

Eynsham Parish Council – response to Minerals Core Strategy Consultation



Eynsham is a large settlement with a Primary School, a major High-Tech industrial site, allotments and many homes adjacent to one edge of the current 'Area of Search' making detailed applications close to the village complicated and protracted.

Approval has already been granted to extract most of the sand and gravel needed in the 'North West Oxfordshire' area for the period up to 2030 making it unnecessary to identify large additional areas and therefore making the Area of Search much larger than required.

We therefore ask that a substantial separation zone be included in the plan, limiting the Area of Search to an area away from the Eynsham village boundary. This will provide reassurance for local residents and preclude speculative applications that are unlikely to be viable.

We suggest this buffer should be 1km to eliminate the need for complex 'Dust mitigation studies' according to para 27 of 'Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework 2012'¹.

We offer the following supporting information:

1. It is likely that sand and gravel will be worked 'dry' making dust the main environmental impact on Eynsham. The initial Area of Search is adjacent to one High-Tech Industry site (Siemens Magnets) in the 'high sensitivity' category while the school and allotments (a horticultural activity) are in the medium category for dust sensitivity.
2. Most dust is created by trucks on site and there is a risk of substantial additional nuisance if minerals are transported from the site by truck. We therefore ask that the idea of moving minerals from the site by conveyor (using the line of the old railway as proposed in the most recent application submitted for the area) be included as a requirement to minimise road damage and congestion.
3. The area is mostly Level 3 floodplain, flooding regularly with water from the Evenlode and, in the southern section, from the Thames. This is further reason for excluding processing operations from the site and taking the material back to existing facilities at Cassington for grading and then shipment directly via the A40.
4. It isn't clear if the area is officially Level 3b 'Functional floodplain' although it clearly plays a role in slowing flood-water from the Evenlode to the Thames. The effect of removing the storage capacity of fields must be taken into account along with the long-term costs of maintaining any works considered necessary to retain water storage capacity after extraction is complete and the area is left as lakes.
5. The village cricket ground is within the Area of Search as currently presented. This facility is presently in receipt of substantial public and locally-raised funds to build a pavilion. A separation zone of 1km from the school would also include the ground and is further reason for the inclusion of such a zone in the core strategy definition. It should be noted that the school has also just received public funds to build its new multi-use games area close to the proposed Area of Search boundary.

¹Published by Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2012

6. The Parish Council would like to be assured that all relevant flood data has been taken into account.

In summary, there is little need to extract the sand and gravel reserves adjacent to Eynsham village during the period of this plan. There will be significant impacts on various facilities if extraction is carried out close to the village. We therefore recommend a separation zone of 1km from the nearest homes, school, allotments and industrial sites be included in the definition of the Area of Search.