Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Stevenson Aggregates Ltd: Sutton Block expansion

Notes from ecology and related groundwater expert conferencing – 31 October 2025

Attendees: Catherine Somerville-Frost (Panel Chair); Dr Graham Ussher (Panel Member); Peter Kensington (Panel Member);

Jon Williamson

Parviz Namjou; Treffery Barnett; Chris Wedding; Jennifer Shanks; Jess Urquhart; Jo Young; Bal Matheson; Nat Summerfield, for the Applicant

Dr Fleur Maseyk (online) for the Department of Conservation

Andrew Rossaak; Philip Kelsey (online) for Auckland Council

Item	Panel query	Expert discussion and agreement (if any)	Key conditions
[2]	What is the nature and scope of potential (indirect) ecological effects from de-watering at the Sutton Block?	Experts involved in discussion: Discussion: *PN: effects are covered through the conditions. Augmentation quality flow will need to be monitored.* *CSF: What the panel is looking for, within the LOQ this is all gone. We can describe these. What might happen outside of the LOQ is what we need to focus on and what are the steps to take?* *PN: Outside the LOQ?* *CSF: gone within the yellow line, but what about outside?*	[10 October 2025 version]

		PN: Wetlands are fed by the shallow system. The shallow system is isolated on top. Outside of the LOQ the shallow system will remain unaffected as it is fed by the regional groundwater. *BM: outside LOQ* *GU: Ecology report talks about edge effects, however, does not cover potential effects due to groundwater drawdown* *AR: How far back should we be looking at the perched water effects from the pit?* *PN: no more than 2 or 3m. As long as it is within a few metres.* *BM: Can't have trees up to the pit edge due to H&S rules.* *AR: How far back should we be looking for the buffer?* *JW: Other than wetland 2 and the southern area – the rest is a rim of high topography and GW won't have an effect. Within 10-20m GW will have no influence – rainwater influenced.* *AR: Wetland 2a / wetland 2b? Influence of the shallow water will change due to the topography?* *PN: gravity influence.* *JW: correct – topography influence.* *CW: have looked at this across the existing pit. Façade of the western pit – perched water – no effects.* *JS: lower left corner of the plans – vege etc have had no adverse effects from a pit that has been operating for 80 years. Would be looking for wilting, death of trees. It is lush growth in location. Have not seen any signs of any issues in the area.*	

Commented [CSF1]: The Applicant has added the following text:

"influence and topography are important in shallow groundwater surmounting [sic - surrounding?] the excavation"

		CSF – viewing the LOQ as a clock – at 6 o'clock – wetland 3 and 8 – topography is very different and so those would need to be 'watched' *TB: well covered by the conditions of consent.* *JS: to clarity – where Wetland 3 area – will all be planted up. It will not suffer any effects from drawdown, it will be fine. Is that correct?* *AR: Stream two area – forest swamp?* *CW: Raupo wetland not forest swamp.* **Summary of agreed position:** - Wetland 2a – south (which is a canary for wetland 2b) immediately adjacent to the pit has potential for drawdown – posed to be monitored and augmented. No other potential drawdown impacts in the shallow GW / perched system affecting other wetlands, or vegetation, because of hydraulic disconnection. - Streams will be subject to a separate augmentation and monitoring regime. The augmentation regime will also support any connected wetlands. - Vegetation outside of LOQ is not expected to experience adverse effects from quarry dewatering. **Agreed: PN / JW / PK / JS / CW / TB**	
[1]	In particular, what is the likely extent of drawdown impacts, and what effects might that have on surface water such as wetlands and stream?	Experts involved in discussion: PN / PK / JW / CSF Discussion notes:	

Commented [CSF2]: The Applicant adds "… any connected wetlands, if needed."

		Groundwater in greywacke is compartmental. Since 2011, have identified a few compartments and there is a flow barrier fault which is located with the proposed Sutton Block excavation. There is another fault – southwest from the site. 7km influence before recharging (conservative consideration). *Using uniform conditions, and assuming all wells are being used, have considered the drawdown on these bores. There are a number of monitoring bores. Further investigation will occur, but this will depend on the monitoring data.* *Potential interaction with surface flows:* *Two systems – sub-surface and regional groundwater.* *Shallow groundwater effects will be limited to the catchment boundary.* *Regional – would go beyond the catchment boundary.* *Surface water – will be augmented. Some will need to be augmented straight away. Others will have a monitoring systems in place to assess whether augmentation is required.* *JW: Map to show where those augmentation bores will be would be helpful.* *PN: east – Maketu stream – Figure 17A – two bore holes proposed. Further away from there we are focusing on baseflow.* *JW: Bores – there are some existing bores for the Drury Quarry – how are these consented?* *PN: Existing bores (Peach Hill) – existing consent. Effects on that will be monitored.*	

Commented [CSF3]: The Applicant adds "It is likely that there will be more flow barrier faults to the east which restrict the zone of influence to expand to 7km".

		BM: Proposed new bore – will this require consent for GW take? *PN: Does not require separate consent – if you are not taking water, it will be discharged back to the sump.* *CSF: Nature of the geology here – assumption of the faultlines and compartmentalisation. Does PK agree?* *PK: In terms of quarry effects – 7.5km is reasonable and conservative. We are consenting an envelope of effects. To the West of the Drury fault there is no drawdown, this is a barrier. The piece unknown, … There is a shallow system and a deep system. We drawn the deeper system significantly, but the shallow one much less. Shallow system underdrainage is unknown. What the Applicant is proposing is a series of gauges and this will be helpful to assess.* *CSF: will go out and undertake gauging in the streams. How will we know that there is a drop that isn't due to drought – do we need a control site?* *PN: Weather patterns etc will be measured. Then we will know.* *GU: Why is monitoring restricted to 7 sites? What is the level of assurance that there won't be effects beyond them?* *PN: If not effects on the intermediate areas then there won't be effects beyond.* *PK: We are looking at drainage. If there is a reduction in the below catchment, then we will need to look at what is happening above. We are looking at a baseflow that is moving through the catchment.*	

		GU: What is the immediate potential risk to drawdown /halo or cone at surface level? *PN: One of the main surface water – NT-8 catchment. In order to maintain this, we have proposed to augment the existing flow to the tributary. The water will be diverted from the sump and we have established a monitoring site next to the proposed expansion. Will be augmented to maintain the existing flow.* *JW: Is this wetland 2a?* *Confirmed correct* *JW: High wall will come close to the features, can you use a geotechnical bund to prevent the loss of water?* *PN: Geotech reports have assessed this. But if there is a reduction there will be augmentation to maintain the existing flows.* *JW: Agree with the conceptual model. Could include a condition to address immediate effects?* *GU: Geotech report and ground stability report mentions a number of options. Want assurance* *JU: Monitoring bores – piezometers – which would then be considered and geotechnical options would be implemented at that time (Stage 4).* *PN: Baseflows and shallow flows (piezometers) will be monitored.* *AR: Understand there is some uncertainty.* *CSF: Later agenda questions* **<u>Summary of agreed position:</u>** • The 7.5km radius to the east is conservative.	

		• In terms of the deep system there is uncertainty in terms of where the effects may manifest because of faulting and compartmentalisation of the GW flow within the greywacke. • This uncertainty can be managed by conditions addressing gauging stations looking at baseflow trends and there are also existing GW monitoring bores. There are conditions that already address this. • In a vertical sense, there is less concern about the shallow perched GW system (e.g. basalt, weathered greywacke, WCM). • Depressional (topography) features that are located immediately adjacent to the pit (e.g. Wetland 2A - south) may drain unless mitigated. **Agreed: PN / PK / JW**	
[3]	How would these effects be monitored for? In particular:	<u>Experts involved in discussion:</u> *GU outlined concerns on potential effects on streams based on Symonds Stream event where 1km of stream was affected (dried) due to GW drawdown.* *Has concerns that the SQEP requirements are geological and hydrogeological expertise, but what about ecological expertise?* *Discussion was around condition 168.* *BM: to the extent that there is concern, there is the possibility to doing baseline monitoring.* *GU: would be useful to obtain a baseline values assessment.*	43 167-170.

		TB: doing the baseline assessment now will not be helpful – should do it closer to when the potential effects occur.
		
		BM: Could link this requirement to the MG1 additional condition that has been discussed earlier today (at the end of Stage 2). If that would address the concern, that would then give you the baseline
		
		CSF: Which streams?
		
		TB: only the streams east of the fault
		
		If we are too prescriptive on the assessment requirements, the metrics will be totally different. So need to do a generic ecological baseline assessment in accordance with appropriate assessment criteria at that time.
		
		Discussion:
		
		Summary of position:
		
		- The applicant will propose a new condition that will address the following:
		  - At the end of Stage 2 – link to RL levels, a report to Council will be provided. This will include:
		  - An assessment of bore locations east of the pit; and
		  - If there are indications of drawdown effects and loss of stream flow, there will be an ecological baseline assessment on streams completed by a SQEP on relevant streams within the ZOI	

Commented [CSF4]: The Applicant adds ", and only once the direction of any dewatering is indicated"

Commented [CSF5]: Mr Kelsey has commented that this summary is unclear, and noted suggested text as follows:

"The applicant will propose a new condition that will address the following: At the end of Stage 2 at RL90m ~~– link to RL levels~~, a report to Council will be provided. This will include the assessment of:

Potential groundwater drawdown effects within the Mangawheau Catchment. If drawdown effects within the catchment are predicted then additional groundwater monitoring bores need to be installed. ~~An assessment of bore locations east of the pit~~; and

If there are indications of drawdown effects, there will be an ecological baseline assessment on streams completed by a SQEP on relevant streams within the ZOI."

		▪ Review condition provisions	
[3a]	Which streams might need to be monitored, and which wetlands?	Experts involved in discussion: Discussion: **Summary of position:** **Summary of position:** - Too far out due to potential effects (Stage 2 check point condition will address this)	43 (a), (b), (d), (k) 45 (c) 178
[3b]	Is sufficient baseline data available for those resources?	Experts involved in discussion: Discussion: **Summary of position:** - Too far out due to potential effects (Stage 2 check point condition will address this)	45 (c) 174
[3c]	How often and over what time period would monitoring, and related reporting, be required?	Experts involved in discussion: Discussion: **Summary of position:**	43 (a), (b), (d), (k) 175-177

		- Too far out due to potential effects (Stage 2 check point condition will address this)	
[4]	If there are impacts on surface water features, how would those be addressed?	Experts involved in discussion: Discussion: **Summary of position:** - Too far out due to potential effects (Stage 2 check point condition will address this)**:**	181- 199
[5]	If required, how would augmentation be achieved, and what steps would be necessary to make sure augmentation appropriately addressed any adverse effects and did not create further adverse effects?	Experts involved in discussion: Discussion: **Summary of position:** - Applicant to consider amendments to the conditions to reflect ecological components for the augmentation **Agreed:**	174 -202
[6]	What monitoring is required to ensure the SEV enhancement values are achieved?	Experts involved in discussion: Discussion: **Summary of position:** - Now addressed through Conditions128 and 131.	119-122 127-135

		- Andrew to provide cadence of numbering to applicant. **<u>Agreed:</u>**	
[7]	How has the potential loss of aquatic extent and loss of aquatic values of ecological features of streams and wetlands been addressed through the effects management package?	<u>Experts involved in discussion:</u> <u>Discussion:</u> *GU – aquatic side of things. Provided an explanation and BM provided an opinion that was helpful. Describe how loss of values is being addressed and how loss of extent is being addressed.* *TB – talking about loss – quantum of stream loss. First we used the Drury Quarry site, including down to Davies Road. Then looked wider than that – 4 other sites, worked down to 2. Then looked at the Tuakau site – had other synergies that we could do. So settled on the Tuakau site – 16km from the Quarry. The main advantage is that all offset features can occur on the one site and the site is now owned by the applicant. Stream to the west of the site, and part of the Tutanui Stream. Length is offset 1:1. Aquatic habitat is offset at 1:10 loss.* *GU – is that creating more …* *TB – Stream 4 – pond is going to be removed and restoring stream length at 128m – currently the upper dam. This was not put into the offset calculation. This was considered additionality.* *What the amount of stream loss on site?* *What is being mitigated?* *What is being restored?*	

		What is being offset? *CSF – so there is a loss of extent and that is not being replaced elsewhere.* *3.341 km is the extent of loss* *AR: 50 years later, we will be loss of 3.4 km of stream. If it was a development you may be able to address extent and loss* *TB – No. For small lengths only – for something of this size, it is too large, and a quarry is complete loss, unlike a development site.* *AR: Appreciate that we are dealing with a quarry. Is it possible or feasible to do both extent and values?* *AR: the loss of length still needs to be mitigated – considers it should be compensated.* *SEV doesn't include the extent.* *There are a number of components that build up the picture of what needs to be done. SEV doesn't account for the stream extent.* *CSF do you think there is a shortfall.* *AR: Yes, but I haven't worked it out* *BM – focus on the outcome rather than the labels. Consider the applicant has a fair outcome.* *CSF – also need to make sure we describe it correctly* *TB – we responded to the panel queries – pretty adamant on this position. Have been working in this stream space well before. This concept of separating out the extent and values in streams is only used for streams – not done in a terrestrial ecological setting.*	

		AR: Considers there should be a lot more offsetting a lot closer to the site. *Where the impact is and where we should be making every effort to put into the offset.* *TB – what is loss on the current site and what will be gained – the difference is enormous. Biodiversity outcomes are huge* *CW – huge opportunity for wetland birds and bats.* *FM – holistic element – it does matter what you call it. Permanent loss is not trivial. Important to be transparent on what we are mitigating, offsetting and compensation. It is important that the distinction is outlined. The ECR does not account for loss of extent of biodiversity values.* *TB – disagrees and has outlined this position.* *BM – High Court decision – Whata J – talks about values. AC legal position is that you read them together. Need to assess them collectively. Can't ignore one or the other, have to assess together.* *CSF – can we please have a copy of this case?* *FM – what did the judgment say?* *PK (Panel Member) – any examples that backs up what you are saying about how things should be done – if you have a quarry / mine / landfill?* *FM – Dome Valley Waste Management is working hard to recognise and be explicit about the biodiversity values and extent – compensation in addition to*	

		AD – council comments on Brookby – were asked to review it and that had additional compensation to address the loss of stream *GU – company works for – have already separated them – transmission gully – 2.5km stream – recreating a new stream in another catchment. Different people have different approaches.* *TB – have never been allowed access to Council land. Parks has control.* *Brookby quarry – Covid Fast track – condensed timeframe – one stream had a small wetland on the top. It wasn't calculated – it was offered up as an addition.* *FM – wetlands. Question covers streams, not wetlands. SEV not used for wetlands.* *GU – further information has been provided addressing this.* **Summary of position:** - Applicant to provide Panel with HC decision **Agreed:**	
[8]	How do the various parts of the effects management package detailed in the application relate to: Ecological mitigation Biodiversity offsetting	Experts involved in discussion: Discussion: **Summary of position:** - Agreement could not be reached in principle.	

	Ecological compensation	**Agreed:**	
[9]	Is a bond required in relation to delivery of ecological outcomes, or to ensure compliance with particular conditions (e.g. relating to remedial or restoration work, or ongoing monitoring of long-term effects)?	Experts involved in discussion: Discussion: *BM outlined reasons why a bond for a quarry is not appropriate.* *GU queried why a bond was used in the Brookby covid consent.* *TB noted there were timing constraints under the Covid fast-track process.* **Summary of position:** - .. **Agreed:**	

Matters discussed in addition to Agenda Items:

Philip Kelsey – queries on groundwater user conditions and ground settlement conditions. When reviewing the application materials, PK has been considering potential affected parties. 11 bores affected by the drawdown projections – 5 will be dried.

Considers the standard drawdown conditions from the Hunua quarry should be included in the condition set – is there a reason that they are being excluded?

BM: condition 43(j) contains the requirements.

PK: Sitting in the monitoring plan.

BM: Needs some flexibility. There are a number of reasons why the bore would go dry. Investigate process, consider whether it is due to the quarry effects.

PK: Happy to accept this.

MCP: Got built infrastructure to the W of the Drury fault

JU: Condition 168(c)

PK: Happy with this condition. Happy that we are monitoring this.

JW: has some queries around modelling at 50 years. RFI may be required once JW report has been received.

Applicant to consider further conditions. Staged step to consider whether there is a need for additional monitoring bore to be drilled either at MG1 or alternatively at another location based on SQEP advice, at the end of Stage 2.

Dr Fleur Maseyk – concerns regarding absence of detail/specifics in the conditions, with core matters sitting instead only in management plans or elsewhere. Preference is for material to be included in conditions, rather than cross referencing

Commented [CSF6]: Dr Maseyk has added the following text:

Conditions need to explicitly state the biodiversity gains to be achieved and ecological outcomes to be delivered by the effects management package IN ADDITION to the conditions that set out the required content of the management plans (the details needed to achieve the stated outcomes). These conditions should be coupled with monitoring against performance targets and triggers for time-bound contingency measures. Conditions are also required to ensure that changes to management plans (and associated conditions) cannot be made in a way that would lead to reduced protection and enhancement of ecological values and proposed offset (or compensation) outcomes.