

DMC 2023 - 04

Application for planning permission

Application No: 22NP0066

Proposed Development Variation to planning permission 14NP0057 for a lateral extension to quarry and time extension to operational life beyond its current permitted end date of 2029 extending to 2054 at Harden Quarry, Biddlestone, Netherton, Rothbury, Northumberland, NE65 7DX

Applicant Name Tarmac Trading Ltd

Reason for DMC Decision The application is a major planning application raising issues of significant public interest

Recommendation Grant conditional planning permission

1. Description of site

- 1.1 Harden Quarry is an active hard rock quarry located north of Biddlestone, Northumberland within the boundary of Northumberland National Park. The Quarry produces a decorative Red Felsite aggregate known as Harden Red and covers about 14 hectares. The site has been worked into the side of Bleakmoor Hill, with the workings prominently visible on the northern flank of the valley.
- 1.2 The nearest residential properties to the site are located in Biddlestone, including The Priest's House and 1-6 Biddlestone, approximately 200m to the south. Further residential dwellings are located in excess of 500m from the site. The 'Palisaded settlement on Bleakmoor Hill, 700m north west of Biddlestone Townfoot farm' Scheduled Monument is located approximately 60m north of the currently consented limit of the Quarry. At its closest point, the Quarry is approximately 2.3km from the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodland Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the closest site with a statutory designation for nature conservation.
- 1.3 Most of the site comprises the quarry void, with five faces rising up on the northern side to the brow of the hill, and a previously worked southern face beneath a plantation of coniferous woodland. The faces rise on the northern side from 245m AOD to 335m AOD. The processing plant sits at the current base of the quarry. Aggregate storage, lagoons, weighbridge, and mess facilities cover the remaining ground.
- 1.4 Access to the site is via a purpose-built road which adjoins a local access road (U4017 to C169). Unless delivering to local sites, all lorries' head out via Netherton towards Whittingham, on a road upgraded under the provisions of the current permission, from where they reach the principal trunk road network joining the A697. A substantial proportion of the stone is exported to the Netherlands from the Port of Blyth.
- 1.5 Mineral extraction has been carried out at Harden Quarry since the 1940s and currently operates under two active planning permissions. A periodic review of permitted conditions was granted on 15th October 2014 (14NP0041) allowing for the continuation of mineral extraction within the permitted area. A separate, concurrent planning permission was also granted on 11th December 2014 (14NP0057) permitting further mineral extraction in the base of the quarry until 31 October 2029. A further recent permission (22NP0006) allowed for a variation of condition 1 (approved plans) of planning approval

14NP0057 to allow the working an additional 80,000 tonnes of mineral below the quarry floor over a period of about 8 months.

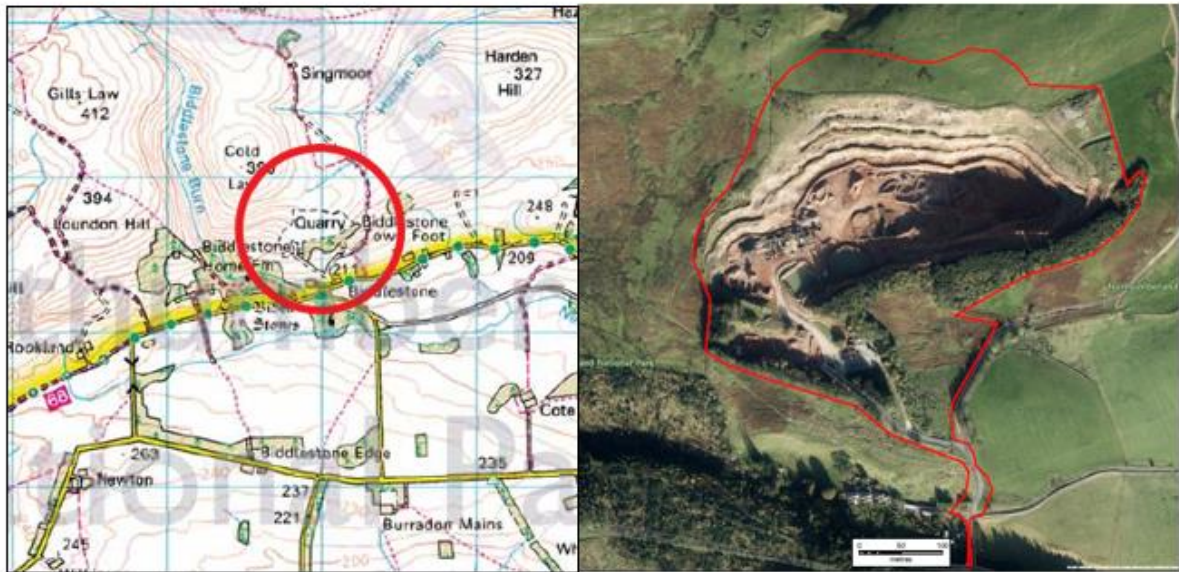


Figure 1: Site Location

Description of proposal

- 1.6 This application seeks to extend to the quarry 45m north of the current planning permission boundary, towards, although remaining just outside of, the Bleakmoor Hill Scheduled Monument. As rock will be released at several levels, the proposed extension would release about 2.5 million tonnes of additional felsite. Worked at the same rate as now, between 100,000 and 150,000 tonnes per year, this would extend the life of the quarry 21 to 25 years beyond its current permitted end date of 2029, to between 2050 and 2054 by which time the quarry would be fully restored.
- 1.7 The extension area would cover about 1.5 hectares, and a soil store to the south of the existing quarry boundary would add another 1.5 hectares, increasing the overall size of the quarry from 14 hectares to 17 hectares. Together with the felsite, the lateral extension would also release 800,000 tonnes of andesite, which would be worked and sold at the same time as the felsite. Andesite is the rock underlying the felsite batholith where it surfaces through fissures into the felsite. The andesite extrusions have to be worked through to ensure satisfactory working of the quarry as a whole. While having a low commercial value, it can be used in local markets, such as forest and farm tracks.
- 1.8 The proposed extension would be worked in the same manner as existing, including the same fixed and mobile plant, and blasting methods and frequencies, the same operating hours and the same number of lorries entering and leaving the site. The quarry faces would be worked back from their existing positions, with intervening benches and traps. No deepening of the quarry floor or alteration to any other face is proposed as part of this proposal.
- 1.9 The nature of the rock is such that material has to be extracted from the face by blasting. Typically, 25,000- 40,000 tonnes of rock would be extracted from a single blast, so there is usually a requirement for approximately four to six blasts per year during production phases. Material would be extracted by face blasting and loaded via excavator into a mobile crusher. A loading shovel then loads the crushed rock into the main processing plant. An area of land to the southeast of the quarry void would be used to store excavated soils whilst minerals are extracted from the proposed lateral extension area.
- 1.10 The extension would be worked in three phases. During phase 1, the two top benches would be worked northwards to the limit of extraction. Phase 2 would move to the two middle benches, working northwards. During Phase 2, waste rock and overburden would be used to restore Phase 1 to create a

combination of slopes, scree slopes and rock faces. Phase 3 would work the bottom two benches' northwards and continue the progressive restoration of phase 2 with the same approach to phase 1.



Figure 2: From left to right, Phases 1 to 3 showing extent of quarrying and soil storage

- 1.11 The application provides details of the proposed restoration of the site. The restoration scheme approved under 14NP0057 has been revised to take into consideration the proposed extension area and biodiversity net gain. The application states that a detailed programme of aftercare management will be devised and agreed with the local planning authority.
- 1.12 An Environmental Statement has been submitted to accompany this planning application due to the proposed development being identified as Schedule 2 development by virtue of its location within a 'sensitive area', as defined under Regulation 2 of The Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations). The applicant has considered the potential likely significant environmental impacts of the proposed development and determined that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) should be carried out.

2. Planning Policy & Guidance

2.1 National Policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021)
- National Planning Practice Guidance

2.2 Local Policies

Northumberland National Park Local Plan

- Policy ST1 Sustainable Development
- Policy ST2 General Development Principles
- Policy ST3 Major Development
- Policy ST4 Spatial Strategy
- Policy DM7 Rural Economy and Diversification
- Policy DM9 Transport and Accessibility
- Policy DM10 Habitats, Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy DM11 Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Night Skies
- Policy DM12 Trees, Woodlands and Forests
- Policy DM14 Historic Landscape Assets and Built Heritage
- Policy DM15 Archaeological Heritage
- Policy DM16 Minerals Development
- Policy DM17 Minerals Safeguarding Areas

2.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- NNPA Building Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Design Guide SPD)
- NNPA Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (Landscape SPD)

3. Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 **22NP0006** Variation of condition 1 (approved plans - to allow working of additional 80,000 tonnes below quarry floor) of permission 14NP0057 - Vertical and lateral extension within the current red line boundary. at Harden Quarry, Biddlestone, Netherton, Rothbury, Northumberland, NE65 7DX. *Planning permission conditionally granted 17th August 2022;*
- 3.2 **21NP0069** Scoping Opinion Northern Extension to Quarry. *Scoping opinion issued 13th October 2021;*
- 3.3 **15NP0029** Approval of details reserved by conditions nos. 5, 14, 31, 36 and 39 of 14NP0057 for a vertical and lateral extension within the current red line boundary and time extension of mineral planning permission 96NP29, as amended by permissions 02NP56 and 03NP23. *Approved 23rd September 2015;*
- 3.4 **14NP0057** Vertical and lateral extension within the current red line boundary and time extension of mineral planning permission 96/NP/29 as amended by planning permissions 02/NP/56 and 03/NP/23. *Planning permission conditionally granted 11th December 2014;*
- 3.5 **14NP0041** Review of Mineral Planning Permission 96/NP/29, as amended by planning permissions 02/NP/56 and 03/NP/23. *Planning permission conditionally granted 15th October 2014*
- 3.6 **03NP0023 (03/NP/23)** Variation to planning permission 02/NP/56 to permit the storage of soils and overburden north east of the quarry. *Planning permission conditionally granted 28th May 2003;*
- 3.7 **02NP0056 (02/NP/56)** Variation to planning permission 96/NP/29 to permit construction of new internal haul roads, car parking area, stockpiling area, weighbridge, and site offices. *Planning permission conditionally granted 16th October 2002;*
- 3.8 **98NP0005 (98/NP/05)** Details of onsite drainage facilities submitted pursuant to condition no. 8 of decision 96/NP/29. *Planning permission conditionally granted 9th April 1998;*
- 3.9 **97NP0065 (97/NP/65)** Details of archaeological scheme of works and fencing around areas of archaeological sensitivity pursuant to conditions no. 6 and 7 of planning permission 96/NP/29 (dated 06/06/97) in respect of quarrying operations. *Planning permission conditionally granted 15th December 1997;*
- 3.10 **97NP0068 (97/NP/68)** Details of tree planting submitted pursuant to condition no. 9 of planning permission 96/NP/29 in respect of quarrying operations. *Planning permission conditionally granted 2nd February 1998;*
- 3.11 **97NP0057 (97/NP/57)** Details of noise monitoring and blast monitoring submitted pursuant to conditions 28 and 57 respectively of planning permission 96/NP/29 in respect of extraction of redstone aggregate. *Planning permission conditionally granted 16th January 1998;*
- 3.12 **96NP0029 (96/NP/29)** Extension. *Planning permission conditionally granted 6th June 1997;*
- 3.13 **93NP0022 (93/NP/22)** Variation of condition no. 7 of planning permission 78/A/424 to allow 60 vehicles per day with an average of 40 a year. *Planning permission conditionally granted 29th September 1993;*
- 3.14 **89NP0007 (89/A/125)** Extension to existing quarry on 1.452 ha of land *Planning permission refused 13th September 1989;*

- 3.15 **88NP0002 (88/A/52)** Variation of condition no. 1 of planning permission 78/A/424 to allow continued extraction of roadstone and retention of access. *Planning permission conditionally granted 5th April 1989;*
- 3.16 **85NP0011 (85/A/204)** Construction of an exit road Planning permission conditionally granted 2nd September 1985;
- 3.17 **78NP0004 (78/A/424A)** Details of weighbridge and office *Planning permission conditionally granted 4th October 1984;*
- 3.18 **78NP0003 (78/A/424)** Extension to existing redstone quarry on 10.98 ha of land *Planning permission conditionally granted 4th April 1979;*

4. Consultee Responses

- 4.1 **Biddlestone Parish Council:** No response received
- 4.2 **Historic England:** **No objection** on heritage grounds
- 4.3 **Environment Agency:** **No objection**
- 4.4 **Natural England:** **No objection**
- 4.5 **NCC Minerals officer:** **No objection**
- 4.6 **NCC Lead Local Flood Authority:** No response received
- 4.7 **NCC Public Protection:** **No objection** subject to conditions relating to noise vibration, air quality and dust.
- 4.8 **NCC Highways:** **No objection** subject to conditions
- 4.9 **NNPA Landscape and Forestry Officer:** **No objection** subject to conditions. Agree with the applicant's assessment that the impacts upon landscape character and the views of this part of the national park as a result of the proposed development is unlikely to be significant.
- 4.10 **NNPA Ecologist:** **No objection** subject to conditions. Agree with findings of the ecological report. No protected sites are likely to be adversely affected. Biodiversity net gain delivered above 10%.
- 4.11 **NNPA Access and National Trails Officer:** **No objection**
- 4.12 **NNPA Historic Environment Officer:** **No objection.** The scheme will cause substantial harm (total physical loss) of non-designated heritage assets. The scheme will also have indirect impacts to the setting of 1 scheduled monument beyond the site boundary. The work carried out to date has established the presence, significance and potential of the historic environment to inform decision making. Discussions between the applicant's archaeological consultant, Historic England and the NNPA's Historic Environment officer has resulted in the production of a robust mitigation scheme to reduce the scale of the impacts upon non-designated archaeological remains and to secure wider public benefit. On the basis of the agreed and submitted mitigation scheme I have no objection to the proposals.

Public response

- 4.13 The application has been advertised by means of a site notice, a press notice, as well as notification letters sent to 24 nearby properties.
- 4.14 In response **two letters of objection** (from a single household) have been received from local residents of Biddlestone which can be summarised as follows:
- Danger from the single track road leading into Biddlestone which is unsuitable for quarry traffic
 - Lack of support from the quarry for the immediate local community
 - Danger to special needs child (resident within Biddlestone village)

- Impact on the village environment and standard of living
- Lengthy extension to life of quarry highly detrimental to quality of life of residents, local wildlife (including red squirrels) and the environment.
- Significant noise pollution through blasting and lorry transportation
- Loss of important archaeological history

4.14 A further 28 letters of **support** have been received. The majority of these letters of support are from the wider local area including from Rothbury and villages outside the National Park. They raise the following planning issues:

- Tarmac does so much for the locals it would be a shame not to extend the license
- They supply an iconic product that is both useful, unique and visually recognisable nationally.
- They provide sustainable local employment and local community support.
- The site is managed very well currently and see no reason why it shouldn't continue in the future
- The stone quarried is in demand and the local area benefits from the continued mining of this lovely rich red stone
- Tarmac has been a long-standing and excellent company that has only done good for the local community in many ways. We must not lose this outstanding company!
- Puts Northumberland on the map when the produce from the quarry is shipped all over the world.
- Excellent and conscientious operators of this site. They actively support the local area, economy and community and are an asset to the area
- This company does not just take from valley but has many years given back to help our local community
- Support the continuing extraction of Biddlestone red gravel as long as the lorry drivers drive responsibly going to and from the quarry
- This quarry is a great asset to the valley and the rural community
- The quarry provides badly needed employment in our area and the company supports the community in a number of ways. The National Park should not be allowed to become a museum, it is a resource for many people, but it is also where we live and work.
- This appears to be a well-reasoned proposal from a competent and reliable company. It will bring both direct and indirect benefits to the area. I believe it should be fully supported.

5. Assessment

5.1.1 The key material planning considerations include the following:

- The principle of the development, including major development.
- Impact upon National Park special qualities.
- Residential amenity.
- Highways.
- Noise, vibration, air quality and dust.
- Hydrology and flood risk.
- Climate change.
- Soils and agriculture.

Principle of Development

5.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places emphasis on a presumption in favour of sustainable development to guide decision making. Policy ST1 of the Local Plan adopts a similar presumption in favour of sustainable development and defines the qualities and criteria which are deemed to represent 'sustainable development'. The degree to which the proposals accord with these qualities is discussed throughout the report. It is however considered that parts a), d), e), f), g) and l) of policy ST1 which respectively relate to making the National Park a high-quality place to live and work; protecting or enhancing landscape character; protecting and improving biodiversity; making efficient use of land; and conserving or enhancing the historic environment are of particular relevance to this application.

Principle of Development - Major Development

5.1.3 National Planning Policy (NPPF) refers to major development in National Parks. Paragraph 176 states that:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, ... which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited...'

National policy also confirms that when considering applications for development within National Parks '*... permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances...*'. The footnote to this advice states that:

'Whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale, and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined'.

5.1.4 Policy ST3 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan relates to major development and reflects national policy in its wording. In the preamble to the policy, it is noted that development is classed as major '*when its characteristics and specific impacts are likely to have a significant impact on the special qualities of the National Park*'. It is further noted that '*Major development is only permitted inside National Parks in exceptional circumstances. Proposals are subject to the most rigorous examination and have to demonstrate that they are genuinely in the nation's interest if they are to proceed*'.

5.1.4 Part 1 of Policy DM16 (Minerals Development) states that proposals for major minerals development will be considered under the terms of Policy ST3. Whilst Harden Quarry is an existing quarry, the extent of the proposal of excavation of 1.5 hectares, extending the timescale for a further 20 years, as well as the potential to impact upon a scheduled monument and other special qualities of the National Park, it

is considered this proposal would fall within the parameters of characteristics and specific impacts likely to have a significant impact on the special qualities of the National Park.

5.1.5 Policy ST3 establishes the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that each aspect of Policy ST3 can be met and that taking all the information provided into account, they need to demonstrate that the development is exceptional and in the public interest.

5.1.6 Officers are satisfied that the applicant has justified the national need and contribution of the development to the national economy under criteria a). The supporting statement sets out the three main reasons that justify the national need and economic case, including:

- i. Harden red contains unique qualities that make it rare and in demand nationally and internationally for different end uses. Its hardness, strength, and durability mean it can bear weight allowing for use in asphalt and ground surfaces; it is distinctively red in colour due to the mineralogical composition of the stone.
- ii. Harden red contributes to historic and modern placemaking, from the Mall and Buckingham Palace courtyard in London, local driveways in Northumberland and for cycle path networks in mainland Europe.
- iii. An established market demand for Harden red. Evidence of the market demand has been provided within the documents submitted and have confirmed there are no indicators that market demand is reducing.

5.1.7 The proposal to extend the quarry will allow the site to continue supplying material which is required to meet particular demands for the material. There is a distinct and separate market for this product due to the nature, type and qualities of the aggregate. The material cannot easily be substituted from other quarries. It is considered the proposal would allow for the continued steady and adequate supply of red felsite rock for aggregate use.

5.1.8 Officers are satisfied that the information submitted under criteria b) relating to the impact of permitting the major development, or refusing it, upon the local economy, justify the exceptional circumstances for this proposal. The quarry employs six full time staff as well as 10 contact hauliers, and more third party hauliers, as well as occasional support staff such as electricians, fitters, fencing and landscaping contractors. The proposal will preserve the skilled jobs where alternative employment opportunities are limited, as well as continue to support the local community. Details of ways the applicant have helped the local community have been outlined in the supporting information, and this includes gritting local roads, subsidising the local community bus trust and supporting local businesses.

5.1.9 Criteria c) refers to whether the proposal cannot viably and technically be located elsewhere outside the National Park, or that the need cannot be met in some other way. This is an established quarry. Officers are satisfied that alternative replacement sources of felsite in the area are rare and excavation at other known sources of red felsite within the National Park would result in more of an impact than extending an existing quarry. The supporting information shows that the use of similar red felsite quarries in Scotland would not meet the demand of Harden's current export market.

5.1.10 Criteria d) relates to the extent to which the proposal is designed and sited to respect the character of the landscape. An assessment of the impact of the proposed extension on the landscape has been carried out as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment. The assessment concludes that the quarry is an existing and long-standing feature within the sensitive landscape, and the lateral extension would not significantly change the landscape and views into and out of the Park. Officers concur with this view and more detail on this is outlined in the landscape section below.

5.1.11 The report below sets out how the fifth criteria will be met, e) whether all possible measures have been taken to minimise and mitigate any adverse effects; on the special qualities of the National Park; the ability for the public to understand and enjoy the special qualities; the setting of historic assets, natural

resources and transport network. Officers are satisfied this proposal has been carefully designed to ensure that all measures have been taken to minimise and mitigate any adverse effects.

- 5.1.12 Part 2 of Policy ST3 requires that when all activity ceases the land will be required to be suitably restored or enhanced where appropriate. The application documentation confirms that on cessation of the quarry workings a detailed and progressive restoration plan will be implemented, and officers are satisfied this aspect of the policy can be met and achieved through suitably worded conditions.
- 5.1.13 It is considered that all aspects of Policy ST3 relating to major development have been satisfied and there are exceptional circumstances to justify the proposal; and it has been demonstrated that it is in the public interest to permit the proposal subject to consideration of the detailed environmental impacts elsewhere within this report.

Principle of development – minerals development

- 5.1.14 Local Plan Policy DM16 relates specifically to minerals development. Part 1 has been assessed above in relation to major development. Part 2 refers to small scale quarry expansion and extensions of time applications. As outlined above, the proposal includes an extension of time to allow for the additional minerals to be extracted from the site for a further 20 to 25 years. Socio-economic benefits have already been addressed in the report and the impact on the special qualities are discussed below. Part 3 is not relevant to this proposal as it relates to small scale quarrying of traditional building stone. Part 4 refers to the importance of mitigation measures to minimise negative environmental and socio-economic impacts. This again is addressed below in relation to effects on the natural and historic environment.
- 5.1.15 Part 5 of Policy DM16 sets out the type of evidence that is required to support a mineral application. The environmental statement submitted is comprehensive and provides all the required information. This is demonstrated by the lack of objection made by the statutory consultees who are all satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to assess the effects of the proposal. Details of the effect of the proposal on each aspect of possible environmental effects are addressed in the report below.
- 5.1.16 Part 6 of Policy DM16 includes the requirement to include proposed restoration and aftercare strategy. Details of the restoration have been submitted as part of the application and further details can be sought through suitably worded conditions.
- 5.1.17 It is considered that the proposed lateral extension of the quarry and extension of time by a further 25 years would be acceptable in principle and would accord with Local Plan policies ST1, ST3 and DM16 and policies in the national planning policy framework.

Impact upon National Park special qualities

Landscape & Visual Amenity

- 5.2.1 National planning policy supports '*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*' with paragraph 176 of confirming that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. Local plan policies reflect this national stance with Policy ST1 (part d) defining sustainable development as development which '*protects or enhances the landscape character of the National Park*'. The landscape Policy DM11 requires the conservation and enhancement of this important landscape but does accept that it needs to be '*responsive to landscape change*'. Development which would adversely affect the quality and character of the landscape will not be permitted. Part 4 of Policy DM16 requires all mineral applications to provide reasonable mitigation measures to ensure, amongst others, no unacceptable adverse effects on the natural environment while Part 5) e) v) requires an assessment of the effects of the proposal on '*landscape character and visual intrusion*'.
- 5.2.2 The 2019 Landscape Character Assessment for Northumberland National Park identifies that the site lies within the Rounded Hills Landscape Character Type, specifically the Cheviot Rounded Hills Landscape Character Area. It is noted that "Quarrying of natural stone resources has caused localised scarring of the landscape".

- 5.2.3 The application is accompanied by a full landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) undertaken in line with established practise. Photographs and photomontages have also been submitted. The visual baseline (set out in the LVIA) describes the visibility of the site as limited. Owing to the nature of the topography of the site and its location on the south facing slope of Bleakmoor Hill visibility is limited from within the National Park to north and west of the site. To the east of the site there are some oblique views of the site along the valley formed by the River Aln, but these are broken by changes in landform and intervening blocks of plantation. To the south views north toward the site are more open as the landform gradually falls away to the River Coquet, although a ridge of land runs west to east between the site and Coquetdale and blocks of plantation along this ridge largely screen views at lower elevations to the south. Most open views toward the site are from the minor road C172 that runs along this ridge to the south of the site between Alwinton and Netherton. The LVIA sets out that outside of the 5 km study area, further to the south, there are open distant views to the site as the landform climbs within the National Park boundary to 361 m AOD at Cold Law to the south-west of the site and 440 m AOD in the Simonside Hills to the south-south-east of the site.
- 5.2.4 The landscape effects are identified in the submitted documents as the soil stripping from phase 1 and transporting to the new storage area south of the quarry; the creation of a low bund along the northern edge of the extension to reduce views into the quarry from the Scheduled monument; working of the northern quarry face northwards by approximately 45 metres; and the progressive restoration of new quarry faces.
- 5.2.5 The Authority's Landscape and Forestry Officer has confirmed that the scope and level of assessment contained within the LVIA is appropriate. He also confirms that he is satisfied with the conclusions reached in both the assessment of landscape affects and assessment of visual effect, notably that the proposed extension would result in some localised and temporary significant visual effects in close views of the site but the effects on the landscape character would not be significant due to the presence of the existing quarry. Habitat creation and progressive restoration would reduce impacts in time and once the site is restored, there would be some localised beneficial effects. Officers are satisfied that the development would not permanently adversely affect the quality and character of the landscape of the National Park or its setting.
- 5.2.4 The LVIA document and the Phase 1, 2 and 3 plans identify the importance of existing and proposed additional tree planting in helping to soften and screen the development from various viewpoints. There is reference to the long-term maintenance and retention of this woodland, gorse and tree cover and officers are satisfied that this can be achieved through a suitably worded condition for the submission of a Woodland Management Plan that would be incorporated into the Ecology and Landscape Plan discussed in the Ecology section below.
- 5.2.5 It is considered that the proposal would meet with the requirements of Local Plan Policy DM11. Notably the development would not permanently adversely affect the quality and character of the landscape, subject to suitably worded conditions to ensure resilient woodland planting and restoration plans.

Tranquillity

- 5.2.6 In relation to tranquillity, Local Plan Policy DM11 requires that '*All development proposals should avoid external lighting where possible. Where external lighting is necessary its design should avoid all unacceptable adverse impacts, or as a last resort mitigate them to...avoid adverse impacts on tranquillity, dark skies....*'. Part 5 e) iv) of Local Plan policy DM16 requires an assessment of the effects of the proposal on '*dark night skies and tranquillity.*'
- 5.2.7 In terms of dark night skies the applicant confirms there are no proposals to change the lighting of the site. This proposal relates to the lateral extension and the extension of the timescale for operation. As the proposal makes no changes to the existing infrastructure on site and no lighting is proposed for the northern extension it is outside the realm of this application to request any existing external lighting to be brought into line with the Dark Sky Park lighting master plan. However, the applicant has confirmed

they are happy to look into this issue as part of discussions with the Harden Quarry Liaison Committee, but outside this application.

5.2.8 As well as lighting, tranquillity also relates to the level of noise and traffic. Local Plan Policy DM11 requires *'The level of noise, traffic and light generated as a result of the development during construction and thereafter is minimised and dark night skies maintained'* and *"the quiet enjoyment of the landscape is minimised"*. As outlined above there is already an established quarry where an element of noise and disturbance is to be expected. The documentation submitted shows that traffic levels and noise levels would be retained as already approved and would not increase as a result of this proposal. Officers are satisfied that the proposal would accord with Local Plan Policy DM11 in relation to no increase in traffic or noise and these will be ensured through suitably worded conditions.

Ecology

5.2.9 Local Plan Policy DM10 relates to habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity. It requires the conservation and enhancement of wildlife, habitats and sites of geological interest within the National Park to be given great weight with all development aiming to *'Maintain and where appropriate enhance features of ecological value and recognised geodiversity assets.'* Development proposals that are likely to have a harmful impact on protected or valuable sites or species will generally be refused. Part 5 e) vi) of policy DM16 states that proposals for extended mineral operations must be supported by an assessment of the effects of the proposal on *'habitats and species and geodiversity'*. In relation to major development, Policy ST3, requires it to be demonstrated, amongst others, that *'all possible measures have been taken to minimise and mitigate any adverse effects on the special qualities of the National Park'*.

5.2.10 The Environmental Statement submitted contains a comprehensive assessment of the proposed development on ecological features within and in the vicinity of the site. This assessment confirms that the design of the project has sought to avoid and mitigate potential significant ecological effects where possible and any residual effects addressed through compensation. The proposal also includes opportunities for a biodiversity net gain target of over 10%.

5.2.11 Baseline ecological conditions are set out in the Environmental statement, including the results of surveys relating to protected species, badger, bat, great crested newt, ornithological, flora, reptile, wax caps and other priority species. The site falls within the impact risk zone of the River Coquet and Coquet valley woodlands SSSI.

5.2.12 The documentation submitted confirms the proposed extension will result in the loss of an area of semi-improved acid grassland and the species it supports; the loss of the northern-most upper quarry benches; a loss of a small area of coniferous plantation to create a temporary haul road; a delay to quarry restoration works; medium term creation of grassland habitats on translocated soils and extensions to the area of grassland and wetland habitats created in the base of the restored quarry. Measures have been outlined to mitigate and compensate for these effects. A programme of monitoring and removal of pirri pirri burr that was approved under the 2014 permission, confirmed in 2015 will also be continued.

5.2.13 An assessment of restoration effects has been included, which will result in the retention of a framework of woodland and scrub habitats around the quarry with open mosaic, acid grassland, scrub and bare rock habitats extended over the restored quarry walls. The floor of the quarry will be restored to semi-improved acid grassland. The former compound and mineral storage area will be restored to native broadleaved woodland. The documents confirm that the extent of the number of habitats will increase along with the species they support. It is accepted that the extension will delay the restoration of some areas of the quarry and so habitat enhancements are proposed for the start of phase 1 of this proposal in the form of improvements to habitats and connectivity around the margins of the quarry.

5.2.14 Natural England has confirmed that they have no comments to make on the application. The NNPA Ecologist confirms she agrees with the findings of the ecological report, that no protected sites are likely to be adversely affected. The proposed mitigation relating to badgers, red squirrels, badgers and the

method statement for control of piri piri burr are all considered to be appropriate subject to conditions to ensure they are all carried out. The restoration plan, which includes broadleaved woodland as well as wetland species are considered appropriate.

- 5.2.15 An assessment outlining the proposed approach to biodiversity net gain has been submitted. It sets out that quarry margins to the west and north would be restored and planted at an early stage, with naturalistic patchy planting established wrapping around the extension area and the soil storage areas of gorse, hawthorn, sessile oak and hazel, providing low level cover in the upper areas of the site. Also, in the south eastern areas there are proposed scattered native trees and shrubs at the plantation woodland margins. These are “off-site” as in they are not within the red line of the application plan but still within close proximity as seen in the figure below.



Figure 3: *Habitat enhancement proposal outlined in white (off-site)*

- 5.2.16 The biodiversity net gain assessment submitted confirms that the current proposal will result in greater biodiversity net gain than the previously approved scheme. The NNPA Ecologist has confirmed that this is acceptable and provided a detailed Landscape and Ecology Management Plan that provides full habitat creation, enhancement and on going management details is submitted through a condition then there are no objections. The proposal would accord with local Plan policies ST1, ST2 and DM10 of the Local Plan and national planning policies relating to ecology.

Cultural Heritage

- 5.2.17 National planning policy is clear that all heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. The policy requires that developers describe the significance of any heritage assets which may be affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Paragraph 199 of the NPPF requires that when there is an impact from a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states that “*Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification*” and “*Substantial harm to or loss of...assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments...should be wholly exceptional*”. Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that “*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage*

asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”.

- 5.2.18 There are a number of Local Plan policies relevant to cultural heritage. Part I) of policy ST1 defines sustainable development as development that ‘*conserves or enhances the historic environment and helps secure a sustainable future for the assets at risk*’. Policy DM15 refers to archaeological heritage for all proposals, whilst Part 4 of Policy DM16 is specific to minerals applications and requires such applications to provide reasonable mitigation measures to ensure, amongst others, no unacceptable adverse effects on the historic environment.
- 5.2.19 The proposed lateral extension is in an extremely archaeologically sensitive area, bringing the quarry to the edge of the palisaded settlement of Bleakmoor Hill Scheduled Monument. While the proposed extension would not directly impact the scheduled monument, it would impact on its setting while resulting in the direct loss of a number of undesignated heritage assets.
- 5.2.20 The cultural heritage section of the Environmental Statement submitted identifies the policy context against which the application needs to be considered; details the methodology for assessing predicted impacts; details the existing baseline conditions; assesses the likely significance of effects on heritage assets (both direct and on setting); details the proposed scheme of mitigation; highlights residual effects; considers cumulative impacts; identifies limitations to the study and finally provides conclusions. An extensive suite of archaeological investigations has been undertaken to inform the proposal. This includes a preliminary strategic heritage assessment, geophysical survey, earthwork survey, an archaeological evaluation and a setting study and have all been submitted as part of the application.
- 5.2.21 The ES concludes that the effects of the proposed quarry extension are largely slight adverse without mitigation. Through the implementation of mitigation, the overall effects across the range of cultural heritage assets have been assessed as largely neutral or slightly beneficial, with some slight adverse effects where assets are to be removed. In specific relation to the Bleakmoor Hill Palisaded Enclosure Scheduled Monument, the ES concludes that the proposals will ensure its preservation and enhance its long-term protection, whilst at the same time significantly enhancing understanding of it both in its own right as well as in relation to its surrounding palimpsest. The understanding and appreciation of the Scheduled Monument is likely to be increased through local involvement and wide dissemination of the results. On the basis of the above, the ES has summarised that the overall effect of the development will not only amount to less than substantial harm but will provide an overall slight / moderate beneficial effect.
- 5.2.22 Given the archaeological and historic significance and sensitivity of the site and its surrounds, Historic England and the NNPA Historic Environment Officer have been consulted on the proposals. In their response, Historic England confirm that the cultural heritage of the proposal area has been comprehensively assessed as well as the impact of the proposal on it. Historic England have noted that the enclosure at Bleakmoor Hill represents a rare example of an Iron Age hilltop enclosure which did not develop into a hillfort. Although it has suffered from soil denudation over time, it still contains archaeological evidence which can tell us a great deal more about the site, its use, and contribute to wider discussions about this region and this period more generally. Given this, and that the National Heritage List for England records that there are only 11 palisaded hilltop enclosures which are scheduled in England. Historic England believe that the site remains one of national significance. In terms of impact, Historic England are satisfied that the cultural heritage of the proposal area has been comprehensively assessed as well as the impact of the proposal on it. The results support the application and have been used to devise proposed mitigation of the impacts.
- 5.2.23 Historic England note that the new quarry edge is proposed to be marked by a one metre high bund covered in native vegetation and a fence. It will come within around 10m of the boundary of the scheduled monument and in doing so will remove some non-designated heritage assets in its vicinity including a burial cairn, some orthostats, parts of a linear boundary, and some small clearance cairns. While advising that there will be no direct impact to the scheduled monument, Historic England confirm

their view that there will be an impact to its setting. The monument is part of a landscape which survived several millennia, although it has been eroded. The landscape was in use during multiple periods of time from the Mesolithic through to the Post Medieval. Much of what remains visible today primarily dates to the Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age, Early Iron Age, and with later Post Medieval agricultural practices evident.

- 5.2.24 While Historic England consider the proposed loss of features within the monument's setting to be regrettable, they note that the proposed mitigation strategy, may be seen to off-set that impact by providing data to enhance knowledge and understanding. It is proposed to carry out archaeological works including but not limited to excavation of affected assets; geo-chemical soil analysis; high resolution imagery; pollen coring and analysis of a waterlogged feature outside of the red-line boundary; annual monitoring of the monument and its vicinity. Historic England consider that whilst the quarry extension ensures that the monument is retained, the proposed one metre high bund with fencing and native planting within 10m of the boundary will have an impact on views out from the monument. The sense of openness that presently exists, despite the active quarry below, will be lost.
- 5.2.25 In light of the above, the position of Historic England is that the proposal will cause harm to the setting of the scheduled monument, both visually and through the loss of associated features in the immediate landscape. However, they are satisfied if conditioned and carried out accordingly, the proposed archaeological mitigation would off-set some of the harm caused.
- 5.2.26 The NNPA Historic Environment Officer confirms he has engaged in extensive discussions with the applicant's archaeological consultant. He accepts that the scheme proposed will cause substantial harm, (total physical loss) of non-designated heritage assets. He also confirms that the proposal would have indirect impacts to the setting of the Scheduled Monument beyond the site boundary. The archaeological work carried out to date has informed and produced a robust mitigation scheme to reduce the sale of the impacts upon non-designated archaeological remains and to secure wider public benefit. The Historic Environment Officer accepts that there will be some harm to the setting of the scheduled monument of the Palisaded settlement on Bleakmoor Hill. However, he also considers the mitigation and landscape scheme will reduce the level of this harm to an acceptable extent. This is on the basis that the mitigation is secured through suitably worded condition.
- 5.2.27 The mitigation strategy includes direct impacts and improvements to the setting impacts. For the features that will be removed as part of the proposal, some of the better preserved examples will be accurately surveyed prior to targeted hand dug archaeological excavation to ensure preservation by record. These works will include local volunteers and schools assisting with capacity, community inclusion and engagement, with the results being made widely available. The Scheduled Monument itself will be recorded accurately and will be inspected and recorded annually enhancing the long-term care of the monument. Setting impacts are proposed by the improvements to the quarry boundary including a bund planted with vegetation, softening the current boundary view. Highly accurate drone surveys will be undertaken over all the archaeological remains on Bleakmoor Hill which will provide preservation by record and identify any as yet unidentified buried archaeological remains.
- 5.2.28 To conclude, the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the scheduled monument. As required by national policy set out in paragraph 202, it is for the local planning authority to weigh up the harm versus the public benefit. As outlined above, it is considered the proposed mitigation strategy to enhance knowledge and understanding adds considerable weight to the public benefit of approving this proposal. If this development did not proceed then the mitigation strategy would not be carried out. The public benefits of extending the quarry have been outlined in the consideration of the major development test set out above, and it is therefore considered the test is met that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the less than substantial harm. Subject to a suitably worded condition to ensure all works are carried out in accordance with the written scheme of investigation and mitigation measures are carried out in full, the proposal would accord with Local plan policies ST1, ST2, DM15, DM16 and national planning policies in relation to the historic environment.

5.3 Residential amenity

- 5.3.1 National planning policy as set out in the NPPF requires that when determining applications for mineral extraction local planning authorities should ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions are controlled, mitigated or removed at source and establish appropriate noise limits for extraction in proximity to noise sensitive properties.
- 5.3.2 Policy ST2 states that development will be permitted where *'The proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of adjoining occupiers.'* In relation to minerals applications part 4 of Policy DM16 requires proposals to provide reasonable mitigation measures to ensure, amongst others, no unacceptable adverse effects on human health. Policy DM16 Part 5) e) ii) and iii) require all proposals for extended mineral operations to include an assessment of the effects of the proposals on *'levels of noise, dust and vibration'* and *'amenity and a loss of privacy'* respectively'.
- 5.3.3 The closest properties to the site are located to the south (No's 1-6 Biddlestone approximately 200m from the site operations base). Biddlestone Townfoot Farm is located to the east of the site (approx. 500m from nearest part of the quarry). It is recognised that the working of minerals inevitably gives rise to some disturbance and local communities can be affected through visual intrusion, noise, dust, vibration and other features which contribute to the amenity and quality of life of the area.
- 5.3.4 Officers are satisfied that the lateral extension of the quarry would not be any more visible from the nearest residential properties, than their current views. The soil storage area will be closer, but any operations associated with that would not be significant. The additional woodland tree planting that will increase in time will also help to provide general screening in the area.
- 5.3.5 The application proposes the same operational hours and noise limits as the current operation. The site has been operational for some time and, there is no history of complaints from the operation. Given that the proposal would not increase the operational hours or noise experienced within the area, subject to appropriate conditions, it is considered that there is no reason to withhold planning permission on these grounds. The recommended conditions would restrict the operational hours and impose noise limits at a number of named properties. In addition, noise monitoring reports would be submitted to ensure that the site was operating in accordance with the imposed limits.
- 5.3.6 There is a potential for dust to occur from operations in quarries. Under the existing planning permission, measures are in place to ensure that dust management arrangements are in place and it is considered a further condition should be attached to this permission requiring the site to be operated in accordance with a Dust Action Plan.
- 5.3.7 NCC Public Protection raise no objection to the proposal and it is considered that the recommended conditions are sufficient to ensure that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity in terms of noise or dust, in line with the NPPF and local planning policies.
- 5.3.8 Two letters of objection have been received from a single household from Biddlestone village. They raise concerns relating to vehicle safety on the single track road leading into Biddlestone; the lack of support from the quarry for the immediate local community; danger to their special needs child; impact on the village environment and standard of living. They also raise concerns regarding noise pollution through blasting and vehicle movements, harm to red squirrels and the impact on archaeological history of the hillside.
- 5.3.9 In response to these objections, officers refer to the highways, noise, ecological and archaeological sections of this report. These concerns raised by the local residents are not shared by the specialist technical officers who have responded to consultations on this proposal. For example, red squirrels are considered to be doing well in the local area and given the proposals provide opportunities for woodland enhancement and new woodland planting, it is considered the proposal would be more of a benefit than harm for red squirrels. The lack of support from the quarry for the immediate local community would not be a reason to refuse planning permission, however the applicant has provided evidence of support, including local gritting of roads on working days of the quarry. The extent of

support for the community differs in opinion with a number of letters of support praising the contribution the company makes to the local community.

- 5.3.10 The impact of the proposal on residents is a material planning consideration, as is the impact on someone with a protected characteristic such as a disability. This proposal is to extend an existing quarry 45 metres further away from the existing quarry face, away from the residents of Biddlestone village. It is considered that measures needed to avoid danger to a child with special needs would be the same as that are already required by the existing quarry. If this permission was refused then the quarry operations would still remain operational until 2029 and then the restoration would still retain quarry faces, albeit restored with vegetation. The proposal is not considered likely to increase any danger significantly beyond what exists at present to such an extent to warrant refusal of planning permission.
- 5.3.11 The issue of extending the lifetime of the quarry does mean the impact will lengthen for local residents. However as outlined in this report the number of vehicle movements will be the same as existing, the same frequency of blasting (up to 6 times per year) and impact of noise (controlled through monitoring conditions) will be experienced by local residents for a longer period of time. Having weighed up the positive benefits of permitting the quarry to continue, it is considered the strict operational conditions attached to this permission would enable any harm to residents to be lessened. The lack of complaints received during the operation of the quarry and no objection from Public Protection supports the fact that the quarry can continue successfully without significant harm to immediate residents. It is considered the proposal would meet with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16 with respect to residential amenity.

Highways and Public Rights of Way

- 5.4.1 Local plan policies ST2 and DM9 are supportive of proposals which do not compromise highway safety, the local road network or public rights of way. Policy DM16 relating to minerals development requires an assessment of the proposals on traffic and air quality.
- 5.4.2 The details submitted in the Environmental Statement relating to highways and traffic cover the impact of the proposed development in terms of access arrangements, operational details, traffic generation and the distribution and assignment of vehicle trips on the highway network and highway safety, particularly in relation to all road users is drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians, and identifies mitigation measures where required. The application confirms the majority of material extracted each year is exported in Tarmac vehicles but there are also private collections (local contractors) that include third party haulage vehicles.
- 5.4.3 The proposal would not seek to change the overall quantity of stone extracted each year and would not alter the vehicle movements currently permitted. There would be no increase in staff either. The study submitted shows the existing traffic can be accommodated on the local highway network and the local network will still be able to accommodate associated traffic for the extension period of 25 years, without causing any significant impacts to the flow and safety of the surrounding highway network.
- 5.4.4 There are existing restrictions in place through the 2014 planning permission that limit the number of vehicle movements and it is considered necessary to continue these restrictions. This means that the number of vehicle movements would be no more than 50 loaded lorries leaving the site per day, with the exception of 30 days when not more than 70 vehicles are permitted to leave the site. The daily average over one year does not exceed 50 per working day. The route management plan that is implemented by Tarmac would also remain with the extension to the quarry and secured through planning condition. Off- site highways improvements are proposed, such as the condition of the U4017 towards the site access- and appropriate improvements would be agreed with the Highway Authority.
- 5.4.5 NCC Highways as Highway Authority are satisfied that a robust assessment has been undertaken of the impact of the development on the highway network. They confirm that they have no objection to the proposal subject to conditions relating to the number of movements, record keeping of HGV movements, sheeting of vehicles and the prevention of mud stone etc being deposited on the highway,

along with additional conditions to secure the routing of HGVs and the proposed road repairs / improvements set out in the submitted documentation. They also refer to the continuation of the Highway Agreements with the Highways Authority for contributions towards maintenance of the highway due to extraordinary traffic transferred to the 22NP0066 decision notice.

- 5.4.6 NCC Highways recommend a number of conditions including requiring the submission of information relating to a HGV routing strategy and providing for road repairs / improvements on the A4017. The suggested conditions require the submission of information *prior to commencement of development*. National guidance on planning conditions states that pre-commencement conditions should only be used where there is a clear justification and that the timing of compliance requirements are so fundamental to the development that it would be otherwise necessary to refuse the whole permission. Given the 2014 permission allows of the same number of vehicles on the road until 2029, officers consider a pre-commencement condition is not essential and instead recommend the submission of the same details through a condition however the details should be submitted within 12 months of the commencement of development.
- 5.4.7 There are a number of public rights of way in the vicinity of the site, including bridleways and public footpaths. The NNPA Access officer has confirmed that the proposals would not impact on any of the public rights of way or other access opportunities.
- 5.4.8 Subject to the imposition of suitably worded conditions the proposal would meet with the requirements of Local Plan policies ST2 and DM9 in relation to transport and accessibility.

Noise, vibration, air quality and dust

- 5.5.1 National planning policies require proposals to *'ensure that any unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any blasting vibrations are controlled, mitigated or removed at source and establish appropriate noise limits for extraction in proximity to noise sensitive properties'* (paragraph 211). Local planning policy DM16 relating to Minerals Development requires an assessment of *'levels of noise, dust and vibration'*.
- 5.5.2 The Environmental Statement includes chapters on air quality, noise and vibration. The air quality chapter includes dust impacts associated with the proposal and details the methodology for assessment. The sources of dust associated with quarrying have been identified and a dust assessment was undertaken. Mitigation measures that are currently in place are considered appropriate, with no complaints received. The continuation of the existing measures, controlled through conditions, would ensure the proposal will not lead to an unacceptable risk from air pollution. NCC Public Protection confirm that the information submitted demonstrates compliance with guidance dust limits and therefore continuing with the dust management plan conditioned in the 2014 permission would ensure that this continues with the proposal.
- 5.5.3 National planning policy suggests noise associated with quarrying can be restricted and controlled through planning conditions. A chapter has been included within the Environmental Statement to assess the potential impacts of the proposal in terms of noise. This identifies the main sources of noise such as soil stripping (using an excavator), mineral extraction including blasting and associated site operations, aggregate processing and haulage. Mitigation measures have been in operation and would continue, which include regular maintenance of plant, liaison with local residents to inform of blasting, haul road surfacing kept as smooth as possible and vehicle reversing alarms adjusted to ambient noise levels.
- 5.5.4 NCC Public Protection confirm the assessments carried out in relation to noise meet the relevant code of practice. They also confirm that the operational hours of the quarry and the noise limits set in the 2014 permission have shown that the Tarmac have been successful in demonstrating compliance with the noise limits and it is recommended these conditions are attached to any permission for the extension.
- 5.5.5 A chapter on vibration provides detail of a blast induced vibration study carried out and assesses the implications of blasting operations on sensitive receptors and provides recommendations for mitigation/minimisation measures. NCC Public Protection accepts that some blasting will be required in the

extension to the quarry, as it is currently with the quarry operations. They confirm that the information submitted demonstrates that compliance with accepted official and unofficial vibration limits can be achieved with this proposal subject to suitably worded conditions.

- 5.5.6 Subject to strictly controlled conditions, it is considered the proposal would accord with national policy and Local plan policies ST2 and DM16 with respect to noise, vibration, air quality and dust.

Hydrology and flood risk/ ground water

- 5.6.1 The submitted Environmental Statement assesses water related issues associated with the proposal. It sets out the baseline with respect to hydrology, watercourses, springs and waterbodies, as well as providing a water quality assessment and a Flood Risk Assessment. The proposed extension is above the water table and therefore de-watering or other mitigation measures are not required.
- 5.6.2 The Environment Agency (EA) have been consulted on the proposals. Having considered the submissions, they have raised no objection, noting that the information provided within chapter 9 of the Environmental Statement in relation to water resources is sufficient to describe the hydrogeological impacts of the proposed quarry extension. They do not consider that the imposition of any conditions or informatives relating hydrology and / or flood risk are necessary. As such officers are satisfied that the proposal accords with national and local policies with respect to hydrology and flood risk.

Climate Change

- 5.7.1 The climate change chapter of the Environmental Statement provides an assessment of impacts from emissions related to the proposed development as well as an assessment of climate resilience. The conclusion is that the intensity of the proposed development is no different from what is happening at present, and therefore the impact on climate change is deemed to be negligible. This does not mean the proposed development would have no effect on climate change as all human activity does. Mitigation measures have been investigated such as using modern efficient equipment and mobile plant, installing renewable technologies, and they also make the point that the restoration plans for the site will enhance biodiversity in the long term. It is considered that a condition requiring replacement efficient plant and machinery, renewable energy sources and other measures to reduce the quarry's carbon footprint would be excessive considering the proposal would not be intensifying the current operations. Instead, officers encourage the company to work with the Liaison Committee and planning officers to seek ways to reduce the carbon footprint outside this planning application.
- 5.7.2 The assessment of climate change vulnerability highlighted potential risk to infrastructure and operations, extreme weather events affecting infrastructure and risk to environmental management, such as an increase in rainfall affecting slope failure. The assessment concludes that it will not be possible to eliminate every risk associated with climate change but through intelligent design, preparation and responsible construction the risks can be minimised.
- 5.7.3 The proposal is considered to meet with the requirements of sustainable development set out in Local Plan Strategy ST1 and does not raise any concerns that would warrant refusal of planning permission or require any specific planning conditions.

Soils and agriculture

- 5.8.1 National planning policy states proposals should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by '*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*'. Local Plan Policy DM16 relating to minerals development requires an assessment of the proposal on soils (part 5) and the inclusion of a restoration and aftercare strategy for soils (part 6).
- 5.8.2 The information submitted with the Environmental Statement on Soils considers the potential impacts on soil and the loss of agricultural land associated with the proposal. The assessment includes a soil survey which concludes the soil that would be permanently lost comprises Grade 4 (poor quality) agricultural land. Proposed activities associated with stripping, transport and storage of the soils have

the potential to result in the loss of soils due to inappropriate storage, erosion and contamination. Mitigation measures have been proposed and can be implemented through a site specific Soil Management Plan to allow for the soil to remain at a suitable quality for reuse, which would be achieved through a suitably worded condition.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The principle of mineral extraction at this site is long established and the proposal would bring about significant benefits, including continued employment and the continued supply of a specialist material. The extensive information provided in support of this application, including an Environmental Statement, satisfies officers that the proposal would meet with the major development test for allowing major development in the national park in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.2 The report concludes that the lateral extension and extension of time proposals are acceptable in relation to their impacts on landscape, tranquillity, ecology, the desirability of preserving heritage assets and their setting, residential amenity, highways and public rights of way impact and other matters of acknowledged importance, subject to the imposition of conditions.
- 6.3 The recommended conditions seek to ensure that the extraction of minerals is controlled both during the operation and restoration of the quarry and that the site can be restored to a high standard. The conditions are considered to be in accordance with the adopted Local Plan and Government policy and advice.

7. Recommendation & Conditions

7.1 It is recommended to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Unless otherwise required by condition attached to this permission, the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the plans and specifications set out below:
 - Planning application and EIA Northern Extension document including Environmental Statement dated August 2022
 - Figure 2 Lateral extension application boundary plan. Drwg no H096-001090-2
 - Figure 3.1 Quarry extension Phase 1 Stage 1 Drwg No H0960-00109-13
 - Figure 3.2 Quarry extension Phase 2 Stage 3 Drwg No H0960-00109-14
 - Figure 3.3 Quarry extension Phase 3 Stage 6 Drwg No H0960-00109-15
 - Figure 3.4 Quarry extension Restoration Drwg No H0960-00109-18
 - Figure 3.5 Cross sections Drwg No H0960-00109-40
 - Application form received 18 August 2022
 - Method statement for the control of Pirri pirri burr report and additional clarification received 31 October 2022
 - Biodiversity net gain assessment report by E3 Ecology received 5th December 2022

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved details. For the avoidance of doubt, to enable the local planning authority to adequately manage the development and to ensure the proposal accords with policies ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, DM9, DM10, DM11 and DM16 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2. The extraction of minerals hereby permitted shall cease on or before 31st October 2054. The whole of the site shall be restored in full accordance with the site restoration plans (Listed in condition 1) and all plant and buildings shall be removed from the site within a period of 12 months of the cessation of mineral extraction.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved details in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan policy DM16.

3. In the event of the development permanently ceasing for any reason prior to the time limits set out above, the Local Planning Authority shall be notified in writing by the site operator within one month of the date of the closure of the site. A revised scheme for the restoration of the site shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval within 6 months of the closure of the site. The revised restoration scheme shall be implemented within 6 months of the approval of the scheme.

Reason: In the interests of proper restoration of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

Site preparation

4. The operator shall maintain a notice board at the entrance to the quarry indicating the name, address and telephone number of:
- a) A representative of the operators who would be available to deal promptly with any complaints;
 - b) The telephone number of the Local Planning Authority in respect of queries regarding the working of the site.

The notice board shall be maintained in sound and legible condition throughout the period of working and restoration. The notice board shall be removed upon completion of works to restore the site.

Reason: To assist local residents in making contact with the developer and Local Planning Authority, in accordance with Local Plan Policies ST2 and DM16.

5. Prior to commencement of development a site specific Soil Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. All works shall be carried out in accordance with approved details.

Reason: To ensure the soil removed retains suitable quality for reuse, in accordance with local plan policies ST1 and ST2.

6. The development of the lateral extension shall be carried out in strict accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation outlined in Appendix 10.9.

Reason: In order to ensure that there is no unacceptable risk to potential or unknown archaeology on the site and to safeguard the cultural heritage of the National Park, by providing an adequate opportunity to investigate archaeological remains on the site before development is carried out, in accordance with Northumberland National Park Local Plan policies ST1, ST2 and DM15, and Chapter 16 the NPPF.

7. Within 6 months of the date of this permission, a detailed Landscape and Ecology Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall make provision for the retention of and ongoing maintenance of existing and new woodland on site, as well as the full habitat creation, enhancement and maintenance of the ecological measures. The plan shall detail the management and monitoring during operation and after restoration. The agreed Landscape and Ecology Management plan shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity and landscape character of the area and to ensure the development is in accordance with Local Plan Policy DM10 and the NPPF

8. The on-site drainage facilities shall be maintained on site as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of proper working and restoration of the site in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16 and the NPPF.

9. A Community Liaison Committee, comprising representatives of the National Park Authority and Northumberland County Council, the operators and the local community shall meet at regular intervals throughout the operational life of the site.

Reason: To assist local people in making contact with the operator and Local Planning Authority and to act as a forum for the discussion of issues relating to the operation of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

Site working general

10. Until the completion of site restoration a copy of this decision letter, together with copies of all approved plans, and any subsequent amendments, plus noise/dust action plans shall be retained in the site office and made available at all times the site is in operation.

Reason: In the interests of proper working and restoration of the site in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16 and the NPPF.

11. The site shall be worked in accordance with the phased scheme of operation outlined in the application hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of proper working of the site in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16 and the NPPF.

12. A detailed and up-to-date site working and phasing plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority every 24 months.

Reason: In the interests of proper working of the site in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16 and the NPPF.

13. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and County Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any order revoking, re-enacting or modifying that order), no plant or machinery, buildings or structures shall be placed on the site other than those expressly authorised by this permission.

Reason: In the interests of proper working and restoration of the site in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16 and the NPPF.

14. The scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Piri piri burr method statement and further addendum as approved under 15NP0029.

Reason: In order to control this invasive species in accordance with Local Plan policies ST1, ST2 and DM10.

Site working – Site operations

15. A stock proof fence shall be maintained around the working areas at all times during the period of extraction and restoration.

Reason: In the interests of proper working of the site in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

16. The hours of site operations shall be as follows:

Site preparation, extraction, processing and restoration:

Mon-Fri 0700-1900 hours

Sat 0700-1300 hours

Maintenance of plant or buildings:

Mon-Fri 0700-1900 hours

Sat 0700-1700 hours

Sun 0900-1700 hours

Maintenance does not include the operation of plant or machinery

Blasting:

Mon-Fri 1000-1630 hours.

No working other than that identified shall take place on Sundays or Public Holidays. Operations required for the purposes of site drainage may be continued 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

17. Noise, when measured at the properties identified below, shall not exceed the levels shown below: (1 hour Leq)

Biddlestone Cottage 52 dB (free field)
The Priests House 50 dB (free field)
Biddlestone Home Farm 45 dB (free field)
Biddlestone Town Foot 45 dB (free field)
Singmoor 45 dB (free field)

With the exception of periods of up to 8 weeks in a calendar year for the temporary operations of soil stripping or mound formation when noise shall not exceed 70dB.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

18. All plant, machinery and vehicles used on site shall be fitted with effective silencers and no vehicle shall use any automatically operated and externally audible reversing siren whilst on site.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

19. The regular monitoring and reporting of noise levels at the nearest noise sensitive properties shall be carried out every six months at the identified properties in accordance with the approved scheme. The assessment must be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within one month of the monitoring taking place.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

20. The operation shall be carried out in full accordance with the Dust Action Plan agreed under 14NP0057 and the following dust control measures must continue to be implemented:

- in dry weather conditions, all operational roads are dampened by trailer bowser to minimise the potential for dust generation;
- all soil storage and overburden storage mounds are graded and seeded to minimise the potential for dust generation, with regular visual inspections to ensure that the vegetation cover is maintained;
- the crushing and screening plant deployed at the processing area is fitted with integral dust suppression (bowser) sprays, and the working area is dampened during dry conditions by bowser;
- all laden HGVs pass through the wheelwash facility prior to leaving the quarry to wash off dirt or dust before travelling on the public highway;
- all laden HGVs are securely sheeted prior to leaving the site to prevent spillage of such materials and the generation of dust from the vehicle whilst in transit;
- a road sweeper is employed if dust or debris from quarry vehicles is deposited on the public highway;
- earthmoving equipment and HGVs utilised within the quarry are fitted with exhausts which do not point downwards; and
- during particularly dry and windy conditions, where dust is visible close to the site boundary, additional measures are taken including relocation of activities or suspension of quarry operations.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

21. Blasting shall only be carried out after clear audible warnings from a warning siren.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

22. Blasting operations shall be carried out so that all blast vibration as measured at the nearest sensitive properties is less than 12 mms -1 peak particle velocity and 95% of all blast vibration as measured at the nearest sensitive property is less than 6 mms -1 peak particle velocity. The measurement to be the maximum of three mutually perpendicular directions taken at the ground surface.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

23. Methods employed to minimise air overpressure from blasting operations shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in reference 15NP0029.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

Environmental Protection - Transport

24. Not more than 50 loaded lorries in total per day shall leave the quarry on any working day with an exception of 30 days in a calendar year when not more than 70 vehicles in total shall leave the quarry. The daily average over one year shall not exceed 50 per working day.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity, in accordance Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

25. A record shall be kept, at the quarry, of the numbers of lorry loads leaving each day and such record shall be made available to the Local Planning Authority on request.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

26. All vehicles carrying stone and loose material from the site shall have their loads securely sheeted.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

27. Measures shall be taken to ensure that no mud, stone or other debris is deposited on the public highway by any vehicles leaving the site. Such measures shall include the provision and use of a wheel wash, if, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, such equipment is required.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

28. Within 12 months of commencement of development, a routing strategy which shall incorporate adequate provision for addressing any abnormal wear and tear to the highway shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in Liaison with the Highway Authority together with proposals to control and manage vehicle movements and to ensure no inappropriate local roads are used by associated large vehicles.

Reason: In the interests of maintaining highway efficiency and safety. In accordance with Local plan policies ST2 and DM16.

29. Within 12 months of commencement of development, a scheme to carry out improvements to the highway, including a timetable, must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall provide for road repairs / improvements on the A4017 as set out in the submitted Environmental Statement. The scheme shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved detail and timetable.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity. In accordance with Local Plan policies ST2 and DM16.

Environmental Protection - Pollution

30. Any facilities for the storage of oils fuels or chemicals shall be sited on impervious bases and surrounded by impervious bund walls. The volume of the bunded compound shall be at least equivalent to the

capacity of the tank it contains plus 10%. If there is multiple tankage, the compound shall be at least equivalent to the capacity of all tanks plus 10%. All filling points, vents, gauges and sight glasses must be located within the bund. Associated pipework shall be located above ground and protected from accidental damage. All filling points and tank overflow pipe outlets should be detailed to discharge downwards into the bund. The bund shall be sealed with no drain for removal of contained liquids. Any bund contents shall be bailed or pumped out under manual control and disposed of safely. A mobile spill drip tray shall be made available throughout the duration of the development.

Reason: To prevent pollution to any watercourse in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM10 and DM16.

31. Measures shall be taken to ensure that no adjoining watercourse or water feature is affected by any part of the operations carried out on site.

Reason: To prevent pollution to any watercourse in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM10 and DM16.

32. The scheme to monitor spring flow should be carried out in accordance with the details approved under 15NP0029.

Reason: In order to protect the water environment in accordance Local Plan policies ST2, DM10 and DM16.

Restoration General

33. The quarry shall be restored progressively in accordance with the approved plans using restoration blasting techniques on quarry faces.

Reason: In the interests of proper working, restoration and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

34. Only native species indigenous to the area should be used in restoration tree and shrub planting and re-vegetation grass mixes.

Reason: In the interests of proper working, restoration and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

35. In order to take account of any changes necessary as a result of working experience on this site, the developer shall submit a final restoration strategy for the approval of the Local Planning Authority at least 12 months prior to the final replacement of overburden on the first part of the quarry floor to be restored. The strategy shall include:

a) a definitive restoration plan indicating landform, after uses, surface features and contours based on the approved Restoration Master plan (Restoration Drwg No H0960-00109-18); and

b) details of the depth and composition of the soil profile to be replaced on areas intended for land based after uses.

Reason: In the interests of proper working, restoration and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

36. After cessation of mineral extraction all quarry buildings, plant and machinery shall be removed and overburden and any other permitted fill materials shall be replaced to such levels that, after replacement of subsoil and topsoil the contours of the restored land will conform to the approved restoration contours.

Reason: In the interests of proper working, restoration, and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

37. The final layer of overburden on land intended for an agricultural after-use shall, so far as is practicable, be replaced to slopes of not less than 1 in 30 and graded to minimise the risk of ponding.

Reason: In the interests of proper working, restoration and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

38. The Local Planning Authority shall be notified in writing when condition 37 has been complied with, and given the opportunity with at least 48 hours notice, excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays) to inspect the surface before restoration work is carried out.

Reason: In the interests of proper working, restoration, and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

Restoration – Replacement of soil

39. Prior to the replacement of soil, the surface onto which it is to be placed shall be scarified to alleviate compaction, and surface picked of any stones or other materials capable of impeding the proposed agricultural or associated operations.

Reason: In the interests of proper working, restoration and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

40. Any re-spreading of soil for the proposed agricultural after-use shall only be carried out when the material and the ground onto which it is to be placed are in a dry and friable condition and in sufficient time for sub-soiling, cultivation and reseeded to take place under normal weather conditions between April and September.

Reason: In the interests of proper working, restoration, and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

41. The Local Planning Authority shall be given the opportunity to inspect the soil respreads in accordance with condition 43 prior to further cultivations being carried out.

Reason: In the interests of proper working, restoration, and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

42. Within 3 months of the restoration of the final soil layer, the developer shall make available to the Local Planning Authority a plan with contours at sufficient intervals to indicate the final restored landform of the site, together with a record of the depth and composition of the reinstated profile.

Reason: In the interests of proper working, restoration, and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

Aftercare- Submission of an aftercare scheme

43. An Aftercare Scheme requiring such steps as may be necessary to bring the land to the required standard for the use of agriculture shall be submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority, not later than 6 months prior to the date on which it is first expected that the replacement of topsoil shall take place within the areas intended for vegetation based after-uses, as indicated by the Restoration Masterplan.

Reason: In the interests of proper restoration and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

44. The submitted aftercare scheme shall:

a) provide an outline strategy in accordance with the NPPF for the 5 year aftercare period. This shall specify steps to be taken and the period during which they will be taken, including provision for cultivation, planting, fertilising, watering, drainage, field boundaries, access and otherwise treating the land;

b) providing for annual meetings between the developer, the Local Planning Authority, DEFRA and other parties with an interest in the aftercare of the land;

c) provide for a detailed annual programme, in accordance with NPPF to be submitted to all interested parties not later than 12 months prior to the annual aftercare meeting.

Reason: In the interests of proper restoration and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

Aftercare- The aftercare period

45. Following the completion of restoration of any part of the site intended for a vegetation-based after-use, that land shall be put under effective aftercare management in accordance with the approved outline strategy as set out in conditions 43 and 44.

Reason: In the interests of proper restoration and aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

Aftercare- Completion of aftercare

46. During the fourth year of aftercare, the developer shall prepare a report on the condition of the land and incorporating proposals to demonstrate that by the end of the aftercare period this will have been made reasonably fit for a viable long-term agricultural after-use. The report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of proper aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

47. The period of agricultural aftercare shall be deemed to have been successfully completed following a period of 5 years effective management, when it has been demonstrated and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority that all necessary steps have been taken to ensure that the land has been made reasonably fit for a long term after use.

Reason: In the interests of proper aftercare of the site, in accordance with Local Plan policies ST2, DM11 and DM16.

Informative Notes

1. This planning permission is granted in strict accordance with the approved plans. It should be noted however that:
 - (a) Any variation from the approved plans following commencement of the development, irrespective of the degree of variation, may constitute unauthorised development and may be liable to enforcement action.
 - (b) You, your agent, or any other person responsible for implementing this permission should inform the Local Planning Authority immediately of any proposed variation from the approved plans and ask to be advised as to the best method to resolve the matter. Most proposals for variation to the approved plans will require the submission of a new application.
2. This consent is granted subject to conditions and it is the owner and the person responsible for the implementation of the development who will be fully responsible for their compliance throughout the development and beyond. Some conditions may require work to be carried out, or details to be approved prior to the commencement of the development.

Where pre-commencement conditions are not complied with, the whole of the development could be unauthorised, and you may be liable to enforcement action. In some circumstances, the only way to rectify the situation may be through the submission of a new application. If any other type of condition is breached then you may be liable to a breach of condition notice.

3. Please note mitigation works associated with archaeology of the site may require Schedule Monument consent. Please refer to Historic England for advice.

Development Management Committee

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4. Under Section 59 of the Highway Act there is the requirement in relation to the extraordinary maintenance placed upon the Highway Authority as a result of the development proposals. An agreement will need to be entered into with the Highway Authority in relation to the proposed for road repairs / improvements on the A4017.
5. **Highway Agreement re highway works.** You are advised that offsite highway works required in connection with this permission will require an agreement under the Highway Act 1980. All such works will be undertaken under the supervision of the Council at the applicant's expense. You should contact Highway Development Management at highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk to progress this matter.
6. **Section 59 Agreement - Extraordinary Expenses:** You are advised to contact the Council's Highway Development Management team at highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk concerning the Section 59 Agreement of the Highway Act 1980 relating to extraordinary expenses

Contact Officer: For further information contact: Susannah Buylla, Head of Planning & Policy, email Susannah.Buylla@nnpa.org.uk

Background papers: Planning file 22NP0066

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