

FAO: the Hampshire Planning Authorities,
c/o Minerals and Waste Planning Policy,
EII Court South,
3rd Floor,
The Castle,
Winchester,
Hampshire, SO23 8UH

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is the response of Dorset Council to the *Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan – Partial Update – Regulation 19* consultation. Thank you for allowing us to submit a holding response, which will be confirmed following a meeting of the Dorset Council Cabinet on 12 March 2024. This response was jointly prepared by officers and locally affected Members.

This response is accompanied by two Appendices. These comprise:

- a) Appendix 1: Dorset Council's response to the Purple Haze application consultation dated May 2021, and;
- b) Appendix 2: Natural England's Further Response to the Purple Haze application, dated May 2023.

Dorset Council consider that these documents set out clearly the reasons that Purple Haze is unsuitable for reallocation and/or development.

Dorset Council has the following comments on the current consultation:

Policy 17: Aggregate supply – capacity and source

Dorset Council support Hampshire's aim to plan for a realistic and evidence based supply of sand and gravel and has 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.

Policy 20: Local land-won aggregates and Table 6.3 – Local land-won requirement up to 2040

Dorset Council notes that 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, it proposes an overall supply figure of 24.5 million tonnes. Of this, 11.2 million tonnes is expected to come from new allocated sites. It is noted therefore the proposed level of supply will exceed the identified need, thereby providing a contingency amount should any of the sites not be developed, or yield less than expected. Dorset Council has no objection to the proposed approach of building in a contingency figure in allocating new sites, provided that the sites allocated in the Plan do not include Purple Haze as this would make the whole plan unsound.

Of the four new allocations for sand and gravel extraction proposed for allocation through Policy 20, two are in close proximity to the Dorset border. These are Midgham Farm near Alderholt and Purple Haze, near Verwood. Dorset Council has the following comments about these proposed allocations.

Purple Haze

Ever since this site was first proposed as an allocation in the 2013 Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan, Dorset Council has responded to a number of consultations regarding its development, including the current planning application submitted 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;
- Result in amenity impacts for local residents and recreational users of the site.

It is understood that the sand extracted from the Purple Haze site will be washed on site before being exported, in order to remove silt. Dorset Council have concerns regarding how the silty water will be processed to remove the silt before it leaves the site. Although the Environment Agency will require that any water leaving the site is of an acceptable quality, 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 as 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, the site should not be re-allocated or developed.

The proposed Purple Haze allocation incorporates part of the Moors Valley Country Park (Moors Valley Country Park), which receives nearly a million visitors a year. Many of these 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, including some sections of cycling single track, needing to be rerouted 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 and cycle hire income
- Negative impact of the proposed quarry affecting the Park's good reputation should it be assumed that Moors Valley Country Park supported the proposal
- Impact on of the Moors Valley Country Park 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

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. 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 Purple Haze site be reallocated and ultimately permitted for quarry development, Dorset Council and Moors Valley Country Park would seek to enter into discussion with the developer and Hampshire County Council with a view to negotiating benefits to offset these and any other impacts that may be identified on the Moors Valley Country Park.

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 Moors Valley Country Park and the number of users of the area.

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.

On the information currently available, and being mindful of comments from other consultees such as the Dorset Council Natural Environment Team and Natural England, Dorset Council are unable to support the retention of this site as an allocation in the Draft Plan Update. It is considered that retaining it as an allocation will make the Plan unsound.

This stance could be revised if further information was made available that clearly demonstrated that should the site be developed all harmful effects could be eliminated - 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 in the plan.

Midgham Farm

The north-western part of this proposed allocation lies adjacent to Alderholt, with potential for impacts (e.g. visual, noise, dust) on the amenity of residents. Dorset Council welcomes the requirement set out in the Draft Plan Update 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.

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. In order to avoid cumulative traffic impacts Dorset Council would want an absolute reassurance that, should Midgham Farm be allocated, the existing Hamer Warren quarry will be completed before Midgham Farm is developed and there would be no simultaneous working of Hamer Warren and Midgham Farm. It is noted that there is also potential for cumulative traffic impacts on the access to the B3081 and the A35 should the proposed extension of Alderholt and/or the development of Purple Haze be permitted.

On the information currently available, Dorset Council objects to this proposed allocation. This objection could be withdrawn should the Hampshire Authorities provide assurances that the proposed development of this site will:

- ensure adequate protection for the amenity of residents of Alderholt;
- ensure no simultaneous working with the Bleak Hill Quarry extension and;
- address the issue of potential cumulative traffic impacts in accessing the A31.

Access to the site is likely to be from the Hillbury Road, crossing land that lies 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.

Dorset Council

4 March 2024