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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
PRESTON LOCAL PLAN

V P REDFERN
Resource Planning Team
ADAS Statutory Group
WOLVERHAMPTON

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AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT FOR PRESTON LOCAL PLAN

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Survey for the 15 sites shows the land to be not best and most versatile and predominantly Subgrade 3b with some minor areas of Grade 4.

1.2 The main limitation to the agricultural use of the land is soil wetness.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The site was surveyed by the Resource Planning Team in March 1994. 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 15 sites comprise approximately 1,500 ha and are located around the north of Preston, from Lea Town in the west to Longridge in the east.

2.3 The survey was requested by MAFF in connection with the Preston Local Plan.

2.4 At the request of the Land Use Planning Unit of MAFF this was a free survey undertaken at a reconnaissance scale. The aim of the survey was to establish the presence of areas of best and most versatile land within the sites.

2.5 At the time of the survey the sites were predominantly in agricultural use and under permanent grass.

3. CLIMATE

3.1 The following interpolated data are relevant for ALC; average annual rainfall (mm) and accumulated temperature above 0°C for January to June. Average annual rainfall increases eastwards across the site from 981mm at site 1 to 1120mm at site 12. Accumulated temperature decreases eastwards from 1421 day °C at site 1 to 1313 day °C at site 12.

3.2 The climatic Grade varies from grade 2 at site 1 to Subgrade 3a at site 12.

3.3 Other relevant data for classifying land include; field capacity days, moisture deficit wheat and moisture deficit potatoes. The field capacity days ranged between 222 days at site 1 to 252 days at site 12. Moisture deficits for wheat and potatoes were 77mm and 62mm at site 1 to 55mm and 33mm at site 12.

4. SITE

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

4.2 Gradient is a limiting factor over limited areas of sites 3, 6 and 11. Micro relief and flooding are not limiting factors on the agricultural use of the land.

5. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

5.1 The solid geology of the area is predominantly Sherwood Sandstone with occasional areas of Mudstones and Shales. This has been overlain everywhere by Till with small areas on some sites of Glacial Sand and Gravel and Alluvium.

5.2 The underlying geology influences the soils which are predominantly clay textured.

6. AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

6.1 The type and scale of survey undertaken did not permit mapping of ALC grades. The survey was able to establish that none of the 15 sites contained significant areas of best and most versatile land. The land was predominantly subgrade 3b with some areas of grade 4.

6.2 A significant proportion of site 1 was in use as a golf course and was not surveyed. An area of site 3 was in use as a rugby club and a golf driving range and this area was also not surveyed.

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