

Westbury: Preferred Area for Chalk - Adjacent to Existing Chalk Pit

Mineral: Chalk

Area: 36.6 hectares

Name: Land adjacent to Westbury Chalk Pit

Yield: 23.8 million tonnes of chalk

Proposal: Phased extraction of chalk with restoration to nature conservation.

Site Description

1. The Preferred Area surrounds the existing chalk quarry the west, south and north east and is bordered by public open space to the northeast with Westbury White Horse and Bratton Fort Scheduled Ancient Monuments being some 250m to the northeast.
2. As a consequence of the topography of the area, the site is not visible from long distance, with views from the northwest being beyond the sight line of the ridge which forms the northern boundary of Salisbury Plain. A small part of the Preferred Area, northeast of the existing chalk quarry is visible from long distance views from the south and west, although it is considered that appropriate landscaping and phasing would mitigate this impact.
3. The agricultural land quality of much of the site is unknown due to a lack of survey information, however the area northeast of the existing chalk pit contains the "best and most versatile land". Part of the site, south-east of the existing chalk pit is designated as a SSSI/SPA/cSAC, the most valuable part of which is adjacent to the site and covers the whole of Salisbury Plain. Much of this area is covered by the Salisbury Plain military training area and part of the existing quarry is already leased from the M.O.D.
4. The site is accessed via the unclassified road from Westbury. However, as the Preferred Area effectively constitutes an extension to the existing chalk quarry, chalk would continue to be pumped to the cement works through an underground pipeline, in accordance with current arrangements. Traffic generation would therefore be negligible.