

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: COUNCIL RESPONSE TO INSPECTOR'S MATTERS AND ISSUES

MATTER 2 – Does the Plan make appropriate provision for the steady and adequate supply of aggregates?

Issue 1

Is Policy 1 positively prepared to secure the Council's commitment to have a suitable landbank for both sand & gravel and crushed rock at the end of the plan period?

Policy 1 was found sound in 2014 and is not being proposed to change. There is no need to amend it to reference the Council's commitment to have a suitable landbank for both sand & gravel and crushed rock at the end of the plan period. The policy identifies the landbank targets that are compliant with national policy and seeks to maintain these. This is a positive yet practical and realistic approach as it enables sites to come forward that would extend the landbank beyond the plan period (as expanded on in paragraph 4.11) and recognises that although the County Council has an important role to play in minerals planning it cannot force industry to bring sites forward.

Issue 2

The LAA (2015) indicates that permitted reserves for sand and gravel stand at 3.57 Mt, but the Plan sets out that there are 3.94 Mts of existing reserves. What is the reason for this difference?

The 2015 edition of the LAA covers aggregate sales and reserves data for Northamptonshire for the 2014 period. The baseline position for estimated committed reserves is 3.94 Mt as at 01 January 2016 (paragraph 4.17). The difference of +0.37Mt (between the LAA and Plan) is attributed to grant of permission at Passenham Quarry South Extension and updated reserve data received from other permitted sites.

Issue 3

Could Site Allocation M6: Passenham Extension East within in Policy 4 be delivered without causing unacceptable adverse harm to the Historic Environment, the Natural Environment or Flood Risk? How would the site's omission affect the overall minerals strategy?

The site assessment identifies potential adverse impacts associated with M6 Passenham Extension East on the historic environment, natural environment and flood risk along with possible (standard) mitigation measures that are likely to avoid and/or reduce potentially adverse impacts to acceptable levels, refer Exam Doc Ref 401, 402, 403, 621.

The County Council's experience with sites that have similar issues has shown that with the implementation of appropriate working schemes, working practices and mitigation measures a development is able to either avoid adverse impacts or reduce them to acceptable levels in accordance with planning policy and guidance. Any planning application coming forward for the site would be required to undertake site-specific investigations and assessments which identify appropriate avoidance and/or mitigation measures, demonstrating that implementation would adequately address such issues prior to planning permission being granted.

None of the sites are considered to be "strategic" in the sense that the Plan could not be delivered if the site did not come forward. In addition the plan is flexible in its approach as it includes proposed allocations and development criteria for unallocated sites to come forward through the planning application process. As such

the consequences for the soundness of the Plan were M6 to be omitted are negligible. Nevertheless exclusion of this site from the plan would strongly imply that this site should not be developed and would thus sterilise a mineral resource that requires extraction whilst there is a nearby operational processing plant available.

Issue 4

Should Site Allocation M8: Wakerley, which benefits from planning permission, be included in Policy 5? If so, should the Policy or its supporting text make clear that its capacity has already been counted in the commitments as set out in Paragraph 4.25, to avoid confusion?

The reasoning for including M8 Wakerley in Policy 5 even though it has planning permission, along with the sites anticipated yield during the plan and extended landbank period (i.e. 2031 plus 10 year landbank = 2041), is set out in paragraph 4.46. The site is identified as a commitment in the submission plan paragraph 4.20, with an explanation of how much of the sites potential yield has been captured in calculating the estimated committed reserves in paragraph 4.25. Since this time Council has been in discussion with the operators who have indicated a more immediate intent to commence working the site (2017). As such the Council now considers that the site could be removed from the plan as an allocation and has prepared modifications to the plan to reflect this (refer Exam Doc Ref 620).

Issue 5

Is the Plan effective in terms of being able to control any potential highway safety impacts at Site Allocation M10 Harlestone Quarry Extension?

Within its remit, the Plan is effective in terms of being able to control potential highway safety impacts at M10 Harlestone Quarry Extension. The site assessment identifies potential adverse impacts associated with M10 on the highway and access along with possible (standard) mitigation measures that are likely to avoid and/or reduce potentially adverse impacts to acceptable levels, refer Exam Doc Ref 402. It should be noted that the site is adjacent to an operational quarry so vehicle movements are likely to be maintained rather than increased. In addition, access would be via existing access route and routing agreements would be used.

Policy 18 and 19 provide for identification and the nature and extent of adverse impacts, including those associated with transport, and appropriate avoidance and/or mitigation measures. Further (site-specific) detail and control measures would need to be identified and subject to assessment through the planning application process.