

Cabinet

23 January 2023

Response to consultation on the Hampshire Planning Authorities' Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update – Draft Plan

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr D Walsh, Planning

Local Councillor(s): Cllrs Flower, Coombs, Tooke, Gibson, Bryan, Goringe

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

This report comes to Cabinet with information about the consultation on *Hampshire's Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update*. It provides information about the proposed issues in the Draft Plan most relevant to Dorset Council, highlighting potential impacts on Dorset's environment and setting out a recommended response to be returned to the Hampshire Authorities.

Recommendation:

That a response be sent to the Hampshire Authorities, raising no objection to the *Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update*, but including a number of detailed comments as set out in this report.

Reason for Recommendation:

As neighbouring minerals and waste planning authority Dorset Council has been consulted by the Hampshire Planning Authorities on a proposed update to their Minerals and Waste Plan. Dorset Council needs to ensure that the proposals in the Draft Plan do not prejudice our interests. Although it is not suggested that Dorset Council raises objections to any of the proposals at this stage, this response provides an opportunity to express to the Hampshire Authorities our support for some proposals and our concerns over others. Cabinet's endorsement of the response will give it additional weight when returned to the Hampshire Authorities.

1. Preparation of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan

1.1 The Hampshire Planning Authorities comprise Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils, the New Forest National Park Authority and the South Downs National Park Authority. They have jointly prepared the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan: Partial Update – Draft Plan (the Draft Plan), which is out to consultation until the end of January 2023.

2. The Hampshire Draft Plan

2.1 Minerals produced in Hampshire include sand and gravel, brick clay, chalk and oil and gas. Most relevant to Dorset are sand and gravel, as Hampshire has historically exported sand and gravel to Dorset, contributing to meeting the need for sand and gravel in Dorset. Dorset Council would want to ensure that Hampshire will provide for future supply at appropriate levels, to avoid putting additional demands on Dorset's mineral reserves.

2.2 Dorset Council has in the past exported waste to Hampshire for processing, but no waste is directly exported to Hampshire now. However Dorset Council does have an arrangement with Hampshire County Council for Dorset residents to use the Hampshire Household Recycling Centre (HRC) at Somerley near Ringwood. Dorset Council will want to ensure that the Draft Plan keeps relevant future waste management options open.

2.3 The Draft Plan proposes the allocation of a range of minerals and waste site allocations, including some in close proximity to Dorset. Dorset Council will want to ensure that any potential impacts on Dorset's amenity or environment will be fully and appropriately mitigated.

3. Maintaining aggregate supply

3.1 Policy 17 of the Draft Plan states that a steady and adequate supply of aggregates until 2040 will be provided for Hampshire and surrounding areas from local sand and gravel sites at a rate of 1.15 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). The figure of 1.15 mtpa for locally extracted sand and gravel is below the previous annual supply figure of 1.56 mtpa as set out in the current 2013 Plan. However the proposed revised figure of 1.15 mtpa is based on an average of the previous 10 years of aggregate sales in Hampshire, along with other factors influencing supply. It is considered to more accurately reflect the average level of production over the last ten years.

3.2 To ensure that the level of provision remains at an appropriate level, the Draft Plan contains a commitment that if:

- Sand and gravel sales were above (by 10% or more) or below the proposed 1.15 mtpa level of provision over three consecutive years, or
- The landbank fell below 7 years over 3 consecutive years,

then the provision rate will switch to the then-current, annually determined rate as set out in the annual Local Aggregates Assessment that every Mineral Planning Authority is required to produce. This will more accurately reflect demand for aggregate until the Plan can be revised.

3.3 Dorset Council are aware that demand for and supply of sand and gravel can vary, and there needs to be a mechanism that allows for variation if needed. This is considered to be a reasonable approach to maintaining a realistic level of supply, thereby reducing risks to Dorset Council's own reserves of sand and gravel. It is recommended that Dorset Council's response states no objection to the proposed approach to maintaining a supply of aggregates.

4. **Sources of aggregate**

4.1 The Draft Plan states that the supply of land-won sand and gravel will be maintained, through:

- Extraction of remaining mineral from existing permitted sites, and
- Extensions to two existing sites, and
- The development of new sites, proposed as site allocations within the Draft Plan, and

- Development of new and as yet unidentified sites, providing certain criteria are met.

4.2 The Draft Plan notes that new proposed sites may be rejected following further testing/assessment. Even if ultimately included in the Plan there is no certainty that all allocated sites will be developed as other issues may arise with any of them at planning application stage.

4.3 The Draft Plan identified a need for approximately 9.7 million tonnes of sand and gravel reserves in new allocations in order to meet expected demand during the life of the Plan. However, the Draft Plan currently proposes some 17.7 million tonnes in new site allocations. In addition, not all the allocated sites will be worked out and completed during the life of the Plan.

4.4 Dorset Council accept that the Draft Plan figure, particularly at this early stage, will be higher than actually needed in order to allow for expected losses. It is recommended that Dorset Council make no objection at this stage to the proposed approach of building in a contingency figure in identifying and allocating new sites. However, as set out below, Dorset Council does have some concerns regarding some of the proposed allocations identified.

5. **Proposed site allocations close to Dorset**

5.1 The Draft Plan proposes nine new allocations for sand and gravel extraction, three of which are in close proximity to the Dorset border. These are:

- Purple Haze, near Verwood;
- Cobley Wood, further north on the western terraces of the Avon Valley; and
- Midgham Farm, also further north on the western terraces of the Avon Valley.

5.2 The Draft Plan also proposes six new strategic waste management sites, one of which is near to Dorset. This is a hazardous waste landfill site, proposed as part of the restoration of the current Hamer Warren quarry. This is the only waste proposal with relevance to Dorset Council. There are no proposals to amend access arrangements to the Somerley Household Waste Recycling Centre.

5.3 All these proposed allocations in the vicinity of the Dorset/Hampshire border are shown on **Figure 1** below.

Figure1 – Locations of Proposed Allocations close to Dorset



6. **Purple Haze**

- 6.1 This is an existing allocation in the current 2013 Minerals and Waste Plan, and subject to a current application for mineral working. This site, on the Dorset/Hampshire boundary, is considered capable of delivering up to 7.25 million tonnes of soft sand and 0.75 million tonnes of sharp sand and gravel (of which 3.4 million tonnes would be available in the Plan period). Restoration by non-hazardous household waste is not proposed. The Draft Plan estimates that working could begin from 2024 onwards.
- 6.2 The site is very sensitive. In 2020 Dorset Council's response to Hampshire County Council's scoping consultation identified a number of key issues/potential impacts that needed to be carefully addressed. These included:
- a) Ecological, including impacts on sites of international, national and local nature conservation importance and protected species
 - b) Hydrology/hydrogeology
 - c) Highways
 - d) Recreational
 - e) Soils
 - f) Cultural heritage
 - g) Landscape and Visual
 - h) Human health (including noise/dust)
 - i) Climate Change
- 6.3 In response to consultation on this application, Dorset Council did not object to the principle of the development but objected to the detail of the proposed working and restoration, making the following points.
- a) Dorset Council was not satisfied that the Environmental Impact Assessment carried out, provided robust evidence that all impacts have been identified and will be avoided or appropriately mitigated;
 - b) Insufficient information had been provided to be able to rule out significant adverse impacts on nearby European and Nationally designated sites and species. The 2013 Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan stated that

development cannot be permitted if it may adversely affect the integrity of European protected sites. In the absence of sufficient evidence or assurances to the contrary, the precautionary principle should be applied;

- c) Although the site was already allocated, Dorset Council did not accept that there were imperative reasons of overriding public interest to justify adverse impacts upon the integrity of Natura 2000 habitats. Furthermore, since the Plan was adopted, Natura 2000 habitats have faced other cumulative pressures arising from development in the area which would not have been present at the time the local plan was examined. If significant adverse effects could not be ruled out Hampshire County Council was asked to give serious consideration as to whether or not the principle of mineral extraction at Purple Haze can be justified; and
 - d) Hampshire County Council were asked to ensure that it is satisfied that all other impacts, such as those relating to health, amenity, recreation and highways are fully evidenced and suitably mitigated.
- 6.4 Cumulative traffic impacts take on an increased relevance in light of the existing Hamer Warren quarry to the north, along with other proposed site allocations further north, such as Midgham Farm and Cobley Wood, and the proposed hazardous waste landfill at Hamer Warren. All these sites, including Purple Haze, will potentially rely on Harbridge Drove, leading to the B3081 in Dorset, to access the A31. Should more than one of these sites be working simultaneously, there is potential for cumulative traffic impacts particularly in combination with traffic travelling between Verwood and the A31. Dorset Council would require clear evidence that any such cumulative impacts can be fully and appropriately mitigated.
- 6.5 In response to the proposed (re-)allocation of Purple Haze, Dorset Council notes that we (as Dorset County Council) did not object to the original allocation. In addition, in the recent consultation response we did not object to the principle of the development, but objected to the detail of the proposed development.
- 6.6 It is noted that Dorset Council will review our minerals plan in the future to consider whether new sites are required, if viable reserves are present.. It is also noted that, should Hampshire County Council permit the development of Purple Haze, developers, construction sites and other users of sand/gravel in the Dorset Council and BCP Council administrative areas may benefit from the close proximity of the site as a source of aggregate.

- 6.7 Dorset Council notes that Purple Haze is allocated in the current Minerals and Waste Local Plan for sand and gravel extraction and, whilst the principle has previously been established, we re-iterate the concerns and objections we have previously raised and also particularly draw the attention of Hampshire County Council to our concerns on the issue of cumulative traffic impacts and the need to ensure these are properly addressed.
- 6.8 In addition we emphasise that the potential for cumulative traffic impacts needs to be carefully considered and the plan should contain clear evidence that any adverse impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated should they arise. In the absence of such reassurance, Dorset Council would object to any of these proposed sites, either as planning applications or plan allocations.

7. **Cobley Wood**

- 7.1 The Cobley Wood site is immediately to the east of the existing Hamer Warren quarry, approximately 700m from the Dorset border. It is estimated that this site would yield approximately 1.0 million tonnes of sand and gravel and would be worked through the existing Hamer Warren quarry site. The Draft Plan estimates that working could begin around 2036.
- 7.2 Given the location of the site it is considered unlikely that its development would cause unacceptable impacts (i.e. visual, noise, dust) to Dorset. The one exception is the issue of potential cumulative traffic impacts as previously referred to. Dorset Council would want clear reassurance that this issue has been addressed and can and will be mitigated.
- 7.3 It is recommended that Dorset Council do not at this stage object to the proposed allocation of Cobley Wood for sand and gravel extraction, but that Hampshire County Council be made aware of our concerns on the issue of cumulative traffic impacts with other Hampshire County Council sites/proposed allocations.

8. **Midgham Farm**

- 8.1 This proposed allocation lies immediately to the east and south-east of Alderholt. The Draft Plan estimates that the yield could be approximately 4.2 million tonnes of sand and gravel, with up to 3.8 million tonnes being produced during the Plan period, and development could begin at this site from 2024 onwards.

- 8.2 The north-western part of this proposed allocation lies adjacent to Alderholt, with potential for impacts (e.g. visual, noise, dust) on amenity of residents. Access to the site is likely to be from the Hillbury Road. Dorset Council welcomes the requirement that “*A buffer is required in the north-west corner of the site to protect the amenity of Alderholt Village*”. All traffic servicing this site (apart from specific local deliveries) should come from and return to the south, and avoid travelling through or alongside Alderholt.
- 8.3 The Bleak Hill Quarry Extension at Hamer Warren, with a current permission for extraction of sand and gravel, lies immediately south of the proposed Midgham Farm allocation. Dorset Council would want to be reassured that should Midgham Farm be allocated, the existing allocated extension at Hamer Warren will be completed before Midgham Farm is developed and there would be no simultaneous working of the Bleak Hill extension and the proposed Midgham Farm or Cobley Wood sites.
- 8.4 It is recommended that Dorset Council does not object to this proposed allocation at this stage, but stresses the need to: i) ensure adequate protection for the residents of Alderholt; ii) ensure no simultaneous working with the Bleak Hill Quarry extension and; iii) address the issue of potential cumulative traffic impacts in accessing the A31. We note that the Hillbury Road falls within Dorset Council’s administrative area and our response to this consultation is given without prejudice to any subsequent consideration we may be required to give to the development of an access onto the Hillbury Road, should this site be forthcoming.

9. **Hamer Warren hazardous waste landfill**

- 9.1 A part of the existing Bleak Hill (Hamer Warren) Quarry is identified as a new strategic waste management site, a hazardous waste landfill taking soils contaminated by asbestos, with a capacity of approximately 0.4 million tonnes.
- 9.2 The proposed allocation is in close proximity to Dorset, but screened by the existing tree cover of Whitefield Bottom. Pollution risks will be addressed by Environment Agency and separate legislation requirements and potential developers of the site would need to acquire the necessary permissions and permits in advance of development commencing.
- 9.3 Development as a hazardous waste landfill would be part of the restoration of the site and is therefore not a new development. Lorries bringing waste

material to be landfilled would contribute to cumulative traffic travelling to and from the A31, as previously mentioned.

- 9.4 It is recommended that Dorset Council do not object to the development of a hazardous waste landfill at Bleak Hill/Hamer Warren subject to compliance by the developer with all required safety measures. The need to address potential cumulative traffic issues is again noted.

10. **Financial Implications**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications.

11. **Environmental Implications**

- 11.1 Provision of minerals and management of waste are integral aspects of life, but these operations can lead to environmental impacts. Dorset Council has no direct control over proposals within Hampshire, but notes and supports Hampshire County Council's commitment to mitigating such impacts, particularly the effects of climate change, through the proposed policies of the Draft Plan and especially *Policy 2: Climate Change – mitigation and adaptation*, along with supporting text.

- 11.2 This report flags up cases (e.g. with the potential impacts of the proposed Purple Haze allocation or with traffic using the B3081 to access the A31) where development in Hampshire could have an impact on Dorset's environment. In these cases we will want to be assured that impacts can and will be appropriately mitigated, and will continue to object to the detail of such proposals until our concerns are appropriately addressed

12. **Well-being and Health Implications**

- 12.1 There are potential well-being and health implications for Dorset residents associated with living in the vicinity of a quarry or waste management site. Again Dorset Council has no direct control over proposed development within Hampshire but will seek to ensure that impacts resulting from such development can and will be appropriately mitigated.

13. **Other Implications**

- 13.1 None specific.

14. **Risk Assessment**

14.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

15. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

15.1 No specific equalities issues have been identified in preparing this response to the consultation.

16. **Appendices**

16.1 None.

17. **Background Papers**

17.1 *Hampshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan: Partial Update – Draft Plan* Regulation 18 Consultation and other supporting documents (available at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/strategic-planning/hampshire-minerals-waste-plan/minerals-waste-plan-partial-update-consultation>)