CLIFTON QUARRY PUBLIC CONSULTATION
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why did operations pause at the site, and was it always the plan to reopen it?

Moving the mineral extraction operations from the west side of the A38 to the east side of the highway is approved under the current planning permission. The proposal being considered by Tarmac is to vary the current permission and certain conditions relating to the working and restoration scheme. The application is NOT about new development, nor is it about reopening a closed quarry.

In an ideal world, with sand & gravel extraction recently completed in the west, operations would have continued without a break, namely moving seamlessly into the eastern area. However, the time taken to finalise landowner agreements over the eastern area and the requirement (in terms of economic and practical viability) to amend the permitted working and restoration scheme for the eastern area, has led to the current break in operations.

As extraction in the eastern area has not yet commenced, the processing plant, weighbridge and site offices on the western side have been retained and maintained, ready to support future operations should the proposed planning variations be approved.

Why has the standoff from Clifton Village been reduced from 200m to 100m?

The 200-metre standoff of mineral operations from Clifton Village was based on planning policy that prevailed at the time of the original planning application, namely the 1997 Hereford and Worcester Minerals Local Plan.

This standoff policy officially changed on the adoption of the current Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan (2018-2036) which has been replaced by broader, criteria-based development management policies, such as assessing individual impacts on health, amenity and dust, rather than a rigid numerical exclusion distance. Maintaining a rigid 200-metre buffer is inconsistent with national planning policy.

The environmental technical studies we have undertaken show that impacts can be managed within acceptable limits at 100 metres, particularly as this distance already includes the natural boundary of the A38.

To mitigate any impact, soil bunds will be built along the boundaries of working areas to provide visual screening and reduce noise and dust.

Across the site, dust will be controlled through water suppression on haul roads, wheel washing, sheeting of lorries, regular sweeping of the site access, and hard standing at the entrance to the eastern extension, with use of dust monitors to monitor levels.

Noise will be managed under a Noise Management Plan to conform to prescribed noise limits. There will be monitoring throughout the life of the quarry, and no working at night, limited working on Saturday, and no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

We have successfully managed dust and noise to these standards during the western phase of extraction and we will apply the same approach to the eastern phase.

Won't 100 HGV movements a day across the A38 be dangerous, especially when the M5 is closed and the A38 gets gridlocked?

Our detailed highway assessment work shows that with improvements and widening of the eastern track and junction with the A38, a “priority-controlled crossing” can safely accommodate up to 100 HGV movements a day across the A38. Tarmac’s HGV trucks will be used to transport the mineral across the A38 to the plant site and will give way to traffic on the highway before crossing.

Over a working day, 100 HGV movements equates to 50 laden HGV loads crossing the A38 westbound and 50 HGV returning empty eastbound. More specifically, over a typical 10-hour working day, this equates to an average of 5 HGVs crossing in each direction every hour.

It will ultimately be for Worcestershire County Council, as the highways authority, to decide whether further measures are required. Tarmac's highway consultants have demonstrated (through a formal safety audit) that signalised lights are not required, however views on this are welcomed as part of the consultation.

The HGV trucks will operate on hard surfacing on the eastern area at all times, augmented by wheel washing. The 2 HGV trucks will be operated on a turnaround basis, driven by Tarmac staff dedicated and trained to undertake the task safely.

Tarmac expect (and will adhere to) a planning condition preventing the transportation of mineral across the A38 at times when the M5 is closed and traffic is diverted onto the A38.

What happens when the area floods, and won't the works make flooding worse?

Clifton Quarry sits in an area known to be at risk of flooding, and operations are designed around this. When flooding occurs - as it has done before, particularly in 2007 - extraction stops and the site floods as part of its normal, permitted function; this is not something the proposals will change.

A Flood Risk Assessment is being prepared in line with National Planning Policy Framework requirements, Planning Practice Guidance, and Environment Agency Standing Advice, and will take account of the most up-to-date EA flood models. The Environment Agency will be a key consultee on the application. Water permitting has changed significantly in recent years, with a much stronger focus on climate impacts, and the design reflects this.

The restoration landform will include areas of water that will be allowed to connect into the Ashmoor Common watercourse during periods of flooding. In this regard the landform will provide an increased and contained area for accommodation of floodwaters, that otherwise accumulate upstream of the culvert beneath the A38. In this regard the water bodies will provide increased temporary storage during more extreme flood periods, releasing accumulated floodwater once conditions abate.

What's happening to the footpaths that cross the site?

All public Rights of Way will remain open and in use throughout the works. Under the revised scheme, three existing Rights of Way in the eastern extension area will stay in place, running alongside the boundaries of the different working phases rather than being diverted. Where required, there will be controlled crossing for vehicular site traffic, which we have successfully done previously.

At the entrance to the eastern extension, quarry vehicles will run close / parallel to an existing bridleway for a short distance, which will be separated from the access track, to ensure the bridleway is kept segregated and safe for walkers, riders and other users for the duration of the operations.

Once restoration is complete, the plan also introduces a new permissive access route across the restored areas, adding to the existing network for public enjoyment of the site.

The restoration plan creates more open water than before — why isn't the land just returned to agriculture, and will the water bodies be safe?

Compared to the current approved restoration scheme, there is less area to be returned to agricultural land. This reflects a better understanding of the site's geology, mineral resource and the quantity of soils and overburden available for restoration following detailed investigations undertaken since the original permission was granted. As a result, it is no longer feasible to achieve the approved restoration landform exactly as originally envisaged, and the revised scheme has been designed to provide a realistic and deliverable restoration outcome.

Rather than creating large areas of restored agricultural land that would require significant importation or movement of material, the revised restoration scheme works with the site's natural characteristics. It increases the amount of water-based and wetland habitat, delivering greater environmental and biodiversity benefits than the current approved restoration scheme. The proposed habitats will complement those found within the adjacent Ashmoor Common SSSI and are expected to support a diverse range of wetland plants and wildlife over time.

The final scheme will still include grassland, species-rich wet meadow and wet woodland with areas of agricultural land in the central and southern sections, alongside the new lakes, shallows and wetland. We would be responsible for aftercare of the restored land and water bodies for at least five years, as is standard practice.

Safety around the water bodies, including fencing and life-saving equipment where appropriate, will be part of the detailed working and restoration design. The restored site will be accessible via the various Public Rights of Way.

We have also run public health and water safety campaigns at other sites and would welcome working collaboratively with local groups on this here.

Why is the operational end date being extended from 2030 to 2039?

There is insufficient time left in the current permission to work the proven mineral reserves from the eastern area, which comprises approximately 10 years' worth of sand and gravel reserves.

The current permission is due to expire on 31 December 2030 and therefore the application will seek a time extension to 31 December 2039 to allow enough time to complete both extraction and full restoration of the site.

This is a change to the timeframe, not the rate of production. The extension will not increase the annual rate of extraction.

Why are Tarmac no longer using the approved conveyor and instead proposing to use quarry vehicles to transport material from the eastern extension area to the plant site?

The 2016 planning permission included a conveyor system to transport mineral from where it was dug in the eastern extension area to the processing plant on the western side of the A38. We had consent for an overground conveyor across the site, with a more complex arrangement involving infrastructure beneath the A38 to cross to the processing plant.

Since the permission was granted almost a decade ago, the commercial and operational circumstances of the project have changed significantly, Tarmac have therefore undertaken a comprehensive review of how the remaining reserves can be worked.

The proposed quarry vehicle and HGV crossing arrangement has a number of practical advantages. It avoids the need for significant construction works associated with installing conveyor infrastructure

beneath the A38, reduces the amount of permanent operational infrastructure required within the eastern extension area, and provides greater flexibility in how the quarry progresses through the different phases of extraction.

Unlike a conveyor system, which would remain a prominent feature across the site for much of the operational life of the quarry, the proposed vehicle movements would only occur when extraction is actively taking place and would move with the working areas as operations progress. This reduces the extent of fixed infrastructure across the site and enables restoration to be undertaken progressively.

The revised proposal will use dump trucks to move the as-dug mineral from the working dig to the area adjacent to the concreted loading bay, next to the eastern track. A wheeled shovel will then load the sand & gravel onto the HGV lorries (standing on the loading bay) which will then transport the mineral across the A38, having first passed over a mechanical wheel wash. The 2 HGV trucks used to transport the mineral to the plant site on the west will be operated on a turnaround basis, driven by Tarmac staff dedicated and trained to undertake the task safely.

Over a working day, there will be up to 100 HGV movements across the A38, equating to 50 laden HGV loads crossing the A38 westbound and 50 HGV returning empty eastbound to the loading bay. Over a typical 10-hour working day, this equates to an average of 5 HGVs crossing the A38 in each direction every hour.

Detailed highway assessments have been undertaken to assess the proposed crossing arrangements and Worcestershire County Council, as highway authority, will independently review the proposals before making any decision on the application.

Why are the proposed operating hours 7am to 7pm on weekdays and 7am to 1pm on Saturdays?

The proposed operating hours are not new and mirror exactly the current permitted maximum working hours under the existing planning permission for Clifton Quarry.

The permitted working hours are:

- 07:00 to 19:00 Monday to Friday
- 07:00 to 13:00 Saturday
- No working on Sundays or Bank Holidays

These hours are controlled through the planning permission and are intended to strike a balance between allowing the quarry to operate efficiently while protecting the amenity of nearby residents.

Importantly, there is no proposal to extend operating hours as part of the Section 73 application. The application seeks to extend the overall life of the quarry to allow the remaining reserves to be extracted and the site fully restored, but it does not seek permission for longer daily working hours.

Noise and dust impacts will continue to be controlled through dedicated management plans, environmental monitoring and planning conditions throughout the life of the quarry.

Where stage are we at with the proposals and what's the timeline for the application?

Tarmac is currently undertaking public consultation on the proposed changes to the existing planning permission. Feedback received during the consultation will be reviewed and, where appropriate, used to help refine Tarmac's draft proposals before a planning application is submitted to Worcestershire County Council. Tarmac is aiming to finalise its proposals and submit the application in the final quarter of 2026.

Following submission, the application will be validated by Worcestershire County Council and will be subject to the formal planning process. This will include a further period of public consultation, review by statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency and highways authority, and assessment of the environmental and technical information submitted with the application. Consultees will have the opportunity to comment before the Council reaches a decision.

Once a decision has been made, the outcome and any associated planning conditions will be published by Worcestershire County Council. Updates on the progress of the application will continue to be made available throughout the process.