REPORT TO ACCOMPANY THE AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION FOR BIG HIND HEATH, NEAR SANDBACH

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

The site at Big Hind Heath was first visited by the Resource Planning Group in May and June 1986, as part of the Sandbach District Plan. Information was collected in sufficient detail to present the maps at a scale of 1: 25,000. A subsequent visit was made in July 1989, and a more detailed survey carried out, allowing the maps to be presented at a scale of 1: 10,000.

The site is 1 mile to the south-west of Sandbach, and is bordered by housing and industry to the west, housing to the north, housing and agricultural land to the east, and a dismantled railway to the south.

Climate

This falls within Agro-climatic Area 14. The average annual rainfall is between 740 mm and 760 mm. Rainfall is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year, although wettest during August and November. There are 176 field capacity day's (FCD's) for this site, with a moisture deficit of 91 for wheat, and 79 for potatoes. The growing season is from late March to early December and the near last frost is in late April.

Geology & Soils

The solid geology is of the Triassic succession, comprised of Upper Keuper Saliferous Beds. This is overlain by drift deposits of undifferentiated Fluvio Glacial deposits, except for a limited area of Boulder clay in the extreme east.

The associated soils are generally sandy loams overlying loamy sands with sand at depth. In some of the depressions lenses of more peaty material are found. The area underlain by Boulder Clay has produced heavier clay subsoils, although still with sandy loam topsoils.

Agricultural Land Use

At the time of survey, the entire site was under grass.

2. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Grade 2 land accounts for 36.7 hectares and 88% of the site. It is widespread throughout the site where sandy loams overlie loamy sands and/or sands. Droughtiness is the main limitation to the agricultural use of the land.

Sub-grade 3a land accounts for 4.7 hectares and 11% of the site. It is mapped in the extreme east of the site where sandy loams overlie clay loams and silty clays; and in numerous hollows where sandy loams overlie peaty sandy loams. Wetness is the main limitation to the agricultural use of this land.

Non-agricultural land accounts for 0.2 hectares and 1% of the site.

Resource Planning Group
Wolverhampton R O
August 1989