

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Sites Plan

Site AS06: Great Plantation

Statement of Common Ground:

Hanson UK, Historic England and Dorset County Council

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared by Hanson UK, Historic England and Dorset County Council (on behalf of Dorset County Council, Bournemouth Borough Council and the Borough of Poole), referred to in this Statement as ‘the parties’, and represents an agreed position with regard to the cultural heritage interest at the Great Plantation site

The Pre-Submission Draft of the Minerals Sites Plan 2017 includes land at Great Plantation as one of the proposed allocated sites for sand and gravel extraction.

The site as originally promoted by Hanson in 2007 related to some 75 ha of land and included 5 ancient monuments within the promoted site area, recognising that notwithstanding the area promoted, the monuments would require protection by standoff margins at the detailed design stage.

The promoted site was subsequently modified in 2016 to reduce the area and to exclude the monuments from the promoted area. The promoted area was reduced further in 2017 to an area of some 15 ha, partly to reflect the outcome of discussions regarding ecological issues, but also to avoid any potential direct effect on the conjectured alignment of the Battery Bank which may run east-west between the two known and scheduled areas of the Battery Bank. This further reduced area is shown on Figure 10 of the Pre-Submission draft MSP, where the conceptual ecological ‘mitigation corridor’ is generally consistent with the conjectured alignment of the Battery Bank.

In their formal response to the publication of the Pre-Submission Draft, Historic England indicated that:

The proposed quarry would have a major impact on the settings and significance of three scheduled monuments: a Bronze Age round barrow and two sections of the Battery Bank linear earthwork. These three heritage assets are landscape monuments intended by their builders to have a distinctive topographical and visual presence in the landscape. The landscape setting of the monuments is of key importance to an understanding and appreciation of these heritage assets and is a fundamental and significant component of their heritage significance and public value. The present proposals, both in the position and extent of the quarry and also in the landform created in the post-extraction restoration scheme, would bring permanent major adverse changes to the landform and landscape which provides the primary context and setting of the monuments. We consider that these proposals would result in substantial harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets.

We consider that there may be scope for extraction in the area to the north of the Battery Bank and east of the barrow, but the proposals would need significant modification in order to reduce the level of harm to the affected heritage assets to a level where it would be acceptable. The area of extraction would need to be significantly smaller than that currently proposed and designed so as to retain sufficient historic landform around and between the monuments to maintain the integrity of their landscape setting. Similarly, the present quarry restoration scheme would need to be significantly modified so that it would reinstate ground surfaces at, or close to, the existing historic ground levels within the primary settings of the monuments in order to restore as far as possible their visual landscape settings. We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss this matter....

The importance of the setting of the monuments has also been highlighted by the study commissioned by Dorset CC and undertaken by 'Context One Heritage and Archaeology' which concluded that:

With respect to the designated assets, it is not possible to establish setting using desk-based sources alone, although the designated heritage assets are all of the highest significance and three are immediately adjacent to the Site boundary. As such, further examination of any potential effects on these might be considered desirable within a Heritage Impact Assessment as part of a planning application in accordance with steps 2-5 of the Historic England guidance on the setting of heritage assets (Historic England 2015). A further assessment could enable a fuller understanding what the impacts might be, how, if harmful, these might be mitigated or what further work needs to be done to maximise enhancement and avoid harm. This might include consideration of the appropriateness of the boundaries of extraction areas; provision of buffer areas; provision of screening to control visual effects, and/or light pollution or noise.

The parties agree that a cultural heritage 'setting assessment' will need to be undertaken at the planning application / EIA stage which will inform the definition of a net extraction area within the gross site boundary of the allocated site. Given the importance of the integrity of landform to the setting of the monuments, the parties agree that the primary consideration of the setting assessment will be the archaeological and topographic relationship of the monuments with the historic landscape and landform, and their inter-visibility with each other and with the surrounding area. The setting assessment will thus include a detailed review of existing contours (using a combination of closely spaced topographic contours and lidar data as appropriate) to define existing site features and their relationship to the monuments, notably the ridgeline to the north and north east of the barrow, and the shallow valley feature to the east and south east of the barrow.

The cultural heritage assessment will also include a study to determine the presence or otherwise of the conjectured alignment of the Battery Bank to the south of the allocated area, using a combination of map based / topographic studies, geophysics and trial trenching, as appropriate. This will determine the nature of an appropriate standoff margin / buffer area to ensure no direct effect on the Battery Bank or its alignment if identified, and an appropriate standoff distance to protect its setting.

These detailed studies, to be undertaken at the planning application / EIA stage, are capable of defining a net extraction area within the gross allocated site which would satisfactorily mitigate the effect on the setting of the existing monuments during the operational stage. The parties recognise that notwithstanding the extent of the 'red line' site allocation area, the net extraction area could be more constrained than the overall allocated site boundary, but Hanson remain confident that the site could make a substantial contribution to the sand and gravel resource provision required by the MSP.

The extent of the standoffs to emerge from the setting assessment will also influence the final restoration strategy in terms of the landform to be created, and the nature of the re-profiling works which would be appropriate at the margins of the site in closest proximity to the monuments.

In order to reflect the above, the parties recommend that the 'development guidelines' for the site should be amplified with the following additional text:

"A primary consideration of the setting assessment will be the archaeological and topographic relationship of the monuments to the historic landscape / landform and their inter-visibility with each other and with the surrounding area".

Hanson UK

Historic England

Dorset County Council

Date: 29th August 2018