AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR THE STAFFORDSHIRE MINERALS PLAN SITE AT WHITEMOOR HAYE (NGR: 175135)

Introduction

The 189.05 ha site was visited by members of the Resource Planning Team in October 1992. An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey was undertaken using guidelines laid down in the ALC revised guidelines and criteria document (MAFF 1988).

Location, Altitude and Relief

The site lies to the south east of Alrewas within the area of land between the A38 (T) and the River Tame. The A513 forms the northern most boundary and minor roads form part of the western boundary. The altitude of the site varies slightly from 51m in the east to 54m in the west. Thus the site is almost level. Altitude and relief are therefore non-limiting factors in the classification of the site.

Climate and Rainfall

The main parameters used to assess climatic limitations are average annual rainfall (AAR) as a measure of overall wetness, and accumulated temperature (ATO), as a measure of the relative warmth of the locality. For this site the figures are 650mm and 1414°C respectively indicating that there are no climatic limitations on this site. The field capacity days (FCD) are 144 with the last mean frost occurring in early May.

Geology and Soils

The solid geology is composed of Red Marls with sandy bands overlain by a drift of First Terrace Deposits. This is fairly uniform over the site with only a small area of older river gravel drift being found to the north of Sittles. The

associated soils are typically slightly stony sandy loam over moderately stony loamy sand over moderately stony sand. Some areas of heavier sandy clay loam are also present whilst the soils within the eastern side of the site are mainly silty clay over silty clay or clay at depth.

Other Limiting Factors

The eastern half of the site is usually flooded more than once in three years. This flooding is for occasional long periods or frequent medium periods, during the winter months, according to information obtained from the National Rivers Authority. This is a limiting factor as the land can be graded no better than 3b in this area.

The site is also irrigated which has resulted in a few small areas being upgraded by one grade or sub grade. Topsoil stone content is also a limiting factor over one small part of the site to the south of Roddige Lane which has resulted in the downgrading of this area.

Land Use

At the time of survey the north and north western parts of the site had been ploughed and sown with cereals. The remainder of the site was under cereal stubble except a small area in the south east of the site which was under potatoes.

Agricultural Land Quality

Grade 3a

Land of this grade covers 87.1 ha and 46% of the site. It covers the western side of the site running north-south. The soils are typically medium sandy loams over a medium sandy loam, sandy clay loam or a loamy medium sand on to a medium

sand or clay at depth. It must be noted that the land within this grade is very variable with a few pockets of grade 2 being found although these are too small to be mapped separately at this scale. Droughtiness is the main limitation to the agricultural use of this land.

Grade 3b

This covers 98.8 ha and 52.2% of the site on the eastern side again running north-south. The soils are typically medium sandy loam or sandy clay loam topsoils on to loamy medium sands, medium sand or sandy clay loams on to medium sands or clays at depth. These soils tended to have a higher stone content, typically 20-30% in the lower horizon, than was found in the profiles graded 3a. Flood risk is the main limitation to the agricultural use of this land, with high topsoil stone content a limitation in some small areas.

Urban

Land classified as urban covers 1.6% of the site or 3.0 ha and is composed of the metalled road running through the centre and along the western side of the site.

Agricultural buildings

This consists of the farm buildings at Whitemoor Haye and accounts for 0.1 ha or 0.1% of the site area.