



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Martin Tugwell,  
Deputy Director (Growth and Infrastructure),  
Oxfordshire County Council

22 June 2012

Dear Martin

Thank you for your letter of 29<sup>th</sup> May responding to my concerns about the OCC Minerals Strategy.

It is clear that we disagree about several key points.

Firstly, I cannot accept your assertion that this strategy identifies an area within which specific extraction sites will be finalised later. The strategy shows just 3 specific fields, two of which share a boundary and thus but for a fence could be considered to be one. Three fields do not add up to an area, particularly as the smaller of the 3 fields alone could not meet your requirements for tonnage of gravel. This means that the larger field alongside the road between Cholsey and Wallingford must be worked if this 'area' is selected. The strategy amounts, therefore, to the selection of this single site and not an area.

Secondly, it seems to me from the independent analysis commissioned from an expert former employee of OCC by CAGE that your comparison of this site with others was very flawed. In particular, the numbers of my constituents who will be very directly affected by the working of this site is very relevant indeed. Wherever within what you describe as an area working takes place, much larger numbers of people will be resident within less than a mile than in any other of the 'areas' identified by OCC. This matter can, and should, have been considered before this site was selected as your only option, not afterwards.

Thirdly, I am unable to work out how you will address the concerns of the AONBs, given their fundamental relationship to this site. You cannot, for example, shield the site from view from all the hills surrounding a flat area in a valley.

I do not accept that the issues raised by Wallingford Town Council and Cholsey Parish Council during your consultation were not substantive and did not merit individual responses. While there can never be any doubt about the willingness of any local council to fight for its community, equally it is not always the case that arguments put forward in such a context are not valid.

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I will, of course, respond formally to the current consultation and will make these points in doing so. I very much hope that Oxfordshire County Council will consider the decisions made thus far in the light of responses to that consultation and with an open mind, and reverse this very poor and inappropriate strategic decision.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Vaizey'.

**Ed Vaizey**  
**MP for Wantage and Didcot**

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