

**Proposed Opencast Site at Crock Hey,
Garswood
Agricultural Land Classification
Verification Report
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**AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION REPORT
VERIFICATION REPORT
PROPOSED OPENCAST SITE AT CROCK HEY, GARSWOOD**

INTRODUCTION

1. Resource Planning Team (RPT), FRCA Northern Region has carried out a verification of the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) report prepared by ADAS on behalf of Land, Engineering and Mineral Surveys, in respect of the proposed opencast site at Crock Hey, Garswood.
2. The soil boring information reported by ADAS has been examined in the light of a site visit undertaken by FRCA and in conjunction with other published information.

ADAS REPORT

3. ADAS reported that the site was limited to Grade 2 by climate. RPT found the climatic limitation on ALC at this site to be marginal between Grade 1 and 2.
4. The ALC survey carried out by ADAS classifies all of the 15.5 ha site as Subgrade 3b.
5. Much of the site has been worked previously for opencast coal, with restoration having taken place about 50 years ago. ADAS found that the majority of the soils at the site showed evidence of this disturbance. A few of the borings close to the perimeter of the site appeared to have undisturbed soils.
6. ADAS classifies land as Subgrade 3b over all of the site, as the depth to gleying and slowly permeable layer places both the disturbed and undisturbed soil into Wetness Class IV.
7. The disturbed soils typically consist of medium clay loam topsoil overlying a gleyed and slowly permeable mixture of overburden and former subsoil, overall with a heavy clay loam texture. The undisturbed soils typically consist of a medium clay loam topsoil overlying a gleyed and slowly permeable heavy clay loam subsoil passing to clay. In both cases the soils are classified as Subgrade 3b with soil wetness being the main limitation to the agricultural use of the land.
8. ADAS recommends stripping the whole site as one soil unit.

VERIFICATION

9. RPT has considered the above grading in the light of a site visit and other published information.
10. The provisional 1-inch ALC survey (sheet 101) places the land into Grade 3.
11. British Geological Survey Drift Sheet 84 (Wigan) shows the drift geology as boulder clay.

12. The Soil Survey of England and Wales 1:50 000 Scale Survey (Soils of the Liverpool District) shows the soil at the site as disturbed. The surrounding area is mapped as Clifton Series, typically a clay loam topsoil and upper subsoil overlying a slowly permeable clay or heavy clay loam lower subsoil. The Clifton Series soil would normally be placed into Wetness Class IV although wetness limitations can be ameliorated by drainage.
13. A verification ALC survey was undertaken by RPT in May 1997.
14. At the time of the survey the land was under crops of winter wheat and oats.
15. Profiles examined by RPT were in agreement with those observed by ADAS. RPT placed all those profiles observed into Wetness Class IV.
16. The whole site is classified as Subgrade 3b with the main limitation being soil wetness.
17. Two different soil types are identified with the "boulder clay" soil found on the site perimeter. ADAS propose stripping the site as one unit. However if the "boulder clay" soil forms a discrete unit then it should be considered as a separate unit for use in restoration, providing an "undisturbed" subsoil, not mixed with overburden as found over other parts of the site.

CONCLUSION

18. The descriptions of soil type and ALC grades reported by ADAS for the proposed opencast colliery development at Crock Hey, Garswood are considered to be a fair representation of the agricultural land quality and soil units.

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