working, including the areas proposed for working in policy M3;
- Fuller's earth.

Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document (May 2012)

Policy M5: Non-aggregate mineral working

Permission will be granted for extensions to existing quarries and new quarries for extraction of building stone where a local need for the material has been demonstrated and provided that the quarrying is at a scale appropriate to the locality and will not harm the environment or local amenity.

The working of clay will be permitted only from areas where sand and gravel is being worked in the following locations:

- Lower Windrush Valley;
- Eynsham/Cassington/Yarnton; and
- Sutton Courtenay;

unless it can be demonstrated that there is a local need for clay which either cannot be met from these areas or can be met from elsewhere with less overall environmental impact.

Applications to work chalk, fullers earth, oil, gas, coal or any other minerals not currently worked in Oxfordshire will be considered in the light of national and development plan policies.

Policy M6: Safeguarding mineral resources

Mineral resources will be safeguarded for the future and development which would prevent or otherwise hinder the possible future working of minerals will not be permitted unless it can be shown that:

- The need for the development outweighs the economic and sustainability considerations relating to the mineral resource; or
- The mineral will be extracted prior to the development taking place.

Mineral Safeguarding Areas will be defined, and identified in detailed maps, and will include the following mineral resources:

- Sand and gravel in the main river valleys and in other areas where there is a proven resource;
- Soft sand, limestone and ironstone in existing areas of working, including the areas proposed for working in policy M3;
- Fuller's Earth.

Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy Consultation Draft February 2014

Policy M6: Non- aggregate mineral working

Building Stone

Permission will be granted for extensions to existing quarries and new quarries for the extraction of traditional local building stone where a need for the material has been demonstrated and the proposed quarrying is small-scale.

Clay

The extraction of clay will be permitted in conjunction with the working of sharp sand and gravel from the locations in policy M3 A. The extraction of clay will not be permitted in other locations unless it can be demonstrated that there is a local need for clay which:

- cannot be met by extraction in conjunction with sharp sand and gravel working; or
- would be met with less overall environmental impact than by extraction in conjunction with sharp sand and gravel working.

Chalk

The extraction of chalk for agricultural or industrial use in Oxfordshire will be permitted provided the proposed quarrying is small-scale. Extraction of chalk for wider purposes, including as an aggregate or for large scale engineering will not be permitted unless the proposal is demonstrated to be the most sustainable of all alternative options.

Fullers Earth

The working of fullers earth will be permitted provided that a national need for the mineral has been demonstrated.

Oil and Gas (conventional and unconventional)

Proposals for the exploration and appraisal of oil or gas will be permitted provided arrangements are made for the timely and suitable restoration and after-care of the site, whether or not the exploration or appraisal operation is successful.

The commercial production of oil and gas will be supported in the following circumstances:

- A full appraisal programme for the oil or gas field has been successfully completed;
- The proposed location is the most suitable, taking into account environmental, geological and technical factors;
- For major development in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it is clearly demonstrated that the proposal is in the public interest, including in terms of national considerations.

All proposals for the working of non-aggregate minerals, including exploration and appraisal, shall meet the criteria in policies C1 – C11.

Policy M7: Safeguarding mineral resources

Mineral Safeguarding Areas will be defined on maps, covering the following mineral resources:

- Sharp sand and gravel in the main river valleys, including the areas identified in policy M3 A, and other areas of proven resource;
- Soft sand within the areas identified in policy M3 B;
- Limestone within the areas identified in policy M3 C;
- Fuller's Earth in the Baulking – Fernham area.

Mineral resources in these areas are safeguarded for possible future use. Development that would prevent or otherwise hinder the possible future working of the mineral will not be permitted unless it can be shown that:

- The need for the development outweighs the economic and sustainability considerations relating to the mineral resource; or
- The mineral will be extracted prior to the development taking place.

Mineral Consultation Areas, based on the Mineral Safeguarding Areas, will be defined, identified and updated when necessary in the Minerals and Waste Annual Monitoring Reports.

Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document (August 2015)

Policy M7: Non- aggregate mineral working

All proposals for the working of non-aggregate minerals, including exploration and appraisal, shall meet the criteria in policies C1-C11.

Building Stone

Permission will be granted for extensions to existing quarries and new quarries for the extraction of building stone where a need for the material has been demonstrated and the proposed quarrying is small-scale.

Clay

The extraction of clay will be permitted in conjunction with the working of sharp sand and gravel from the locations in policy M3. The extraction of clay will not be permitted in other locations unless it can be demonstrated that there is a local need for clay which:

- cannot be met by extraction in conjunction with sharp sand and gravel working; or
- would be met with less overall environmental impact than by extraction in conjunction with sharp sand and gravel working.

Chalk

The extraction of chalk for agricultural or industrial use in Oxfordshire will be permitted provided the proposed quarrying is small-scale and a local need for the material has been demonstrated. Extraction of chalk for wider purposes, including as an aggregate or for large scale engineering will not be permitted unless the proposal

is demonstrated to be the most sustainable option for meeting the need of the material.

Fuller's Earth

The working of Fuller's Earth will be permitted provided that a national need for the mineral has been demonstrated.

Oil and Gas (conventional and unconventional)

Proposals for the exploration and appraisal of oil or gas will be permitted provided arrangements are made for the timely and suitable restoration and after-care of the site, whether or not the exploration or appraisal operation is successful.

The commercial production of oil and gas will be supported in the following circumstances:

- A full appraisal programme for the oil or gas field has been successfully completed;
- The proposed location is the most suitable, taking into account environmental, geological and technical factors;
- For major development in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it is clearly demonstrated that the proposal is in the public interest, including in terms of national considerations.

Policy M8: Safeguarding mineral resources

Mineral Safeguarding Areas will be defined in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations Document, covering the following mineral resources:

- Sharp sand and gravel in the main river valleys, including the strategic resource areas identified in policy M3, and other areas of proved resource;
- Soft sand within the strategic resource areas identified in policy M3;
- Fuller's Earth in the Baulking – Fernham area.

Mineral resources in these areas are safeguarded for possible future use.

Development that would prevent or otherwise hinder the possible future working of the mineral will not be permitted unless it can be shown that:

- The site has been allocated for development in an adopted local plan or neighbourhood plan; or
- The need for the development outweighs the economic and sustainability considerations relating to the mineral resource; or
- The mineral will be extracted prior to the development taking place.

Mineral Consultation Areas, based on the Mineral Safeguarding Areas, will be defined, identified and updated when necessary in the Minerals and Waste Annual Monitoring Reports.