

RESPONSE TO THE HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN: PARTIAL UPDATE – REGULATION 18 DRAFT PLAN CONSULTATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to agree the Council's response to Hampshire County Council's Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update, closing on 31 January 2023¹.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Hampshire County Council (HCC) is working to produce a partial update to the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (HMWP) which will guide minerals and waste decision making in the Plan Area up until 2040. The HMWP forms part of the Development Plan for New Forest District. This is a Regulation 18 consultation on an initial draft, and there will be further opportunity for NFDC to respond to a Regulation 19 consultation later in 2023.
- 2.2 The partial update to the Plan will build on the currently adopted Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013), eventually providing new and updated policies based on up-to-date evidence of the current levels of provision for minerals and waste facilities in the Plan Area.
- 2.3 In July 2021 New Forest District Council (NFDC) responded to a previous consultation by HCC on the preparatory stages of plan making, when HCC consulted on the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report and SA Baseline Report. NFDC provided comments on the evidence base, and on the balance required between meeting identified housing need in a timely manner on the one hand and the objective for prior extraction (where viable) on the other.

3. POLICY CHANGES AND PROPOSED NFDC RESPONSE

- 3.1 It is acknowledged that resources can only be won where they exist, and the geography/geology of New Forest District means that the Plan Area is likely to have a role in meeting wider sub-regional needs.

Development Management Policies

- 3.2 Monitoring data presented in the 2020 Review suggested that most of the development management policies were performing well. However, reviewing national policy compliance highlighted that policies would benefit from a refresh and in some cases, their delivery. This has resulted in the following changes:
- Assessing past operator performance when determining planning applications for Minerals & Waste extensions;
 - All applications to be accompanied by a Climate Change Assessment;
 - Reference to impending regulations such as that requiring Biodiversity Net Gain;
 - Public Rights of Way and Local Character Assessments now referenced;
 - Changes to reflect government policy regarding Green Belt purposes;
 - Air quality now specifically mentioned in criteria, to reflect NPPF changes;
 - Criteria relating to sequential approach re flood risk, and climate change modelling;

¹ Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan - Partial Update | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)

- Actively supporting local planning authorities in their targets for climate change.

Proposed Response:

- 3.3 **New Forest District Council (NFDC) concur with the need for partial updates to reflect changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Policy for Waste and in response to the previous consultation.**
- 3.4 **This Council is supportive of the need for an up-to-date evidence base in relation to the current levels of provision for minerals and waste facilities and has previously provided factual comments on the Sustainability Appraisal which sits alongside the draft plan.**
- 3.5 **NFDC is particularly supportive of more detailed reference to Biodiversity Net Gain and the citing of air quality issues. The requirement for all applications to be accompanied by a Climate Change Assessment is especially welcomed following the NFDC declaration of a Climate Change and Nature Emergency in October 2021.**

Mineral Policies

A number of policies relating to minerals are proposed for updating:-

- 3.6 Hampshire's mineral resources are safeguarded against needless sterilisation by non-minerals development, unless 'prior extraction' takes place. Safeguarded mineral resources are defined by a Mineral Safeguarding Area illustrated on the Policies Map (Policy 15). The proposed updated policies (especially Policy 16) and supporting text continue to support appropriate safeguarding of minerals resources and infrastructure to provide for Hampshire's needs, but now make reference to the HCC 2016 Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Supplementary Planning Document.
- 3.7 The overall levels of supply rates has been updated (Policy 17) to reflect current data and forecasts for demand in Hampshire (which take account of past sales and demand prior to the COVID-19 pandemic). This has been informed by Local Aggregate Assessments (LAA) which are produced annually.
- 3.8 Increasing the recycled and secondary aggregate capacity figure should help to secure the existing level of capacity and encourage the use of alternatives to land-won, where possible (Policy 18).
- 3.9 Additional rail depots have been nominated and are proposed in the HWMP (Policy 19) - including the Totton rail sidings (further details below). The increased use of wharves and rail depots has potential benefits of reducing the number of HGVs on the strategic road network, which reduces impacts on local communities and climate change through a reduction in vehicle emissions. However, there needs to be careful scrutiny of site specific impacts, particularly where sites are located in urban locations and with the potential for localised impact, including congestion and impact on air quality.
- 3.10 The HWMP provides detailed policies for each type of land-won mineral resource and under what circumstances they can be extracted. These policies (20-24) are updated to reflect the current position in relation to the supply levels for each type.

Proposed Response:

- 3.11 **This Council is pleased to see reference in the supporting text to Policies 15 and 16 relating to the 2016 Safeguarding Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Given that the Government is proposing that current SPDs will automatically cease to have effect at the point at which authorities are required to have a new-style plan in place, HCC should consider providing criteria on securing prior**

extraction of minerals (before the development of the site for other uses) in this HWMP update. There may be other elements of the SPD that would benefit from being inserted in this HMWP update. This would enable the HMWP to continue to inform Local Plan making.

- 3.12 **NFDC questions the basis for the aggregate requirement set out in the partial review. Paragraph 2.33 of the Minerals background paper (August 2022) sets out a shortfall of 2.17Mt (million tonnes) of aggregate. However, the plan goes on to propose a number of sites that in total are projected to provide nearly 12Mt of sharp sand and gravel. This appears to be significantly above the projected shortfall, and NFDC believes that this represents an excessive allocation of sites. Site specific comments on land within the New Forest District Plan Area are set out below.**
- 3.13 **In addition, the economic forecasts set out in the evidence base (whilst they broadly sound and take into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic) are based on 2020 reports and the Local Aggregate Assessments (LAA), which both predicted growth in construction output in 2021 and 2022 and beyond. However inflation and other factors have had an effect since 2020, and the quantum of demand for aggregates for 2023 and beyond is therefore questioned.**

Waste policies

- 3.14 Waste policies (25-33) are updated to reflect the latest levels of waste arising and to ensure forecasts for future capacity are maintained. In relation to energy recovery the Plan also encourages energy recovery plants to ensure that combined heat and power is provided as a minimum (Policy 28b) but does not provide location considerations as part of the policy criteria. Other policies are amended to refer to the need to comply with the Environment Act. The number of landfill sites in Hampshire have steadily decreased and most of the allocated sites in the adopted 2013 Plan have not been taken up as the County Council moves away from using such sites as part of its Waste Strategy. Hampshire diverts 95% of household waste from landfill, but the Plan still sets out how new landfill can come forward (Policy 32), in order for Hampshire to deal with its own waste.

Proposed Response:

- 3.15 **With regard to updated waste policies (Policies 25-33) this Council makes a general comment that the HWMP appears to reflect the latest levels of waste arising and plans positively to ensure forecasts for future waste capacity are maintained.**
- 3.16 **NFDC supports the stronger policy approach in relation to energy recovery and the requirement that energy recovery proposals provide combined heat and power as a minimum (Policy 28). NFDC would also advocate strong controls on the location of anaerobic digesters in relation to water courses, especially where slurry is stored. There is a nutrient pollution risk; for example entire catchments have been wiped out by spills in Wales taking years to recover.**
- 3.17 **Delivering the policies set out in the updated HMWP will compliment and add value to the delivery of New Forest District Councils new waste strategy which was adopted in the summer of 2022.**

Other policies

3.18 Other sections deal with protecting local residents from any adverse impacts from mineral and waste development, economic impacts, and safeguarding infrastructure. It deletes Policy 14 (Community benefits).

Proposed Response:

3.19 **It is regrettable that the Partial Review deletes the previous Policy 14 (Community benefits). This took a positive approach to the potential implementation of mitigation measures which can bring benefits to the local community. NFDC notes that the Partial Review sees mineral and waste operations (sites) as temporary, but the Plan should retain the policy framework to negotiate positive outcomes where they present themselves.**

SITE ALLOCATIONS WITHIN NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Existing and safeguarded site allocations

3.20 The Plan, as proposed to be updated, continues to safeguard sites that have already been allocated in the existing M&W Plan as follows:

- Existing wharf and rail aggregate capacity at Marchwood wharf (Policy 19);
- Existing Marchwood energy recovery facility (Policies 26 + 28);
- Existing sites that process aggregates, concrete batching, recycling, and waste from liquids or water (Appendix B of the Plan)
- Extraction of remaining sand & gravel reserves at permitted sites (Policy 20) – for NFDC these are Downton Manor Farm Quarry (Milford on Sea), Manor Farm (Lymington), Forest Lodge Home Farm (Hythe), and Blashford Quarry (Ringwood);
- Potential minerals and waste wharves/rail depot sites such as at Marchwood Port (Solent Gateway) and land to the north west of Hythe - known as Dibden Bay - identified in the Port of Southampton Master Plan (which forms part of the area shown in the New Forest District Local Plan Policy ECON4)².

New proposed rail depot allocation

Totton Sidings (Totton Station) – Policy 19

3.21 HCC consider the site to be primarily suitable for use as an aggregate rail depot following discussions with Network Rail who currently occupy the site. The rationale is that the sidings provide a more sustainable transport option for importing aggregate into the north of Hampshire. Such infrastructure enables minerals that would otherwise be transported using Hampshire's roads to be delivered more efficiently. The proposal is multifunctional and it is proposed that the site will operate as a rail depot for aggregate but also other forms of freight.

3.22 It is possible that HGV movements will be required to facilitate the sites use as an aggregate's depot. HCC asserts that the site already generates a significant number of staff and HGV movements. It is expected that this would be replaced by similar traffic levels once the existing site operations relocate to Eastleigh and the site is developed as an aggregate depot in future.

Proposed Response:

3.23 **It appears that HGV movements will be required to facilitate the use of the site as an aggregate depot - however there has been no assessment of traffic**

² [Local_Plan_2016-2036_Part_One_FINAL.pdf \(newforest.gov.uk\)](#)

generation from existing uses or future scenarios. In the absence of this information the District Council wish to note that this use could have significant impact on the highway network, nearby by residential properties and on air quality and the general character of this part of the town centre.

- 3.24 **In the absence of such information, there are concerns that the proposal could generate significant vehicle movements with associated impacts on this part of the town centre and the residents and businesses that occupy this area.**

New Proposed Mineral and Waste Sites

- 3.25 The mineral and waste sites proposed to be allocated are summarised in Policy 20 with further site-specific details provided in 'Appendix A' of the HWMP with proposed rail aggregate depots identified through Policy 19 and accompanying inset maps.
- 3.26 Each proposed minerals and waste allocation includes a number of Development management considerations for each site: e.g. traffic impacts and environmental impacts including the replacement and enhancement scheme for hedgerows and species rich wildlife meadows & ponds / screening for any nearby properties. At this stage it is too early to specify exactly how the development considerations may be addressed, this will all be assessed through specific planning applications.

Yeaton Farm, Hordle (likely delivery 2039) – Policy 20

- 3.27 This site that is currently agricultural land is proposed for extraction of sharp sand and gravel and can be viewed as an extension to the existing extraction site on land at Downton. Following any extraction there would be restoration to a mixture of lakes, wetland, woodland and agriculture. The development has the potential to adversely impact nearby residential dwellings on the southern edge of Hordle. The effects of noise, dust and vibration, for example, will need to be considered and addressed. There is an allocated housing site (Policy SS8 – Land at Hordle Lane)³ for at least 160 homes immediately to the north of the proposed Yeaton Farm.
- 3.28 In terms of biodiversity the site is close to priority woodland and woodland designated as SINC. The main issue within the site are the hedgerows which are important in respect of connectivity in the wider landscape, including important areas of woodland. It is likely that these will be lost as a result of the development.
- 3.29 In terms of landscape, mineral extraction in the west of the character area would risk the loss of the historic field pattern and its hedgerows and trees and maybe visually intrusive for near-by properties and users of public rights of way. The proposal would have a significant adverse effect on the landscape, defined by its small fields and tranquil nature, particularly at the northern end of the site.

Proposed Response:

- 3.30 **NFDC objects to the allocation of this site. There are a number of potential adverse impacts including loss of hedgerows, significant landscape impacts, and potential to encroach on the character of the adjoining settlement. In addition, the draft plan does not specify an access point; a number of the local lanes are very narrow.**
- 3.31 **NFDC draws to the attention of HCC that there is an allocated housing site (Policy SS8 – Land at Hordle Lane) for up to 160 homes immediately to the north of the proposed Yeaton Farm site. Proximity to present and future residential**

³ https://www.newforest.gov.uk/media/705/Local-Plan-Document-2016-2036/pdf/Local_Plan_2016-2036_Part_One_FINAL.pdf?m=637329191351130000

properties raises significant in-combination issues. Given the excess of proposed mineral allocations relative to forecasted shortfall, NFDC question what purpose is served by allocating an environmentally challenged site that is not expected to deliver until the very end of the M&W Plan period.

Ashley Manor Farm, New Milton (likely delivery 2024/25) – Policy 20

- 3.32 Land at Ashley Manor Farm (currently open agricultural land) is proposed for excavation of sharp sand and gravel. After excavation there would be restoration to agriculture with species rich meadow, ditches/ponds and extra hedgerows, utilising approximately 1.5 million tonnes of inert material. In terms of development considerations, 8 are listed e.g. replacement and enhancement scheme for hedgerows and species rich wildlife meadows & ponds.
- 3.33 Regarding biodiversity the site is relatively constraint free, though hydrological linkage to watercourses will need to be managed, as well as dust/emissions to the woodland and water courses to the south-east. It is proposed that significant hedgerow should be retained and enhanced.
- 3.34 It is estimated that there will be 50 HGVs per day making use of the A337. HCC asserts that there are no sensitive land uses close to the site, and sensitivity of the potential access route is judged to be low.
- 3.35 The condition of the landscape is good, and typical of the character area with a flat open landscape and linear woodlands encroaching on the boundaries. This open area of landscape forms an important part of the green belt keeping the rural landscape intact between the heavily populated communities along Hampshire's south coast. Crooked Lane running through the site forms an important landscape feature with double hedgerows along part of the route. In addition the site is earmarked for land that is part of the proposed New Milton Green Loop (as adopted in its Neighbourhood Plan)⁴.
- 3.36 The site has been subject to a mineral planning inquiry in the past and the appeal was dismissed.

Proposed Response:

- 3.37 **NFDC has concerns about this site. The most substantial issue is landscape impact. In addition HCC must ensure that any potential noise from gravel extraction works adjacent to Milford Road Cemetery would not disturb the peace and tranquillity of the cemetery.**
- 3.38 **There is also a significant question regarding the proposed Green Loop as adopted in the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan. It is not clear whether an alternative green loop route has been offered by the site developer.**
- 3.39 **It is noted that biodiversity is low at the site, but the development is likely to have an adverse impact on nearby residents and NFDC consider that the proximity is such that there are likely to be impact of noise and dust on these residents.**

Cobley Wood, Harbridge (likely delivery 2036) – Policy 20

- 3.40 This currently open agricultural land is proposed for the extraction of sharp sand and gravel. The site can be viewed as an extension to the existing extraction site on adjoining land to the west. Following this there would be restoration to agricultural grazing land with increased nature conservation and biodiversity. Woodland and

⁴ https://newforest.gov.uk/media/2301/New-Milton-Neighbourhood-Plan-Made-Version/pdf/New_Milton_Neighbourhood_Plan_Made_Version_July_2021.pdf?m=637613388906700000

permissive access could also be included.

- 3.41 An initial traffic assessment estimates an additional 110 HGV movements a day representing a 2.3% increase in the proportion of HGV vehicles using the site. This is considered by officers to be a negligible impact. Existing HGV routes would be utilised and these are judged by HCC to be routes of low sensitivity.
- 3.42 In relation to biodiversity the main feature of interest of the site is the woodland to the south. Given the proximity of this to the Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) the Plan notes that this should be retained and an adequate buffer provided. Assessment of the site to determine ecological connectivity either through hydrology or the behaviour of birds that rely on Special Protected Areas (SPA) for their habitat will need to be established.
- 3.43 With regard to landscape impacts, the site is currently laid to pasture and although open without any field boundaries other than around the site boundaries, it is an attractive and relatively tranquil area.

Proposed Response:

- 3.44 **Holding objection - this is a remote location but there are potentially significant cumulative impacts from other proposed mineral and waste sites in the area (Hamer Warren and Midgham Farm). In addition there is an emerging residential site on the Dorset side of the boundary which, if brought forward, could result in substantial in combination effects relating to HGV and traffic movement. Impacts on biodiversity are identified in adjacent areas which could be mitigated, and detailed assessment for SPA impacts would be required.**

Hamer Warren Quarry, Harbridge (likely delivery 2024/25) – Policy 29

- 3.45 As an active sand and gravel quarry the proposal is to utilise the existing land for hazardous waste landfill (indicated by HCC to likely be asbestos). Restoration would consist of the delivery of existing restoration scheme approved under the current planning permission.
- 3.46 HCC state that approximately 40 two-way HGV movements per day would be associated with the waste, with all movements via the existing Hamer Warren Quarry access. The supporting documentation judges that traffic will travel along routes of low sensitivity to traffic flows.

Proposed Response:

- 3.47 **This proposed use is compatible with the site and restoration measures have already been agreed in the current planning permission. However it is assumed that this proposed allocation would have the effect of delaying the restoration of the site. If so, it would be regrettable for residents to experience an extended period of works and the likely impacts from an extended period of traffic movement.**
- 3.48 **This is a remote location but there are potentially significant cumulative impacts from other proposed mineral and waste sites in the area (Cobley Wood and Midgham Farm). In addition, there is an emerging residential site on the Dorset side of the boundary which, if brought forward, could result in substantial in combination effects relating to HGV and traffic movement.**

Midgham Farm, Hillbury Road, Alderholt (likely delivery 2024/25) – Policy 20

- 3.49 Currently open agricultural land, the proposed development would be for the extraction of sharp sand and gravel. The site could be viewed as an extension to the existing extraction site on land to the south, but the extent of the proposed site is much larger.

Restoration would take the form of agricultural land at the existing levels using imported inert materials (including nature conservation and increased permissive access).

- 3.50 HCC states that there would be approximately 110 two-way HGV movements per day, and a new priority junction will be required onto Hillbury Road. Access routes are deemed by HCC to be suitable routes for HGV traffic. The sensitivity of receptors along the preferred route will be negligible given that traffic will travel along routes of low sensitivity to traffic flows, albeit there is some concern about unmanaged cumulative highway impacts in this area as discussed for Hamer Warren and Cobley Wood above.
- 3.51 There is ecological interest due to the proximity of this site to the River Avon floodplain with complex habitats to the east and Ringwood Forest to the west. The site may provide supporting habitat to the SPA if birds are using it for high tide/roosting etc. It is suggested that further studies are undertaken to consider this potential loss of habitat, backed up by adequate data, to inform future decisions about the appropriateness of this proposed allocation. This issue was also flagged in the NFDC Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment⁵. The southern margin needs to be protected and enhanced to maintain a strong connection between these two important areas of ecological interest.
- 3.52 The site landscape is judged to be of medium/good quality by HCC except in the area which is grazed by horses close to Midgham Farm, and NFDC would concur with this view, it is a farmed valley landscape, mainly pastoral, with a traditional field pattern surrounded by hedgerows with trees.

Proposed Response:

- 3.53 **Holding objection – this is a large site with the north-west corner in close proximity to a residential area. Biodiversity impacts could be significant; in particular grassland habitats that are likely to provide supporting habitat to the SPA for off-site foraging for protected bird species. Should the allocation be progressed, a landscape assessment should be undertaken to establish the most appropriate screening and/or long-term mitigation, and it should be ensured that no HGV traffic is routed through Fordingbridge via the B3038 as this road is single lane in the town centre.**
- 3.54 **This is a remote location but there are potentially significant cumulative impacts from other proposed mineral and waste sites in the area (Cobley Wood and Hamer Warren). In addition there is an emerging residential site on the Dorset side of the boundary which, if brought forward, could result in substantial in combination effects relating to HGV and traffic movement.**

Purple Haze Location, Verwood (likely delivery 2024/25+) – Policies 20 & 32

- 3.55 The Purple Haze site is situated across the road from an existing sand and gravel site also called Purple Haze. Therefore the site could be viewed as an extension to the existing extraction site on adjoining land to the north even though it is split by the Verwood Road (the B3081). It is currently a coniferous plantation, but the proposed use is for extraction of soft sand, sharp sand and gravel. Restoration measures would be inert fill to agreed levels. The site would eventually be used for a combination of deciduous woodland planting, heathland, nature conservation areas, enhanced recreational areas and public open space, linked to the Moors Valley Country Park.
- 3.56 It has been estimated that during the extraction operations there would be approximately 45 HGVs per day. Routing of the HGVs to the A31 would be along the B3081, which is deemed by HCC to be a suitable route for HGV traffic. If this is the

⁵ Habitats Regulations Assessment of New Forest District Local Plan Part 1

same route along which the current HGV traffic from the existing minerals site is routed then NFDC would not disagree with that assessment.

- 3.57 In relation to biodiversity, the ecological interest at the site is deemed significant, despite the relatively poor condition of the lowland heathland. The varied microclimates and proximity to much better habitat significantly increases its value. The viability of the site is dependent on the resolution of significant ecological issues which can only be achieved with suitable mitigation and compensation packages.
- 3.58 In terms of landscape the site is predominantly coniferous forest which is well maintained, but the landscape is judged to lack diversity and visual interest. The landscape condition is deemed moderate by HCC.

Proposed Response:

- 3.59 **NFDC has concerns about this site. There is a reasonable buffer from the nearest residential area. Ecological interest at the site is deemed significant, but there is also significant scope for restoration to provide woodland, heathland, nature conservation areas, enhanced recreational areas and links to the Moors Valley Country Park.**
- 3.60 **NFDC would flag up the potential adverse impact on the recreational use and enjoyment of the wider Moors Valley woodlands. A number of potential visitors to New Forest and Dorset sites are attracted to Moors Valley Country Park – this successfully diverts them from sensitive international nature conservation sites in the New Forest and Dorset heathlands. Minerals development in these part of the Moors Valley vicinity could reduce the attractiveness of the Country Park for recreation. This would potentially bring more visitors to both the New Forest designated sites and the Dorset sites. As such, the potential to mitigate this potential harm should be explored further.**
- 3.61 **The presence of Ebblake Bog SSSI adjacent to the site is a potentially significant constraint given the hydrological gradient that has brought about this peat mire⁶. Such habitat is now internationally scarce and the relatively few remaining undamaged mires thus assume special nature conservation importance.**

Concluding comments:

- 3.62 **New Forest District Council is concerned that the potential cumulative supply vastly exceeds the need identified in the Draft Plan. There are also questions relating to the in-combination transport impacts from proposed sites in the Harbridge / Midgham area, together with specific site concerns about impacts on residents in Hordle and New Milton. Notwithstanding these concerns NFDC seeks greater collaboration and dialogue with Hampshire County Council. NFDC would welcome the opportunity to comment further as the Plan develops.**

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are none.

5 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are none.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Potentially significant impacts on nationally and internationally protected species and habitats. Localised landscape impacts would need to be addressed. Impacts on

⁶ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1000568.pdf>

biodiversity will also require mitigation, compensation measures, and restoration (together with the requirement for measures that result in a Biodiversity Net Gain). Further assessment will be required to establish whether all impacts can be adequately mitigated.

7 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are none.

8 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none.

9 RECOMMENDATION

9.1 That NFDC respond to the consultation as set out in the report.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report.

Sign: Cllr Diane Andrews

Date: 20 January 2023

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Background Papers:

[HCC Minerals and Waste Plan – Partial
Update – Draft Plan Document Local
\(Hants.gov.uk\)](#)

Date on which notice given of this Decision – 20 January 2023

Last date for call in – 27 January 2023