

Welcome



Aerial view of Sonning Quarry

Thanks for attending our public exhibition today, which has been organised to share our proposals for the next phases of mineral extraction at Sonning Quarry. It is also an opportunity to introduce you to the team, answer your questions and gather your feedback.

Sonning Quarry is a sand and gravel quarry on the outskirts of Sonning Eye, Oxfordshire. Its processing site (which accommodates the plant and equipment needed to process and distribute the sand and gravel) is south of Playhatch Road and the current extraction area (Phase C) is east of Spring Lane.

Tarmac and its predecessors have a long history of operating in the area, with the first phase of extraction starting in the 1950s. Since then, the quarry has provided a consistent supply of sand and gravel to serve the current and ongoing demand for construction materials and road building in the county. There remains a high demand for the quarry's minerals and for sites that can sustainably use left over excavation materials from local construction and demolition projects. We expect this demand to continue in the future and aim to maintain operations from the quarry to meet this local need.

About Tarmac

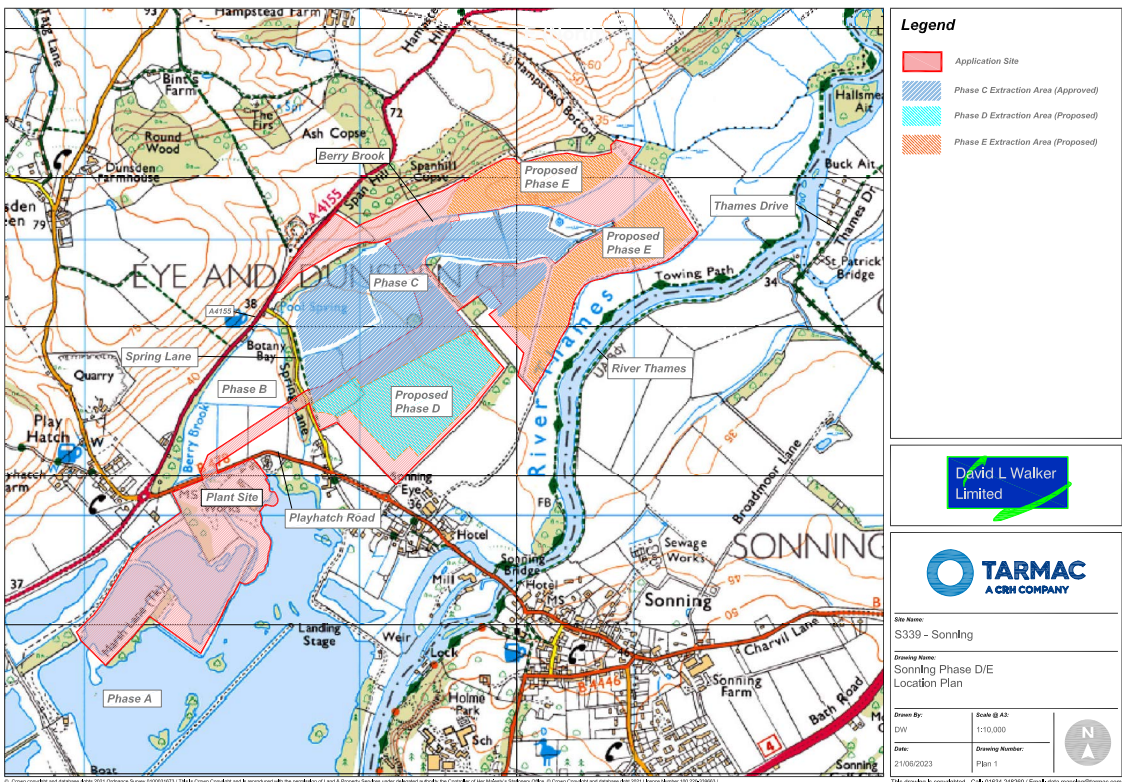
Tarmac is the UK's leading supplier of construction materials. We're a national network of local businesses, combining the knowledge and expertise of two of the construction industry's most iconic brands:

- Tarmac: pioneers and inventors of the modern road; and
- Blue Circle: the company that patented Portland Cement.

We provide vital building materials, such as stone, sand, gravel, concrete, asphalt and mortar, that enable the construction and maintenance of homes, roads and key national infrastructure which play a vital part in our everyday lives.

We employ around 6,000 people across a network of more than 350 sites in the UK. As a large landholder, we are committed to managing the balance between industry, the natural environment and the communities we serve. We ensure that the land we own and develop is managed responsibly and is sustainably restored and maintained for the benefit of local people, biodiversity and the communities in which we operate.

What are the proposals?



Map of existing site and proposals

Background to the proposals

The current extraction area (Phase C) is the third phase of mineral extraction, with previous phases (A and B) now restored to agriculture, wetland habitat and water bodies.

The existing site extends over an area of approximately 86.8 hectares, including:

- The processing/plant site and lagoons situated south of Playhatch Road;
- Parts of an area of completed mineral extraction (Phase B) situated north of Playhatch Road;
- The current extraction area (Phase C) situated east of Spring Lane is being extracted and restored in phases. This phase includes the access onto the A4155; and
- The conveyor network that connects these three areas.

The proposed new extension areas would be the fourth and fifth phases of mineral extraction, known as Phases D and E, covering 47.2 hectares. We propose that these extension areas are in turn connected by a network of transportation routes and other land uses such as lagoons, water management and soil bunds – as is already in place for Phase C.

While we currently have planning consent to extract mineral reserves in Phase C, these reserves are not expected to last beyond 2027. That is why we are now seeking to develop plans for the future of the quarry. We

consider the proposed phases to be logical extensions to the existing site – specifically Phase C.

About Phase D and E

We expect it will take approximately 15 years to complete mineral extraction in Phases D and E.

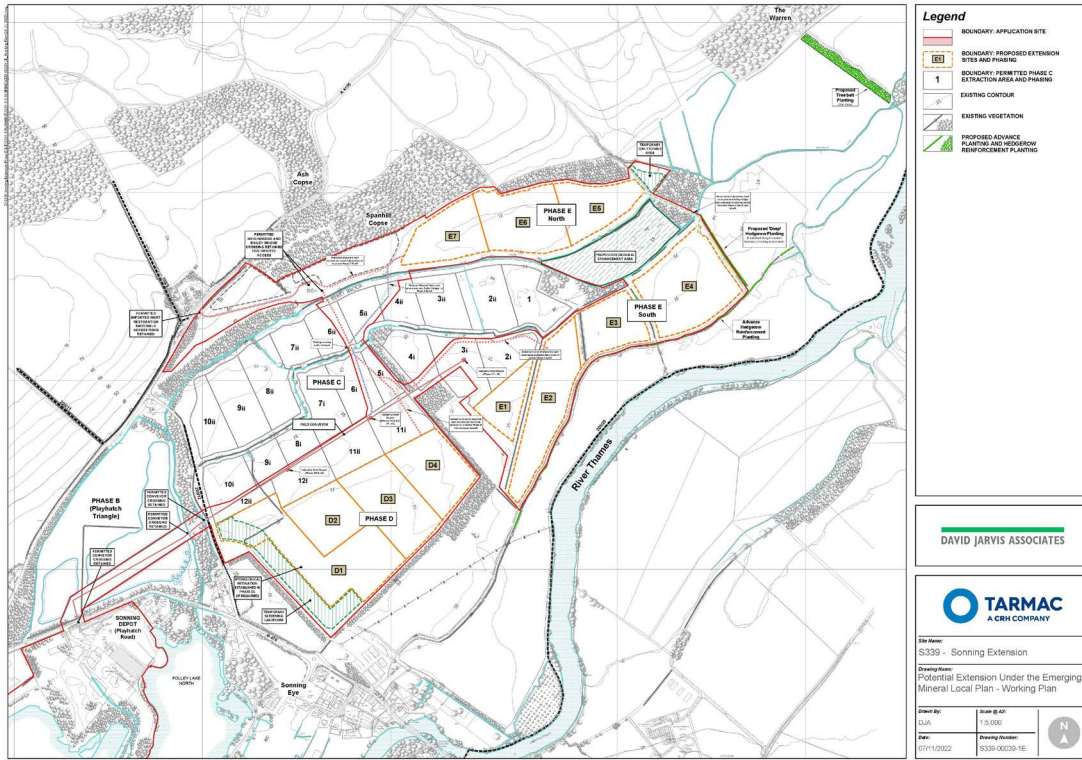
- We would start with Phase D, which is predicted to take six years, followed by two further years of restoration.
- Whilst we are still restoring Phase D, we would move onto Phase E, which is expected to take another six years, followed by two further years of restoration.

By seeking permission to extend the existing site, we seek to make best use of existing sustainable infrastructure, reducing the need to open new sites elsewhere in the county.

Whilst the extension areas represent an additional phase and longer duration of activity, there are no plans to change the way that the quarry operates. For example, the hours of operation and the number of heavy goods vehicles driving in and out of the processing plant on Playhatch Road would remain the same.

All water management measures that have been proven to be highly effective at minimising flood risk in Phase C will remain and be carried forward as part of the proposals for Phases D and E.

Our phasing plan



Indicative phasing plan for Phase D and E

We will continue to take a phased approach, meaning we extract minerals from a section of land and then restore that section afterwards as we move on to developing the next phases. This helps us make sure that the least amount of land is being extracted and/or restored at any given time. By doing this, we can find a balance between mineral extraction and minimising disruption to the local environment.

Phase D

The mineral in Phase D will be recovered over four phases, moving in an anticlockwise direction. This will begin at the southern-most part (D1) and finish at the eastern-most (D4), with the second and third phases moving across the middle of the phase. You can view these in the phasing plan above. This phase will benefit from a range of design and management measures to minimise potential impact on residents in Sonning Eye, and other areas of consideration including the Conservation Area around the village.

Phase E

The mineral in Phase E will be recovered over seven phases. These will move anti clockwise, beginning in the south and working their way towards Shiplake before finishing in an area north of the Berry Brook. This phase will benefit from a range of design and management measures to minimise any impact on landscape and ecology, including sensitive areas with environmental designations such as Warren Wood and Shiplake Marsh, and the Berry Brook itself.

Extracting and processing the mineral



Drone footage of the overland conveyor crossing Playhatch Road

At Sonning Quarry, the sand and gravel deposits are currently removed using conventional methods. We reduce the groundwater level to enable the sand and gravel to be extracted “dry”. We then use an excavator to dig the sand and gravel from the ground and load these materials onto dump trucks. The dump trucks transport the sand and gravel to a conveyor hopper and onto an overland conveyor. This then passes over Spring Lane and Playhatch Road using an existing conveyor bridge system to the processing site. The use of a field conveyor is one of the main ways we look to minimise our energy demands and carbon emissions.

Reducing the impact of our operations on the local community is our number one priority, and the development of Phase C has proven to be highly effective in this regard. As a result,

the way we propose to extract and process the mineral in Phases D and E would remain largely the same. This is except for Phase D1 (the phase closest to Sonning Eye), where we intend to use a long reach excavator that can remove sand and gravel when it is wet. The advantage of this change is that we won't have to remove the water from the sand and gravel before extraction. This means that the groundwater levels in the surrounding area are even further protected.

Either way, the conveyor network would simply be expanded to support the proposed extension areas, with resultant changes in haul roads on site. This would ensure that the minerals continue to be moved from the extraction area to the processing site without the use of the local road network.

Use of the local road network



Existing access to the processing site on the B478

Transporting the mineral to market

Once the minerals are processed, they are loaded onto lorries and exit the plant site via our existing dedicated access onto the B478 and then proceed to the market. No lorries will be permitted to drive through Sonning Eye or to use Spring Lane. To prevent any spills onto local roads, these lorries will be 'sheeted' (covered with a plastic or tarpaulin sheet).

We intend to maintain the current output at Sonning Quarry, meaning that on average there will continue to be 110 daily movements of HGVs (55 in and 55 out of the access to the plant site) if we were to secure planning consent for Phases D and E.

Importing restoration materials

As with the current Phase C extraction area, we will need to import some of the materials to supplement the on-site material required to restore Phases D and E (see 'Restoration' below). This helps meet the local need for sites that have capacity to sustainably use left over excavation materials from construction and demolition projects. To facilitate this, we propose to continue using the existing access onto the Henley Road (A4144). From here,

lorries use a dedicated weighbridge and internal haul roads (including a bailey bridge over the Berry Brook) to access the restoration areas on site. This same network will be expanded and developed to support the proposed restoration operations in Phases D and E.

In terms of HGV activity to import the materials required to restore Phases D and E, we propose a maximum of 200 movements per day (100 in and 100 out of the access on the A4144). This level of activity would be kept to a minimum and only be applied at key peaks in the restoration process. Operating in this way has been proven to be safe and sustainable on the highway network and has enabled us to maintain the progressive restoration of the Phase C area.

When it comes to our road logistics, we're committed to minimising disruption to road users and residents. Independent contract hauliers, which collect and deliver materials on our behalf, are closely monitored and must adhere to company guidelines, as well as always operating safely and responsibly. To raise a query about Tarmac-branded vehicles, please get in touch (contact details in your handout).

Minimising the impact on our neighbours



Wheel washing HGVs

Minimising noise levels

We operate a noise monitoring scheme that has been approved by Oxfordshire County Council. This includes routine noise monitoring at specific locations around the neighbouring area to highlight any potential concerns that need addressing. It also incorporates a complaints procedure, with a series of methods designed to promptly investigate and resolve any issues raised.

We also proactively use a range of techniques that are designed to help control noise, such as: bunds (mounds of soil that serve as a sound barrier); using the right equipment; enclosing certain elements of processing equipment; and restricting the hours of operation. All operations are underpinned by a maintenance regime to promptly rectify any emerging issues.

As part of the planning application, we are preparing a Noise Impact Assessment to demonstrate that the quarry (including the proposed extensions) will continue to comply with best practice guidance. This will include the maintenance and development of our existing monitoring plan to ensure we continue to minimise noise.

Reducing dust levels

As a responsible operator, we have a strong track record in managing dust and air quality. We have an existing Dust Management Plan for Phase C, which will be reviewed and updated to cover the proposed extension areas.

As part of the preparation for this application we have monitored dust levels at locations in and around the plant site and extraction area, as well as within the neighbouring area. Understanding the levels of dust around the site enables us to mitigate any potential impact.

Sand and gravel extraction is inherently a wet process which minimises the production of dust. Nonetheless we use a variety of methods to reduce dust from the site that are set out in the Dust Management Plan that will be reviewed and updated as part of the Phase D and E schemes. These include: the use of field conveyors to minimise heavy plant activity; using water bowsers to dampen materials and haul roads; and using wheel washes to clean vehicles before they leave the site. Wherever possible, we also try to ensure that dust generating activities are located away from residential properties and other public buildings or sensitive locations.

Minimising our impact on the landscape



Example of a soil bund



Hedgerow planting to provide screening

We're committed to ensuring the proposed extensions are designed to be sympathetic to the local landscape. For example, we use techniques such as advance planting and the establishment of soils bunds to reduce noise, increase privacy and create screening. These methods have been highly successful for Phase C, allowing the extensions to blend in with the natural environment, whilst also reducing the impact on the historic landscape.

The proposed extension area for Phase D will mean the quarry comes slightly closer to residential properties in Sonning Eye. However, it is still well over 100m away from the closest edge over the other side of Playhatch Road. In addition, Phase D already benefits from a strong woodland and hedge perimeter that limits views into the proposed extension area. We also propose to further screen the extraction site from residents using soil bunds to minimise

any visual, dust or noise impact, and will extract the mineral in that part of Phase D first, completing operations as quickly as possible.

Whilst there are no residential properties in such close proximity to Phase E, the proposed extension includes the planting of a deep hedgerow to the west of the site. We will also enhance the existing woodland and hedgerows along the south of Phase E to further minimise our impact on the surrounding landscape and provide further Biodiversity Net Gain - with no impact on the River Thames public rights of way network.

Whilst the site is generally well enclosed by the existing shape and features of the land and established vegetation, we are undertaking a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in support of this application. This assessment will identify any areas for improvement.

Minimising our impact on the water environment



Groundwater monitoring

We are aware that residents living in Sonning are alive to the risk of flooding. We already have an extensive surface water and groundwater monitoring network in place at the quarry. By monitoring our network of boreholes, as well as the Berry Brook and Eye Marsh Drain, we're alerted to any changes in water levels. These results are submitted to Oxfordshire County Council and the Environment Agency on an annual basis and are publicly available.

Since we began operations in Phase C, any localised flooding has been naturally occurring rather than as the result of our operations. In addition, due to the structure of landscape and the effective application of management schemes as part of planning conditions, if flooding were to occur, then it is unlikely to spread. This is because the void generated by the extraction activities increases flood storage capacity and

can manage the release of floodwater without overwhelming nearby watercourses. Overall, the approved water management schemes for Phase C increases flood storage capacity by 1766m³. After restoration, Phase C will provide over 8,000m³ of additional long-term flood storage capacity.

These measures have proven successful in our current operational area (Phase C) and we intend to apply these proven strategies to the proposed Phases D and E extension areas.

We are currently undertaking extensive hydrology and hydrogeology investigations to accompany the planning application. Based on the successful application of management regimes in Phase C, we're confident that we can undertake mineral extraction and restoration activities in Phases D and E in a way that minimises the risk of flooding across all areas.

Protecting the environment



Examples of grassland and wetland habitats created as part of Phase B restoration

We are committed to responsible land management and environmental stewardship, with Sonning Quarry being no exception. Operations in Phase C are underpinned by site specific schemes, such as a landscape and habitat management plan and the employment of an ecological specialist to support site operations. These are effective in supporting ecology on site and around the site perimeter.

At Sonning Quarry, we host a dedicated Habitat Management Group that includes specialists from the Environment Agency and Oxfordshire County Council. This collaborative approach ensures we follow the best methods to safeguard and promote ecology as we extract and then restore the quarry.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

We design our schemes to ensure our activities make a positive contribution to biodiversity, wherever possible. We've carefully designed the proposals to ensure that mature trees and hedgerows within and around the proposed extension phases would be protected.

In line with the successful management techniques applied to Phases B and C, we will ensure our proposed activity has minimal impact on local wildlife. This includes using sensitive lighting and providing additional nesting boxes for bats and birds.

We're also undertaking further extensive ecological surveys to help us identify any additional ways we can protect birds, bats, badgers, otters and other species present locally.

As part of the restoration schemes for Phases D and E, we will seek to deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain. This means we will leave the site with an increased level of biodiversity compared to the levels today.

Sustainability and achieving net zero

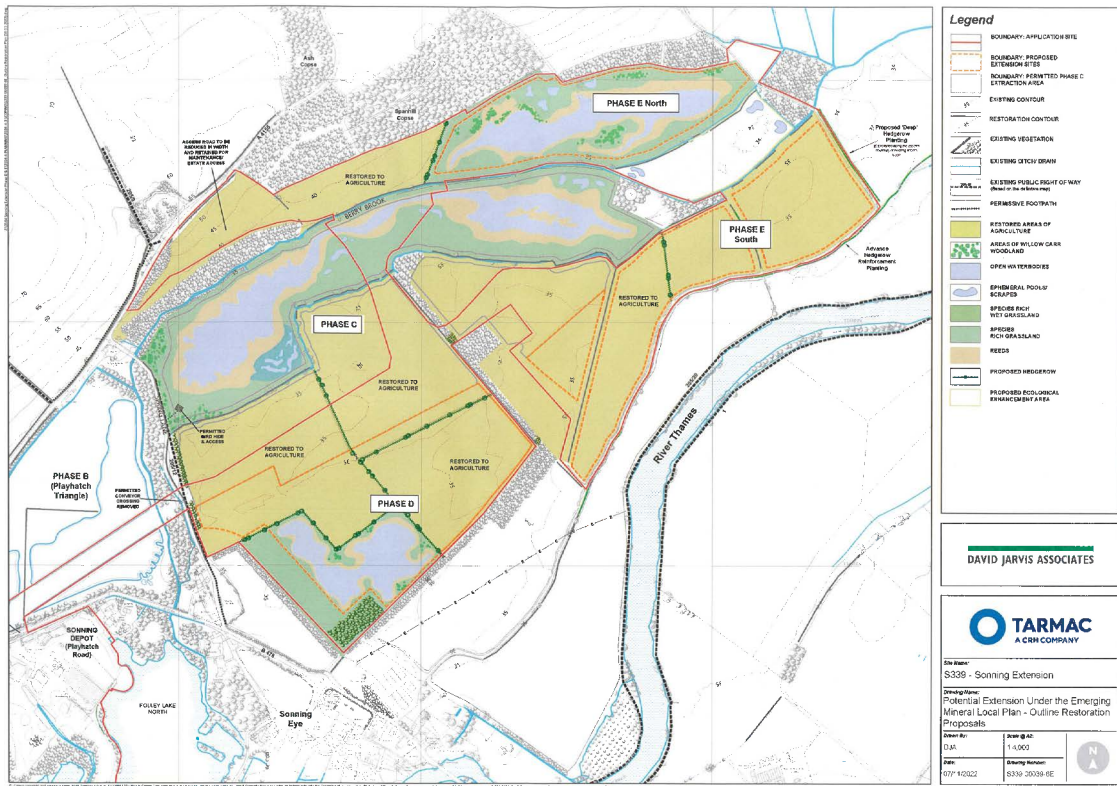
We're committed to becoming a net zero business by 2050. Decarbonising our operations, and providing products, services and solutions that help society and the UK's built environment tackle the climate emergency is central to our strategy and corporate purpose.

We've taken early action to drive decarbonisation across our business, including at Sonning Quarry.

For example, we currently source all our electricity from renewable energy sources and are actively undertaking a review of site operations and energy output at the quarry, with the aim of producing several options for further decarbonisation.

What's more, the proposed restoration scheme has been designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change both in terms of flooding and the appropriate selection of land uses and habitats.

Delivering high quality restoration



Proposed restoration scheme for Phases D and E

Once extraction is complete, we will restore the land responsibly. Phases A and B are now largely restored to agriculture, wetland habitat and water bodies, with Phase C currently being restored to similar land uses and habitats.

Restoration proposals for Phases D and E

We are seeking to restore the areas back to agricultural land, whilst also creating nature conservation habitats such as areas of grassland, woodland, wetland habitats and water bodies. We hope in the long-term this will preserve the pastoral setting of Sonning Eye. The main goals of this plan are to:

- Establish a durable and easily maintained environment
- Improve the local landscape, including looking for solutions to connect the site in a positive way with nearby local wildlife sites
- Enhance the natural environment by making improvements to habitats on and around the site, and establishing species-specific features on dedicated areas outside of the proposed areas of extraction
- Reinstate high-quality agricultural land
- Minimise any negative impact on the long-term movement of groundwater

- Make sure the project mitigates the risk of flooding in the future, either on or off site
- Deliver long-term ecological gain by identifying a dedicated area for a nature conservation site associated with the Berry Brook
- Look to provide opportunities for recreational activities

Restoring the proposed extensions gives us an opportunity to create a better and more diverse environment that positively contributes to Sonning's ecology and biodiversity, with conservation habitats envisaged including: broadleaf woodland; wetland habitats, including grassland, woodland and reedbeds; neutral grassland habitats; farmland including arable margins; and 'green infrastructure' such as hedgerows and ditches.

As is customary across the sites that we own, we will be responsible for the aftercare of agricultural land for five years and nature conservation habitats for 20 years.

The proposed extraction areas will be restored as we go, meaning that not all of it would be under operation at any one time. We anticipate the restoration taking two further years to complete once extraction operations cease in each phase.

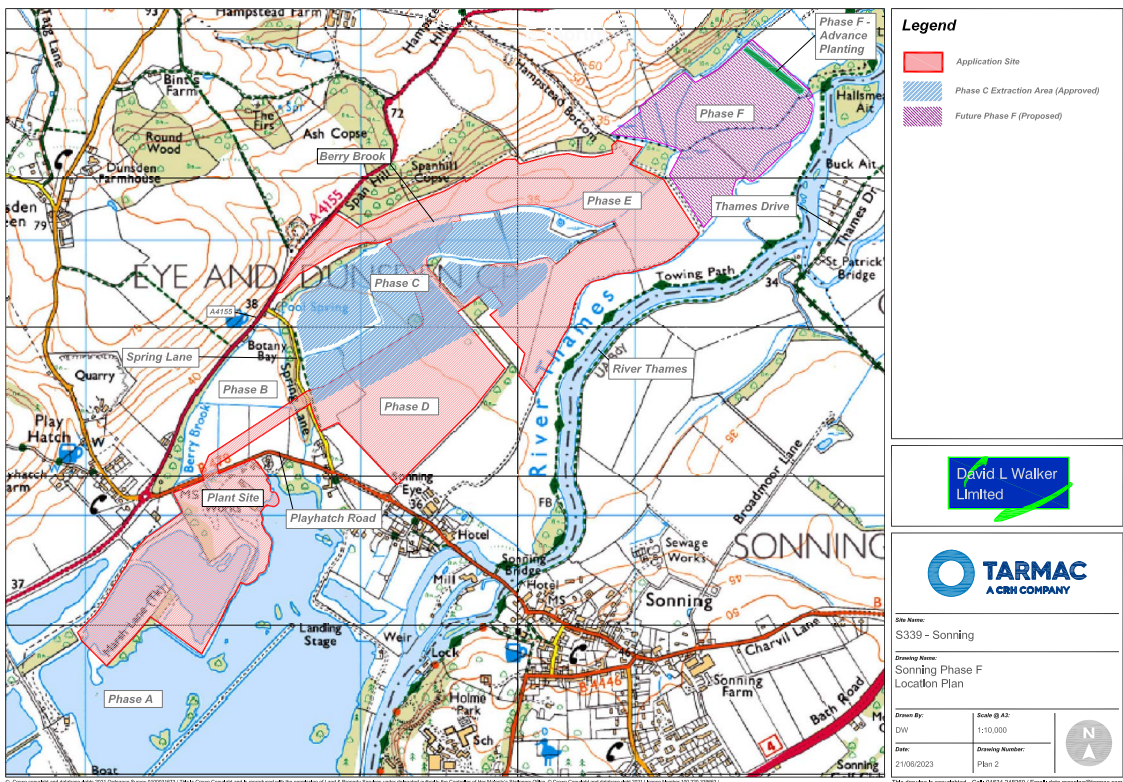


Phase B restoration



Phase A restoration

Planning for the future - 2030 and beyond



Location plan for future proposed extraction area Phase F

If our application for Phases D and E is granted planning consent, we would have enough mineral to contribute towards the supply needed for the county and surrounding markets until the late 2030s. The resultant void space created by the extraction process would also provide additional capacity to sustainably use left over excavation materials for nearby construction and demolition projects. Whilst we will not be bringing forward any further planning applications for over a decade, it is important that we continue to plan for the future by working with Oxfordshire County Council, the statutory Minerals Planning Authority.

Oxfordshire County Council are in the process of producing a new Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan (MWP). This will replace the adopted MWLP: Part 1 Core Strategy (2017). The emerging Oxfordshire MWP will set out the planning policy framework for minerals and waste within Oxfordshire to ensure there is a constant supply of minerals for the county. The emerging plan will also include the location of future sites for minerals and waste developments.

In response to the Council's 'Call for Sites' issued earlier this year, we proposed the allocation of Phases D and E and we also put forward a further phase of Sonning Quarry (Phase F). This would allow Sonning Quarry to deliver sand and gravel to Oxfordshire into the 2030s and up to the end of the plan period in 2042.

We have already put in place certain measures to ensure we can develop Phase F in the least impactful manner. For example, we have undertaken a new phase of advance planting designed to address potential views from Shiplake. By planting now, these areas will mature to provide screening, landscape and ecological benefit into the future.

The emerging MWP is currently at the initial consultation phase. We will liaise with key stakeholders, including Oxfordshire County Council, during the site allocation process and other phases of the plan. Whilst it is a very long way off, we want to continue to have a trusted relationship with the communities that live and work near the quarry - and therefore want to be upfront and transparent about the future plans for Phase F.

Supporting the economy and the local community



Memorial Park Play Area, funded by the Tarmac Landfill Communities Fund



Sandbags to support against flooding

Supporting the economy

Sonning Quarry has played a crucial role in delivering a consistent supply of high-quality sand and gravel to Reading, the Lower Thames Valley and the wider South Oxfordshire area for decades. The minerals we extract are vital components for manufacturing concrete for road construction and other infrastructure projects, as well as concrete blocks, bricks, and pipes for all scales of construction projects.

Sonning Quarry is also an important local employer, with four full-time employees working on site as well as many indirect jobs supported in the supply chain such as hauliers, contract plant and operator hire, maintenance contractors, cleaners, as well as highly skilled lab technicians, restoration managers and more. There are also opportunities for local people through our apprenticeship scheme, which can be accessed via <https://tarmaccareers.com/>.

The proposed medium-term operations in Phases D and E, and long-term in Phase F will support this highly skilled and local workforce into the future.



The team at Sonning Quarry

Supporting the community

It is important to us that we are a good neighbour to the people who live and work near our quarry. We look to proactively engage with our neighbours and support local projects and charities. There are two ways in which people can apply for us for funding: either directly through the quarry or through the Tarmac Landfill Communities Fund.

Since the Tarmac Landfill Communities Fund was established in 1996, we have donated more than £18.5 million to local communities and projects throughout the UK. This has included more than £420,000 funding to community projects in the Sonning area.

Projects that have received funding include Sonning Common Parish Council's Memorial Hall Field Play area, Shiplake Parish Playground and The Gate Church's kitchen regeneration project. We have also sponsored the Sonning Scarecrow Trail and provided sandbags to residents to mitigate against flooding.

Quarry Liaison Group

We have a long-standing Quarry Liaison Group to ensure we keep the community updated and address any questions or concerns. Its members currently include the local parish councils, Oxfordshire County Council and Tarmac. Meetings take place every six months and provide us with a forum to discuss opportunities or issues relating to our operations. If you would like to raise anything via the group, please get in touch with your local parish council.

Next steps



Thanks for taking the time to attend our public exhibition. We hope you have found this event useful and that we have been able to answer your questions.

Share your views

Please take a moment to fill out one of our feedback forms to provide your comments on our draft proposals. We will consider all suggestions or queries you may have. The deadline for completing feedback forms is Sunday 16 July 2023.

You will also have an opportunity to submit your comments directly to Oxfordshire County Council as part of the statutory consultation process once the application has been submitted. We anticipate that this will happen in the autumn.

Once this consultation has been concluded, the application will be considered by Oxfordshire County Council's Planning and Regulation Committee.

Keep in touch

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact our community liaison manager Jordan via jordan@eqcommunications.co.uk or on 020 3617 6359.

If you have any questions about the quarry's day-to-day operations, please contact the site manager Kevin Browne on kevin.browne@tarmac.com or 020 8896 5760.



Kevin Browne is the site manager. He has been the site manager at Sonning (formerly Caversham Quarry) since 1986, overseeing extraction in both Phases A, B and Phase C. He managed the site under previous owners and has worked in the industry for over 40 years.