

**WSSC CONSULTATION RESPONSE:
County Planning – Minerals & Waste Planning Authority**

TO:	Case Officer: Caroline Girst
DATE:	23/06/2026
LOCATION:	Land West Of Gatesmead, Wickham Way, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
SUBJECT:	DM/26/1315 Proposed 49 new homes together with open space and associated infrastructure.
RECOMMENDATION:	☒ Advice ☐ More Information ☐ Objection ☐ Consulted in Error ☐ No Objection ☒ No Objection Subject to:

The application site comprises an area of 4.78ha to the west of Gatesmead, Wickham Way, within the Wickham Fields area to the north of the town centre of Haywards Heath. The northern fringe of the application site is located within the brick clay (Wadhurst Clay) Mineral Safeguarding Area, with the remainder of the site within the Minerals Safeguarding Consultation Area for brick clay and building stone.

Policy M9 (b) of the Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018, partial review 2021) ('JMLP') states that proposals for non-mineral development within these areas will not be permitted unless:

- (i) *"Mineral sterilisation will not occur; or*
- (ii) *It is appropriate and practicable to extract the mineral prior to the development taking place, having regards to the other policies in this Plan; or*
- (iii) *the overriding need for the development outweighs the safeguarding of the mineral and it has been demonstrated that prior extraction is not practicable or environmentally feasible."*

The applicant has provided a Mineral Assessment Report (MAR) as part of their application submission. The MAR identifies the potential for the safeguarded mineral resources to underly the site by way of referencing the JMLP, however, provides no first-hand evidence or assessment of the potential quality or quantity of the underlying resources. Therefore, the full extent of mineral sterilisation, should the non-mineral development be granted, is not understood at this stage.

Regardless, the MAR concludes that, when applying a 250m standoff between the application site and neighbouring properties (in the interest of safeguarding the amenities of nearby residents) the remaining mineral resource within the site would be uneconomical to extract, and is therefore essentially sterilised. Further, the MAR considers operational brickworks across the county and concludes that the existing supply within the county is sufficient as to not warrant extraction of clay from this site.

A very small portion of the northern part of the application site lies within the mineral safeguarding area for brick clay (Wadhurst Blue), with the remainder of the site within the consultation area (i.e. a 250m buffer zone around mineral resource areas). This consultation area is used to ensure that proximal development considers the potential for mineral sterilisation of undiscovered outcrops of mineral that may not have been recorded or uncovered in previous geological surveys.

In this instance, given the full extent of mineral sterilisation is unknown, and the economical viability of the potential underlying Wadhurst Blue clay has not been assessed or demonstrated (e.g. through discussions with local users of the resource), it is unclear as to the level of weight to afford the safeguarded mineral resource when considered against the need for the non-mineral development. That said, given the application site in its majority is located within the Mineral Consultation Area, the level of weight to afford the potential for the site to yield meaningful levels of the resource is likely considered to be 'low', albeit this will be for the LPA to determine when considered within the planning balance.

Therefore, at this stage, the MWPA would raise no objection to the proposed development, subject to the LPA being satisfied that the information provided is sufficient to demonstrate that (M9 b) (iii)) the overriding need for the development outweighs the safeguarding of the mineral and it has been demonstrated that prior extraction is not practicable or environmentally feasible when considering onsite environmental constraints as outlined by the applicant.

If the LPA does not consider this demonstrable at this stage then we would request the submission of further information, including an updated MAR with evidence of any underlying mineral resource, to be demonstrated through the undertaking and assessment of first-hand investigative data (e.g. boreholes, trial pits etc.). Any updated assessment should provide an estimate quantity of the underlying resource as well as details of its quality and potential users should the resource be found to be economically valuable. Any such update should be informed by the Minerals and Waste Safeguarding [Guidance](#).

West Sussex Waste Local Plan (April 2014)

The decision maker should be satisfied that the proposals minimise waste generation, maximise opportunities for re-using and recycling waste, and where necessary include waste management facilities of an appropriate type and scale (Policy W23).

Kind regards,

Edward Anderson (Planner)

Tel.: 0330 2228 879

Email: edward.anderson@westsussex.gov.uk