

Leicester City Council
Mineral Safeguarding July 2015

Introduction

1.1 Mineral resources are natural concentrations of a solid, liquid, or gaseous material that are, or may become, of potential economic interest due to their natural properties. Deposits of igneous rock, coal, limestone, brick clay, fireclay, ironstone, gypsum, oil and gas are examples of such resources.

1.2 A wide range of indigenous minerals can be found in Leicestershire, and the continued pressure especially from the construction industry means that minerals such as sand & gravel, brick clay and gypsum are in high demand.

1.3 Leicester has historically had some significant mineral workings, with brickworks at Gipsy Lane and the various historic sand and gravel pits at Watermead Country Park & around the River Soar at Aylestone. However due to the relative size and location of settlements and the comparable amount of open areas all current mineral workings in Leicestershire are outside of the boundary of the City and it is unlikely that this is going to change in the near or distant future.

1.4 The planning system balances competing interests and demands to make sure that land is used and developed in the public's long-term interest. In the past little weight has been given to the protection of mineral resources. However there is the requirement for Planning Authorities to protect known mineral deposits.

1.5 Leicester City Council is responsible for the minerals within the City boundary, and will locate potential Mineral Safeguarding Areas even if they are unlikely to be worked in the short, medium or long term.

1.6 This document defines the draft brick clay Mineral Safeguarding Areas up for consideration. Brick clay can be defined as clay and mudstone which is often used in the manufacture of bricks, roof tiles and clay pipes.

1.7 From consultation on these defined areas we will determine how matters related to Mineral Safeguarding Areas are to be addressed through the Local Plan and decide what development management policies and what mechanisms should be included.

Policy

2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF covers all aspects of planning and replaced all previous minerals policy documents.

2.2 The NPPF recognises the importance facilitating the use of minerals, stating that in preparing Local Plans, Local Planning Authorities should:

‘Define Mineral Safeguarding Areas and adopt appropriate policies in order that known locations of specific mineral resources of local and national importance are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development, whilst not creating a presumption that resources defined will be worked; and define Mineral Consultation Areas based on these Mineral Safeguarding Areas;

- Safeguard:
 - existing, planned and potential railheads, rail links to quarries, wharfage and associated storage, handling and processing facilities for the bulk transport by rail, sea or inland waterways of minerals, including recycled, secondary and marine dredged aggregates; and
 - existing, planned and potential sites for concrete batching, the manufacture of coated materials, other concrete products and the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material.

Set out policies to encourage the prior extraction of minerals, where practicable and environmentally feasible, if it is necessary for non-mineral development to take place’ (part of paragraph 143)

2.3 At a county level, the Leicestershire Minerals Core Strategy sets out the policies and proposals for the development and use of land for minerals within the area. The City of Leicester is located generally in the centre of the County, but does not form part of the Framework area.

2.4 The 2014 Leicester Core Strategy recognises that the City Council should identify potential mineral locations during the site allocations process. The Core Strategy states that brick clay deposits can be found in the north east of the City, however recognises that none of these areas could be sustainably extracted in the near future due to the extensive size of workings required.

Methodology

3.1 The methodology for defining Mineral Safeguarding Areas has been developed in accordance with the NPPF and Mineral safeguarding in England: good practice advice (British Geological Survey, BGS, 2011).

3.2 Defining a Mineral Safeguarding Area requires up to date, factual information on the physical location of mineral resources. The best available data has been used to identify the Brick Clay Mineral Safeguarding Areas outlined within this report. Local knowledge and information provided by the British Geological Survey (BGS) was used.

3.3 To help determine what sites will be safeguarded mineral survey data was acquired under licence from the BGS for the City of Leicester and 1km buffer around the boundary. The survey highlighted that there was potential for sand & gravel, brickclay and gypsum, within the city boundary.

3.4 Leicester does have some potential brick clay deposits which could be workable in the future. Therefore an initial search was carried out showing all the potential areas within the city where brick clay is potentially located and where it hasn't as of yet been sterilised by development or other uses. All sites below 5 ha in size were excluded as this was seen as the minimum size for a site to be worked, even for small scale mineral working in the future. A total area of about **ha** was identified which was made up of 33 individual sites and the result of this initial search is shown on Map 1.

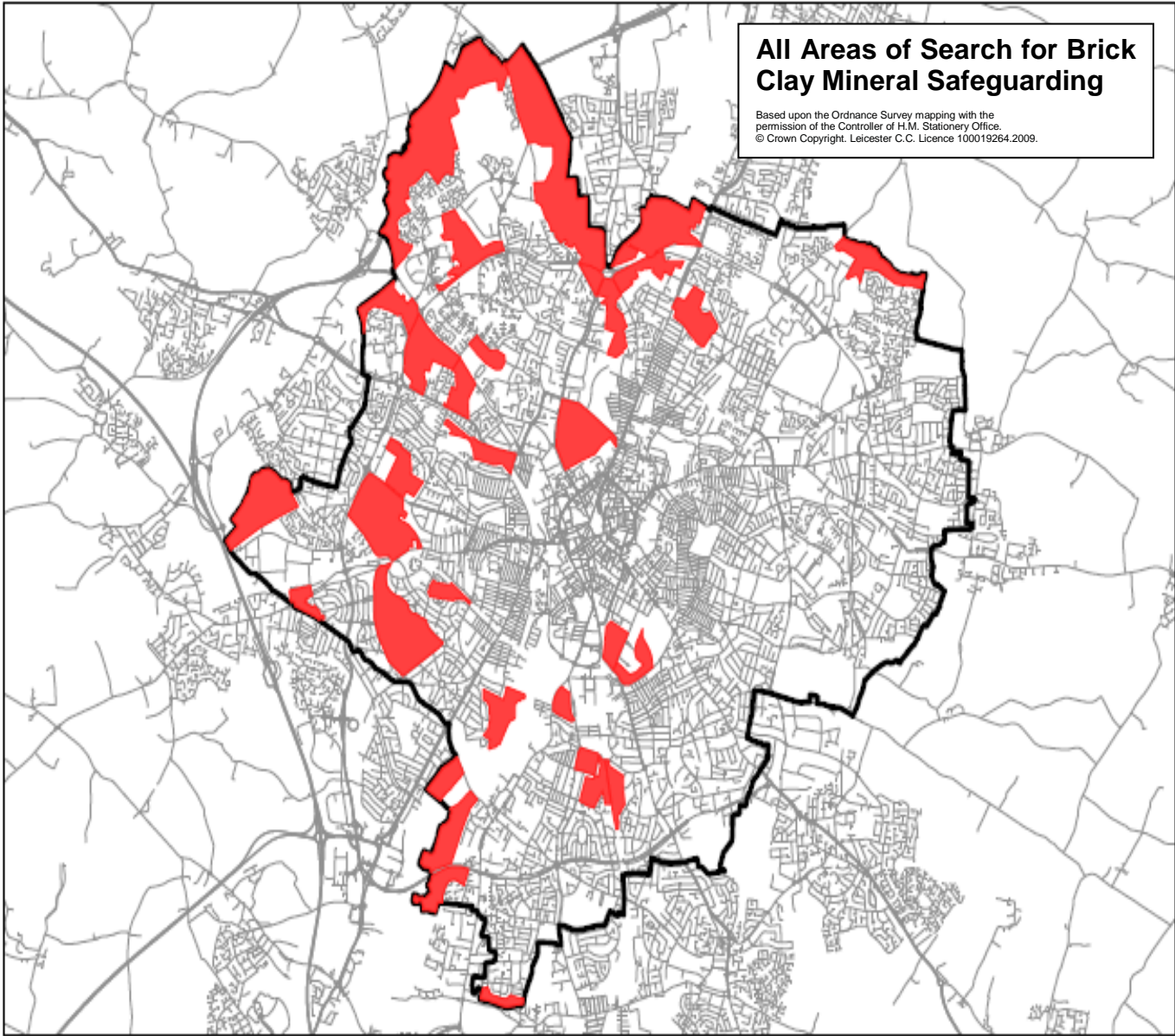
3.5 The second stage of the assessment looked at the initial list and excluded the larger strategic sites, and certain areas which are of local importance such as Abbey Park. Privately owned sites were also excluded at this stage. This reduced the initial list of 33 to 16 sites with a total of **ha**. The results of this are shown on Map 2.

3.6 The last stage of the assessment involved a desktop study of the 16 sites from stage two, choosing to safeguard the site or not safeguard the site. Issues relating to development pressures, adjacent land uses, highways access, ecology, flooding and the historical landscape were considered.

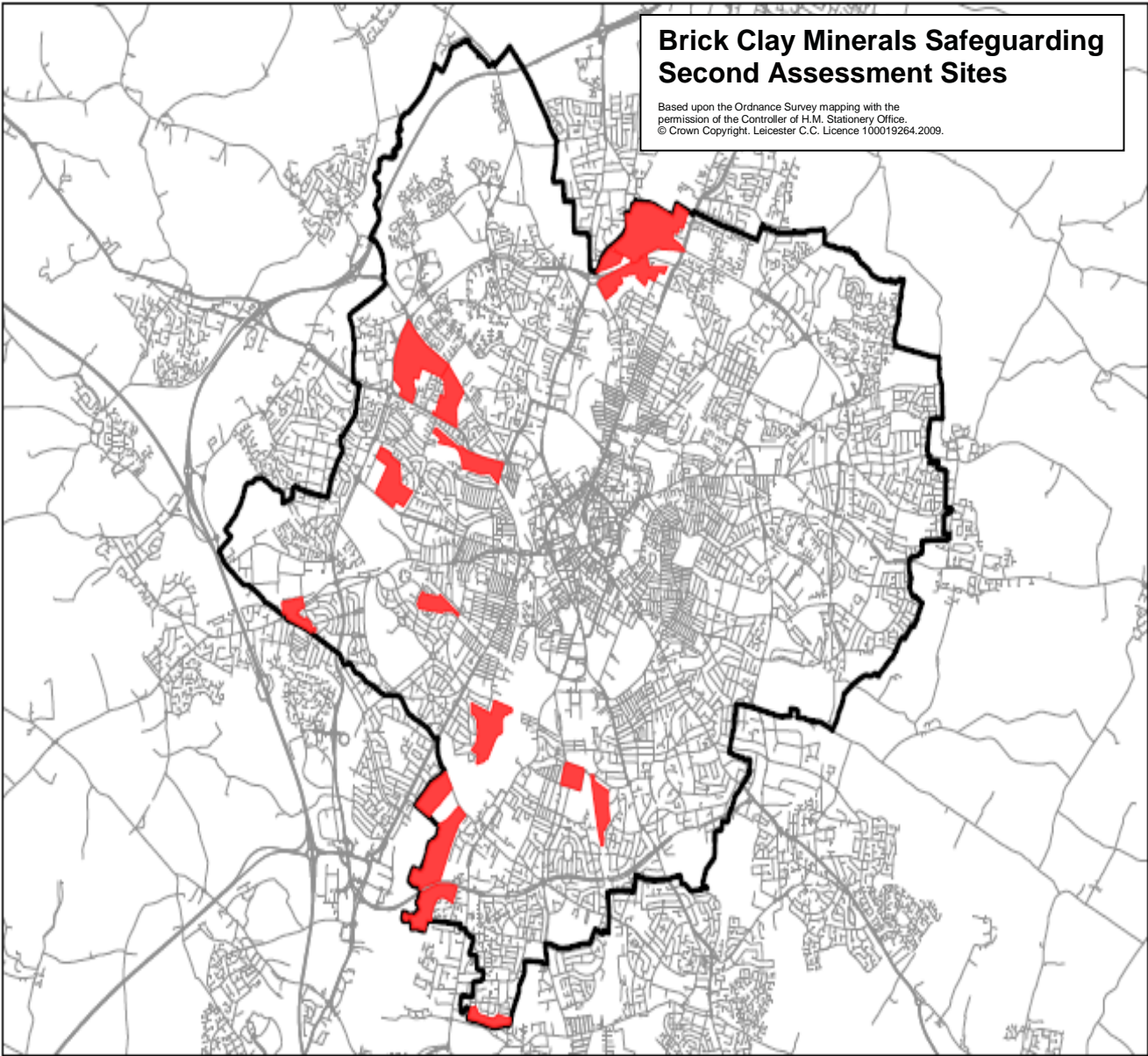
3.7 The council also acknowledges its responsibility to alert potential developers if mineral deposits may be located on sites they plan to develop, even if these have not safeguarded.

3.8 The responses received during the consultation will be given due consideration and amendments will be made where appropriate.

Map 1



Map 2



Shortlisted Sites not being Safeguarded

4.1 Option 1: Gilroes Cemetery



Site Information:

Location: North West of City

Ward: Beaumont Leys

Size: 35 ha

Mineral: Brick Clay

Deposit Type:

Reason for not being safeguarded:

This site forms part of the Anstey Road Green Wedge and currently consists of Gilroes Cemetery, an electricity substation and the Severn Trent headquarters. An extension for Gilroes Cemetery has been approved since the adoption of the Local Plan in 2006 demonstrating development pressures. The site is bounded by residential development to the north, south and east. A large part of the area is accessible to the public as footpaths cross the Cemetery. The site is of a size that could accommodate potential mineral workings in the future. However the site is considered inappropriate for mineral extraction due to the existing land use (Cemetery) as well as the protected nature of the strategic green space.

4.2 Option 2: Groby Road Allotments



Site Information:

Location: West of City

Ward: Fosse

Size: 20 ha

Mineral: Brick Clay

Deposit Type:

Reason for not being safeguarded:

The site currently consists of Groby Road Allotments. The site is not easily accessible due its close proximity to residential development to the north, south, west and east. The site forms part of Fosse Road North Allotments Biodiversity Enhancement Site and Stokeswood Park Local Wildlife Site. The area is of historical interest with scheduled monuments and archaeological findings. The site is extremely constrained due to the nearby residential development, and therefore will not to be safeguarded.

4.3 Option 3: Aylestone Meadows



Site Information:

Location: South of City

Ward: Aylestone

Size: 34 ha

Mineral: Brick Clay

Deposit Type:

Reason for not being safeguarded:

The site forms part of the Riverside Park Green Wedge and consists of natural green space, agricultural land, Rowley Field Allotments and the Great Central Way. The site lies within areas at high risk of river flooding and of shallow surface water flooding. Permissive paths and footpaths cross and run through the site. The site forms part of Aylestone Meadows Local Nature Reserve as well as Meredith Road Allotments Biodiversity Enhancement Site and Aylestone Meadows Twelve Arches Bridge to Braunstone Lane Local Wildlife Site. The Great Central Way which crosses the site is locally designated as a Building of Local Interest. The site is of a size that could accommodate potential mineral workings in the future. However the site is considered inappropriate for mineral extraction due to the historical landscape and the sites ecological value as well as the protected nature of the strategic green space.

4.4 Option 4: Aylestone Farm



Site Information:

Location: South of City

Ward: Aylestone

Size: 30 ha

Mineral: Brick Clay

Deposit Type:

Reason for not being safeguarded:

The site forms part of the Riverside Park Green Wedge to the south of the city and consists of Riverside Park, agricultural land, the Grand Union Canal and the Great Central Way. The site forms part of the Aylestone Conservation Area, and there are several historical features of merit including the Kings Lock and Great Central Way Railway. Aylestone Meadows Local Wildlife Site, Aylestone Farm North Biodiversity Enhancement Site and King's Lock fields Local Wildlife Site all form part of the site. The site is of a size that could accommodate potential mineral workings in the future. The site however is inappropriate for mineral extraction due to the historical landscape and the sites ecological value as well as the protected nature of the strategic green space.

4.5 Option 5: Soar Valley Way



Site Information:

Location: South of City

Ward: Aylestone

Size: 20 ha

Mineral: Brick Clay

Deposit Type:

Reason for not being safeguarded:

The site forms part of the Riverside Park Green Wedge and consists of natural green space, agricultural land, a play area and the Great Central Way running to the City boundary. The site is largely flat and lies within areas at high risk of river flooding and of shallow surface water flooding. Permissive paths and footpaths cross and run through the site. The site forms part of two Biodiversity Enhancement Sites and two Local Wildlife Centres. Several historical monuments are located within the site boundary including Union Canal, Canal Bridge and the Great Central Railway. The site is considered inappropriate for mineral extraction due to the historical landscape and the sites ecological value as well as the protected nature of the strategic green space.

4.6 Option 6: Rancliffe Allotments



Site Information:

Location: West of City

Ward: Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields

Size: 9 ha

Mineral: Brickclay

Deposit Type:

Reason for not being safeguarded:

The site currently consists of Rancliffe Allotments. The site is not easily accessible due its close proximity to residential development and the railway line to the north. Flood Zone 3 covers a small part of eastern boundary of the site. The site is extremely constrained due to the nearby residential development, and therefore will not to be safeguarded.

4.7 Option 7: Sir John Woods



Site Information:

Location: South of City

Ward: Eyres Monsell

Size: 8 ha

Mineral: Brickclay

Deposit Type:

Reason for not being safeguarded:

The site is located on the very edge of the city boundary and currently comprises of green open space, a play area and woodland. The site is bounded to housing to the North on Sonning Way, and restricted to the south by a river and a railway line. Queen Park Way and Featherstone Drive Biodiversity Enhancement Site forms part of the site and there have been historical findings including the Glen Parva Lady & associated Saxon cemetery. The site is in close proximity to a wider area where historic landfill has occurred. It is considered that the site is not suitable for small scale mineral extraction due to access issues and proximity of residential development.

4.8 Option 8: Saffron Brook Site



Site Information:

Location: South of City

Ward: Knighton

Size: 9 ha

Mineral: Brick Clay

Deposit Type:

Reason for not being safeguarded:

The site consists of school playing fields, sports pitches and green open space. Washbrook Nature Reserve Local Wildlife Site as well as Main Line Railway Biodiversity Enhancement Site form part of the site. The majority of the site falls within flood zone 3. The site is extremely constrained due to the nearby residential development, and therefore will not be safeguarded. Access to the site is very limited due to a railway line to the west, a school and college to the east and residential development to the north and south.

4.9 Option 9: Hinckley Road Site



Site Information:

Location: West of City

Ward: Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields

Size: 10 ha

Mineral: Brick Clay

Deposit Type:

Reason for not being safeguarded:

Hinckley Road divides this site in two which predominantly consists of mature woodland. Broadleaf woodland Local Wildlife Site and a proposed Local Nature Reserve Highway Spinney & Meynell's Gorse forms part of the site. There is no flood risk on this site. The site is extremely restricted due to the natural landscape therefore will not to be safeguarded for mineral extraction.

Shortlisted Sites being safeguarded

5.1 Option 1: Gorse City Hill Farm and Fields



Site Information:

Location: North West of City

Ward: Beaumont Leys

Size: 17 ha

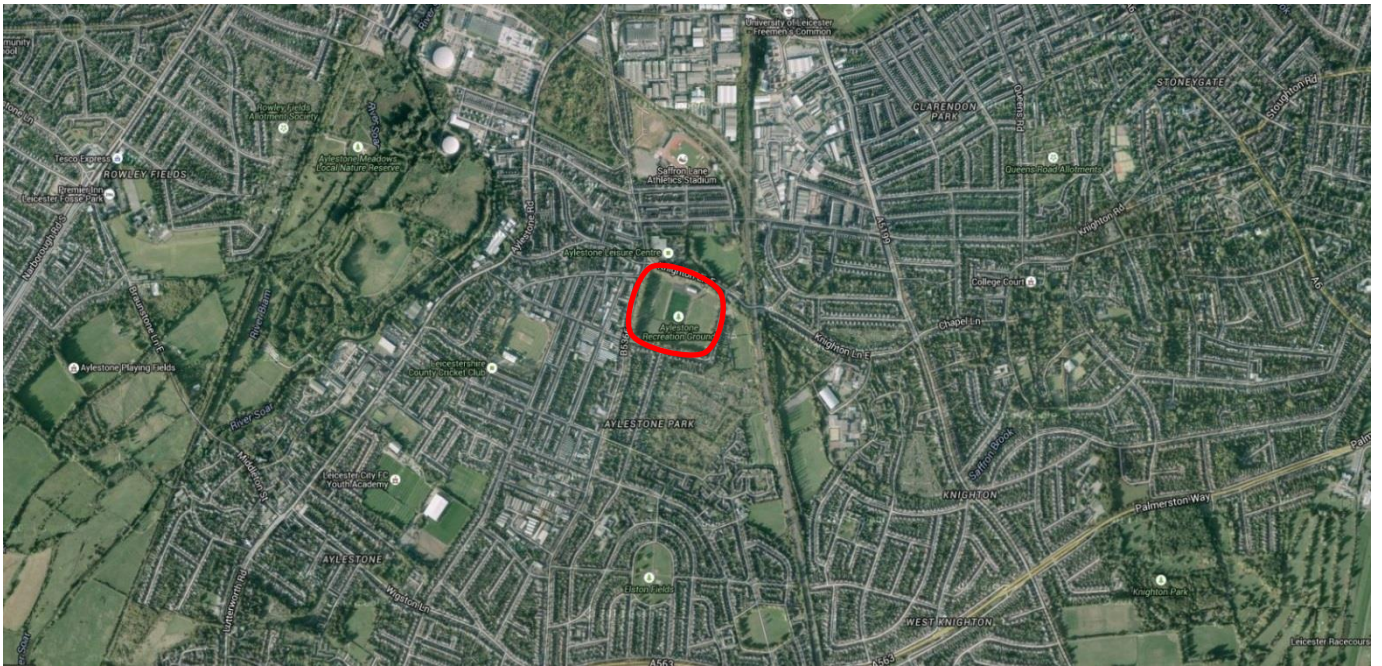
Mineral: Brick Clay

Deposit Type:

Reason for Safeguarding:

This site forms part of the Anstey Road Green Wedge and currently consists of Gorse City Hill Farm, a nature reserve and a Petrol Filling Station. Gorse City Farm is designated as a Biodiversity Enhancement Site. The site is not entirely landlocked by housing therefore suitable access could be potentially achieved. There is no flood risk on the site. No mineral extraction would be allowed within the short or medium term but the site is of a size means that it could accommodate potential mineral workings in the distant future.

5.3 Option 3: Aylestone Recreation Ground



Site Information:

Location: South of City

Ward: Aylestone

Size: 8 ha

Mineral: Brickclay

Deposit Type:

Reason for Safeguarding:

The site is currently used as a recreational ground with sport pitches and associated facilities. This single storey clubhouse with parking was approved back in 2008, post the adoption of the 2006 Local Plan. Main Line Railway South Biodiversity Enhancement Site forms part of the site and the northern area falls within Flood Zone 3. The site is accessible from Saffron Lane as well as Knighton Lane East. No mineral extraction would be allowed within the short or medium term due to the proximity to residential development and the existing land use although the site could accommodate small mineral workings in the distant future.

5.4 Option 4: New College Site



Site Information:

Location: West of City

Ward: New Parks

Size: 53 ha

Mineral: Brickclay

Deposit Type:

Reason for Safeguarding:

The New College Site currently comprises of school playing fields and sport pitches. The site is bounded by New College to the west, Western Park to the south and residential development to the north and east. The site is easily accessible from Glenfield Road to the south. There is no flood risk on the site. No mineral extraction would be allowed within the short, medium or long term, but it has been decided to safeguard due to the potential for larger scale mineral extraction than other safeguarded sites.

5.5 Option 5: Aylestone Meadows South



Site Information:

Location: South of City

Ward: Aylestone

Size: 11 ha

Mineral: Brickclay

Deposit Type:

Reason for Safeguarding:

The site forms part of the Riverside Park Green Wedge south of the city where evidence exists of previous mineral extraction. Riverside playing fields and clubhouse development is situated within the site boundary. Residential development borders the site to the west, with open fields and agricultural land to the north, south and east. Aylestone Playing Fields Biodiversity Enhancement Site forms part of the site. The site is also located within Flood Zone 3. The site is easily accessible from Braunstone Lane East. The site is of a size means that it could accommodate potential medium scale mineral workings in the distant future. The site however is inappropriate for mineral extraction at the moment due to the protected nature of the strategic green space and proximity to residential development.

5.6 Option 6: Watermead Country Park



Site Information:

- Location:** North of City
- Ward:** Rushey Mead
- Size:** 51 ha
- Mineral:** Brick Clay
- Deposit Type:**

Reason for Safeguarding:

The site forms part of the Watermead Park Green Wedge situated on the city boundary. It consists of Watermead Country Park, Lake, a sports ground, woodland and natural green space. The site forms part of Watermead Country Park Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site and Birstall Meadows North Biodiversity Enhancement Site. The majority of the site falls within Flood Zone 3. The lakes in Watermead Park & the extensive network of landfill sites north of the City were formed by previous sand and gravel extraction during the last century. The site itself is a defined country park, therefore no mineral extraction would be allowed within the short, medium or long term, but it has been decided to safeguard due to the potential for mineral extraction in the future.

5.7 Option 7: Outdoor Pursuits Centre and Fields



Site Information:

Location: North of City

Ward: Rushey Mead

Size: 20 ha

Mineral: Brick Clay

Deposit Type:

Reason for Safeguarding:

The site forms part of the Watermead Park Green Wedge and consists of an Outdoor Pursuits Centre with associated facilities and green open space. The River Soar crosses the site and the northern area falls within Flood Zone 3. Main Line Railway South Biodiversity Enhancement Site forms part of the site. Site forms part of a wider area where known sand and gravel extraction has occurred. The site is easily accessible by routes that would avoid residential areas and is of a size that would be viable for small scale future mineral extraction. Site however is inappropriate for mineral extraction at the moment due to the protected nature of the strategic green space and proximity of residential development.

6.1 Final List of Sites Not Being Safeguarded

Option	Name of Site	Size (Hectares)
1	Gilroes Cemetery	35 Hectares
2	Groby Road Allotments	20 Hectares
3	Aylestone Meadows	34 Hectares
4	Aylestone Farm	30 Hectares
5	Soar Valley Way Site	20 Hectares
6	Rancliffe Allotments	9 Hectares
7	Sir John Woods	8 Hectares
8	Saffron Brook Site	9 Hectares
9	Hinckley Road Site	10 Hectares

6.2 Final List of Safeguarded Sites

Option	Name of Site	Size (Hectares)
1	Gorse City Hill Farm and Fields	17 Hectares
2	Birstall Road Site	6 Hectares
3	Aylestone Recreation Ground	8 Hectares
4	New College Site	53 Hectares
5	Aylestone Meadows South	11 Hectares
6	Watermead Country Park	51 Hectares
7	Outdoor Pursuits Centre and Fields	20 Hectares