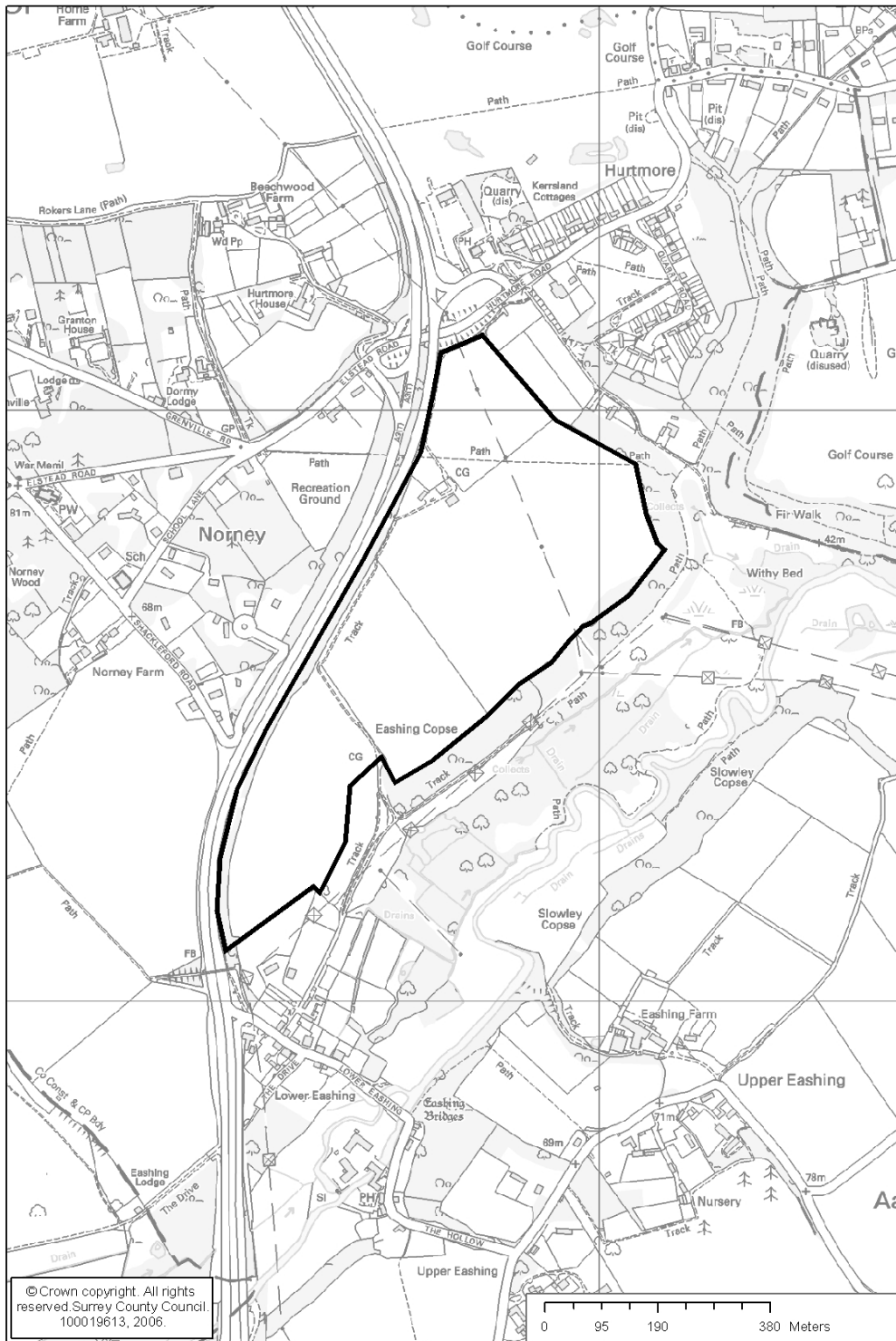


PREFERRED AREAS - SOFT SAND

Preferred area N: Eashing Farm, Eashing



(Guidford 494774E 144697N)

Location

The land is located in open countryside between the villages of Hurtmore (to the north) and Eashing (to the south). It lies on the eastern side of the A3 between the carriageway and the River Wey valley, immediately south-east of the A3 junction with Hurtmore Road and Elstead Road.

Site description

The preferred area forms an elongated area of land lying adjacent to the A3, and consists of open farmland currently used for arable cropping, with a few hedgerows and strips of woodland. The land is a plateau area lying above the wooded valley of the River Wey, and slopes gently down from north to south. The River Wey and its valley are designated an SSSI. Eashing Farm bungalow lies on the western boundary, and access from Hurtmore Road is almost directly opposite the southbound on and off slips of the A3. Power lines cross the site in a south-easterly direction. A footpath runs east to west across the site, and a bridleway runs along the western boundary and then across to join footpaths along the River Wey.

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Maximum yield | 1.30 million tonnes of soft sand up to 0.85 million tonnes of Bargate stone. |
| Area: | 28 ha |
| Planning designations | Area of Great Landscape Value Green Belt |

The preferred area has a total estimated yield of 3.94 million tonnes of soft sand, however the release of this low quality product will be controlled in line with expected demand. This is to ensure that a sufficient landbank of higher quality soft sand is available from other preferred areas. Planning permission will only be granted for one phase of working during this plan period that would give rise to a maximum yield of 1.3mt of soft sand. The location of this phased working within the preferred area will be dependent on the hydrological study, the method of working and restoration proposed. This preferred area would also yield a small proportion of Bargate stone.

Planning applications to work this preferred area should address:

Access

Access could be achieved from the Hurtmore Road, provided that improvements are made to the visibility splays. Access improvements for HGVs joining the A3 to the north and exiting the A3 to the south are also required. Improvements have been agreed in principle with the Highway Authority and Highways Agency, but applications should address the impacts of these improvements in detail.

Local amenity, phasing and rights of way

Applications should include a scheme of phased working so as to minimise the impact on nearby properties. Any impacts on amenity would be on the villages to the north and south, and those residential properties scattered along the River Wey. An assessment of the potential impacts of noise and dust and visual impacts to assess what further planting, unworked margins and screen bunding will be required. Preliminary

investigations indicate that the quarry excavation and processing would not impact significantly on the nearby villages and properties along the River Wey. The rights of way across the site would need diverting and safeguarding from the excavations.

Hydrology

The site is within a major aquifer, but groundwater levels are low. However there would be implications for loss of part of the unsaturated zone, particularly given the adjoining SSSI and its wetland habitat. Groundwater contours indicate that springs fed from the site flow into the River Wey. A reduced unsaturated zone may change the rate of flow from the springs and reduce the mineral content of groundwater. In addition there are concerns that a reduction in the unsaturated zone could increase the risk of contaminated groundwater from any oil spill on the A3 reaching the River Wey and the groundwater table. A full hydrological risk assessment will be required to address these issues.

Ecology

The site has no ecological designations, but the River Wey and its valley are designated an SSSI and land to the north is designated as an SNCI. Applications should include an ecological study which assesses the impacts of working on the preferred area, the SSSI and the SNCI. This should include investigation as to whether working would impact on the spring line within the site which feeds the wetland habitat of the SSSI, and should include mitigation measures where appropriate. An unworked margin together with planting may act as a buffer with the SSSI.

Conservation area

Eashing Conservation Area lies to the south, therefore proposals should demonstrate that the setting and character is not unacceptably harmed by working. A stand-off margin and planting may be one way of addressing this.

Archaeology

Prior archaeological assessment, and if necessary evaluation, would be required as part of any proposal.

Agriculture

The land is of grade 3 agricultural classification and is in arable use. Planning applications should include an assessment of the impact of mineral working on the viability of the agricultural holding.

Landscape

The land is within the AGLV and the Greensand Plateau/Valleys of the Upper Wey Wealden County Landscape Character area. Applications should assess the important landscape characteristics and features, and how they would be protected and integrated into restoration proposals. Adverse impacts on the AGLV and how these would be mitigated during working and restoration should also be addressed.

Utilities

A stand-off from the electricity pylons will be required.

Restoration

The restoration options involve restoring back to existing levels with inert fill or creating a woodland valley feature. Restoration schemes should reflect the AGLV status and provide biodiversity opportunities linking to the adjoining SSSI. Restoration options are covered in detail in the *Mineral Sites Restoration SPD*.