Agricultural Land Classification
CHESHIRE MINERALS REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN
GOOSTREY

Resource Planning Team
ADAS Statutory Group
WOLVERHAMPTON

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR CHESHIRE MINERALS REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN GOOSTREY

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Survey for this site shows that the following proportions of ALC grades are present:

Grade/Other Land	Area (hectares)	% of surveyed area
2	12.4	11
3a	83.8	72
Other land	20.2	17
Not surveyed	9.5	
Total Survey Area	116.4	100
Total Site Area	125.9	

1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of land in Grade 2 and Subgrade 3a is soil droughtiness.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in July and August 1996. An Agricultural Land Classification survey was undertaken according to the guidelines laid down in the "Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales - Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Agricultural Land" (MAFF 1988).

2.2 The 125.9 ha site is situated to the south west of Goostrey. The land surrounding the site is predominantly in agricultural use.

2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with the Cheshire Minerals Replacement Local Plan.

2.4 At MAFF Land Use Planning Unit's request this was a detailed grid survey at 1:10000 with a minimum auger boring density of 1 per hectare. The attached map is only accurate at the base map scale and any enlargement would be misleading.

2.5 At the time of the survey the site was under grass, cereals, potatoes, forage maize, fodder beet and woodland.

2.6 Mr Simms of Rudheath Lodge Farm who owns land to the north of Goostrey Lane, has an abstraction licence for spray irrigation. At the time of survey irrigation was being used on one field of potatoes within the survey area with the major part of the area in grass and fodder crops. Irrigation has therefore not been taken into account when assessing the ALC of this land.

3. CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for the site (SJ 760 695) :

Average Annual Rainfall (mm)	770
Accumulated Temperature above 0°C January to June (day °C)	1390

3.2 There is no overall climatic limitation on the site.

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include:

Field Capacity Days (days)	181
Moisture Deficit Wheat (mm)	91
Moisture Deficit Potatoes (mm)	79

4. SITE

4.1 Three site factors of gradient, micro relief and flooding are considered when classifying land.

4.2 These factors do not impose any limitations on the agricultural use of the land.

5. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

5.1 The solid geology of the area is comprised of Middle Keuper Marl - British Geological Survey Sheet 110 Macclesfield 1 Inch. This is overlain with deposits of fluvio-glacial sand and gravel.

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which have a sandy texture.

6. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 Grade 2 - occupies 12.4 ha (11%) of the survey area.

6.1.1 These soils typically have a sandy loam texture overlying loamy sand and sand to depth, with few or no stones within the profile. The moisture balance places these soils in Grade 2.

6.1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil droughtiness.

6.2 Subgrade 3a - occupies 83.8 ha (72%) of the survey area.

6.2.1 The soil has a sandy loam or loamy sand texture over sand to depth, with few or no stones within the profile. The moisture balance places these soils in Subgrade 3a.

6.2.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of this land is soil droughtiness.

6.3 Other land includes agricultural buildings, domestic residences and woodland and scrub and occupies 20.2 ha (17%) of the survey area. An area of 9.5 ha was not surveyed as access was not granted. This land appears to comprise mostly woodland.

6.4 At a number of auger borings on the site the soil was moist at about 100 cm, indicating a high ground water table. Whilst this cannot be taken into account in calculating the moisture balance of these soils, the availability of this water will obviously assist crop growth on the sandy soils.

6.5 SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION GRADES

Grade/Other Land	Area (hectares)	% of surveyed area
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3a	83.8	72
Other land	20.2	17
Not surveyed	9.5	
Total Survey Area	**116.4**	**100**
Total Site Area	**125.9**	