

Welcome

Welcome to Hills Quarry Products' and Farmcare's public exhibition about our proposal for a sand and gravel quarry at the old airfield near the villages of Marston Meysey and Down Ampney.



We welcome your feedback on our proposal and will consider all comments as we finalise our planning application for submission to Gloucestershire County Council.

About Hills Quarry Products

Hills Quarry Products is part of The Hills Group, a family owned business involved in the extraction of sand and gravel since the early 1900s and more recently in the production of quality assured ready-mixed concrete.

- We currently operate sand and gravel quarries in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and Dorset
- Our quarries in the Cotswold Water Park area are located at Cerney Wick, Shorncliffe and Latton
- We are active members of the Mineral Products Association (MPA), the industry body at the forefront of introducing new and improved practices
- We work in close partnership with local environmental bodies such as the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, the Cotswold Water Park Trust and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
- We have restored quarries to agriculture (Tubney Wood), wildlife sites (Lower Moor Farm & Sandpool) and for leisure uses (Latton and significant areas within the Cotswold Water Park)



About Farmcare Trading Limited

Farmcare Trading Ltd is a large lowland farming organisation in the United Kingdom, with 18,000 acres under its stewardship. Farmcare works with leading farming contractors across the UK to grow quality arable crops and vegetables for the food service, retail and trade sectors.



Mineral partnership

In 2016 Hills Quarry Products and Farmcare Trading Limited entered into a mineral partnership that would provide access to significant mineral reserves in the Cotswold Water Park area.

These mineral reserves provide an essential long-term supply of construction materials into the regions' market.

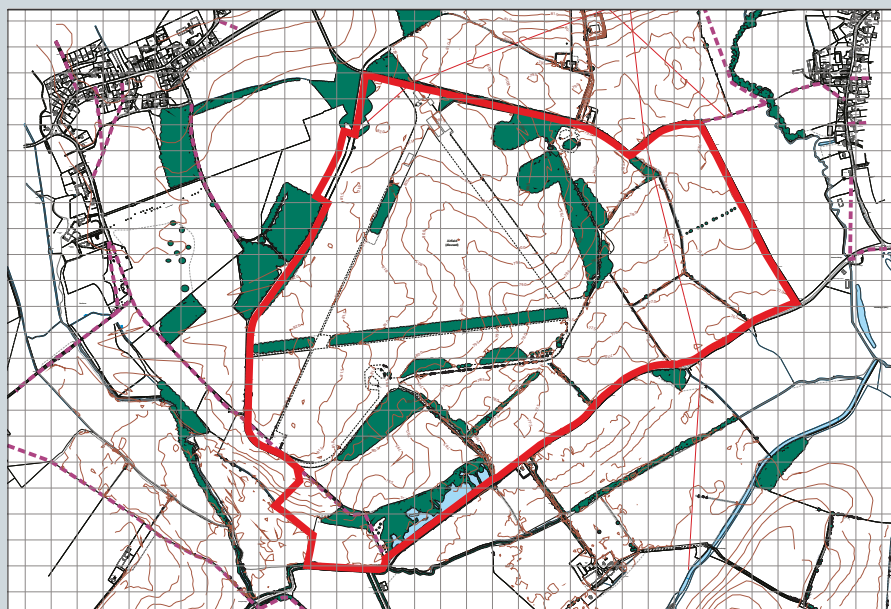
The first phase of the partnership saw Hills open Latton North Quarry on the Gloucestershire / Wiltshire border.

Airfield Quarry will be the second project in the partnership.

Our proposal

Airfield Quarry

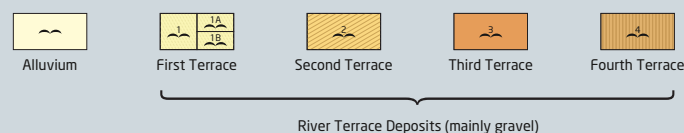
- Mineral extraction will take approximately 13 years to complete after the initial site works to establish new access, plant site, offices and silt management for Phase 1 have been completed
- Restoration will take approximately 25 years starting when Phase 1 extraction is approximately 50% complete
- Overall life of the development is estimated to be 26.5 years
- A new access onto the C124 to the south of the land will be established
- A plant site, including aggregate processing plant, a concrete plant and a bagging operation will be established with the associated infrastructure of silt lagoons, offices, welfare facilities, wheel washes and weighbridges
- Maintaining the mineral activities in the Cotswold Water Park will secure around 50 jobs directly, plus work for other local businesses.



- Planning Application Area
- Existing contours
- Existing tree, shrub, hedge and woodland
- Existing pond and wetland
- Public Rights of Way

Why here?

- We can only source sand and gravel from specific areas and a significant deposit is located in and around the Cotswold Water Park



- The local County Councils identify the need for construction materials in the region and allocate specific sites to meet that need.
- Airfield Quarry is an allocated site in the adopted Gloucestershire Mineral Plan.

Why do we need quarries?

We tend to take minerals for granted - yet they play an essential role in our everyday lives. Materials sourced from the UK's quarries are around us every moment of every day and support us as we work, rest and play.

An end-product in themselves, aggregates are also a raw material used in the manufacture of other vital construction products such as ready-mixed concrete, asphalt, lime and mortar.

In a typical year, we need around 205 million tonnes of aggregates in the UK - that is over three tonnes for every person.

Around 90 per cent of all aggregates are used by the construction industry to build and maintain:

- **Our housing stock** - a single house needs up to 60 tonnes of aggregate
- **Transport networks** - aggregates feature at all levels of road construction and the rail industry uses 3 million tonnes of aggregate each year as track ballast
- **Utilities infrastructure** - substantial volumes of aggregate are required to build reservoirs and sewerage treatment works
- **Hospitals, schools, commercial & industrial buildings** - an average community hospital will need 53,000 tonnes of concrete, a school around 15,000 tonnes and a six storey office building 16,480 tonnes.



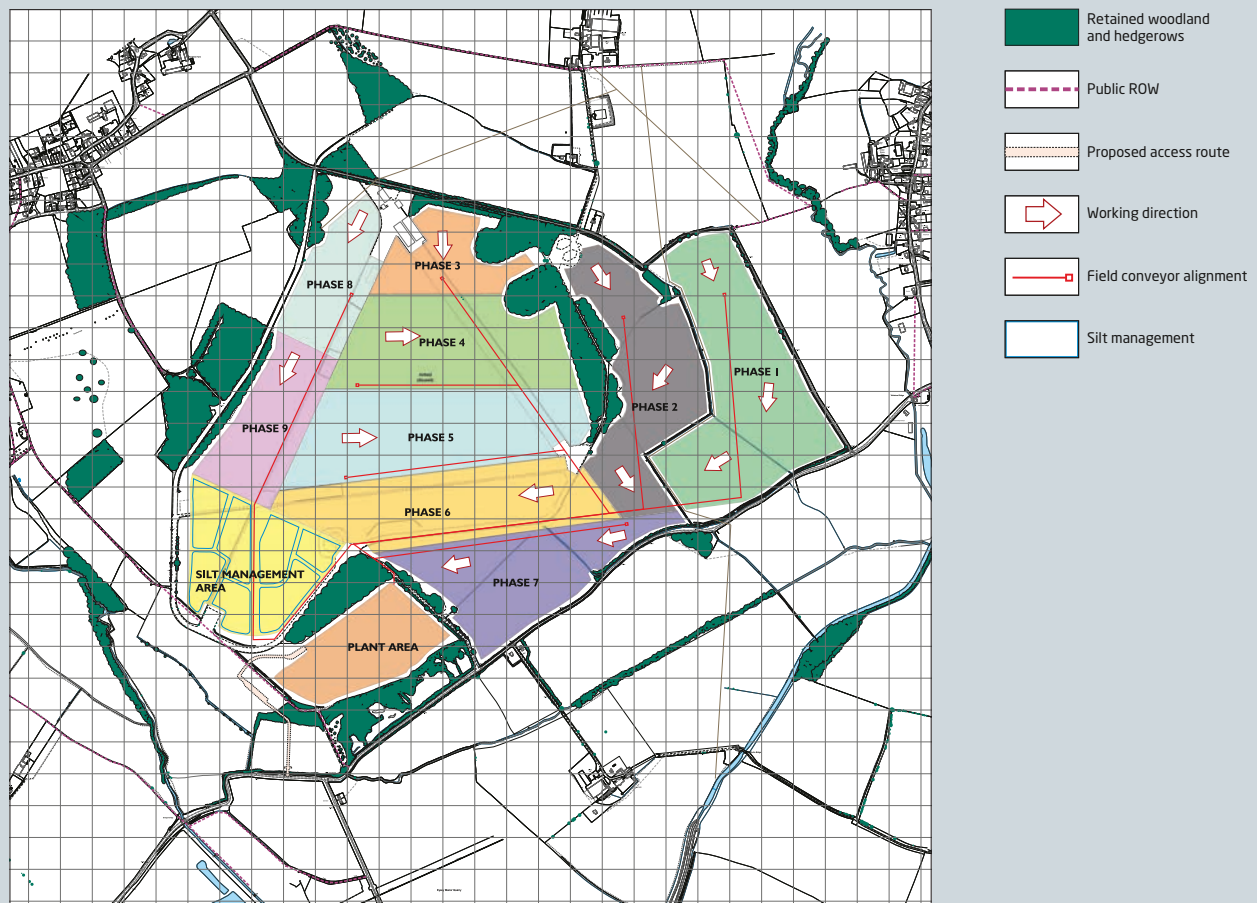
Phasing

The area to be extracted, including the plant site and silt lagoons is 178 hectares.

The proposal is to start in the north east corner, working Phases 1 and 2, then move to the central section and work from north to south, with the final Phases 8 and 9 also being worked north to south on the western side.

All soils would be carefully stripped and stored for use in restoration.

The sand and gravel would be dug using a loading shovel and transported to the processing plant by field conveyors which have been chosen over dump trucks to reduce noise, dust and use of fossil fuels.



Restoration plan

Restoration has been the subject of lengthy discussion with the Ministry of Defence to ensure the scheme will pose no additional risk of bird strike to RAF Fairford.

In this location it was not acceptable to have open bodies of water and this has formed the proposals incorporating agriculture's "best and most versatile land" with permanent pasture, lowland meadow, woodlands, wet woodlands, and reed marsh progressing to wet woodlands.

In order to achieve this, inert materials will be imported and follow the mineral extraction as closely as possible to return the land to the landform shown below.

As well as satisfying planning requirements, this part of the operation will be subject to control by the Environment Agency who look specifically at any risk of pollution and require all appropriate measures to be in place.

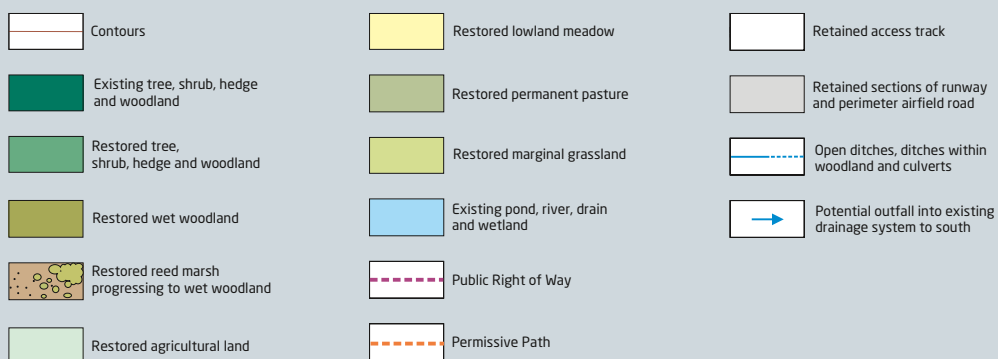
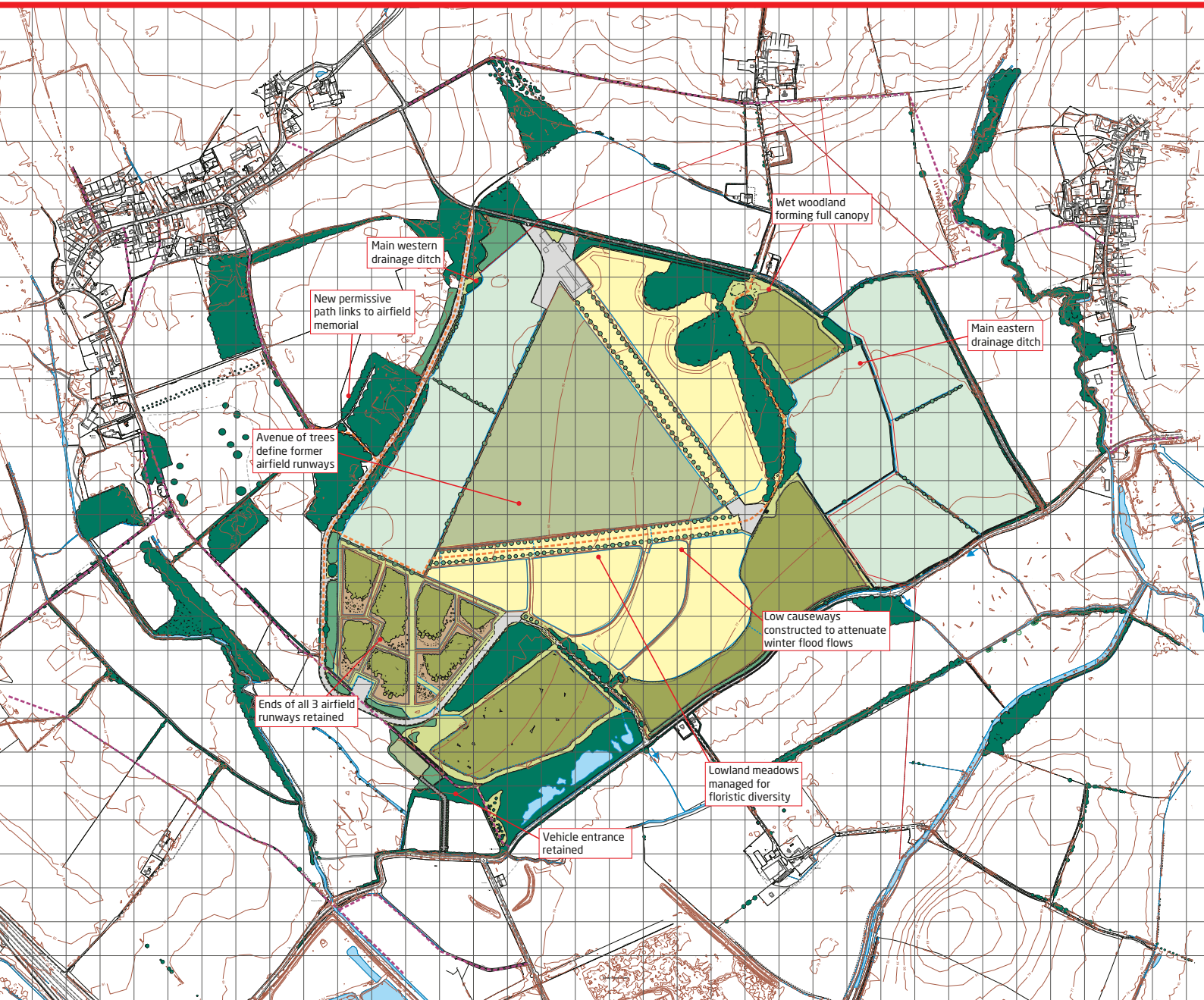
Hills has restored many quarries across the Cotswold Water Park as well as others elsewhere using imported inert materials and has substantial experience of the standards expected of them by the regulators.

After each area of the site has been restored to its final levels, extensive seeding and planting of new hedges and trees will take place.

A period of management will follow to ensure the various habitats and plantings flourish.

Even though there is no large open water in the restoration proposals, the bird management proposals that will be employed during the operational phases, will be updated and deployed on the land when it is returned to agriculture.

Restoration plan



Environmental considerations

Hills recognises the importance of protecting the local environment for future generations and has worked with the land owner to design a restoration which will significantly enhance the biodiversity interests of the land, maintain its farming heritage but additionally acknowledge its relatively recent use as an airfield and provide enhanced public access.

A full environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the proposal has been carried out, which looks at the potential significance of impacts, how these can be prevented or, where not possible, minimised and mitigated to acceptable levels.

The EIA includes detailed assessments on:

- Transport
- Water Environment
- Ecology & Biodiversity
- Archaeology & Cultural Heritage
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Landscape
- Agriculture

Transport

A new access is proposed onto the C124, an identified Local Lorry Route, and the majority of traffic will travel west directly onto the A419, a Strategic Route.

- When the extraction and restoration works are operating together HGVs are estimated to be **115 loads per weekday**
- When the restoration is the only operation at the site HGVs are estimated at **36 loads per weekday**
- Airfield Quarry HGVs will be relocating from nearby existing Hills' quarries as they near the end of their operational life. As a result, increases on the C124 will be lower than modelled in the Transport Assessment which has included those existing HGV movements as a worst case scenario.
- Additionally, during the life of Airfield Quarry other local mineral operations using the C124 and A419 will be ceasing operations with a corresponding drop in HGV traffic
- Hills operates a 'Good Driving Charter' with all its drivers and is a member of the 'How's My Driving?' scheme
- Hills is also committed in its support and promotion of the industry 'Cycle Safe' campaign.



Water environment

The assessment has looked at groundwater, surface water and the potential for flooding both during and after the operational life of the quarry.

- Information on groundwater from boreholes around the site has been collated and the presence of other mineral working in the area considered
- The likelihood of flooding and its extent has informed the design of the working site, for instance the location of offices and positioning of soil storage bunds
- The restoration incorporates attenuation basins and water discharge controls, to prevent increase in rates of rainfall runoff from the site, in accordance with UK guidance



- Additionally, land levels within flood zones are set to a lower level than currently, to increase flood storage capacity in the event of high rainfall.



Ecology & Biodiversity

Most of the site currently comprises arable fields, which offer limited opportunity for diverse habitats. The restoration proposed will introduce a wide range of new habitats giving a substantial gain to the wider environment.

- Extensive field work has been ongoing, looking at the land in terms of both flora and fauna, and an arboriculture survey has been carried out
- Working practices are designed to avoid impacts to wildlife e.g. soil stripping or removal of vegetation at appropriate times of the year
- Site restoration will improve the diversity of habitats with wildlife corridors forming linkages to surrounding habitats
- The proposals would see new areas of lowland meadow with deciduous woodland and reed marsh progressing to wet woodland
- Ecological monitoring will form part of the post restoration work ensuring habitats are managed appropriately.



Noise

The Government has set out specific guidance on noise associated with mineral extraction and restoration and that is the basis for the noise assessment.

- The noise assessment builds a computer model of noise levels through the full operation from soil stripping, bund building, mineral extraction and restoration. The operation of the plant site and vehicles moving around the site are also factored in
- The residences which were considered to represent the sensitive locations were agreed with the local Environmental Health officer at Cotswold District Council and background noise measurements taken
- The mineral extraction at Airfield Quarry will use conveyors to take mineral from the working area back to the plant site. Conveyors are considerably less noisy than using dump trucks
- The noise model confirms where any mitigation measures are needed and these are being incorporated into the overall design. As well as the

distance to properties, mitigation will include the positioning of the grassed soil bunds to act as a noise barrier where needed temporarily

- A site specific noise management plan will form part of the planning submission and operation of the quarry.



Measuring noise levels

Air quality

Consideration of air quality has two elements, vehicle exhaust pollution and dust. As with noise, the first step is to identify sensitive receptors. This has been done using information in the responses from Gloucestershire County Council, together with current guidance and local knowledge of the area. As well as residences, it also includes ecologically important sites.

The assessment uses the traffic numbers predicted and the routes they will follow and considers them against threshold limits provided in guidance as well as proximity to any sensitive receptors.

The assessment concludes that vehicle numbers do not fall within thresholds that would require detailed modelling.

Dust from all aspects of the operations on site is also considered. Mitigation measures include the use of conveyors, which cause much less dust to arise than dump trucks moving around site as well as the naturally damp nature of a sand and gravel quarry. The processing of the material also involves water.

The assessment concludes that, with measures in place, dust can be adequately controlled. A site specific dust management plan (DMP) will form part of the application which includes operational measures such as site speed limits, sheeting vehicles, water sprays on stockpiles and dust monitoring measures.



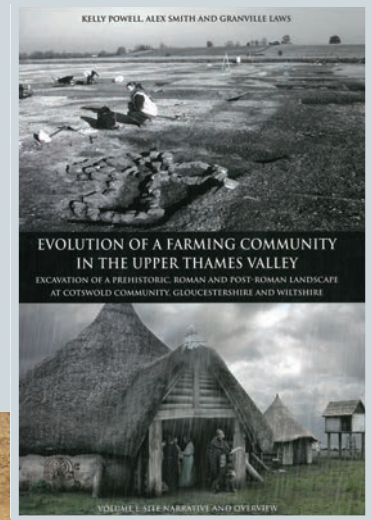
Archaeology

Substantial background information has already been collected with reviews of existing information sources, geophysical investigations and extensive field evaluation work.

It is well documented that this area is likely to have evidence of Roman occupation. The assessment work confirms this and also identifies potential for a range of other finds but nothing has been identified that is considered so significant to prevent mineral extraction.

The archaeology associated with mineral extraction across the Cotswold Water Park has provided considerable insight into the archaeological history of that area and this land has the same potential. At the Cotswold Community site at Shorncliffe, Gloucestershire, Hills spent over £1 million to fund the excavation and documenting of a significant Bronze Age farming settlement.

The exact measures will be agreed with the County Archaeologist but it is expected that an archaeologist will be on site as soil stripping takes place and should anything of significance be found, a specific further investigation undertaken.



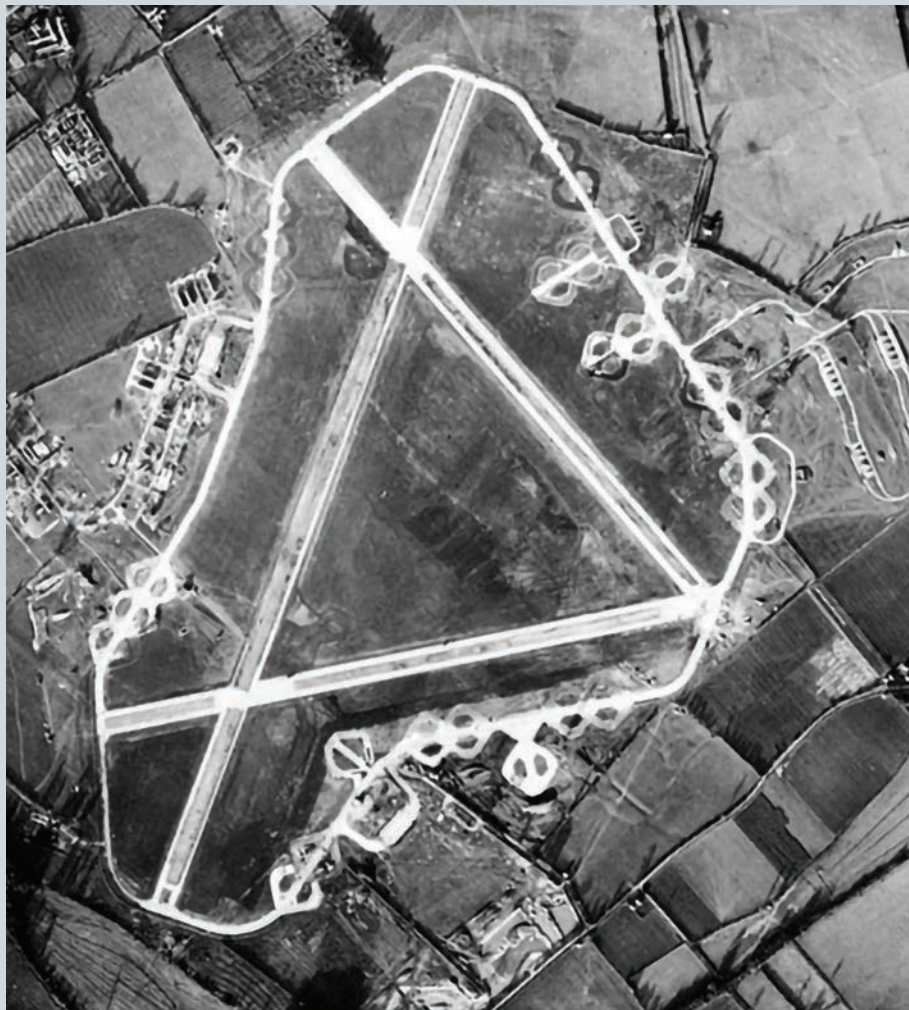
Cultural heritage

Often considered alongside archaeology, the potential for the development to impact on scheduled monuments, listed buildings and similar elements of the surrounding environment also forms part of the assessment work.

Heritage England will be involved in the consideration of this element of the proposals, but it also has overlap with other assessments such as noise, air quality and visual impact.

The World War II history of the airfield has also been part of the considerations and a number of proposals are being made to recognise that land use, such as:

- Addition of new permissive paths providing links to the existing war memorial, along with interpretation boards
- Avenues of trees will define the former airfield runways
- Existing ends of all three airfield runways to be retained



Visual and landscape

The views of the quarry and the processing area are very limited due to the screening effect of existing woodland and hedgerows within and adjacent to the site.

The landscape and visual impacts of the development would be limited by:

- Retention of blocks of woodland plantation to maintain the limited visibility of the site
- The early implementation of woodland planting on peripheral edges to provide landscape benefits
- Restoration to agricultural land in a similar field pattern to those existing and avoiding the creation of large water bodies that are usually associated with sand and gravel workings, but which are often uncharacteristic of the landscape setting
- The creation of additional native woodland linking existing blocks of various ages and types
- Creation of species rich lowland meadows and permanent pasture
- Creating additional public access to the land by two new permissive footpaths across the site which also create better east-west pedestrian links in the wider area.

Working with the community

Hills knows the importance of being a good neighbour and has formed liaison committees at their sites as a forum to discuss the site with the local community.

Quarries can be good educational facilities. Hills regularly gives access to local groups and schools who are interested in gaining a fascinating insight into the geology, fossils and prehistory of the local area together with learning more about the important role that quarries play in modern day life.



Awards

We have won awards for our restoration of former quarry sites and promotion of their biodiversity.

- **2019 Shorncote Quarry**
MPA Highly Commended Award for high quality restoration of Shorncote Quarry
- **2015 Cotswold Water Park**
MPA Special Award for Hills' contribution to restoration for wildlife conservation and recreation
- **2007 Langford Lakes**
MPA Chairman's Trophy for restoration of former gravel workings to a nature reserve (in conjunction with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust)
- **1999 Isis Lakes**
QPA Award for restoration of sand and gravel quarry to wildlife habitat with residential development (in conjunction with Watermark)
- **1996 Manor Farm**
QPA Award for restoration of sand and gravel quarry to wildlife habitat and leisure use
- **1994 Spinnaker Lake**
Sand & Gravel Association Award for restoration of sand and gravel quarry to leisure use.

Restoration of Dry Leaze quarry to agricultural fields



Next steps

Thank you for attending today's exhibition.

We welcome your feedback on our proposal and there are a number of ways you can do this:

- Complete a feedback form today and place it in the box provided;

or

- Visit the website **www.airfieldquarry.co.uk** and leave your comments in the 'Feedback' section;

or

- Write to us at:

**FREEPOST RTJC-RKKY-RYKR
Hills Quarry Products
Wiltshire House
County Park Business Centre
Shrivenham Road
Swindon SN1 2NR**

We will look at all the comments we receive and this will help to shape our final planning application.

We intend to submit our final application to Gloucestershire County Council in autumn 2020.