

PROPOSED SAND & GRAVEL EXTRACTION AT LOWER HALL FARM,
SAMLESBURY, PRESTON, LANCASHIRE
FOR
HARLEYFORD AGGREGATES LIMITED

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction, Background and Scope

1.1 I was commissioned in June 2013 to advise Harleyford Aggregates Limited (the Applicants) on the potential impact of their proposal to extract sand and gravel from an area alongside the River Ribble adjacent to Lower Hall Farm, Samlesbury, Nr. Preston, Lancashire. The following drawings have been used as a basis for this report :-

1/5,000 scale Site Survey Plan
Highway Layout Plans produced by consultants to the Applicants

1.2 I have carried out numerous Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA's) throughout the country since the late 1960's on many similar projects, and a considerable number relating to sand and gravel extraction schemes.

1.3 The report has also been supplemented with site and visibility photographs taken in June 2013 including visual assessments from public viewpoints. This assessment was used to assist in determining the form of the development so as to remove or minimise visual and other impacts. The report has been revised subsequently to reflect changes in the proposed development and mitigation works.

1.4 The purpose of this report is to assess the potential landscape and visual impact of the proposals. The report comprises :-

- i. a description of the site and its surroundings
- ii. details of the proposals
- iii. an appraisal of the landscape character of the site
- iv. an appraisal of the visual significance of the site
- v. an assessment of the potential impacts, including mitigation measures
- vi. a summary and conclusions

1.5 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been defined as a tool used to identify and assess the significance of the effects of change resulting in developments in both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right, and on people's views and visual amenity.

1.6 This study conforms generally with the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA) published by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and The Landscape Institute in April 2013. The GLVIA emphasises the aspects that are essential to successful landscape and visual impact assessment, which are (i) proportionality to ensure relevant weight is given to the most important elements; (ii)

transparency of professional judgement, to allow others to see how judgements have been reached; and (iii) what reasoning has been applied by the assessor and communication and presentation, so that those reading the LVIA can understand it.

- 1.7 The GVLIA emphasises that the work that is carried out in LVIA should be proportional to the scale and nature of the proposed development. Landscape professionals have responsibilities to the character and quality of the environment. Change in the landscape must be managed for the benefit of existing and future generations, seeking to enhance the diversity of the natural environment to enrich the human environment, and to improve them in a sustainable manner.

2. The Existing Situation (see Drawing Nos. 1040/PL1B – PL14A inclusive)

- 2.1 Using Ordnance Survey Sheets, reproduced under licence, a desk-top study has been carried out to identify the physical components of the local area, to identify areas of high ground, significant ridgelines, woodlands and potential location of views into and from the Application Site. The following data was used :-

- O.S. Landranger Sheet (1/50,000)
- O.S. Land Plan information (1/10,000)
- Vertical Aerial Photographs
- The Applicants' Site Survey Plan

- 2.2 The land in the control of the Applicants and the Application Site at Samlesbury are the same and are identified by a red line. The Application Site consists of a large meander of the River Ribble to the east of Preston and a group of fields lying on the gently sloping valley side to the south up to the A59. The Development Area (the extent of operations and landscape works, edged in orange, is contained within the Application Site and consists of (i) a substantial part of the meander (the extraction and processing plant areas); and (ii) a corridor within the group of fields to the A59 forming the route of a private access road.

- 2.3 Drawing No. 1040/PL1B is an extract from the 1/10,000 scale Ordnance Survey maps, reproduced under licence which covers an area of approximately 4.5 x 3.5km. The Application Site is shown edged in red. It will be seen that the land under the Applicants' control consists of (i) the terrace of the River Ribble which is a generally flat area at an elevation around 15m AOD set approximately 2-3m above river level and (ii) the valley side which rises from 15m AOD to a plateau at about 55m AOD at the A59 and which is traversed by the private access road. In this location the Ribble Valley is approximately 1.5km wide running to the sea in a north east to south west direction. The valley slopes are densely wooded on the northern side, but a mixture of open farmland and woodland where the slopes are less steep to the south. The other major corridor is that of the M6 Motorway running south to north, with the adjacent Junction 31 as the access to Preston which, with the exception of the large industrial area immediately north of the Application Site, is located west of the motorway. Between the river and M6 corridors is the former sand and gravel works at Brockholes, which is now a recreation and wildlife park run by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust. The east/west Preston New Road dual carriageway runs south of Samlesbury. As can be seen from the plan the site lies within the urban fringe of Preston and is surrounded by typical urban fringe development. The site is located in the Green Belt, but is not within any landscape designation or any defined valued landscape where specific landscape considerations or policies may apply.

- 2.4 Drawing No. 1040/PL2A is a District aerial photograph covering a similar area to the Location Plan. The Application Site is edged in red and the Development Area is identified in orange on the plan. It will be seen from the aerial photograph that the area immediately surrounding the Development Area includes the following landscape features :-
- i. Preston (east) and the Red Scar Industrial area to the north (the Samlesbury Airfield industrial zone is just off the plan to the east)
 - ii. Scattered settlements and farmstead
 - iii. The Brewery and Sewage Works to the south
 - iv. The River Ribble corridor
 - v. The M6 Motorway, the A59 and junction 31
 - vi. Private Residences
 - vii. Woodland including Boilton Wood, Red Scar & Nab Woods, SSSI's
 - viii. Grazing land
 - ix. Arable land
 - x. Hedgerows
 - xi. The Brockholes Centre
 - xii. The former Lower Brockholes sand and gravel quarry
- 2.5 Drawing No. 1040/PL3A is an aerial photograph which covers the area of the proposed extraction, the River Ribble corridor, and the areas immediately to the north (Elston Farm), east (Lower Hall Farm, Bezza House, Seed Park and Seed House), and west (Brockholes and Boilton Wood). The northern section of the proposed access route and the Development Area is shown edged in orange.
- 2.6 Drawing No. 1040/PL4A is a 1/5,000 scale plan, based on the OS plans plus the site survey plan, which shows the existing situation on the Application Site and in the surrounding area. The OS data has been supplemented with information gained from on-site surveys and inspections, aerial photographs and other documented information. The Development Area is shown edged in orange and comprises two main elements :-
- i. The proposed extraction area, including the plant site west of Bezzabrook Nursery (approximately 65ha).
 - ii. The route of the proposed access road from the dual carriageway (Preston New Road) approximately 1km to the south east, running west and then north to the Plant Site (see Drawing No. 1040/PL5).

Drawing No. 1040/PL4A also illustrates :-

- i. The existing topography of the eastern part of the extraction area (a flat low plateau at around 15m AOD), some 2-3m above the normal level of the River Ribble.
- ii. Scrub over former mineral workings in the western part of the extraction area (worked from the 1930's to the early 1950's).
- iii. Samlesbury Lower Hall which is located at the northern end of Potters Lane adjacent to Lower Hall Farm is a Grade II listed building. The house thought to have been built c. 1625 by Thomas Walmsley to replace the original Lower Hall. It is now ruined with

only the front wall remaining comprising red sandstone with yellow and white stone dressings.

- 2.7 A series of photographs have been taken within the Application Site, i.e. at public and non-public viewpoints and along the proposed route of the new access road. These are included on Site Photograph Sheets 1-6 (Drawing Nos. 1040/PL6 – 11) and illustrate the existing site features, ground formation and views out into the surrounding landscape. These locations are identified on Drawing Nos. 1040/PL4A and 5. Views from the public rights of way in the vicinity are included in the Visibility Study (Section 10).

3. Pre Application Consultation

- 3.1 Various discussions have taken place pre-Application with the Mineral Planning Authority, the Parish Council, The District Council, Environment Agency, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and others. These have resulted in amendments to the scheme now submitted which include suggestions that resulted from these consultations.

4. Landscape Policies and Guidelines

- 4.1 The following landscape policies have been considered as having relevance to this development. The condition of the landscape of the application site in relation to those policies is assessed.
- 4.2 **The National Planning Policy Framework 2018.** The introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced the previous Planning Policy Statements and Mineral Planning Guidance Notes. The NPPF was first published in 2012. A revised NPPF (the 'NPPF' for the purposes of this assessment) was published in summer 2018.
- 4.3 Section 15 of the NPPF sets out the Government's policy on conserving and enhancing the natural environment including landscape. Paragraph 170 states that policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, inter alia, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (170a); and recognizing the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services (170b).

In relation to 170a in the NPPF, the site is not located within, or adjoining or within the zone of influence of any statutory landscape designation. The assessment of the quality of the landscape of the site and its relationship to the term 'valued landscape' is not defined in the NPPF or elsewhere. However, in decision making, the 2018 NPPF has clarified that decisions on protecting and enhancing valued landscapes should be undertaken "in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality". While valued landscape may exist outside designated landscapes, not all the countryside is valued landscape because some countryside will be of low quality. To pass the test of 'valued landscape' the landscape needs to demonstrate attributes and qualities which take it out of being 'ordinary' landscape.

This quality may be informed by local policies or surveys but is primarily a reflection of the attributes of a particular site. The Lancashire Landscape Strategy does not define, describe or map landscape quality. Neither does the Minerals Plan. The Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012) does not define, describe or map landscape quality, but in relation to Green

Infrastructure assets it displays in Figure 14 a plan of the whole of Lancashire coloured according to the significance of those assets. The application site is mapped as being of the lowest environmental significance. The South Ribble Local Plan (2015) does not define, describe or map landscape quality across the authority, but Policy G4 in that Plan provides a presumption against development in “valuable open areas of land” which are defined as ‘Protected Open Land’ in that policy. However, these ‘valuable’ areas of land are valued to ensure breaks in between settlements and consist of a very few discreet areas in and around the urban areas. The application site is not within or adjoining a Policy G4 ‘valuable’ area. The statutory status of the application site is therefore a site of no landscape quality other than it being merely open countryside, albeit as defined of the lowest environmental significance in the Core Strategy .

The actual quality of the landscape will reflect the characteristics of the site. There is no defined mechanism to assess such characteristics. However, recent cases considering this point have used factors set out in Box 5.1 of the ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’, 3rd Edition, as an indicative methodology. Using that procedure the ‘value’ of the landscape in the application site can be considered as follows:

- (i) The physical condition of the landscape – the landscape consists of three main elements, (a) a poorly restored former mineral working; (b) a flat featureless intensive agricultural landscape with poor hedgerows and few trees; and (c) an area of typical undulating lowland farmland; such that the landscape is no more than ordinary but might be considered of being less than ordinary;
- (ii) The scenic quality – because of its typical or featureless nature the landscape itself has no particular scenic appeal and is neither within or adjacent to or impacting on designated landscapes of scenic importance;
- (iii) The presence of rare or distinctive landscape elements – the landscape has no rare or distinctive elements;
- (iv) The presence of any particularly important landscape elements – the landscape does not contain any such elements, other than having, in part, less floodplain trees and poor quality hedgerows and therefore containing less important landscape elements;
- (v) The presence of ecological, heritage, geological, etc features of particular interest – the area contains a very limited range and number of such features as would exist in ordinary countryside, but none of which are of particular importance in the value of the landscape;
- (vi) The recreational experience of the landscape – there is no public access and no recreational value of the landscape other than of a very limited nature in relation to fishing from the banks of the Ribble;
- (vii) Is the landscape one of wilderness and tranquility – this is a working landscape where noise, lighting, etc from the M6/A59 and the Red Scar industrial area dominate the landscape, it is a location of intensive farming;
- (viii) Does it have associations with famous people or important historic events – there are no particularly important such relationships.

The above indicates that this site is perhaps a typical piece of ordinary lowland landscape, which has some detrimental characteristics (featureless, intensive agriculture, few trees, impact of noise, etc) and where its landscape value is low in policy terms and based on assessment of the site itself. It does not pass the test of being ‘valued’ landscape.

In relation to 170b in the NPPF the genesis of the proposed development recognized the character and such limited intrinsic beauty as exists at the site and these factors were considered in determining the detail of the operations, landscaping and the form of the

restoration scheme. Further the landscaping and restoration works by the provision of further tree and hedgerow planting and the provision of the wetland feature contribute significantly to green infrastructure, natural capital and ecosystem services and ensure a net gain in landscape character, value and quality.

4.4 Section 17 of the NPPF sets out the Government’s policy on facilitating the sustainable use of minerals and the relevant landscape and environmental considerations in that process. Paragraph 203 states that: *“It is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.*

4.3.1 Local Authorities are required inter alia by paragraph 204 of the NPPF to provide policies which:

- *provide for the extraction of mineral resources of local and national importance (204a)*
- *set out criteria or requirements to ensure that permitted and proposed operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment or human health, taking into account the cumulative effects of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or a number of sites in a locality (204f).*
- *ensure that worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity, taking account of aviation safety, and that high quality restoration and aftercare of mineral sites takes place (204h).*

4.5 When determining planning applications Local Authorities are required inter alia by paragraph 205 of the NPPF to ensure that *“great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy”* and in considering proposals mineral planning authorities should:

- *as far as practical, provide for the maintenance of landbanks of non-energy minerals from outside National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and World Heritage Sites, scheduled monuments and conservation areas (205a)*
- *ensure that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment, human health or aviation safety, and take into account the cumulative effect of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or from a number of sites in a locality (205b)*
- *provide for restoration and aftercare at the earliest opportunity, to be carried out to high environmental standards, through the application of appropriate conditions (205e)*

These considerations have been taken into account in the proposed development and its landscaping and restoration.

4.6 The National Planning Policy Guidance.

The National Planning Policy Guidance is web based guidance that is updated as required. It adds further context to the NPPF. It requires that planning applications should provide a landscape strategy, as appropriate. A site specific landscape strategy is required to accompany applications for either a new site or any significant extension to an existing working site. The strategy should include:

- *defining the key landscape opportunities and constraints;*

- *considering potential directions of working, significant waste material locations, degrees of visual exposure etc;*
- *Identifying the need for additional screening during operations;*
- *identifying proposed after-uses and preferred character for the restored landscape.*

These considerations have been taken into account in the development.

Green Belt

The Green Belt covers the whole of the development site and most of the adjacent land. The purpose of the Green Belt is not related directly to landscape quality or change. However, in determining development in the Green Belt considerations of visual impact and landscape change are relevant in their own right. Such matters are considered in this assessment. It is noted that visual impact is limited and restricted to part of the valley of the Ribble, most of which has no public access, and to limited views from footpaths in the area and views from a small area at Brockholes on the other side of the Ribble. It is concluded that the development will lead to changes in the landscape. However, those changes meet the objectives of national and local policy in relation to mineral supply and will provide positive landscape (and biodiversity) improvements in line with national and local landscape policy objectives in respect of enhancing the landscape, biodiversity and the Green Belt. These changes will not remove or harm the essential open nature of the landscape, nor thereby harm the openness of the Green Belt, during operations or after restoration. The development and the changes in the landscape will give rise to visual impacts but these will be low to negligible when mitigated and a positive contribution to the visual scene on restoration.

The Lancashire Landscape Strategy

4.7 The Lancashire Landscape Strategy was published in December 2000 to assist the review of the then in force Structure Plan and to provide good practice guidance. While the timescale of the Strategy was to be concurrent with the Structure Plan review to 2016, and the Strategy is therefore somewhat out of time, the main considerations in the description of the landscape character in the Strategy still apply. The Strategy consists of two parts the first being the Landscape Character Assessment and the second the Landscape Strategy.

- (a) **Landscape Character Assessment** – this document is a *“comprehensive integrated landscape and assessment of Lancashire including the urban areas to produce a landscape strategy informed by the landscape character assessment process (Section 1).*
 - (i) The Application Site lies within Landscape Character Area 5 (the route of the private access road) – ‘Undulating Lowland Farmland’ and specifically in category 5c, ‘Lower Ribble’, and 5d ‘Samlesbury-Withnell Fold’; and Landscape Character Area 11 – ‘Valley Floodplain’ (the location of the extraction area and plant site) in particular in category 11a – ‘Lower Ribble Valley’
 - (ii) The relevant description for category 5 is of: *“a lowland landscape traversed by deeply incised wooded cloughs and gorges with many mixed farm woodlands, copses and hedgerow trees creating an impression of a well wooded landscape from ground level and patchwork of wood and pasture from raised viewpoints – the landscape type is of gentle topography – many of the woodlands which survive on the steep slopes of the deep cloughs and valley sides are of ancient*

origin and represent a rich natural resource – hedges and hedgerow trees are also important in an otherwise intensively managed landscape – standing bodies of water are important habitats within the area”. Specific description of the character areas note that the Lower Ribble has “a distinctive broad valley landform – there is a particularly distinctive pattern of wooded cloughs which descend the valley sides – a complex pattern of hedges and woodland form links to these wooded cloughs, giving an overall impression of a well wooded landscape”; while for the Samlesbury-Withnell Fold it is noted that this is “a gently undulating landscape of large lush green pastures divided by low cut hedgerows and hedgerow trees”, but one influenced by infrastructure such as “road routes, industrial works, the airfield at Samlesbury and built development on the edges of Preston”

- (iii) *The relevant description for category 11 is of a landscape of “broad, flat, open floodplains on the valley floors of the larger lowland rivers – subject to periodic flooding and their rich alluvial drift deposits support fertile grazing land for cattle and sheep. Although part of the wider landscape of the valleys, the floodplains have distinctive landscape patterns and land use pressures. They are characterized by large river meanders eroded bluffs and terraces, standing water and steep wooded banks, which enclose the floodplain and determine its edge. Large fields are divided by post and wire fencing, hedgerows or stone walls and mature floodplain trees are characteristic of the pastoral landscape – the floodplains themselves remain rural and unpopulated except for the visitors who fish or walk the riverside footpaths” and that “floodplains meander gently across wide green pastures, in places the river crosses a flat valley floor bordered by distinct bluffs, but elsewhere the floodplain rises gently to the undulating landscape beyond”. It is also noted that “classic floodplain features; such as oxbow lakes and abandoned channels are important landscape features” where “the river channels provide important linear freshwater and wetland habitats which support diverse aquatic plants and invertebrates, as well as birds and fish. However agricultural intensification, drainage, flood defence work and urban/industrial development ensures that nature conservation interest is concentrated in remnant areas of neutral grassland, wet meadows, domed mosses, areas of standing water and marshland. Small areas of woodland on the valley sides and hedges and isolated trees fringing the river channels, also provide important resources for nature conservation. Areas of river shingle and shallow wet margins are important for breeding birds and other wildlife, whilst eroding banks are an essential nesting habitat for kingfisher and sand martin”. The description also notes that “The wide valleys continue to provide an important communication route for main roads, rail lines and canals” and that “sands and gravels are now being worked at Higher Brockholes”. The specific description of the Lower Ribble Valley notes that “The open flat and fertile plain of the Lower Ribble is a pastoral, tranquil landscape containing the meandering course of the river. Its extent is defined by the steep wooded bluffs and terraces which enclose the floodplain. Lush green fields of semi-improved pasture are grazed by sheep and cattle. The large regular fields are defined by gappy hedgerows, supplemented by sections of post and wire wooded fencing or stone walls. This array of materials and styles conveys a lack of visual unity despite the natural beauty of the landscape. Mature floodplain trees are notable features in this character area, ash and oak stand in the floodplain, their silhouettes striking against the open landscape. There is little settlement within*

the floodplain itself, but a number of large farms and country halls are positioned along the edges of the floodplain.

- (b) **Landscape Strategy** – this “builds on the Landscape Character Assessment ... it provides an overview of forces for change A landscape evaluation, strategies and recommendations for each individual landscape character type and broad guidance on priorities and actions for implementing the Landscape Strategy as a whole” with the objectives of (i) reviewing the forces of change, (ii) identifying the implications of that change and strategies to manage landscape change positively, and (iii) identifying the key actions to bring about positive landscape change. The Strategy is not intended to be prescriptive but to act as a catalyst for positive landscape change through a partnership such that planning authorities set out policy and guidance, which landowners and developers can use to inform their decisions on development so as to provide creative options for landscape change, particularly in relation to tree and woodland planting and habitat creation. This will be achieved by taking a positive integrated approach to landscape resources and change securing no net loss, with possible gains, by taking advantage of radical landscape change via creative solutions for new landscapes and habitats. This approach should maximize opportunities for nature conservation and restrict public access where there is a risk of erosion or disturbance to wildlife. In relation to mineral working the Strategy notes:-

- (i) Section 2.4 Mineral Extraction and Landfill :-

“Mineral Extraction – Lancashire contains extensive mineral resources, some of which are of national and regional significance. The most important of these are construction minerals such as limestone, gritstone, sand and gravel and shale.

Minerals can only be worked where they occur. Detailed policies for the control of new mineral workings are included in the emerging Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Planning decisions on proposals will be made having regard to their overall environmental impact and landscape impact will be an important determining consideration. There is potential for extended or new mineral operations to have negative implications for visual amenity, landscape character, archaeological and ecological resources, although detailed restoration plans are always required. Landscape impacts can also result from quarry traffic.

Restoration of completed mineral workings offers a positive opportunity to bring land back into production use and/or to maximize its amenity or ecological value. However, where extensive sand and gravel extraction is restored as part of a leisure complex, permanent structures, infrastructure, gardens and sports facilities may diminish rural character and nature conservation value

Summary of Key Issues for Mineral Extraction

The principal pressures for change arising from mineral extraction are :-

- *The impacts of extractive workings both during operation and following restoration, together with the impact on historic sites, industrial archaeology and characteristic patterns of fields, woodlands and settlements;*

- *The visual impact of traffic associated with mineral workings, especially on traffic routes through rural areas;*
- (ii) The Landscape Strategy itemizes “*Local Forces for Change and their Landscape Implications*” and the “*Landscape Strategy*” for each landscape character types with recommendations on how to achieve the Strategy objectives.
 - (iii) For Character 5 the relevant ‘Forces of Change’ in relation to the proposed development in the Strategy include (i) a decline in mature hedgerow and parkland trees – noting little evidence for new planting; (ii) intensive agricultural management – noting the harmful effects of fertilizer and herbicide on fields and rivers ; and (iii) pressure for visitor facilities – noting signs, car parks, restaurants resulting in suburbanization of the landscape. The relevant ‘Recommendations’ include (i) encourage natural regeneration of river woodlands by excluding grazing; (ii) conserve ancient semi-natural woodlands; (iii) planting new hedgerows; (iv) avoid road improvements that would affect verges or walls; (v) encourage planting and links to existing woods and hedgerows to provide a continuous network or ‘stepping stones’ of trees, hedgerows and wood; (vi) promote the restoration of habitats to develop linkages for wildlife; (vii) use typical species in plantings; and thereby (viii) leading to landscape change which will show an increase in woodland and hedgerows.
 - (iv) For Character 11 the relevant ‘Forces of Change’ in relation to the proposed development in the Strategy include (i) loss of views and riparian habitat by fencing on river corridors – noting the effects of grazing and planting; (ii) increased risk of agricultural pollution – noting its impact on rivers; (iii) decline of floodplain trees – noting the loss is due to over-maturity; (iv) pressure for sand and gravel extraction – noting that the visual impact may provide long term opportunities for wetland habitat; and (v) pressure for recreation along the valley floor – noting that this may damage the character of the landscape by urbanization. The relevant ‘Recommendations’ include (i) encourage low intensity grazing and managing riparian habitats; (ii) conserve a natural river form and floodplain features such as old channels, ponds and islands; (iii) extend and link floodplain woods to those on the valley side; (iv) undertake tree planting to provide a new generation of native floodplain trees, including particularly Black Poplar; (v) manage public access to sensitive river banks and wet meadows to avoid erosion and disturbance to wildlife; (vi) seek opportunities for wetland habitat restoration; (vii) encourage conservation of existing trees as well as new tree planting and floodplain woodlands; (viii) ensure every opportunity is taken to provide wetland habitat to deliver biodiversity objectives; and thereby (ix) leading to landscape change which will show an increase in floodplain trees, woodlands and wetland habitats.
 - (v) This project has taken due regard of these, where possible and applicable, and details in Section 12 show how these proposals will implement many of these recommendations.

Other Landscape Policies in Lancashire

4.8 The Minerals Core Strategy through Policy CS5 seeks to protect landscapes of historic and cultural importance from harm, but this is not such a landscape; it also seeks to protect and enhance the character of the landscape and ensure that restoration is appropriate to the landscape character. The Minerals Sites Plan through Policy DM2 seeks to ensure that demonstrable harm to

factors such as landscape do not arise or can be mitigated and that development proposals will make a positive contribution to landscape character where appropriate. The Review Plan, in Policy MW1, reiterates the need to prevent harm to the landscape.

There are no specific relevant landscape policies in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy or the South Ribble Local Plan.

5. Landscape Character and Methodology Assessment Elements

- 5.1 This study conforms generally with the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA) published by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and The Landscape Institute in 2013. The GLVIA emphasises the aspects that are essential to successful landscape and visual impact assessment :- proportionality to ensure relevant weight is given to the most important elements; transparency of professional judgement; to allow others to see how judgements have been reached and what reasoning has been applied by the assessor and communication and presentation, so that those reading the LVIA can understand it.
- 5.2 The GLVIA defines the difference between 'Landscape' and 'Visual' effects as 'an assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on the landscape as a resource', whereas 'an assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity'. The third edition of the GLVIA emphasises the need to build the assessment around a consistent framework of factors, ensuring a clear judgement and transparency. It follows the guidance of EC directives which require the identification of '**likely significant effects**' rather than **any or all effects**.
- 5.3 The specific landscape character of an area can be recognised by the presence of an identifiable and consistently recurring pattern of elements, which are representative of generic character types, or unique character areas. These range from large scale regional landscapes to small localised zones. Landscape character results from a combination of geology, landform, landcover, hydrology, vegetation, landuse management, as well as historical influences and ecological assets. Before determining the impact of the development the nature of the local character should be established by studying national and regional policy guidance and carrying out on-site investigations. The National guidance for landscape character is the Countryside Agency's Natural Areas Character Map of England and also English Nature's document, which are large-scale nationwide assessments. The Character Map of England considers all aspects of landscape character whereas the Natural Areas are formally defined as 'biogeographic zones which reflect the geological foundations, the natural systems and processes and the wildlife in different parts of England, and provide a framework for setting objectives for nature conservation'. Regional-scale character assessments should be consulted and on-site investigations ensure a detailed definition of the local landscape character. Having defined the local landscape character, an assessment is made of the impact of development on it. This is done by evaluating the landscape's sensitivity and the magnitude of impact of the development.
- 5.4 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition include a list of the range of factors that help in the identification of valued landscapes.

"5.39 Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

- 5.40 – 43 - *Susceptibility to change;*
- 5.44-47 *Value of landscape receptor*
- 5.49 *Size or Scale*
- 5.50 *Geographical extent*
- 5.51 & 5.52 *Duration and reversibility of the landscape effects*
- 5.53-5.57 *Judging overall significance of landscape effects*

The determination of the sensitivity of the landscape resource is based upon an evaluation of each key element or characteristic of the landscape likely to be affected. The evaluation will reflect such factors as its quality, value, contribution to landscape character, and the degree to which the particular element or characteristic can be replaced or substituted.

5.5 The table below focuses on capacity to accept this change and a value of the sensitivity of the landscape. The condition of the landscape is a judgement from a visual, functional and ecological perspective and reflects the physical state of individual features and elements which make up the character of the place :-

Table 1: Sensitivity of landscape

Sensitivity of Landscape		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Capacity to accept this type of development :					
Difference in land use	The land use proposed does not exist in this landscape	Land uses of a similar scale currently exist	The proposed type of land use is found in this landscape	The proposed type of land use is common to this landscape	
Difference in pattern and scale	Such a proposal is vastly different in terms of pattern and scale	Such a proposal is not similar to the landscape in terms of pattern and scale	Elements with a similar pattern and scale	Elements with the same pattern and scale	
Visual enclosure/ Openness of views	The landscape is open with high visibility	The landscape is moderately open with some visibility	Semi-enclosed landscape	Enclosed landscape with low visibility	
Value placed on the landscape	National designation National Park, AONB and regional designation	Regional designation	Local designation	No designation	
Policy objective for the landscape	Proposal conflicts with objectives	There are minor conflicts between the proposal and the objectives	Proposal neither fits nor conflicts with objectives	Proposal does not conflict with policy objectives	
Condition of the landscape	Very high, with recognisable elements in good repair	Moderate, distinctive elements, some in need of repair	Low, non distinctive elements in need of repair	Poor, with elements which are in disrepair	

5.6 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition, detail the scale or magnitude of landscape impacts as follows:-

5.48 Each effect on landscape receptors needs to be assessed in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility.

The evaluation of the individual effects may be quantified within a series of categories, indicating a gradation from high to negligible. In all cases the thresholds should be clearly defined, readily understood and applicable for all circumstances. The assessment of the scale or magnitude of relative effects is generally based on the scale and degree of change to the landscape, the nature of the effects, their duration and whether it is permanent or temporary, or indeed whether the effects are reversible. Some effects may be easily quantified, i.e. the number of mature trees and length of hedgerow to be lost as a result, and the extent of new and replacement planting to take place at restoration.

5.7 The judgements should take account of :-

- *The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape – in some cases this may be quantified;*
- *The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones – for example, removal of hedges may change a small-scale, intimate landscape into a large-scale, open one, or introduction of new buildings or tall structures may alter open skylines;*
- *Whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.*

5.8 A combination of the factors below are used to assess of the magnitude of impact on the landscape. The following factors address the detailed nature of the change :-

Table 2: Magnitude of Impact of the development on that landscape.

Magnitude of Impact (or change to view)		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Capacity to accept this type of development :					
	Characteristic landscape features are lost	Yes, most of the characteristic landscape features are lost- or those which are lost are irreplaceable.	Yes, some of the characteristic landscape features are lost	No, none or a small quantity of the characteristic landscape features is lost. Or those which are lost are replaceable.	No, none of the characteristic landscape features are lost
	Characteristic BAP habitats are lost	Yes, most of the characteristic BAP habitats are lost – or those which are lost are irreplaceable	Yes, some of the characteristic BAP habitats are lost	No, none or a small quantity of the characteristic BAP habitats is lost. Or those which are lost are replaceable	No, none of the characteristic BAP habitats are lost
Contribution to the local landscape character :					

	Development is characteristic in terms of scale, mass, colour, texture, form or features	No	Some of it is characteristic, some of it isn't	Yes, most of the development is characteristic	Yes, all of the development is characteristic
	Scope for mitigation and replacement of features and/or potential for characteristic BAP habitats	Little or no scope for mitigating features or characteristic BAP habitats	Some scope for mitigating features or characteristic BAP habitats	Much scope for mitigating features or characteristic BAP habitats	Great scope for mitigating features or characteristic BAP habitats

5.9 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition states :-

5.56 – there are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and landscape context and with the type of proposal. At opposite ends of a spectrum it is reasonable to say that :

- *Major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes are likely to be of the greatest significance;*
- *Reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value are likely to be of the least significance and may, depending on the circumstances, be judged as not significant;*
- *Where assessments of significance place landscape effects between these extremes, judgements must be made about whether or not they are significant, with full explanations of why these conclusions have been reached.*

<p><i>Loss of mature or diverse landscape elements, features, characteristics, aesthetic or perceptual qualities.</i></p> <p><i>Effects on rare, distinctive, particularly representative landscape character.</i></p> <p><i>Loss of lower-value elements, features, characteristics, aesthetic or perceptual qualities.</i></p>
<p><i>Loss of new, uniform, homogeneous elements, features, characteristics, qualities.</i></p> <p><i>Effects on areas in poorer condition or of degraded character.</i></p> <p><i>Effects on lower-value landscapes.</i></p>

More significant



Less Significant

The assessments of sensitivity of the landscape and the magnitude of impact are used to determine the significance of the overall landscape effect which is calculated in the following table :-

Table 3: Assessment of potential significance of landscape impacts

SENSITIVITY	NEGLIGIBLE	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	SIGNIFICANCE
MAGNITUDE					
NEGLIGIBLE	0	2	4	6	NEGLIGIBLE 0
LOW	1	3	5	7	SLIGHT 1 - 3
MEDIUM	2	4	6	8	MODERATE 4 - 6
HIGH	3	5	7	9	SUBSTANTIAL 7-9

6. The Landscape Character in context (see Drawing Nos. 1040/PL12A to 14A incl.)

6.1 Drawing No. 1040/PL12A is a version of the Location Plan which has been coloured to illustrate and identify topography, landform and areas of significant vegetation. This includes :-

- i. Areas of significant vegetation, which it will be seen are mainly confined to the steeper slopes of the river valley.
- ii. Land which is lower than, or roughly equivalent to the elevation of the Application Site (approx. 15m AOD).
- iii. Land above this level, as identified in the Key.
- iv. The line of the principal ridgelines/plateau edge.
- v. The routes of the principal roads (M6 and Preston New Road) and the meandering River Ribble running north east/south west through the valley floodplain.

It will be seen that the site lies astride the flat bottom river valley within the steep physical and visual enclosure of the Woodland Scars, with gently sloping slopes to the south and east.

6.2 Drawing No. 1040/PL13A is a version of the Location Plan (1040/PL1B) on which the National and Regional Landscape Character areas have been shown. These include the following as illustrated in the Key :-

- i. The Character Areas of England:
 - (a) Area 32 Lancashire and Amounderness Plain – an area west of the M6 motorway including the outskirts of Preston.
 - (b) Area 33 Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill – an area in the north west on the higher ground.

- (c) Area 35 Lancashire Valleys – the majority of the area shown on the drawing which includes the River Ribble valley bottom and valley sides and includes the Application Site.
 - ii. A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire (Character Assessment):
This document, referred to in 4.11 above, identifies (a) “Area 5 – Undulating Lowland Farmland”, and more specifically area 5c Lower Ribble and area 5d Samlesbury-Withnell Fold; and (b) “Area 11 – Valley Floodplain” which is also the more specific area 11a – The Lower Ribble Valley Floodplain, in which the Application Site lies.
 - iii. All of the above areas are described on the drawing using extracts from the above documents. It will be seen that the Application Site lies within the Lancashire Valleys (the eastern section of the proposed access road) and the remainder in the Valley Floodplain designations.
- 6.3 Drawing No. 1040/PL14A is a similar plan to the above but illustrates some relevant land uses, allocations in the three administrative districts within the area covered by the plan, i.e. Preston, Ribble Valley and South Ribble. From the drawing it will be seen that the Application Site lies at the northern end of South Ribble District. The relevant matters of interest in the area are as follows :-
- i. Green Belt, the whole of the South Ribble Plan area shown on this drawing is so designated, as is the adjacent part of Preston, but not that part of Ribble Valley.
 - ii. Biological Heritage Sites, these include, the Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods SSSI, and other woodlands on the flanks of the valley of the Ribble and elsewhere, including the site of the new access road at its junction with A59.
 - iii. Wildlife Corridors, which includes primarily the River Ribble itself, plus one near Bezza House, one south of Seed House, and one south of the A59 as illustrated.
 - iv. The eastern fringe of Preston and notably the extensive Red Scar industrial area and adjacent crematorium immediately to the north of Red Scar wood, including further allocations for industrial use to the north, east and south.

7. Brief Description of the Proposals (see Drawing Nos. 1040/PL15 – 28A incl.)

- 7.1 Design is an iterative process, i.e. as it is developed the potential effects are addressed, negative effects are avoided or minimised and opportunities are sought for enhancement sometimes by consultation.
- 7.2 The development has been fully detailed in the Planning Statement produced by the Applicants. There follows a brief synopsis which should be read in conjunction with the drawings described hereafter.
- 7.3 Drawing No. 1040/PL15, which is a version of Drawing No. 1040/PL5, shows the proposed route of the new access road to 1/5,000 scale. From its new junction with the eastbound carriageway of the dualled Preston New Road, the proposed road will cross through five fields and over three public rights of way during its approximate 1km long route to the low level plant site. The new road has been carefully located in order to mitigate its impact by the following :-

- i. Wherever possible to keep it close to the existing field boundary hedgerows/linear woodlands to provide a visual backdrop and screen as well as reduce the loss of agricultural land to a minimum but normally keeping at least some 10 metres from such features so as to protect root systems and allow for marginal shrubby ecotone planting in that gap.
- ii. To make use of the ground formation to provide visual and aural screening but with the provision of landscaped screening features where possible.
- iii. To limit the removal of existing trees and hedgerow sections as much as possible and to provide new hedgerows alongside the haul road to compensate for the loss of hedgerows both in constructing the haul road and in the extraction area.

The introduction of substantial areas of new tree planting as shown on the drawing, will supplement existing vegetation and add further visual mitigation and habitat. This will also include the planting of new woodland areas on adjoining land as shown. The Applicant has received an assurance from the land owner that all existing trees and woodland under the control of the Applicant within the Application Site and those on the periphery of the Application Site will be managed in such a way that these woodlands will continue to provide visual containment and wildlife corridors. A provision to that effect is to be included within a Unilateral Undertaking under S106.

7.4 A series of phased extraction and progressive restoration drawings have been produced (Drawing Nos. 1040/PL16 – 27A inclusive) to illustrate in detail the full extent of the proposal to work the area and remove approx. 3.5m min depth of sand & gravel. These are described as follows:-

- i. Drawing No. 1040/PL16 – this shows the initial site set up phase following construction of the new access road described above, and includes bridging over the Bezza Brook as shown, soil stripping of the plant site and the Phase 1 working areas including haul road, to remove 300mm of topsoil and a further 400mm of fine silty sand. Spoil which arises will be used to construct 8m high temporary acoustic screen bunds around three sides of the plant site. The remaining stripped material will be used to create a lower permanent 4m high screen bund running north as shown, to form a visual screen along the eastern edge of the extraction area. New tree planting areas, approximately 30m wide, will be formed to the south and west of the plant site using species shown on the plan., plus a triangular area south of Bezza Brook Nursery. A new 60m wide tree screen will be fenced off and planted to the east of the screen bund's northern section, allowing a 'fisherman's path' access between them, as shown. The bunds will be seeded with a low maintenance grass mix. New fences will be erected as shown.
- ii. Drawing No. 1040/PL17A illustrates the Phase 1A workings which are primarily to create a hard surface for the new plant site in order to provide an operational area for loading and stockpiling material both for processing and for sale. The new plant site will be set up as illustrated on Drawing No. 1040/PL17A with its 7 metre high processing plant, the office and weighbridge, canteen and other ancillary elements, all as shown on the detail drawings which accompany this Planning Submission. Details of internal vehicle movements are shown on Drawing No. 1040/PL17A. The future Phase 1B working area will be stripped to reveal the mineral and extraction

shall commence in Area 1A working north westwards. This, and all future extraction, will be carried out as demonstrated on the Typical Working Section, and as follows :- The top layer of the mineral will be worked 'dry' using a hydraulic excavator loading into a dump truck. The bottom layer of the mineral will then be worked 'wet' also by hydraulic exactor loading into a dump truck. The outer limit of the extraction areas will be no closer than 25m to the bank top. It should be noted that soil stripped from these and all subsequent phases will be used to create screening bunds initially and then for restoration of land areas for new planting. During Phase 1A the inner (western) face of the northern screen bund will be planted with trees as detailed on the plan. The area to the south west of the plant area will also be planted as detailed.

- iii. Drawing No. 1040/PL18A illustrates the Phase 1B extraction phase. The future Phase 2 area will be stripped, Phase 1B will be worked in a westerly direction, initially dry and then completed by working wet. During this phase the former Phase 1A working area will become a water treatment/silt pond.
- iv. Drawing Nos. 1040/PL19A-21 incl. show the Phased 2, 3 and 4 workings which involve stripping soil, mineral extraction and the extension of the water treatment/silt ponds into the Phase 1B excavated area. This will also involve the removal of existing hedges, hedgerows and vegetated areas. During these phases a 25m wide area of backfilling will be formed, see Typical Section D-D along the excavated phase 2, 3 and 4 southern edge, using soil excavated from the site strip. This area will be planted as each phase progresses. Working areas 2 and 3 will be connected and combined to become clean water ponds taking water from the silt ponds to the east. A similar area of backfilling against the western end of Phase 4 will be carried out.
- iv. Drawing Nos. 1040/PL22-26A incl. show extraction Phases 5 to 9 inclusive, but during these phases the profiled edge of the final lake will be constructed (see typical sections), a shallow island formed as illustrated, and areas around the periphery planted as illustrated. During Phase 8 an area at the north of the former Stock Area will be excavated and in Phase 9 will become a new silt pond, the eastern section of the lake in the former Phase 8 area will become reed beds.
- v. Drawing No. 1040/PL27A illustrates the final restoration phase following working in Phase 9. During this Phase the islands shown on the drawings will be created by the progressive removal of the haul road. The remaining area of Phase 8 will become reed beds as will the former silt ponds which will be re-profiled and planted on their periphery. The plant and the temporary acoustic bunds will be removed and the resulting soil used to restore the plant area and the access road following its removal. Any surplus will be used in the area north of the Phase 9 former silt pond to create a succession from damp wood northwards to a drier wood and habitat.
- vi. Drawing No. 1040/PL28A is a drawing, to 1/2,500 scale, at A1 size, showing the restoration concept for the whole site, i.e. an amalgamation of the previous phased restoration. This illustrates a final water body totalling approximately 14ha, areas of reedbeds totalling approximately 4ha, new tree planting areas totalling approximately 5ha, and river/lake edge planting scheme totalling approximately 4ha

7.5 A series of typical cross sections have been produced and these are included on the phased drawings. These illustrate existing ground levels, screen bund details, extraction levels and

details of the proposed restoration profiles. The planting schemes shown on the phased working and restoration drawings, and also along the access road, have been formulated using the plant species and guidelines produced by Lancashire County Council entitled "Lancashire Trees and Woodlands".

7.6 Drawing Nos. 1040/PL39-41 inclusive illustrate the landscape treatment both at the site entrance off the A59 and along the route of the access road to the plant site. The treatment of the road surface, associated drainage and construction works are all shown on the Highway Engineer's drawings and described in the Planning Statement. These drawings show the whole route, split into three sections as follows :-

- i. Site Entrance (1040/PL39) illustrating the treatment of the areas on either side of the new entrance, including a new hedgerow on the eastern and northern edge of the road, plus new woodland areas to tie in with the existing woodland TPO adjacent to the A59, and new planted links between it and the hedge and woodland to the north. New ditches and a new pond are also shown.
- ii. Central Section (1040/PL40) illustrating the section of road which runs west from the entrance area skirting the woodland to the south before turning northwards inside the field hedgerow, before crossing the public footpath running east from Potter Lane. Along this northern section the road runs in a low cut and fill form to the west of which a gabion type structure filled with sods, earth and stones and planted with shrubs is to be placed so as to mitigate views and noise. A new 10m wide tree belt will be planted (Area L) on the western side of the field hedgerow as shown.
- iii. Northern Section (1040/PL41) illustrates the access road which runs through a vegetated depression in this field, see Site Photograph Sheet 4 (1040/PL9). The western section of the cutting will be planted with shrubs, as illustrated, and the area to the east will become a woodland with a central glade, once the trees become established. The section of access road which runs northwest from Potter Lane across the field to the plant site has no associated planting as, at the end of this project, it will be returned back to agriculture. A new triangular wooded area will be planted south of Bezza Brook Nursery as illustrated (Area K).

7.7 Drawing No. 1040/PL42 shows two options for the treatment of the riverside bank proposals and restoration. They include, as shown on the cross sections, a 25m wide stand-off from the River Ribble of unexcavated material. Both illustrate the excavated base, tree and shrub planting, areas of shallows, and the final lake profile. The upper section illustrates the profile with a lagoon and gravel bank, the lower section with shallows and reedbeds. The location of these profile options will be determined and agreed on site prior to each phase of the extraction.

7.8 See Section 10 below for the Visibility Study, which includes Drawing Nos. 1040/PL29A to PL38A inclusive.

8. Landscape Character Assessment

8.1 Using desk-top and published studies, site surveys, aerial photographs and computer analysis, the baseline character of the landscape has been identified, confirmed and assessed. The identification of effects, changes to this baseline, whether positive or

negative, their magnitude, sensitivity and significance is analysed and have all been identified.

- 8.2 Mitigation proposals have been considered from the outset of the scheme to reduce potential and residual impacts and the methodology and terminology referred to above has been used.
- 8.3 Worst case scenarios have been considered, i.e. in winter and during periods of earthmoving, extraction, restoration, and assessed; options and alternatives explored and concluded.
- 8.4 The cumulative effect of the phased working, construction, access, screening, vehicle movements and phased and progressive restoration have all been considered and assessed. The sustainability of the resulting wetland and woodland with potential for significant improvement to existing and possible future flood risk conditions and additional tree planting play a vital role in the development of the proposals.
- 8.5 Using the tables set out in paragraphs 6.4 and 6.6 the landscape impacts have been considered and assessed as follows :-

Table 1: Sensitivity of landscape

Sensitivity of Landscape		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Capacity to accept this type of development :					
Difference in land use	The land use proposed does not exist in this landscape	Land uses of a similar scale currently exist	The proposed type of land use is found in this landscape	The proposed type of land use is common to this landscape	
Difference in pattern and scale	Such a proposal is vastly different in terms of pattern and scale	Such a proposal is not similar to the landscape in terms of pattern and scale	Elements with a similar pattern and scale	Elements with the same pattern and scale	
Visual enclosure/ Openness of views	The landscape is open with high visibility	The landscape is moderately open with some visibility	Semi-enclosed landscape	Enclosed landscape with low visibility	
Value placed on the landscape	National designation National Park, AONB and regional designation	Regional designation	Locally identified as Green Belt	No designation	
Policy objective for the landscape	Proposal conflicts with objectives	There are minor conflicts between the proposal and the objectives	Proposal neither fits nor conflicts with objectives	Proposal does not conflict with policy objectives	
Condition of the landscape	Very high, with recognisable elements in good repair	Moderate, distinctive elements, some in need of repair	Low, non distinctive elements in need of repair	Poor, with elements which are in disrepair	

The overall sensitivity is therefore assessed as **Low**

Table 2: Magnitude of Impact of the development on that landscape.

Magnitude of Impact (or change to view)		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Capacity to accept this type of development :					
	Characteristic landscape features are lost	Yes, most of the characteristic landscape features are lost- or those which are lost are irreplaceable.	Yes, some of the characteristic landscape features are lost	No, none or a small quantity of the characteristic landscape features is lost. Or those which are lost are replaceable.	No, none of the characteristic landscape features are lost
	Characteristic BAP habitats are lost	Yes, most of the characteristic BAP habitats are lost – or those which are lost are irreplaceable	Yes, some of the characteristic BAP habitats are lost	No, none or a small quantity of the characteristic BAP habitats is lost. Or those which are lost are replaceable	No, none of the characteristic BAP habitats are lost
Contribution to the local landscape character :					
	Development is characteristic in terms of scale, mass, colour, texture, form or features	No	Some of it is characteristic, some of it isn't	Yes, most of the development is characteristic	Yes, all of the development is characteristic
Scope for mitigation and replacement of features and/or potential for characteristic BAP habitats		Little or no scope for mitigating features or characteristic BAP habitats	Some scope for mitigating features or characteristic BAP habitats	Much scope for mitigating features or characteristic BAP habitats	Great scope for mitigating features or characteristic BAP habitats

The overall magnitude is assessed as **Low**.

8.6 Table 3 below assesses the significance of the development using the results from the overall sensitivity and magnitude described in the preceding paragraphs

Table 3

SENSITIVITY	NEGLIGIBLE	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	SIGNIFICANCE
MAGNITUDE					
NEGLIGIBLE	0	2		6	NEGLIGIBLE 0
LOW	1	3		7	SLIGHT 1 - 3
MEDIUM	2	4	6	8	MODERATE 4 - 6
HIGH	3	5	7	9	SUBSTANTIAL 7-9

8.7 In terms of the potential impact of the proposals both the sensitivity and the magnitude have been assessed as **Low** resulting in an overall significance of **Slight**.

8.8 The foregoing Landscape Character Assessment has described and assessed the Application Site in the context of National, County and Local character areas and has assessed the potential impact on its character of the proposals. This process has resulted in the conclusion that it will have a **Slight** potential significance due primarily to its current location. In mitigation the sympathetic design and form, groundshaping, planting all of which have been built into the scheme from the outset will all have a significant impact once established. The following Field Study Sheets identify in diagrammatic form the elements that make up the immediate character of the area :-

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

FIELD SURVEY SHEET	SHEET NO: 1
Project: Lower Hall Farm	Job No. 1040
Location: Samlesbury, Preston	
Date: June 2013	

Regional Landscape Character Type: Lancashire Valleys			
District Landscape Character Type: Valley Floodplains			
Geology:	Limestone	Sandstone	Chalk Clay Granite Alluvial
Topography:	Flat	Plain	Dry Valley
	Undulating	Rolling Lowland	Deep Gorge
	Rolling	Plateau	Broad Valley
	Steep	Scarp/Cliffs	Narrow Valley
	Vertical	Hills	Coastal
	Estuary	Floodplain	Downland
	Mountainous		
Dominant Landcover and Landscape Elements :			
	Buildings:	Heritage:	Farming:
	Farmsteads	Vernacular Buildings	Walls
	Masts/Poles	Country House	Fences
	Pylons	Field Systems	Hedges
	Industry	Prehistoric	
	Settlement	Hill Top Enclosure	Arable
	Urban	Ecclesiastic	Improved Pasture
	Follies	Monuments	Rough Grazing
	Military	Coppice	Water Meadows
	Urban fringe	Ancient Woodland	Grassland
	Village		Species Rich
Grassland			
Woodland/Trees:	Hydrology:	Communications:	
	Deciduous	River	Road
	Coniferous	Stream	Track
	Mixed Woodland	Reservoir	Footpath
	Shelterbelt	Dry Valley	Railway
	Hedge Trees	Winterbourne	Pylons
	Orchard	Pond	Communication
			Masts
	Species rich hedges	Lake	
	Isolated Trees	Ditch	
	Moorland	Coastal	
	Heathland	Marshland	
	Parkland		
	Fen		
Note: All options are shown in green , black is specific to the character type			

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

FIELD SURVEY SHEET
Project: Lower Hall Farm
Location: Samlesbury, Preston
Date: June 2013

SHEET NO: 2
Job No. 1040

Brief Description (including main elements, features, attractors and detractors) of the Application Site – a broad flat site set on a meander within the Ribble Valley open floodplain, subject to periodic flooding. Rich alluvial drift deposit supports fertile grazing. Large fields separated by post and wire fencing and hedgerows. Few mature trees within extraction site, wetland colonisation in northern area around site of former workings. Medium sized fields along route of proposed new access road bordered by mature and ancient woodland with interconnecting wildlife corridors. Site IS open to view from elevated areas to west and east.

Key Characteristics/Distinctive Features of the Character type: broad valley, urban fringe, major road route, country farmhouses, hedgerow trees, riverside vegetation, limited public access areas, ancient woodland.

Rarity within the character type : typical of character type so not rare.

Condition of the landscape character: medium condition

Capacity to Accommodate Change: Good, proposed development is consistent with former extraction sites with potential for significant increase in flood alleviation and diverse ecological habitat.

9. Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

9.1 This visibility study and visual impact assessment used 'The Guidelines for Visual Impact Assessment' produced jointly by The Landscape Institute and The Institute for Environmental Assessment, Third Edition, 2013 as background.

9.2 The identification of the potential visual impact is carried out as follows :-

- i. In order to assess the degree of visual impact of a development it is necessary to identify its visibility from its surroundings. This is usually done as a two-stage process identifying:-
 - a. The "visual envelope" (VE), i.e. the area from which the site is thought to be visible due to ground formation and vegetation.
 - b. The "zone of visual influence" (ZVI), i.e. the area from which the site is actually visible and will affect the observer's visual amenity.
- ii. A desk-top study of OS data is carried out to determine the maximum area from which the site may be visible. There are often many areas where it would appear that a view could be obtained, when in reality the site is obscured. The VE is used as a starting point for identifying the visibility of the site from its surroundings.
- iii. Using the VE as a guide, surveys are undertaken to identify and record the ZVI of the site. Undertaken initially by car, walking public rights of way and open access land this determines which parts of the VE actually have a view of the site, i.e. within the ZVI, taking into account intervening buildings, structures and tree cover. The ZVI is the area within the VE where changes would be noticeable and could have the potential to affect the observer's visual amenity. A judgement needs to be made of the spread for the ZVI, beyond which views are considered to be negligible i.e. from such a distance the site is just discernable. The worst case scenario should be considered in line with the EIA regulations. Field surveys are best carried out in early springtime when leaves are off the trees and weather conditions are clearer. If this is not possible, i.e. in winter. then the screening effect of deciduous trees must be considered.
- iv. Viewpoints within the ZVI are identified and photographs taken. Where the ZVI is large and/or the view from some of the viewpoints is very similar not every viewpoint will be recorded and representative viewpoints are chosen to illustrate the visual impact. A viewpoint schedule defines the impact from each location in terms of sensitivity and magnitude that the development would have on that viewpoint. Tables 1 and 2 below identify the factors which are taken into account when determining the sensitivity of the viewpoint and the magnitude of impact. This is recorded on the viewpoint schedule and the significance of the visual effect is calculated using the matrix on Table 3.

9.3 The assessment of visual sensitivity is set out in Table 1 below :-

Table 1 : Sensitivity of viewpoint

Sensitivity of Viewpoint	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Number of users/frequency of use	Heavily used, many people	Frequently used	Infrequently used, few people	Rarely used
Period of use	Lengthy periods of time spent looking at views, e.g. home and garden	Moderate length of time, e.g. right of way	Very little time	Fleeting glimpse
Is attention focussed on the landscape ?	Yes, e.g. rights of way, view from residential property	Sometimes e.g. country road, outdoor sport facility	Rarely – e.g. view from place of work, busy road	None
Movement of users	Sedentary (e.g. seat)	Transitory (e.g. country road)	Fast, busy main road	Rapid transitory (e.g. motorway, high speed train)
Publicity (Reference to viewpoint)	Noted in literature or art, identified on maps or guides	Known regionally as a viewpoint	Known locally as viewpoint	Not known or definable as a viewpoint

9.4 The assessment of the Magnitude of Impact on the Visual Amenity is assessed in Table 2 below :-

Table 2 : Magnitude of Impact from the site at each viewpoint

Magnitude of Impact (or change to view)	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Proportion of field of view occupied by site	Site dominates view	Site is a notable component of the view	The site is a small part of a wider or panoramic view	Site is barely identifiable
Zone of Visual Influence	Over 3km.	1-3km.	0.5-1km.	Less than 0.5km.
Orientation to site	Directly facing site	In general direction of site	Site at edge of range of view	Site barely visible
Context of view	Few detractors (e.g. rural, little development)	Occasional detractor (e.g. another development)	Other detractors (e.g. urban)	View currently dominated by other detractors
Extent of the site visible	The whole site or a large proportion of it	Around half of the site	Less than half to a small proportion of the site	Site is only identified by one or two of its components
Presence of intervening factors restricting view	Site is within an open view with few or no intervening factors	View of site is limited by intervening factors	View of site is largely obscured by intervening factors	Intervening factors detract one from noticing site
Integration of the development in terms of colour, form, line etc.	Will look very odd in the landscape – stick	Will be noticeable as a negative change	Will blend in well with its surroundings	Will be indistinguishable from its surroundings

		out like a sore thumb!			
	Primary/secondary elements visible	e.g. more than 3 primary and some secondary	e.g. 1 or 2 primary and some secondary	e.g. 1 primary, occasional secondary	No primary elements
	Use of lighting	24 hours	Part of the night e.g. dawn and dusk	Occasionally	Never

Primary elements:	Secondary elements:
Elements which are generally considered to be visually intrusive by nature of their form, scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture in comparison with the surrounding landscape.	Elements which are generally considered to be less intrusive due to their intermittent or transient nature or where they represent a change to the current view which is not entirely out of character.

9.5 The notes which accompany the Visibility Photograph Sheets identify and assess the significance of the effect on visual amenity. The magnitude of impact is normally assessed as negative, although where it is positive this will be stated.

9.6 The assessments of sensitivity of the ZVI and the magnitude of impact are used to determine the significance of the overall visual effect as the following table illustrates :-

Table 3: Significance of Visual Effect

SENSITIVITY	NEGLIGIBLE	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	SIGNIFICANCE
	MAGNITUDE				
NEGLIGIBLE	0	2	4	6	NEGLIGIBLE 0
LOW	1	3	5	7	SLIGHT 1 - 3
MEDIUM	2	4	6	8	MODERATE 4 - 6

10. Visibility Study (see Drawing No. 1040/PL29A – 38A inclusive, Visibility Photographs and Visual Assessments)

10.1 Using the 1/10,000 scale Ordnance Survey sheets under licence, Drawing No. 1040/PL12A was produced in order to identify areas of high ground, significant ridgelines, and areas of woodland/vegetation. A desk-top exercise using this information identified areas within a Visual Envelope for further investigation, shown on Drawing No. 1040/PL29A, and these included the following:-

- i. The M6 corridor
- ii. Areas on the eastern fringe of Preston to the west
- iii. Areas in the Longbridge Trading Estate to the north
- iv. Areas along the 'Ribble Way' long distance path
- v. Areas to the north east on the northern Ribble Valley slopes
- vi. Areas to the east on the southern valley slopes

- vii. Areas on the periphery of the proposed extraction site on Dean Lane, Potter Lane and at Samlesbury Village
 - viii. Areas along the Preston New Road dual carriageway and to the south
 - ix. Public areas at Brockholes Visitor Centre, the riverside walks and on public rights of way in and on the periphery of Boilton Wood and Red Scar Wood.
- 10.2 The above areas were visited, footpaths walked and, as a result, some areas were eliminated and the public viewpoints included on Drawing No. 1040/29A were identified.
- 10.3 Drawing No. 1040/PL29A illustrates the spatial elements which have a bearing on the potential visual impact of the proposals; these include :-
- i. Areas of existing vegetation.
 - ii. Land below the 20m contour (The Development site is at approximately 15m AOD).
 - iii. Land above and below this level.
 - iv. The principal ridgelines dashed in purple
 - v. The location of the principal public viewpoints.
- 10.4 Also shown on the drawing is the calculated Visual Envelope shaded in blue covering an area of approximately 4km west/east, and 5 ½ km north/south, i.e. the areas broadly within the confines of the plateau edge.
- 10.5 Visibility photographs have been taken to demonstrate and assess the potential visual impact of the proposals. The location of each is shown on Drawing Nos. 1040/PL4A, PL5 and PL29A, the individual representative views are shown & potential visual impact assessed at each viewpoint on Drawings 1040/PL30A-37 inclusive.

11. Assessment of effect of Visual Impact

- 11.1 The notes which accompany the individual Visibility Photograph Sheets (Drawing Nos. 1040/PL30A-37 inclusive) identify and assess the unmitigated significance of the effect on visual amenity and those locations. The magnitude of impact is normally assessed as negative, although where it is positive this will be stated. The following is a summary of the impact assessments at these viewpoints.
- i. New site entrance (Viewpoints 1 – 6) - **High** during construction, **Low/Negligible** during use.
 - ii. Public right of way from Preston New Road to Potter Lane (Viewpoints 7 – 10, 21 and 31-34), - **High** during construction, **Low/Negligible** at other times.
 - iii. Potter Lane (Viewpoints 11 – 20 and 22) – **High/Medium** but **No** impact at Viewpoint 14.

- iv. Dean Lane/Bezza Lane (Viewpoints 23 – 28) – **Medium/Low/Negligible** except **No Impact** at Viewpoint 26.
- v. Elston New Farm area (Viewpoints 29 and 30) – **No** impact.
- vi. Brockholes Site (Viewpoints 35 – 45) – **High** impact from elevated viewpoints, **Medium/Low** from riverside areas.

11.2 The assessments of sensitivity of the ZVI and the magnitude of impact are used to determine the overall unmitigated significance of the potential visual effect as the following table illustrates :-

Table 1 : Sensitivity of viewpoint

Key: **Blue** = residences, **Orange** = public access areas, **Green** = Roads, **Yellow** = all.

Sensitivity of Viewpoint	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Number of users/frequency of use	Heavily used, many people (at Brockholes across river)	Frequently used (Bezza House) Frequently used (Potters Lane)	Infrequently used, few people (Public Footpaths)	Rarely used (Potters Lane)
Period of use	Lengthy periods of time spent looking at views, e.g. home and garden	Moderate length of time, e.g. right of way	Very little time (Potters Lane/Dean Lane)	Fleeting glimpse (Preston New Road)
Is attention focussed on the landscape ?	Yes, e.g. rights of way, view from residential property	Sometimes e.g. country road,	Rarely – e.g. view from place of work, busy road	None
Movement of users	Sedentary (e.g. seat)	Transitory (lorry movements on private access Route}	Fast, busy main road	Rapid transitory (e.g. motorway,)
Publicity (Reference to viewpoint)	Noted in literature or art, identified on maps or guides	Known regionally as a viewpoint	Known locally as viewpoint	Not known or definable as a viewpoint

Using Table 1 in paragraph 8.3 the Sensitivity of the viewpoints is assessed as follows :-

- i. Number of users/frequency of use **High/Medium/Negligible**
- ii. Period of Use **High/Medium/Low/Negligible**
- iii. Focus of attention **High/Medium/Low**
- iv. Movement of users **High/Medium/Low**
- v. Reference to viewpoint **Negligible**

The overall sensitivity is determined as **Medium**

11.4 Examples of visual impact receptors of high sensitivity include residential properties and public rights of way in locations where there are important views or which run through areas of important amenity value. The only residences with close views are those at the adjacent tenanted farmsteads, Seed House Farm, Lower Hall Farm, which also have large buildings, barns etc., within their curtilage plus associated vegetation. Other receptors of

high sensitivity are the residences on Potter and Dean Lanes and at Bezza House. Views from local public rights of way have been assessed as detailed on the drawings. The Application Site becomes difficult to distinguish in the wider panorama due to the intervening vegetation and flat topography.

11.5 The assessment of the Magnitude of Impact on the Visual Amenity is set out in Table 2 below:-

Table 2 : Magnitude of Potential Visual Impact from the site at each viewpoint

Key: **Blue** = residences, **Orange** = public access areas, **Green** = Roads, **Yellow** = all.

Magnitude of Impact (or change to view)	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Proportion of field of view occupied by site	Site dominates view	Site is a notable component of the view (from adjacent access route and entrance) Site is a notable component of the view (Bezza House)	The site is a small part of a wider or panoramic view (Public right of way across river)	Site is barely identifiable
Zone of Visual Influence	Over 3km.	1-3km.	0.5-1km.	Less than 0.5km.
Orientation to site	Directly facing site	In the general direction of site In the general direction of site	Site at edge of range of view	Site barely visible
Context of view	Few detractors (e.g. rural, little development)	Occasional detractor (e.g. another development)	Other detractors (e.g. urban)	View currently dominated by other detractors
Extent of the site visible	The whole site or a large proportion of it	Around half of the site (Bezza House)	Less than half to a small proportion of the site (tenanted farms)	Site is only identified by one or two of its components
Presence of intervening factors restricting view	Site is within an open view with few or no intervening factors	View of site is limited by intervening factors	View of site is largely obscured by intervening factors	Intervening factors detract one from noticing site
Integration of the development in terms of colour, form, line etc.	Will look very odd in the landscape – stick out like a sore thumb!	Will be noticeable as a negative change	Will blend in well with its surroundings	Will be indistinguishable from its surroundings
Primary/secondary elements visible	e.g. more than 3 primary and some secondary	e.g. 1 or 2 primary and some secondary	e.g. 1 primary, occasional secondary	No primary elements
Use of lighting	24 hours	Part of the night e.g. dawn and dusk	Occasionally	Never (in emergencies only)

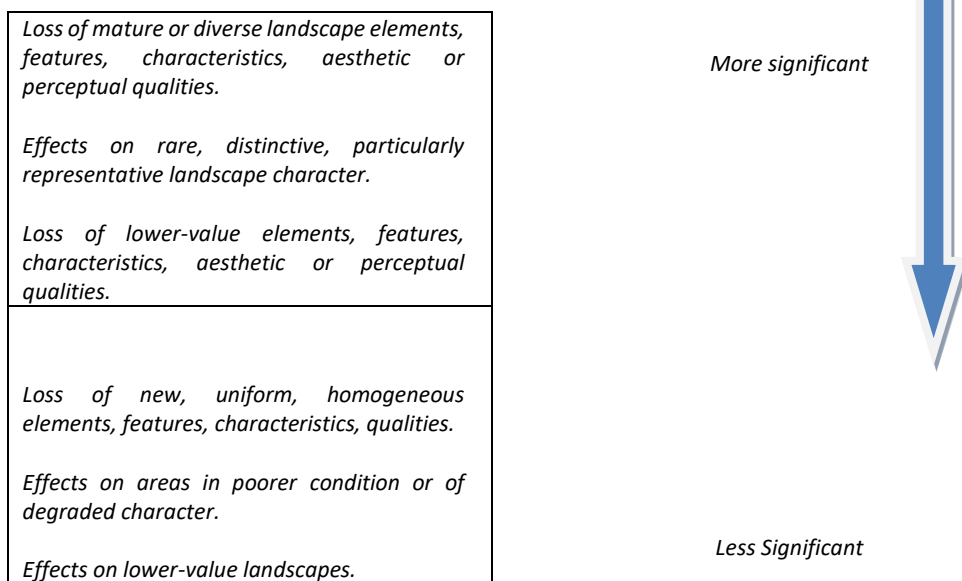
Primary elements:	Secondary elements:
Elements which are generally considered to be visually intrusive by nature of their form, scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture in comparison with the surrounding landscape.	Elements which are generally considered to be less intrusive due to their intermittent or transient nature or where they represent a change to the current view which is not entirely out of character.

Table 2 in paragraph 8.4 is used to identify the magnitude of visual impact from the site at each viewpoint. This has been individually assessed on the Visibility Photographs. Below is an assessment of the overall magnitude of the development :-

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| i. | Proportion of field of view | Medium/Low/Negligible |
| | a. Zone of visual influence | Medium/Low/Negligible |
| | b. orientation | Medium/Low |
| | c. context of view | Low |
| | d. extent of site visible | Medium/Low/Negligible |
| | e. presence of intervening factors | Medium/Low/Negligible |
| ii. | Integration of development | Low |
| | a. primary/secondary elements visible | Low |
| | b. use of lighting | Negligible |

The overall magnitude is therefore assessed as **Low**

11.6 There are no hard or fast rules about what makes a significant effect as circumstances vary with the location, context and type of proposal. The following diagram illustrates the scale of significance:-



Where landscape effects are judged to be significant and adverse, mitigating proposals should be considered. The significance of the effects remaining after mitigation should be summarised as the final step.

Using the above tables and overall assessments the sensitivity of the potential visual impact has been determined as **medium** and the magnitude as **low**.

11.7 The assessments of the overall sensitivity of the ZVI and magnitude of impact are used in the table below to determine the significance of the overall effect.

Table 3: Assessment of potential significance of visual impacts

SENSITIVITY	NEGLIGIBLE	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	SIGNIFICANCE
MAGNITUDE					
NEGLIGIBLE	0	2	4	6	NEGLIGIBLE 0
LOW	1	3	5	7	SLIGHT 1 - 3
MEDIUM	2	4	6	8	MODERATE 4 - 6
HIGH	3	5	7	9	SUBSTANTIAL 7-9

As a result of the above assessment the overall significance of the visual impact of the proposals is **Moderate**.

11.8 The visual changes at local level will be limited in extent due to the low profile of the proposed plant and the fact that most of the views will be towards the site from a similar elevational ground level, thus making the retention of intervening hedgerows during the phased extraction, an important screening function as well as construction of permanent and temporary screen bunds. From the few elevated locations identified, working in the western and southern sections of the mineral deposit will have a slightly more significant impact.

11.9 The Zone of Visual Influence is cross-hatched in yellow on Drawing No. 1040/PL38A. The Zone of Visual Influence includes an area, illustrated in the Key, comprising one main area closest to the Application Site approximately 3 ½ km west/east and 3 ½ km north/south. It is notable that the vast majority of the ZVI consists of agricultural land over which there is no public access and therefore where there is in effect no visual impact.

11.9 Field Survey Sheet

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

NOTE: (Black is all options, **Green** is site specific)

FIELD SURVEY SHEET	SHEET NO: 2
Project: Lower Hall Farm	Job No. 1040
Location: Samlesbury, Preston	
Date: June 2013	

Visual Assessment Criteria:					
Pattern:	Random	Organised	Regular	Formal	
Scale:	Intimate	Small	Medium	Large	Vast
Texture:	Smooth	Textured	Rough	Very rough	
Colour:	Monochrome	Muted	Colourful	Garish	
Complexity:	Uniform	Simple	Diverse	Complex	
Remoteness:	Wild	Remote	Vacant	Active	
Unity:	Unified	Interrupted	Fragmented	Chaotic	
Form:	Straight	Angular	Curved	Sinuous	Sloping
Enclosure:	Expansive	Open	Enclosed	Constrained	
Diversity:	Uniform	Simple	Diverse	Complex	
Balance:	Harmonious	Balanced	Discordant	Chaotic	
Movement:	Dead	Still	Calm	Busy	
Visual Dynamic:	Sweeping	Spreading	Dispersed	Channelled	

Perception:					
Security:	Intimate Threatening	Comfortable	Safe	Unsettling	
Stimulus:	Monotonous	Bland	Interesting	Challenging	Inspiring
Tranquillity:	Inaccessible	Remote	Vacant	Peaceful	Busy
Pleasure:	Unpleasant	Pleasant	Attractive	Beautiful	

11.10 Drawing Nos. 1040/PL1B and PL43 are versions of the Location Plan on which the details and location of the new waste incinerator site on the top of Red Scar Ridge to the north west of the Lower Farm extraction site are shown. For a detailed assessment of the potential visual impact of this 37m high building with twin stacks, each 85m high, reference should be made to the accompanying Assessment Report dated 30th October 2019, and Drawing No. 1040/PL33A (Visibility Sheet 1).

12. Mitigation Measures and Cumulative Impacts

12.1 The scheme proposed is seen as providing an important wetland habitat within the River Ribble Valley to complement other natural and recreated habitats along the banks of the river including the former Higher Brockholes Quarry immediately to the west on the other side of the Ribble. This site, run by Lancashire Wildlife Trust has many important wetland habitats but by its very purpose as a major visitor and tourist destination for the North West with associated social, learning and recreational space has few areas where access is restricted and wildlife species can be left unhindered.

12.2 The proposed wetland habitat at Lower Hall Farm, shown on Drawing No. 1040/PL28A, has no public access and none is provided in the scheme, and will, in contrast to Brockholes, provide a 'quiet' area for wildlife conservation. While not apparently providing a public service, by provision of a 'quiet' wetland habitat, the restored site at Lower Hall Farm offers a much wider and valuable public benefit in accordance with ecosystem service considerations. The public will be excluded from the site although controlled access for ecological research will be allowed.

12.3 As mentioned earlier the restoration concept has embraced many of the recommendations contained within the 'Landscape Strategy', in particular the following :-

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
<i>Conserve valuable floodplain habitats</i>	<i>Manage riparian habitats to avoid erosion due to over-growth of riparian vegetation</i>
<i>Conserve a natural river form</i>	<i>Conserve natural river floodplain features such as meanders, oxbows, old river channels, ponds and islands</i>
<i>Conserve historic and archaeological sites in the Valley Floodplains</i>	<i>Consider the setting of historic and archaeological sites when planning and implementing all landscape management action (i.e. Samlesbury Hall).</i>
<i>Enhance woodland planting on the outer fringes of the Valley Floodplain</i>	<i>Consider opportunities to extent and link woodlands on the fringes of the floodplain with existing woodlands on the valley sides (i.e. new woodlands in conjunction with access road). Encourage the use of natural regeneration where appropriate.</i>

	<p><i>Avoid areas of ecological and geological interest.</i></p> <p><i>Respect the characteristic sinuous form of the floodplain bluffs and any existing floodplain fringe woodlands.</i></p>
<p><i>Enhance opportunities to maintaining the distinctive character of the floodplain areas</i></p>	<p><i>Initiate a programme of tree planting to ensure that there is a new generation of locally native trees (i.e. in accordance with Lancashire CC guidelines).</i></p> <p><i>Encourage planting of native black poplar as feature trees on the floodplain from locally provenanced cuttings (i.e. in new woodlands).</i></p>
<p><i>Enhance opportunities for informal recreation</i></p>	<p><i>Manage public access areas to sensitive river banks and wet meadows to avoid river bank erosion due to tramping and the disturbance of key wildlife habitats (i.e. restricted access to anglers etc.)</i></p> <p><i>Provide opportunities (both physical and intellectual) to appreciate the historical and natural assets of the Valley Floodplains (i.e. in new woodlands).</i></p>
<p><i>Restore wetland habitats in areas where they have been lost or degraded</i></p>	<p><i>Seek opportunities for wider wetland habitat restoration or creation on the valley floor.</i></p>
<p><i>Ensure built development on the fringes of the floodplain is visually integrated within the rural landscape setting</i></p>	<p><i>Encourage the conservation of existing trees as well as additional tree planting on the outer fringes of the floodplain.</i></p> <p><i>Localised planting of floodplain woodlands may be appropriate in some locations.</i></p> <p><i>Conserve long open views across and along the floodplains.</i></p>
<p><i>Restore sand and gravel extraction sites</i></p>	<p><i>Ensure every opportunity is taken to create and manage a new range of wetland habitats to deliver biodiversity objectives.</i></p>

- 12.4 The NPPF states in paragraph 204 of Section 17 that Local Authorities are required to “take into account the cumulative effects of multiple impacts from individual sites and/or a number of sites in a locality’. This provision specifically relates to the impact of mineral development. However, there is a general requirement to consider the cumulative impacts from all planned development.
- 12.5 The Application Site is one of three mineral sites within the River Ribble Valley on the edge of Preston and within 1.5km of each other. The other two are a) the now restored Brockholes Centre immediately to the west and b) the former Lower Brockholes sand and

gravel quarry on the other side of the M6 corridor, now proposed to be partly landfilled with construction and demolition waste.

- 12.6 There is no visual relationship between the Application Site and Lower Brockholes as the M6 embankment precludes any views. There is no view of the Application Site from the elevated section of the M6. There are no views from the Brockholes Centre into the Application Site, other than from one restricted location, due to the bunds retained around the Brockholes Centre. There are no views from the existing industrial land or the crematorium at Red Scar due to the topography and woodland in the intervening land. Views from further proposed extensions to the industrial site will bring additional industrial operations closer to the Application Site but such development will still be screened by woodland and topography. Redevelopment or intensification of industrial uses on Red Scar industrial site will benefit in a similar manner. Therefore, as illustrated in the Visual Impact Analysis, no cumulative visual or landscape effects will arise in association with other mineral activities or any other development.
- 12.7 The former Higher Brockholes Quarry provides positive ecological and recreation assets to the area. The restoration of the Lower Brockholes Quarry will add to this. The restoration concept for the Application Site, prepared following discussions with the Environment Agency, the Ribble Rivers Trust and the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, is perceived as an important additional asset, albeit in a slightly different format in that it proposes to provide typical landscape elements in line with the Landscape Strategy, as well as the provision of a 'quiet' nature conservation wetland and woodland.

13. Summary and Conclusions

13.1 Discussions have taken place with the relevant Authorities and the scheme hereby submitted provides a solution which addresses their concerns with special emphasis on the following :-

- i. It will achieve many of the recommendations set out in NPPF, the Lancashire Landscape Strategy, the relevant Local Plans and it takes account of the County Council's advice on new planting.
- ii. It is clear from this assessment that the primary Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) is limited to a small area within the River Ribble Valley, mostly an area with no public access, plus a few views from the public rights of way/public access area adjacent to the river and close to the route of the proposed access road.

13.2 The proposals shown on the drawings and described herein have been carefully designed and sited to avoid any damage to the surroundings. As a result I conclude that the development will have the following unmitigated impacts:-

Landscape Character	- Low sensitivity
	- Low magnitude
	- Slight significance
Visual	- Medium sensitivity
	- Low magnitude
	- Moderate significance

- 13.3 The impacts will be mitigated by landscaping and screening as proposed such that the resulting mitigated impacts on landscape and visual considerations will be **low to negligible** and in the main provide positive landscape and visual impacts in accordance with national and local policies and strategies.
- 13.4 Having studied the relevant Policies above I conclude that the development complies with these and will provide a positive contribution to the local economy and environment.