

Date: 10 August 2026
Application: 261846



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

WBC Highways

Development Management &
Compliance

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Dear WBC Highways,

Consultation from adjoining LA Consultation

Application Number: 261846

Applicant: Emma Bolster

Site Address: Sonning Quarry, Playhatch Road, Sonning Eye, Playhatch, Reading, RG4 6TX

Parish: Out of County

Grid Reference: Easting - 475147, Northing - 176429

Type of Development:

Proposal: Consultation from Oxfordshire County Council for notice of Submission of Further Information in relation to Application for Planning Permission Accompanied by an Environmental Statement (Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 as Amended).

Case Officer: Joanna Carter

Development Management has received the above application, and we require your comments on the proposal using the recommended memorandum below. The documents associated with this are available to view in NEC DM using the application number 261846. Alternatively, public documents are available to view on the Council's planning application search page: [Wokingham Borough Council Online Planning](#).

Please index your response into NEC DM against the application. If you are recommending conditions, you should give a reason with reference to relevant policies. A list of standard conditions can be requested from the case officer.

Your observations are required in respect of this application by **24 August 2026**.

Yours sincerely,
Development Management & Compliance

MEMORANDUM

From:	AL		
Service	WBC Highways	App No:	261846
Address:	Sonning Quarry, Playhatch Road, Sonning Eye, Playhatch, Reading, RG4 6TX.		
Proposal:	Consultation from Oxfordshire County Council for notice of Submission of Further Information in relation to Application for Planning Permission Accompanied by an Environmental Statement (Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 as Amended).		
Type of Development:			
Site Visit Made:	Yes/No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☒ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☐ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

Thank you for consulting us on this application.

The Application is supported by an Environmental Assessment (EA) and, at Appendix 9, a Transport Statement (TS). Both focus almost entirely on Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) movements, with some examination of road safety, focused on B478 corridor north of the Sonning bridge. The application does include some jobs, and the TS notes some opportunities for public transport but there is no connecting footways to access the site – which Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Local Highways Authority (LHA) assumes Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) may seek to address under its own volition.

As the (7.5T) weight limit on the bridge currently limits HGV traffic to the south, the WBC LHA considers it would be unreasonable to obstruct the approval of the proposals. However, reviewing the application it is evident there are a few things that should be clarified and resolved, as it may be appropriate to contemplate conditions to manage operations and/or support longer-term objectives.

Clarification of Forecasts

It is our understanding that the quarry remains operational and under the current consent the site would cease to operate in a few years. Communities might therefore expect to see reductions in traffic.

Section 2.7 of the Environmental Statement (ES) considers daily HGV movements to and from the access, reporting these as 120 (60 2-way) movements, “...*more typically of the order of 100 (50 in and 50 out)*.” As the proportion of HGVs can be material at 10% of the daily flow, the anticipated reduction of traffic could easily be material justifying some consideration.

The Transport Statement (TS) considers a range of proposals for development phases. Accepting these might vary over the phases (150-230,000 tonnes per annum), Table 7 attempts to record the current consent for extraction of materials and the importation of inert waste, recording a cumulative total of 290 HGV's/day. This makes no allowance for 'back-loading' which might normally be considered for concurrent extraction and remediation phases. As such comparisons within the application against the extant consent warrant some examination, if only to properly consider the thresholds of change.

The TS also offers observed data for B478 Playhatch Road over a week in September 2022, which is generally regarded as a neutral month and should be representative of a typical week for a quarry (as summer months might normally be higher). The TS notes that since 2017 the site has not operated cement production (6 HGV/day) the remaining uses might be operating near typical levels.

At 3.2.4 the TS explains how the site is divided with two access points for the different operation area such that the plant and extraction areas generate around 38 & 62% of the HGVs respectively.

The TS suggests the Average Annual Daily Total (AADT) is around 12,000. As the weight limit restricts HGV movements it might be easier to decipher the proportion of HGV's associated with the operation. As many of the vehicles to/from the quarry are branded it might be possible to conclude that the majority of HGVs are three or possibly four axle rigid vehicles. From the data at Appendix B, this would appear to show 18-36 HGV/day. Even at 38% of the whole quarry this is consistently lower than the typical operation described in the ES.

As noted above the differences in the phases and uses may not be material to WBC however in the longer-term the continued use could be material to a wider network thus some clarification should be reasonable to inform communities, to inform or manage expectations of the opportunities expanded below.

Missing Opportunities

Traffic flows on the B478 south of the river has remained between 12-13,000 vehicles per day for at least a decade. Objective 3 of The Sonning Neighbourhood Plan ([SNP](#)) seeks to “*Generate a sustainable reduction of the impact of traffic pollution, including air quality, and noise, within the Parish*” thus it might be reasonable to explore how the proposals could help support a reduction in traffic levels to preserve and enhance the sense of place in surrounding villages.

Whilst it is acknowledged that OCC do not support proposals for the Thames Crossing east of Reading, the Adopted Transport Strategy for Transport for South East (TfSE) records that the new bridge proposals could come forward by 2040. Linked to other proposals these are supported by WBC where the LHA notes this time horizon could fall within the life of the application and therefore some consideration of the restoration opportunities should be considered.

The Thames Path (Public Rights of Way (PROW) 205/20) skirts the edge of the proposed site and has proven to be a successful cycle route for a range of villages, typically connecting to Reading et al. Through its Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (PROWIP), WBC hopes to improve connections from this PROW to Wargrave to support wider aspirations to support sustainable travel.

It is amongst WBCs longer term aspirations to support the parish and restore the sense of place within their and other villages as traffic on the B478 falls, particularly if the Thames Crossing be delivered. With these longer-term objectives in mind, it appears the modal filter on Spring Lane has delivered a positive contribution to that the creation of a quiet lane (suitable for cyclists) such that similar opportunities should be considered to the north – with some prospect of linking this route around the edge of the site to Bridleway (205/9/20) and therefore connecting Binfield Heath and the Thames Path.

At this juncture, WBC LHA notes the applicants have not pursued or exploited opportunities to embrace TR1 & TR3 of the NPPF, nor the aspirations of WBC PROWIP to preserve or enhance the cycle network to connect a range of villages in both OCC and WBC. Whilst the B478 may remain a limiting factor in the short-medium-term they should not be missed once the remediation works are completed.

Summary

The weight limit of the Sonning Bridge is likely to prevent the proposals from resulting in any material effect in WBC in the short-term. However, in the longer-term changes could occur within the life of any potential consent, which have some bearing on the proposals.

It appears that conflating data and forecasts in the application might lead a

range of parties to miss opportunities to preserve or enhance conditions in the surrounding area. If these are clarified it is likely that opportunities exist and consistent with national and local policies these should be pursued.

WBC LHA would therefore wish to lend its support to OCC to explore opportunities to improve linkages between existing and planned improvements of the PROW and the highway network, with the aim that these support sustainable travel in the area helping restore the sense of place in villages north and south of the River Thames and supporting accessibility to all.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

At this juncture it is inappropriate to formally propose conditions, as the opportunities identified lie within OCC. However, by advancing these opportunities, it should be possible to frame modest obligations that support the wider aims of the two Councils.

Date:	25/8/26	Signed:	Alan Lewis
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