

WARWICKSHIRE MINERALS DEVELOPMENT FORUM

28th April 2006, Manor Hall, Leamington Spa

Warwickshire's Minerals Development Forum met for the second time on the 28th April 2006. 19 representatives attended and 8 gave their apologies.

Present:

ALP Ambrose, representing Brinklow Quarry, KSD Dunton, Cemex, Hornton Stone Quarries and UK Coal, Andy Ambrose

Aggregate Industries UK Ltd., Tim Claxton

Bidford Resident, Carol Callaghan

Bidford Resident, Terry Harrison

The Coal Authority, Simon Cooke

Cotswold Conservation Board, Malcolm Watt

Countryside Protection for Rural England, Mark Sullivan

Countryside Protection for Rural England, Mick Jeffs

Ennstone Johnstone Ltd., Colin D'Oyley

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Tony Beysens

Hanson Aggregates, Peter Toon

UK Coal Mining Limited & CoalPro, Craig Ball

Warwickshire County Council, David Lowe

Warwickshire County Council, Derek Greedy

Warwickshire County Council, Jonathan Parkhouse

Warwickshire County Council, Jon Radley

Warwickshire County Council, Magnus Alexander

Warwickshire County Council, Matthew Williams

Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group, Ian Fenwick

Jasbir Kaur (Chair), Development Group Manager, WCC

Suzanne Osborn, Senior Planning Officer, WCC

Jim Davies, Planning Officer, WCC

Rebecca Bailey, Student Planner, WCC

Mikka Styles, Arup

Apologies:

British Geological Society, David Highley
Cemex, David Tomlin
Coleman and Company, David Coleman
Countryside Agency, Hazel Flemming
Lafarge Aggregates Ltd., Gary Staddon
The National Trust, Jeremy Milln
Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group, Martyn Bradley
Minerals, Waste and Environment Consultancy, Geoff White

1. Presentations:

Jasbir Kaur opened the meeting, followed by an introduction to the morning's agenda by Mikka Styles. Jim Davies then gave his presentation on the issues for mineral extraction, addressing the matters raised at the first Forum meeting, before guest speaker David Lowe presented on the relationship between minerals planning and the work of the County's Ecology Unit to address biodiversity targets. Copies of these presentations are available at:

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/A73FA9387D537D74802571410029B5FF>

- Introduction to Meeting 2, Mikka Styles, Arup
- Balancing Need with the Environment, Jim Davies, Planning Officer, Warwickshire County Council
- Warwickshire's Minerals Sites: the Benefits of Biodiversity, David Lowe, Senior Ecologist, Warwickshire County Council

2. Breakout Session:

The object of this session was to discuss site specific issues as they affect mineral development in Warwickshire. To facilitate the process the meeting was divided into three groups. Following these discussions, each group fed back to the meeting their key points.

Discussion: What are the issues for future extraction sites?

Issue	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Safeguarding Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially greater requirement to safeguard coal, (and other minerals?), if directed to do so by central Government 	
Coal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to safeguard areas to avoid sterilization Where there is no guidance – avoid site specific allocations, no-go areas and minerals constraint areas – enabling development to respond to need and minimise distance to market 		
Industrial Sands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not considered an aggregate Need to recognise different mineral properties Can produce a distortion of the landbank 		
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A resource to be protected Apply concept of minimal handling Bunds may be a temporary feature Policy should refer to approved soil management guides e.g. DEFRA 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil is a living medium and should be replaced as soon as possible Its role in the restoration scheme should be recognised and reference should be made to what will be done with it and when

Issue	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of surface materials removed is mineral specific • A general policy would be difficult to formulate; appraise and determine, but nothing too prescriptive • Ecologists are able to determine the level of intervention required to restore desired landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mineral extraction is only a temporary land use and the benefits to the environment should be emphasised (this argument is more applicable to sand and gravel, hard rock quarries generally have a longer life expectancy) • Landscape can be recreated and even enhanced following extraction • Industry already has environmental policies that it has to adhere to (see www.hanson.co.uk and www.aggregate.com) • Policy should ensure that environmental issues are looked at, but each considered on a site-specific basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cotswold AONB – future extraction of aggregates should be resisted but there should be a policy framework allowing activities for local building stone as long as it was on a small scale and for local use. This could be an extension of existing quarries or reopening disused quarries • Local stone is a countywide issue • Guidance to consider: Cotswold Conservation Board Minerals Statement, Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLCA); LCA and HLCA seek to identify high value areas and preserve the unique • Guidelines should be applied to extraction and restoration
Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory no-go zones should be recognised • Ancient sites should be protected • Long-term management plans are required • Consider agriculture • Policy should encourage site avoidance unless there is an opportunity to improve ecological value in the long-term 		

Issue	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Archaeology, Geology and Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlike ecology you can not put archaeology back after extraction • Current project being undertaken to improve predictive modelling • Balance needs to be struck between protecting and conserving – much has been gained from studying existing sites • Recognise the value of extraction sites to maintain or enhance ecology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to make clear how reliant potential ecological, geological and archaeological benefits are from quarrying • The benefits to communities are greatest when geology, ecology and archaeology work together at both extraction and restoration stages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should protect archaeologically, geologically and ecologically important features that we are aware of and make provision for any features that come to light through extraction • Archaeology, geology and ecology opportunities should be maximised during extraction
Traffic and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry finds it difficult to get on the railway, (often the cheapest option) • Use waterways if they exist • There are massive infrastructure costs in loading and unloading • Viability of using alternatives may be determined by contract length • Policy should consider the best way of moving minerals to market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement largely restricted to road unless dealing with large quantities e.g. a site dealing with 2-3million tonnes per year • Movement largely restricted to road unless minerals are being transported larger distances • Industry would generally support the protection of railheads, although it is sometimes cheaper to build a new one • Extraction of sand and gravel is largely determined by whether there is a market for the product within reasonably close proximity <p>Minerals Consultation Areas policy could at most 'encourage' developers to consider extraction prior to development (if development was to a non-mineral extraction use e.g. housing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road transport is likely to be the mode of transport where markets are local or dispersed

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Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take into account the requirements of the landowner and costs of maintaining • When formulating policy, establish a number of principles, and details of concept • Consider restoration closer to the end of the site's life – to reflect current priorities • There might be different guidance for agriculture vs. restoration to other land uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy should encourage developers to consider aspects of positive restoration, but the restoration scheme needs to be appropriate for the site concerned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration schemes could be included when sites are allocated. • A criteria based approach could be adopted taking into account site specific issues and the different issues relating to mineral type • Sites should be restored to the original landscape if not land use or be enhanced • Secondary uses of restored sites should also be considered
Climate Change			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration of minerals workings in river terraces could be developed to take into account flood alleviation
Site Allocation Criteria			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a more robust assessment of sites than in the Minerals Local Plan, including more accurate geological data • Site allocation could be based on proximity to market, reducing transport distances and industry • Site allocation shouldn't be based on proximity to market as markets move, but extraction is generally a long-term activity and this criteria wouldn't protect communities • Land ownership issues should be considered

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Buffer Zones		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are already being applied in Scotland and Wales, and may be applied in England. Generally these are not favoured unless applied on a site-specific basis • More important to demonstrate whether noise and visual intrusion etc are within reasonable levels. 	
Other Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is government guidance follow it/ no need for separate policies • If there is reason or pressure to go beyond policy it needs to be supported by justified reasons or principles • As a preamble to the plan consider the intellectual knowledge/ projects and programmes that have contributed to the decision making. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a comprehensive list of interests to take into account during decision making • Several other issues were discussed which are outside the scope of WCC's Mineral Development Framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of the Aggregate Levy and Landfill Tax in encouraging the reuse and recycling of minerals - A change in VAT considerations to promote restoration rather than new building properties with the aim of reducing the need for minerals and the hope that this would be reflected in ODPM figures - Methods of determining demand/ need based on future requirements rather than past trends - Open cast coal mining is possible

3. Feedback on the Process:

Participants were invited to comment on the success of the meeting using the evaluation forms provided. All respondents concluded that the meeting had been useful for sharing information, ideas and opinions and facilitating open, constructive debate, but that it had been less successful at developing consensus of opinion, largely due to the lack of time to fully debate the issues. There was unanimous support for participation at future meetings of the Forum.

4. Date of Next Meeting

Warwickshire County Council intends to hold a meeting of the Minerals Development Forum to discuss the Minerals Development Framework: Issues and Options Report between June and July. Invitations to attend this meeting will be sent out as soon as a date has been agreed.

For further information on this or any other matters of the Forum's work and progression, please call Suzanne Osborn at Warwickshire County Council. eMail: planningstrategy@warwickshire.gov.uk Telephone: 01926 412538.