

Joint West Sussex Minerals Local Plan

Engagement Event- Wednesday 13 August 2014

Summary of Outcomes

1. Background

1.1 This document summarises the engagement event held on Wednesday 13 August at the South Downs Centre Hall, Midhurst. The event focused on four main mineral issues pertinent to the preparation of the new Joint Minerals Local Plan covering West Sussex:

- A steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals in West Sussex;
- Non-aggregate minerals in West Sussex;
- Mineral site allocations for the Joint MLP; and
- Safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure.

1.2 This event is part of a wider informal engagement stage to support the early work on the Joint Minerals Local Plan. This session was aimed at gathering evidence, verifying facts and identifying areas of concern or support from the mineral industry, landowners and their representatives. The summary of the four discussion areas, set out below, represent the views of the attendees.

1.3 Additionally, event attendees were encouraged to feedback any comments through response forms as part of a wider stakeholder engagement exercise focused on the Mineral Sites Study running until 22nd September 2014.

2. Aims of event

2.1 The aim of the event was to update attendees on the progress to date towards the development of a new Minerals Local Plan being prepared in partnership by West Sussex County Council and the South Downs National Park Authority. The two overriding objectives of the event were to:

- Check information to ensure the Authorities knowledge and understanding of minerals issues was up-to-date and robust; and
- Identify potential issues, problems or concerns relating to the working of minerals in West Sussex.

3. Structure of event

- 3.1 Following an introduction to the work on the Joint Minerals Local Plan to date, the event was split into four sessions:

Session 1: A steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals in West Sussex;

Session 2: Non-aggregate minerals in West Sussex;

Session 3: Mineral site allocations for the Joint MLP; and

Session 4: Safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure.

- 3.2 A copy of the Event Programme is included in Appendix 1.

- 3.3 Attendees at the event were split into four groups with one facilitator from the Authorities assigned to each group to support debate and encourage questions. A copy of the list of attendees is set out in Appendix 2.

4. Key issues and next steps

- 4.1 The key issues discussed in each session are summarised below. This summary presents the key issues raised, however does not provide a response or comment by the Authorities on how the issues will be considered as part of the plan making process. The comments from this event will be considered alongside the feedback received throughout the early engagement stage to assist in the development of the draft Plan in 2015. This includes comments from the public engagement on the Background Papers (which closed on 28 July 2014), other engagement events and the comments received in relation to from the Mineral Sites Study.

- 4.2 Information on the next stages of the Joint Minerals Local Plan process, and anticipated timing, is provided in the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme available at www.westsussex.gov.uk/mwdf/mwds.

5. Summary of comments

Session 1: A steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals in West Sussex Minerals Local Plan

General

- Aggregate markets transcend boundaries – there is a need to look beyond local demand.
- Minerals and localism won't work. Needs to be viewed as a bigger picture than just local need.
- Consideration of how the resource base will change with permissions and in respect of future demand.

- NPPF uses the phrase “great weight” in relation to various aspects. How do you balance this with the economic need to provide minerals?
- Plans are landbank driven, however we should be considering supply, not landbanks, to gain a fuller picture.
- Consideration needed to the dynamic of local need, regional need, and national need.
- The 4-yearly Aggregates Survey will still take place; and record data for 2013 as planned (confirmed by representative from the Department of Communities and Local Government).
- MLP policies should allow for windfall sites (flexibility):
 - sites should be allocated, as windfall sites are a greater risk if planning permission is refused (cost implications for operators).
 - Allocations provide more certainty to the operators. “Can’t invest in maybes”
 - This was countered with the point that a number of allocated sites are not brought forward for development, and this can restrict the supply of aggregates to market from windfall sites.
- Land won aggregate sales may be falling due to the cost implications of gaining planning permission, and the costs of operating sites with multiple issues (mitigation). Meanwhile marine won aggregates have fewer issues, and licenses have been granted, thus operators may be focusing their business there.
 - This clearly links to the importance of safeguarding wharves.
- The Plan should be flexible, and the LAA should be used to trigger a Plan review, if evidence suggests the demand for aggregates is going beyond supply provided by site allocations.
- There should be a straight forward extension policy to support existing sites.
- The Plan should be flexible to meet supply and demand – if there is an unexpected change in baseline evidence, the Plan should be able to react.
- If enough sites are allocated in the Plan then the industry will react to the market accordingly.
- One of the key challenges is the lack of nominations for aggregate extraction, leaving limited options. The Plan cannot allocate what’s not available.
- Getting a site permitted takes 5-10 years. Large multinational companies have started looking abroad. The industry needs certainty through allocations.
- The industry works to different time frames to the development Plans timetables, creating a challenge.
- There was a discussion about the need for upgrades to the A27 choke points. Perhaps the Plan should include an assessment of the aggregate demand for such works?

Local Aggregates Assessment

- LAA's provide a good local context, however minerals travel beyond boundaries – the Plan should seek to understand the distance travelled.
- The mineral haulage distance is dependent on the mode of transport. Barged materials travel further.
- What role does the LAA background work have to do when it comes to the Duty to Co-operate? Adds another element for consideration.
- What is meaningful co-operation in relation to the LAA and minerals?
- There has been a ripple effect on aggregate production as a result of the economic downturn, 30% drop but now starting to recover.

Soft Sand v Sharp Sand and Gravel

- Other authorities produce separate landbanks and need requirements for soft sand and sharp sand.
- Given the commercial confidentiality issues in West Sussex, estimates may need to be used in the MLP and this would be acceptable to the industry.
- Dorset CC's policy on this issue may be useful.

Clay

- Should consider resource areas of clay (beyond own boundaries) rather than reserves at other counties. Attempt to grow a bigger picture.
- Brick production fell heavily during the recession – brick clay usage is strongly linked to housing completions.

Silica Sand

- Is an industrial mineral;
- Number of categories to consider;
- These types of sites also tend to contain other sands (soft or sharp).

Mineral Forecasting

- Data reliability was a recurring theme.
- The economic recession has had an impact for six years. The forecasts should attempt to look further back at sales and other factors to try and see if there is a long term trend (over past 20 years);
- Economic recovery is perceived to have started, thus is likely to see mineral demand increase.
- Assessing housing completions and planned housing may not capture the entire picture of aggregate use in housing. What about maintenance? How will this translate into the forecast?
- Question was raised about whether or not planning inspectors look at areas that use up resource, such as the relationship between housing and mineral use.

- Discussions around the merits of forecasting were brought up. For example, why not just plan for the calculated rolling 10-year average of sales, particularly in light of the detailed aggregate forecasting work carried out by Oxfordshire CC which was not taken forward.
- Should consider other key works going on which may impact on demand:
 - Cross Rail
 - Gatwick 2
 - Heathrow runway 3
 - High Speed 2
- Building techniques are changing, what impact will they have on aggregate demand? i.e. The use of other materials such as glass and steel.
- Should look at Nationally Significant Infrastructure Plan projects (Macro level)
- Should consider flood alleviation works and the aggregates they demand

Marine won aggregates

- Marine won aggregates need consideration also, not just land won sand and gravel, when it comes to forecasting.
- Availability of marine won **soft** sand was raised, however WSCC confirmed that that the Crown Estate have considered it to be unviable- too much processing would be required and operators are have not shown an interest as a result. Industry representatives did not challenge this view.

Session 2: Non-aggregate Minerals in West Sussex

Chalk

- No demand for site allocations unless linked to cement production which is no longer occurring in the Plan area.
- Possible need for clay to add to mix for cement production but this depends on the type of chalk being used.
- Still used for agricultural lime but the demand for this use has declined as farmers are using other alternative products.
- Recycled aggregate has replaced use of chalk for low grade construction type uses – less economically viable to use chalk as the aggregate levy would apply.
- May be used for one-off road construction projects
- Some flint in Upper Beeding Quarry. Chalk at Upper Beeding Quarry a 'hard' chalk making it difficult to extract.

Recycled and secondary aggregates

- Still close link between quarries and inert waste recycling operations – makes financial sense to link the two when quarries are operational.
- Policies in Minerals Plan need to link in and work consistently with Waste Local Plan policies to ensure that capacity for recycling in quarries is maintained
- Need a flexible approach to ensure that recycling facilities in quarries can continue within protected landscapes – due to the high coverage of designations within the Plan area.
- Supply of material – relies on redevelopment taking place, does travel from London
- Higher specification recycled aggregate being developed to increase the range of uses in construction.

Oil and Gas

- Discussions around whether to allocate sites or use a criteria based policy approach
- Suggestions made around potential for use of surplus public sector land, waste water treatment works or quarry sites for locating exploration sites
- Rural locations are problematic due to vehicle movements

Silica sand

- The quality of the sand affects whether it is considered as 'industrial sand'.
- All of the Folkstone Beds are silica sand.
- Need evidence about the geological characteristics of the deposit- borehole evidence likely to be necessary.
- 'Soft sand' implies a building sand but sand from current sites used for a variety of end markets – e.g. sports pitch sand, concreting sand, cattle bedding.
- Different markets depending on the product.
- Classification difficult and needs to be carefully considered.
- Colour variations in sand.
- Uncertainty about the quality of the sand resource outside the SDNP – view that it wasn't suitable but not sure whether any evidence available to justify.
- Plan can't dictate the market end use of sand extracted from any one site
- To produce a silica sand of glass making quality would require extensive processing (and associated equipment) and considerable investment.

Clay

- Generally sufficient supply at individual brickworks but always considering future reserves.

- Specialist bricks produced by brickworks in the Plan area (e.g. at Freshfield Lane Brickworks) continue to be popular and new techniques are being sought to replication clamp fired bricks
- Increasing trend for architects to specify particular type of locally distinctive brick.
- Windfall provision of clay needs to be considered e.g. from prior extraction from a housing development.
- Safeguarding of clay needs to work in practice – best applied to larger sites as prior extraction would not be viable on smaller sites.
- Viable to transport clay from up to 25- 30 miles away.
- Important to get the right blend of clay to produce the right end product for the market – consistency and colour of brick is important to customers.
- Clay for flood defences was raised – want to make sure that clay from brickworks is preserved for brickworks – is a policy needed to address this issue?
- If clay is extracted from elsewhere, space is needed on brickworks site to stockpile it.
- Restoration of claypits is an issue – now less material is available for restoration.
- Permissions need to consider the availability of restoration material and allow for changing circumstances.
- Brickworks need other additives for brickmaking – does Plan need to consider the continued availability of other minerals e.g. chalk.
- Potential for linking with other quarries was discussed e.g. using clay overburden from a sand quarry.

Building Stone

- Discussion about whether the Upper Greensand was quarried for stone anymore.
- Continuing demand for building stone – plus trend towards increased use of stone for new build, not just repair.
- Access to stone quarries can be poor, policy needs to recognise constrained location.
- 'Waste' stone needs to be dealt with – can be used as an aggregate and this needs to be considered in the Plan
- Quarries should not have to prove 'need', as market will drive applications, but may also be speculative applications
- Lorry movements – emphasis on restricting lorry movements can cause problems due to variable contracts. Limiting lorry movements can affect the viability of an operation.

Other issues raised

- Community benefits need to be considered.
- Liaison groups – can work well but not always well attended.
- Overall paucity of data for non-aggregate minerals.
- Borrow pits- how will the Plan handle this?

Session 3: Mineral site allocations for the Joint Minerals Local Plan

Deliverability

- Sites that have been previously allocated and not developed keep being put on short list resulting in large operators sitting on sites for years.
- Applications are being made according to the larger operators and not just for large reserves.
- Larger operators have higher returns thresholds meaning that it might not be viable to develop sites at a particular time but they could not rule out a site being developed during the plan period at this stage. Circumstances change such as ownership, landlord's aspiration for restored site use, etc.
- Industry would prefer to see far more flexibility in taking sites forward such as areas of search for example.
- Impact of marine-won aggregates – easier option for large operators.
- UK seen as difficult to bring sites forward and therefore multinationals look elsewhere first.
- Not in the interest of the MPA to have operators sit on sites. Industry must provide evidence as to why sites have not been developed or else drop from the list.
- Some operators work to much shorter timeframes than the plan. Planning for sites to develop in 10+ years' time does not fit with the way the industry works.
- Quicker decision making needed to help develop sites. An application can take so long to prepare that a site that was deliverable and viable at the time the plan was written may no longer be available.

Site Assessment Methodology

- Needs to consider issues such availability of water for washing of aggregates – questionable if sites west of Chichester can be delivered because of this issue. Cannot expect industry to undertake large studies at this stage as it is no guarantee that planning permission will be granted.
- Industry should only be expected to carry out further work/studies if it is a 'showstopper'.
- Studies undertaken by industry can be out of date within a year.
- Front loading of assessment work prohibitively expensive for smaller operators.
- Kent County Council only required geological information.

- Assessment work needs to be kept simple.
- Industry need adequate time to consider outcomes of study considering costs involved if a lot of work is needed to be carried out.
- General consensus that a certain degree of flexibility is required.
- The more sites allocated the more certainty the industry has.
- Number of sites allocated needs to reflect the fact that recoverable resources can be considerably less put forward during the call for sites.
- Appendix 2 of the Mineral Sites Study – full rejected site proformas need to be included for transparency.
- The Authorities need to go back to landowners to check deliverability at each stage of the plan making process.

Sites within the South Downs National Park

- Mineral development no longer an attractive option for farmers/estates – public backlash and alternative uses now potentially more valuable.
- Park designated because of geology therefore it must acknowledge that minerals of value and national importance need to be extracted from inside the National Park.
- History tells us where the best sand is – in the National Park.
- Similar study to Surrey and Kent's silica sand study needs to be undertaken.
- Any additional soft sand/silica sand studies will need to be park-wide.
- SDNPA Management Plan Policy 27 seen as negative towards minerals as it does not actually refer to development of' or 'extraction' but rather 'management and restoration of'.

Session 4: Safeguarding Mineral Resources and Infrastructure

Mineral resource safeguarding

- The Upper Greensand formation, as separate from the Folkstone formation may be the location of the silica sand resource. If this is the case (needs to be checked with British Geological Society, Mineral Products Association or neighbouring mineral planning authorities) it would be prudent to consider safeguarding this resource through an Mineral Safeguarding Area.
- It is important to identify a 'protocol' for inclusion in the MLP, to guide both district and boroughs and applicants through the Mineral Safeguarding Area/ Mineral Consultation Area policy and process- this could include a flow chart in the Plan, a planning guidance document, plus a clear policy on the Plan.
- Any MSA policy must include reference to prior extraction as an option for developers, subject to the usual controls, but should not require prior

extraction. The approach must reflect the viability of extraction, the proposed non mineral development and NPPF.

- Support for MCA boundary to follow the MSA boundary.
- Concerns about the Plan's role in protecting mineral resources from encroachment from other development, such as housing.
- Support for MCA around specific site allocations or active sites, possibly extending 250m from the boundary.
- Discussion around need for extended MCA around allocated/active sites, to 400m – 500m concluded with the need for evidence to support such an approach as it is not common.
- The Plan should include a policy to enable the assessment of 'windfall' extraction sites. Such sites should then be covered by the MCA approach too.

Mineral infrastructure safeguarding

- Support for MCA around safeguarded infrastructure (wharves and railheads), possibly extending 250m from the boundary.
- The approach to wharf safeguarding at Shoreham Harbour was discussed, concluding that the Port Authority held the keys to supporting the Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan whilst ensuring sufficient wharf capacity continued to be available.
- MLP approach to safeguarding in Littlehampton would need to be revisited in light of current evidence. The assumptions of the Wharves and Railhead Study 2014 and the draft interim position statement (2010) must be brought together with NPPF and current plans marina.
- The future usage of Littlehampton rail sidings (safeguarded in current MLP2003) for aggregate transport is limited by the absence of infrastructure such as a conveyor, which used to link the wharf/coated roadstone plant and railhead site. The railhead is not currently used for minerals and is unlikely to be, due to the absence of a conveyor.
- Current usage of Littlehampton Railway Wharf (safeguarded in MLP2003) could be reflected in new Plan, but this would need to be tempered against the aspirations for the Marina.
- A meeting and further evidence around the Littlehampton Marina/ Harbour Board and the MLP is needed in the short term.

Appendix 1: Session Programme

Time	Programme Item	Officer
09.30- 10.00	Registration and refreshments <i>30 mins</i>	
10.00-10.15	Welcome and introductory presentation: Joint Minerals Local Plan <i>15 mins</i>	Darryl Hemmings, WSCC
10.15- 10.45	Group Session 1 A steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals in West Sussex <i>30 mins</i>	Group Facilitators
10.45 – 11.15	Group Session 2 Non-aggregate minerals in West Sussex <i>30 mins</i>	Group Facilitators
11.15 – 11.45	Group Session 3 Mineral Site Allocations for the Joint MLP <i>30 mins</i>	Group Facilitators
11.45- 12.15	Group Session 4 Safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure <i>30 mins</i>	Group Facilitators
12.15 – 12.30	Next Steps for the MLP Q&A <i>15 mins</i>	Darryl Hemmings, WSCC
12.30	Close	

Appendix 2: Attendees

Officers attending

1	Darryl Hemmings (Chair)	Planning & Transport Policy Manager (WSCC)
2	Alethea Evans	Senior Planning Officer (WSCC)
3	Rupy Sandhu	Planning Officer (WSCC)
4	Claire Potts	Minerals and Waste Manager (SDNPA)
5	Peter Wilsdon	Minerals and Waste Planning Officer (SDNPA)

Delegates

1	Richard Ford	Brett Group
2	Mark Kelly	Cemex
3	Andy Scott	Cemex
4	Dave Norminton	Hanson
5	Ken Hobden	Mineral Products Association
6	Mark Russell	MPA/BMAPA
7	Steve Tremlett	Brighton & Hove City Council
8	Douglas Symes	D.K.Symes
9	Lisa Kirby	Hampshire County Council
10	Kate Matthews	Consultant-Day Group Ltd
11	John Prosser	Kent County Council
12	Simon Treacy	Lafarge-Tarmac
13	Hannah Hyland	Environment Agency
14	Nick Tennant	CLG
15	Lee Harrison (deputy harbour master)	Littlehampton Harbour Board
16	Nicola Jones (Clerk)	Littlehampton Harbour Board
17	Neil Jay	Ibstock brickworks
18	Cllr Simon Oakley	West Sussex County Council
19	Cllr John Rogers	West Sussex County Council
20	Stewart Mitchell	Grundon
21	Stephen Bowley	Consultant- Michelmersh Brick Holdings
22	Tony Cook	East Sussex County Council
23	Danny Trussler	Rabbit Group
24	Dave Walton	The Mineral Planning Group
25	Steve Dudman	Dudman Group