

Preferred Area 4 - North West of Water Eaton House

Mineral: Sharp sand and gravel

Area: 65 hectares

Name: Land northwest of Water Eaton House

Yield: 0.7 million tonnes of sharp sand and gravel

Proposal: Phased extraction of sharp sand and gravel with restoration to small lakes and wetland for nature conservation

Site Description

1. The Preferred Area comprises a linear block of flat agricultural land alongside the River Thames, which forms its eastern boundary. Existing field boundaries delineate the Preferred Area to the north, west and south. Due in part to its remote location and surrounding topography the site is well screened from external views, although there are relatively few trees either within or on the boundary of the site.
2. There is no road access to the Preferred Area, the nearest roads being the C114 to Castle Eaton some 400m to the east and the C124 (proposed Eastern Spine Road) to Marston Meysey 800m to the north. There are no public rights of way on the Preferred Area although the Thames Path National Trail will run parallel to the site on the eastern side of the Thames. The site falls within an Area of Special Archaeological Significance as defined in the North Wiltshire Local Plan and abuts a Scheduled Ancient Monument to the north.
3. Much of the site comprises lowgrade (4) agricultural land, and lies within the floodplain of the Thames. Three water bodies are in/adjacent to the northern part of the site consisting of two ponds and a small oxbow lake. These are rich in invertebrates and form an important wildlife habitat.