

Cabinet

12 March 2024

Dorset Council response to Hampshire County Council Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update – Proposed Submission Plan

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr D Walsh, Planning

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

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

This report comes to Cabinet with information about the consultation on the *Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update – Proposed Submission Plan*. It provides information about the proposals in this 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. Seeking to influence this neighbouring Draft Plan helps to meet Dorset Council's priority of protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology.

Recommendation:

That a response agreed and endorsed by Cabinet be sent to the Hampshire Authorities regarding the *Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update – Proposed Submission Plan*, objecting to the proposed re-allocation of the Purple Haze site, and including other 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 Authorities on the proposed update to their Minerals and

Waste Plan 2013. Dorset Council needs to ensure that the proposals in the Proposed Submission Plan do not prejudice our interests. Submitting a response provides an opportunity to express to the Hampshire Authorities our objection to one proposal along with our support or concerns regarding others. Cabinet's endorsement of the response will give it additional weight when returned to the Hampshire Authorities. It is recommended that the response to the Hampshire Authorities includes various previous response documents as appendices to ensure that when the Draft Plan undergoes Examination the Inspector will be able to take them into consideration.

1. Preparation of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan

- 1.1 The Hampshire Authorities comprise Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils and the New Forest National Park and the South Downs National Park Authorities. They have jointly prepared the *Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan: Partial Update – Proposed Submission Plan* (the Draft Plan), which is out to consultation until 5th March 2024. The current consultation is the final opportunity to make comments before the Draft Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State to undergo Examination.
- 1.2 Given the deadline for return of comments, Dorset Council will return a response prior to the end of the consultation in accordance with the recommendations below. Should Cabinet accept these recommendations, the Hampshire Authorities will be notified that the response has been ratified.

2. The Draft Plan

- 2.1 The Draft Plan proposes the allocation of a range of minerals and waste sites, 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 avoided or appropriately mitigated.
- 2.2 Minerals produced in Hampshire include sand and gravel, brick clay, chalk and oil and gas. Most relevant to Dorset's interests 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.
- 2.3 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. The Draft Plan does not propose any changes to these arrangements.

3. Maintaining Aggregate Supply

- 3.1 Policy 17 of the Draft Plan states that a steady and adequate supply of aggregates will be provided for Hampshire and surrounding areas from local sand and gravel sites at a rate of 0.90 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) until 2040. The figure of 0.90 mtpa for locally extracted sand and gravel is below the annual supply figure of 1.56 mtpa as set out in the current 2013 Plan and also below the figure of 1.15 mtpa proposed in the 2022 Draft Plan. Aggregate sales have been steadily declining and the proposed figure of 0.90 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 reflect demand more accurately for sand and gravel.
- 3.2 To ensure that this level of provision remains adequate throughout the life of the Plan, there is a commitment that if sand and gravel sales exceed 0.90 mtpa by more than 10% for a period of 3 consecutive years then the provision rate will switch to a more relevant supply rate derived from the annual Local Aggregates Assessment that every Mineral Planning Authority is required to produce. This will more accurately reflect current demand for aggregate until the Plan can be revised.
- 3.3 Dorset Council support Hampshire's aim to plan for a realistic and evidence based supply of sand and gravel. It is recommended that Dorset Council's response states no objection to the proposed approach to maintaining a supply of aggregate with the proviso that the Purple Haze site is removed from the plan for the reasons outlined in this report that would otherwise make the plan unsound.

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
 - The development of new sites, proposed as site allocations within the Proposed Submission Plan, and
 - Development of new and as yet unidentified sites, providing certain criteria are met.
- 4.2 While the Draft Plan identifies a need for approximately 17.1 million tonnes of sand and gravel to meet expected demand during the life of the Plan (until 2040), it proposes an overall supply figure of 24.54 million tonnes. Of this, 11.2 million tonnes is expected to come from new allocated sites. Dorset Council notes that the proposed level of supply will exceed the identified need. The excess acts as a contingency should any of the sites not be developed or yield less than expected. It is recommended that Dorset Council make no objection

at this stage to the proposed approach of building in a contingency figure in allocating new sites.

5. Proposed site allocations close to Dorset

- 5.1 The Draft Plan proposes four new allocations for sand and gravel extraction, two of which are in close proximity to the Dorset border. These are Midgham Farm near Alderholt (site A on Figure 1 below) and Purple Haze, near Verwood (site B on Figure 1). The previous version of the Plan had proposed a hazardous waste landfill site as part of the restoration of the current Hamer Warren quarry, south-west of Alderholt. This has been rejected and is no longer under consideration. Similarly, the sand and gravel site known as Cobley Wood proposed under the previous version of the Plan is no longer under consideration.

Figure 1 – Proposed Allocations Adjacent to Dorset



6. Purple Haze

6.1 This is an existing allocation in Hampshire's current Minerals and Waste Plan for sand and gravel quarrying. It is proposed for re-allocation and Hampshire County Council are also currently determining an application for mineral working on the site. The plan considers site to be 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). Although restoration by non-hazardous household waste is not proposed through the current application the Draft Plan states that if the site is not used for non-hazardous landfill, inert fill will be used in restoration.

6.2 There have been a number of consultations relating to the allocation and development of the Purple Haze site since it was first allocated in the 2013 Hampshire County Council Minerals and Waste Plan, and the current planning application was submitted to Hampshire County Council in 2021. It is a very sensitive site and responses to the various consultations have identified that its development as a quarry will:

- Adversely affect the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site and the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA).
- Damage or destroy the interest features for which the Ebblake Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) has been notified.
- Disrupt and displace recreational usage of the site leading to damage to other designated sites in the area.
- Contribute to cumulative traffic impacts, particularly in conjunction with the existing Hamer Warren quarry to the north, and if permission is granted for the Midgham Farm site adjacent to Alderholt and/or the proposed extension of Alderholt - all of which will rely on Harbridge Drove for access, leading to the B3081 in Dorset and on to the A31 (shown as dashed purple line on Figure 1).
- Result in amenity impacts for local residents and recreational users of the site.

6.3 It is understood that the sand extracted from the Purple Haze site will be washed on site before being exported, in order to remove any silt. This is a normal process, and the silt removed may be used in restoring the site. The issue of concern is how the silty water is processed to remove the silt before it is either re-used for more washing or leaves the site. The Environment Agency will require that any water leaving the site is of an acceptable quality, but concerns remain that the Ebblake Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) could be contaminated should the water leaving the site be even temporarily exceed the set appropriate levels of silt. Dorset Council consider that the quality of the water leaving the site cannot be guaranteed to be of a consistently high enough quality to ensure that there would be no impacts on the Ebblake Bog therefore the site should not be re-allocated or developed.

- 6.4 The proposed Purple Haze allocation incorporates part of the Moors Valley Country Park (MVCP), which receives nearly a million visitors a year, many of whom cycle or walk on routes that include land on or around the proposed Purple Haze site. Development of Purple Haze as a quarry will impact on the Park in various ways, including:
- Waymarked routes needing to be rerouted, alongside some sections of cycling single track, which will result in potentially significant financial costs, change the way people use that area of the site and cause recreational displacement.
 - Loss of parking income, and cycle hire income
 - Negative impact of the proposed quarry affecting the Park's good reputation should it be assumed that MVCP supported the proposal
 - Impact on of the MVCP visitor service having to deal with customer enquiries, complaints and negativity
 - The loss of an area of the park that people walk and cycle on and has been utilised for events in the past.
 - Significant concerns about air quality impact caused by silica dust, which is harmful when inhaled by wildlife and human beings.
 - A potential impact on trade e.g. reduction in bike hire due to less trails to cycle on.
 - Lack of access to/from informal car parks along B3081 (especially for local dog walkers).
 - Safety concerns should water bodies be included as part of restoration.
- 6.5 Although there would be no direct impacts on statutory Rights of Way in other parts of Dorset, apart from increased footfall, the concern is that should the site be developed then land previously used for access would no longer be available, forcing users to other areas possibly less safe or convenient. As noted above displacement of recreational use/users onto land designated for nature conservation protection could cause damage to such land, affecting the reason(s) the land was designated. Should the site ultimately be approved for development Dorset Council would seek some benefits from the developers to offset these costs and impacts.
- 6.6 Should the site be developed the approval and monitored implementation of a Dust Management Plan would be essential, to ensure that potential amenity and health impacts from dust generated on and escaping the site are kept to a safe and acceptable level. Dorset Council consider this issue is of key importance give the proximity to MVCP and the number of users of the area.
- 6.7 Dorset Council acknowledges that the site is allocated in Hampshire's 2013 Minerals and Waste Plan, thereby establishing the principle of its development. Our initial responses did not object to the principle of the development, but as specific development proposals have emerged the difficulties faced in developing this site in a sustainable manner have become clearer, leading Dorset Council to question its suitability for re-allocation and/or

development, given the significant risks posed to protected habitats (together with potential traffic and amenity impacts). If adverse effects cannot be ruled out, our view is that the site should be removed from the plan and the current planning application refused.

- 6.8 It is recommended that on the information currently available and being mindful of comments from other consultees such as our Natural Environment Team and Natural England, Dorset Council return the comment that it is unable to support the retention of this site as an allocation in the Draft Plan Update. However, this stance could be revised if further information was made available that clearly demonstrated that the impacts identified could be appropriately eliminated of any harm [mitigation alone is not considered enough to prevent permanent damage]. In the absence of such reassurances, Dorset Council maintains its objection to the retention, development or reallocation of all or any part of the site known as Purple Haze as this would make the whole plan unsound.

7. **Midgham Farm**

- 7.1 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 3.0 million tonnes being produced during the Plan period. It is understood that CEMEX will in the near future be submitting an application for the development of Midgham Farm as a sand and gravel quarry.
- 7.2 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, crossing land that lies within Dorset. Dorset Council welcomes the requirement that *“A buffer is required in the north-west corner and western edge of the site to protect the amenity of Alderholt Village and any urban expansion”*. 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.
- 7.3 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. Development of Midgham Farm as a quarry could lead to cumulative traffic loading impacts on Hilbury Road and on down Harbridge Drove. Dorset Council would want an absolute reassurance 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 Midgham Farm. There is further potential for cumulative traffic impacts should the proposed extension of Alderholt or the Purple Haze application as referred to in paragraph 6.2 be permitted.

- 7.4 It is recommended that Dorset Council objects to this proposed allocation, subject to assurances from the Hampshire Authorities that should Midgham Farm be allocated, its development will:
- i. ensure adequate protection for the amenity of 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.

7.5 As noted, the Hillbury Road and proposed site access lie 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.

8. **Financial Implications**

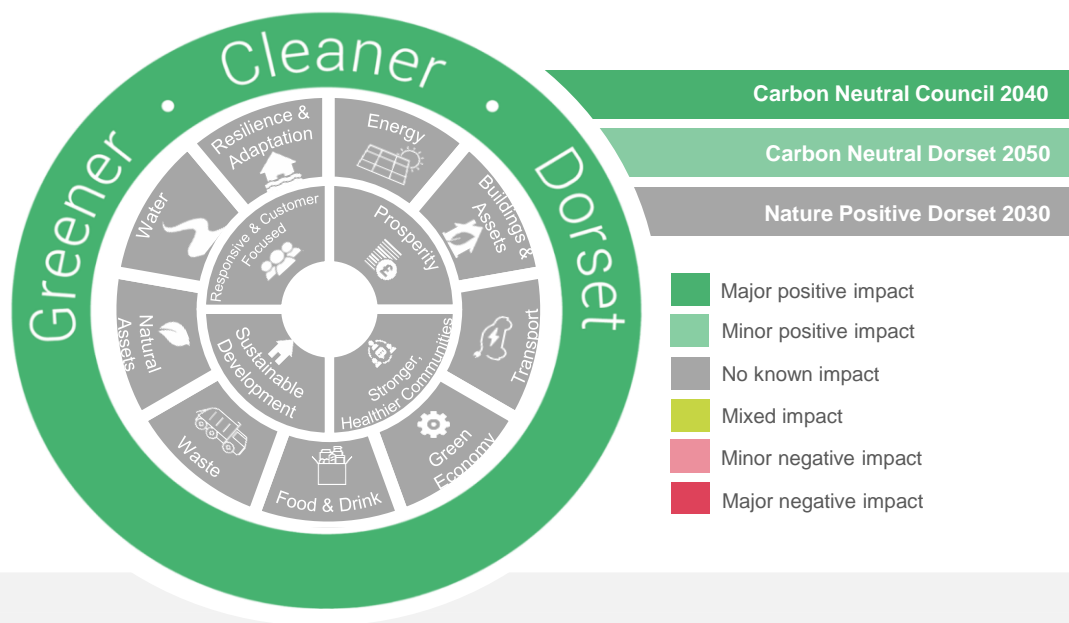
8.1 There are no financial implications.

9. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

9.1 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 mitigation or elimination of 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.

9.2 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.

9.3 The Natural Environment, Climate & Ecological Decision Wheel has been completed. It shows no impacts as the report only relates to a response to a consultation to a neighbouring authority's plan, which currently has no status.



Quantitative Impact on CEE targets (if known)		
	Unit	Number of units (+/-)
2030 - Natural asset extent & condition	Ha	0
2040 - Operational Emissions	CO ₂ (tonnes)	0

10. Well-being and Health Implications

10.1 There are potential well-being and health implications for Dorset residents associated with living in the vicinity of a quarry. 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.

11. Other Implications

11.1 None specific.

12. Risk Assessment

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

Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

13. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

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

14. **Appendices**

14.1 None.

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 *Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan - Partial Update – Proposed Submission Plan*: Regulation 19 Consultation and other supporting documents (available at [Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan - Partial Update - Regulation 19 Consultation | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#))

15.2 Dorset Council response to the *Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan - Partial Update – Draft Plan*: Regulation 18 Consultation (available at [Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 23rd January, 2023, 10.00 am - Dorset Council](#))

15.3 Dorset Council response to consultation on proposed quarry development at Purple Haze, Verwood (available at [Agenda for Strategic and Technical Planning Committee on Thursday, 27th May, 2021, 11.00 am - Dorset Council](#))

15.4 Natural England response dated 26 May 2023 to consultation on further information in support of application to quarry sand and gravel at Purple Haze, near Verwood (available at [def | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#))

16. **Report Sign Off**

16.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).