

Minerals Development Framework: Core Strategy Preferred Options Forum
Manor Hall, Friday 16th February 2007 10:00 – 13:00

Attendees:

Andrew Ambrose	A.L.P Ambrose Consultancy
Anton Irving	Natural England
Brian Shaw	Tarmac
Colin D'Oyley	Ennstone plc
David Brewer	Coal Pro
Martyn Bradley	WGCG
Mick Jeffs	CPRE
Peter Toon	Hanson
Simon Heaton	Heaton Planning
Simone Cooke	Coal Authority
Tony Rhymer	Adrenvironmental
John Radley	WCC
Ian Fenwick	WGCG

Apologies:

Tim Claxton	Aggregate Industries UK Ltd
Patricia Wyatt	WALC
Steven Falk	Warwickshire Museum
Balvinder Gill	Warwick DC
David Coleman	Coleman & Company Limited
Jonathan Parkhouse	WCC
Malcome Watt	Cotswolds Conservation Board

Introduction to Waste Development Framework giving an overview of the Preferred Options consultation: Jim Davies.

A presentation, was given by John Radley the Keeper of Geology Warwickshire Museum titled, "Conserving the geology of Warwickshire's quarries: protecting the past for our future". The positive relationship between the minerals industry and Geologists was discussed.

The forum group then split in to two breakout groups lead by Tony Lyons (GP1) and Jim Davies (GP2).

Main Discussion: GP1

Vision and Objectives

The group were happy with Objective 4 but were concerned it was not highlighted strongly enough later in the document. For example the wording of Policy Principle 13, on page 66, sounds too weak.

It was suggested that the word 'aid' in Objective 8 should be replaced with 'Preserve'.

In discussion of objective 9 the group said they support the Merton rule in principle but felt that the Minerals industry is very different from other industries as it has high energy demands and there is no guarantees that current renewable energy types would be able to supply enough energy to meet the demands. It was felt that putting a figure on the amount of renewable energy to be produced on a minerals site was dangerous.

Key Issue 1: Criteria for Assessing Sites

Policy Principle 1, Pg 39: DEFRA will be publishing a document setting out new terminology for things such as sines and rigs.

Policy Principle 6, Pg43: Replace “protected” with “protection” and “from” with “by”.

Pg 45: The ‘No’ boxes should have a conclusion for completeness.

Key Issue 4: Crushed Rock Production

The word “million” needs to be deleted from the brackets in the line beginning “Total permitted reserves 2005” on page 60.

Key Issue 13: Transport by Rail

The Key Issue mentions inland waterways. This needs to be amended.

It was suggested that there does not need to be a separate Key Issue for Transport by Rail as it can be incorporated in to the Transport Key Issue.

Another suggestion was to rename this key Issue to “Safeguarding of Railheads and Wharfs” to mirror the heading of Policy Principle 23.

Key Issue 14: Mitigation

Policy Principle 24, pg 108: The word “identified” should be changed to “addressed” so an EIA is presumed in every case.

Key Issue 15: Buffer Zones

The group were in favour of this option as it allows flexibility. However it was suggested that it be reworded to make sure there would be no confusion over what it means. It was suggested that the first sentence of Policy Principle 25 should be deleted and the Preferred Option should be amended to reflect this.

Key Issue 16: Restoration and After-Use

The group liked this option as it allows for flexibility. However there are 11 ‘unsure’ in the SA, which makes the option seem quite negative in terms of sustainability, this should be justified in the document. It was suggested the comments under the ‘Biodiversity’ and ‘Geological’ sections of the SA should be the equivalent of each other.

The wording in the Preferred Option should be changed from “consultation process” to “planning application process”.

There should be a paragraph at the end of the Key Issue to explain that the Policy Principle is the same as Policy Principle 26: Restoration and After use.

Key Issue 19: Long Term Community Involvement

This option was seen as a good policy for developers and the public.

The Sustainability Appraisal

There was a suggestion that the comments under 'Biodiversity' and 'Geological Features' could have been more consistent across each key issue. Also the penultimate column needs a different title as it does not relate to the comments below.

The group accepted that the SA is a new and complicated area in which no one is an expert yet. However in order to help people interpret it there should be better explanation in the document on how the SA results affect the choice of option for the key issues.

Other Comments

The group were happy with this consultation process and felt that their comments at previous meetings had been taken onboard in the preparation of the preferred options document, where practicable.

MPS1 needs to be identified/explained in the document.

The Term 'the development plan' needs to be explained in the document.

Policy Principle 12: Crushed Rock refers to Sand and Gravel working.

Main Discussion: GP2

The general point was raised that in planning for the future supply of sand and gravel should recognise "Continuity of Supply" as current policy puts the emphasis on landbanks only.

This would allow flexibility within the system taking into account production capacity of sites when assessing the need for new sites. It must be recognised that a large reserve at one site within the county can give an overall healthy landbank figure but if it isn't being worked then the overall supply of minerals to the market will be affected. The argument for the recognition of the importance of 'continuity of supply' was also extended to other minerals, including brick clay and the raw materials for cement.

Another general point was raised concerning the access to sites for geoconservation, ecological and archaeological work and study. This point followed on from the presentation from the County Geologist and it again pointed out that stating access details for interest groups either by way of planning condition or section 106 would be extremely difficult and the planning authority would rather support good relations between industry and other interested parties.

The need for meaningful consultation between industry and the local community was raised as a general point as all parties would benefit and a good level of trust would then develop between local residents and the mineral company.

Extensions to Existing Mineral Workings

One member of the group wanted clarification as to what constituted an extension to an existing site as this was one of the preferred ways forward in providing for further minerals in the core strategy. Other members of the group thought this would be difficult as mineral workings could extend into adjacent areas or employ the use of

conveyors etc to bring in minerals to be processed at existing plant. It would be the planning authority which judged whether an application was truly an extension of an existing operation or whether it was in reality a separate site.

Key Issue 2: Sand and Gravel Extraction

P53 (Sustainability Appraisal) - recognition should be made in SA Objective 8 of the 20 SSSI's which are of a geological nature and not just designated as RIGS.

Key Issue 15/16 : Restoration and Afteruse.

The use of site working plans showing phased restoration is possible in shallow mineral workings and therefore adherence to phased restoration schemes could form part of a planning permission by condition. The point that in certain sites large areas of striped and worked land which has not be restored have a detrimental effect on the landscape.

Key Issue 5: Secondary and Recycled Aggregates

A concern was raised that there is no need for quarries to contain recycled materials processing plants but several industry representatives stated that both extraction and recycling of aggregates could be complementary activities. It was also stated that there are current examples in Warwickshire of this taking place.

A comment was made that Warwickshire should look to impose a figure, example 10% of secondary materials used in new developments. The Local Districts would be the authorities to implement this sort of policy although the County Council will advise the Districts as they draw up there own LDF's.

The meeting then closed.