

Minerals Site Allocations Plan – Report of Preferred Options Consultation

- 1.1 This report sets out the preferred options identified in the Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals Site Allocations plan alongside a summary of the consultation responses. It also contains initial officer recommendations in relation to the issues raised
- 1.2A complete set of responses to the Minerals Site Allocations Plan is available on request

2. General

- 2.1 Go-East considers that Preferred Option Report has been produced in a comprehensive and systematic fashion. It notes that a sustainability appraisal has been carried out and is pleased to see a commentary on how this has influenced the development of the preferred options throughout the document, including the testing of potential sites and the justification for site selection.
- 2.2 It considers that layout, form, content and use of maps in the document are satisfactory. It does, however, suggest that a useful piece of evidence to underpin the submitted document would be a review of sites not worked for ten years or more to establish the likelihood of production being revived.
- 2.3 It also suggests that the overall need for minerals that is set out in the Site Allocations DPD is a strategic matter which should be addressed in the Core Strategy.
- 2.4 It must also be highlighted that operators and landowners whose sites were within the Issues and Options papers and have not been included within the Preferred Options have objected to their non inclusion.

3. Chapter 4 Aggregate Minerals – Overall Need

Question 1

Do you agree that the identified need is correct? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation Responses

- 3.1 Tarmac, reiterating comments made on the Core Strategy support the use of the aggregate apportionment, the Plan end date of 2021, and the principle of a split landbank.

- 3.2 It questions the appropriateness of the 54:46 split, which it feels is not supported by the Sustainability Appraisal and suggests a 60:40 split, based upon recent trends. This it feels would provide a degree of flexibility into meeting the overall supply requirement.
- 3.3 It notes that no provision is made for the release of additional building sand reserves. They recognise that this is a conclusion which has been drawn from the current level of building sand reserves, but consider it should not be interpreted as an embargo against any future planning permissions being granted for building sand extraction. This should particularly apply to extensions to existing sites, in the spirit of the sequential approach advocated by the Core Strategy. They suggest a policy should therefore be included within either the Core Strategy, or site allocations preferred options to allow such applications to be determined on their merits. They feel this could usefully be included within Section 11: Building Sands”.
- 3.4 A local resident, on the other hand, objects very strongly to the amount of aggregate sands and gravel Bedfordshire and Luton are being asked to provide annually. Additionally they express disappointment that Bedfordshire County Council has not challenged this target which has been imposed on them by a Government agency. They suggest that a lower target of 1.68 million tons would be more reasonable.
- 3.5 The Geographical Association make the point that there needs to be flexibility over the release of sites to ensure that adequate materials are available to meet the requirements of the Milton Keynes – South Midlands growth agenda.
- 3.6 Go-East suggests that the overall need for minerals is a strategic matter which should be addressed in the Core Strategy.

Officers Recommendations

- 3.7 As discussed in the Core Strategy consultation response paper, we used the split 54:46 based on an evidence base of 10 years historical sales records. The 60:40 or 62:38 splits discussed by the mineral operators are based on more recent sales of the past few years rather than the 10 year period. As we are planning for the up to 2021, it was decided that the Councils need to take a long term approach through using the 10 year data. This is because this takes into account more accurately fluctuations in sales over a wider period. Therefore unless further information can be provided to prove otherwise it is recommended that the Councils maintain this approach through to submission stage.
- 3.8 In response to the response in relation to building sands and the request for a policy specifically for such further sites to be allowed on their merits, we disagree that the plan stipulates such an embargo on

building sand sites in the future. We currently have sufficient reserves for building sand over the plan period, and therefore are not required to identify any new sites for building sands. However we acknowledge in some cases to avoid sterilisation of minerals permitting a building sand site may be required and we feel that this instance is suitably covered within the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy in particular the objective “ To conserve mineral resources by protecting them from sterilisation, encouraging their prudent use, and specifying appropriate mechanisms for their release”.

3.9 Agree that the “overall need requirements for minerals” should be contained within the Core Strategy rather than in the Site Allocations Document. To ensure “soundness” of the plan at Examination stage we will need to re-consult on this issue before a submission draft can be prepared.

4. Chapter 5 - Preferred sites for concreting aggregates

4.1 The initial Issues and Options paper included 34 sites for consideration. As a result of a combination of additional proposals, withdrawals, failure of sites on policy grounds and granting of planning permission 24 sites were left for further consideration. These sites were listed in the Preferred Options document, together with their anticipated yield, their status in relation to the Core Strategy sequential test and whether any new plant site is proposed.

4.2 There was no defined question to this Chapter however a number of responses were received and these are summarised below

Summary of Consultation Responses

4.3 In relation to the strategic spatial framework Tarmac, reiterating a point made on the Core Strategy, suggest that the sequential test should include an additional element of “replacement sites”.

4.4 They also feel that there is a need for some flexibility in productive capacity to respond to demand.

4.5 Geographical Association make the point that the sand and gravels sites identified should be regarded as strategic reserves that should be able to be drawn upon if required at a future date.

5. Chapter 6 - Sequential Test Tier 1: Site Extensions

5.1 There are three extension sites on the proposed list:

- Octagon Farm North (MD12)

- Brooklands Farm, Biggleswade (MD 28)
- Ivel Farm, Biggleswade (MD36)

MD12 – Octagon Farm North

Question 2

Do you agree with the identification of site MD12? Please give reasons with your answer.

Question 3

Are there any other operational or restoration considerations that we should take into account?

Summary of Consultation Responses

- 5.2 There is broad approval for this site in recognition of it being an extension to existing workings and its location away from centres of population - the use of this site would cause minimal disruption, and negate the need to transport material over a long distance by HGVs using the public highway to the processing plant.
- 5.3 Concerns are raised about the potential adverse impact on traffic generation, particularly the cumulative impact bearing in mind other planned developments in the area.
- 5.4 The point is made that there are no existing rights of way affected but restoration has potential to improve access (inc bridleway access).
- 5.5 In terms of biodiversity, the site is unlikely to have any adverse impact on SSSIs, but could have a possible impact on legally protected (e.g. Great Crested Newts) which may require further investigation/surveys/mitigation. However, as with access, there is potential for restoration to contribute towards local and/or national BAP targets - for example potential for restoration to contribute towards Bedford River Valley Park and other Green Infrastructure initiatives.
- 5.6 English Heritage point out that the site is within less than 1km of 9 different scheduled ancient monuments, 3 of which are almost immediately around the proposed area. Providing the county archaeologist is satisfied with the impact of these proposals, and full archaeological recording is carried out in accordance with the local authority conditions, they do not object to this site nomination.
- 5.7 One local resident expresses concern that the site identification could conflict with the proposed Park and Ride facility with hotel offices and Health Club on a site between the current A603 and the old A603 which is situated alongside the Great Barford Bypass.

Officers Recommendation

5.8 No new issues have been raised with this site as a result of the preferred options consultation and therefore officers recommend maintaining this site through to the submission draft.

MD28 – Brooklands Farm, Biggleswade

Question 4

Do you agree with the identification of site MD28? Please give reasons with your answer.

Question 5

Are there any other operational or restoration considerations that we should take into account?

Summary of Consultation Responses

5.9 Mid Beds District Council support the allocation of the site on the basis that it is worked as an extension to the existing Broom Operations. Hanson also supports the allocation but considers the restriction on where the material can be processed to be overly restrictive without good reason.

5.10 There is local opposition on the basis of cumulative impact through permitting more reserves affecting the same community and by lengthening the time period of mineral working in the area, with fears that development may delay completion of restoration at existing quarries.

5.11 Local residents and others raise concerns about the potential impact on local amenity, biodiversity, the historic environment, high quality agricultural land, water levels, the flood plain and access and utility supplies (gas/oil/water/electricity) to local residents. Further concerns relate to safety issues and the potential future restoration of the site by both inert landfill and water.

5.12 Natural England point out that the site is within 3km of Sandy Warren SSSI but unlikely to have any adverse impact and that it is within 3.4km of Southill Lake and Woods SSSI, a wetland site notified for wet woodland. Applications would need to demonstrate no adverse impact via changes to hydrological regime.

5.13 It suggests that restoration proposals should consider and be consistent with those at nearby Broom Quarry and consider potential

for biodiversity and/or green infrastructure gains. The latter point is echoed by rights of way interests.

5.14 In terms of archaeology, English Heritage point out that the proposal would surround a grade II farm building and is separated only by the road from a scheduled ancient monument, as well as other archaeological areas. The impacts of mineral extraction on the settings of these sites will need to be fully assessed before this suggested site is determined.

5.15 It suggests that the high water table here will have had considerable impact on the preservation of archaeological material and it is likely that, even if the immediate area of archaeological importance is excluded from these workings, there will be a negative impact on the condition of the archaeological material around the site. This may include impacts on the scheduled castle earthworks to the east, where there could be waterlogged remains, and if this is the case, scheduled monument consent would be needed.

Officers Recommendations

5.16 There have been two main issues raised through the Preferred Options in relation to this site.

5.17 Firstly at the Issues and Options stage we received no objections from the residents at the Brooklands Farm development, who are situated in the middle of the site, even though they were individually sent letters to highlight this proposal. However following the preferred options consultation we have now received many objections and we feel that this significantly affects the sites proposal as a preferred option.

5.18 Secondly we have also included this site on the provision that it is used as an extension to the current operations at Broom (owned by Tarmac), resulting in it being classed in Tier 1 of the Sequential Test of the Core Strategy. We will be talking to the two companies in the New Year to confirm whether this is possible, otherwise this site will constitute a “new site” and fall to Tier 3 of the Sequential Test and would require being reassessed against the core strategy.

5.19 Based on these two issues and the potential outcome of the second issue, the officers recommend reviewing the site to determine whether it should progress to submission draft of the Minerals Site Allocations Plan.

WSD36 – Ivel Farm, Biggleswade

Question 6

Do you agree with the identification of site MD36? Please give reasons with your answer.

Question 7

Are there any other operational or restoration considerations that we should take into account?

Officers Recommendations

5.20 This has been withdrawn by the proposed operator due to owners of the site making the land unavailable and will therefore not be included in the submission draft of the Minerals Site Allocations Documents.

5.21 This will have consequences for the Site Allocations Plan as the potential 150,000 tonnes of mineral from this site, used in the calculations to ensure a landbank is maintained over the plan period will now be require through another site. The Officers recommend reassessing the Site Allocation Proposals to determine the appropriate site to meet this need.

6. Chapter 7- Sequential Test Tier 2: Satellite Sites

6.1 There are three nominated sites which fall into the “satellite” category. All of these are intended to supply minerals via the existing Willington Plant site. The sites are:

- Willington Lock (MD3)
- Willowhill Farm, Moggerhanger (MD8)
- Bridge Farm, Barford (MD10)

MD3 – Willington Lock, MD8 – Willowhill Farm, MD10 – Bridge Farm

Question 8

Do you agree with the identification of sites MD3, MD8 and MD10? Please give reasons with your answer.

Question 9

Are there any other operational or restoration considerations that we should take into account?

MD3 – Willington Lock

6.2 In terms of biodiversity, the site is unlikely to have any adverse impact on SSSIs, but part of the area includes a County Wildlife Site. As the land is flat any exposed workings or spoil would be visible from the village of Willington, River Great Ouse, cycle path and countryside wildlife site.

- 6.3 Natural England make the point that the site represents a large area of land take where progressive restoration will be important. Given the large land take, likely impact on BAP and/or legally protected species, for example, Great Crested Newts, Water Voles, Otters, bats, badgers and birds which will require further investigation, surveys and mitigation. It would like to see the realisation of the potential for restoration to contribute towards local and/or national BAP targets along with Green Infrastructure initiatives that might include the Bedford River Valley Park. Restoration could also provide potential for flood alleviation works.
- 6.4 Bedford Borough Council consider that this site is not suitable for sand and gravel extraction as its use would involve the loss of grade 1 agricultural land.
- 6.5 In relation to rights of way, the point is made that the site is crossed by the much-used Bedford to Sandy Country Way (part of the National Cycle Network). Willington Footpath No.3 is also within the site and along its boundary, but that these could be diverted during operation. However restoration offers opportunities to improve access (inc bridleway access).
- 6.6 Concerns are raised about the potential adverse impact on traffic generation, particularly the cumulative impact bearing in mind other planned developments in the area.
- 6.7 Some respondents noted that site use would be a barrier to the re-use of the original route of the Bedford to Cambridge railway.
- 6.8 Local residents and others raise concerns that the allocation is too close to residential properties causing disturbance by noise, dust and pollution. Moreover, some feel that due to the low level setting of the site that it would be difficult to mitigate the effects of noise and visual impact. Some respondents have noted that the impact of this site on agricultural land, residential amenity and the River Great Ouse would outweigh the value to the site in terms of mineral extraction.
- 6.9 English Heritage have no issues with the preferred site, subject to any archaeological conditions deemed appropriate by the County Archaeologist. Issues and Options consultation with the county archaeologist stated that whilst the land has archaeological potential, and any planning application would need to be accompanied by the results of an archaeological field evaluation, there were no reasons at present why this land should not be allocated for mineral extraction.
- 6.10 English Heritage have no issues with the preferred site, subject to any archaeological conditions deemed appropriate by the County Archaeologist. The County Archaeologist commented during the

Issues and Options Consultation that there are no reasons at present why this land should not be allocated for mineral extraction.

Officers Recommendations

6.11 This site is promoted as a satellite site feeding the existing Willington plant site. No new issues were raised as a result of the preferred options consultation and therefore the officers recommend that it continues through to the submission draft. For clarification to some of the responses received access to the plant site from the extraction site would be through other quarries e.g MD10 or land at Dairy Farm and the minerals would be extracted in a staged programme, not all at once, therefore the increase in traffic concerns could be overcome.

MD8 – Willowhill Farm

Summary of Consultation Responses

6.12 Local residents and others raise concerns that the allocation is too close to residential properties causing disturbance by noise, dust and pollution. Moreover, some feel that due to the low level setting of the site that it would be difficult to mitigate the effects of noise and visual impact. Some respondents have noted that the impact of this site on agricultural land, residential amenity and the River Great Ouse would outweigh the value to the site in terms of mineral extraction.

6.13 Concerns are raised about the potential adverse impact on traffic generation, particularly the cumulative impact bearing in mind other planned developments in the area.

6.14 Some respondents noted that site use would be a barrier to the re-use of the original route of the Bedford to Cambridge railway.

6.15 Natural England point out that this site represents a large area of land take where progressive restoration will be important. Given the large land take, likely impact on BAP and/or legally protected species, for example, Great Crested Newts, Water Voles, Otters, bats, badgers and birds which will require further investigation, surveys and mitigation. Natural England would want to see the realisation of the potential for restoration to contribute towards local and/or national BAP targets along with Green Infrastructure initiatives that might include the Bedford River Valley Park.

6.16 Bedford Borough Council make the point that site allocation would involve the loss of grade 1.

6.17 English Heritage have no issues with the preferred site, subject to any archaeological conditions deemed appropriate by the County Archaeologist. Issues and Options consultation with the county archaeologist stated that whilst the land has archaeological potential, and any planning application would need to be accompanied by the results of an archaeological field evaluation, there were no reasons at present why this land should not be allocated for mineral extraction.

Officer Recommendations

6.18 This site is promoted as a satellite site feeding the existing Willington plant site. No new issues were raised as a result of the preferred options consultation and therefore the officers recommend that it continues through to the submission draft. For clarification access to the plant site from the extraction site would be through other quarries e.g MD10 or land at Dairy Farm, and the minerals would be extracted in a staged programme, not all at once, therefore the increase in traffic concerns could be overcome.

MD10 – Bridge Farm

Summary of Consultation Responses

6.19 There is considerable local opposition to the Great Barford proposal. Residents expressed particular concern regarding the proximity of the site to the village causing disturbance by noise, dust and pollution, particularly to two nearby schools close to the eastern boundary. Others expressed concern that the cumulative impact of quarrying activity in the vicinity (both actual and proposed) would be detrimental to the area as a whole.

6.20 Further concerns were raised regarding potential adverse impact on traffic generation on village roads, particularly the use of Barford Bridge (a Scheduled Ancient Monument). Also, footpaths Nos 4 and 21 would be affected, and the Ramblers Association would like to see both footpaths remain in use throughout the extraction process.

6.21 Others have raised concern regarding restoration, in particular that void would be backfilled with household and/or industrial waste.

6.22 However, in the longer term there are biodiversity, flood storage, access and landscape enhancement opportunities.

6.23 Bedford Borough Council do not consider that the site is suitable on the grounds that its use would involve the loss of grade 1 agricultural land and that it is too close to the village of Great Barford.

- 6.24 With reference to archaeology, English Heritage do not have any issues with site identification subject to any archaeological conditions deemed appropriate by the County Archaeologist, who can see no reason why at present this land should not be allocated for mineral extraction (Issues and Options).
- 6.25 In terms of biodiversity, residents raise concerns that site allocation would have serious adverse effects on wildlife habitat, especially in the immediate vicinity of the river and the water meadows. Parts of this site are within Flood Zones 3 (High Risk), 2 (Low to Medium Risk) and 1 (Little or No Risk) of the Agency's Flood Map, and there is concern that removal of mineral could increase the local hydraulic gradients in flood conditions.
- 6.26 Natural England point out that this site represents a large area of land take where progressive restoration will be important. Given the large land take, likely impact on BAP and/or legally protected species, which will require further investigation, surveys and mitigation. They reiterate earlier comments restoration should contribute towards local and/or national BAP targets along with Green Infrastructure initiatives that might include the Bedford River Valley Park

Officer Responses

- 6.27 There has been high level of objection from this site from the residents of Great Barford as they believe they were not consulted in previous consultations and there is the misunderstanding that many believe the site proposal is an application not a proposed site within the Framework.
- 6.28 For confirmation, the Parish clerk has been notified at every stage of the plan preparation, adverts went in local press and we organised a roadshow at Great Barford Village Hall in early 2007 at the Issues and Options stage, through the Parish clerk, that was well attended by local residents.
- 6.29 As with the previous two sites, this site is promoted as a satellite site feeding the existing Willington plant site. Many of the issues raised by local residents are answered within the Preferred Options consultation paper. In relation to the concerns of too much mineral extraction occurring at once, the preferred options highlights the necessity to define an appropriate phasing strategy for the three sites to ensure progressive working and to minimise the impact of working.
- 6.30 With regards to traffic concerns, movement of the mineral from the extraction site to the processing plant would be through other quarries such as Dairy Farm, not through Great Barford. This would also remove the concerns for the Great Barford bridge and the impact

of HGV's as they would access the strategic highway network from the Willington Plant site

- 6.31 In relation to proximity to residents and local school the preferred options acknowledges this concern and states the requirement for a suitable buffer zone to minimise impacts on local residents.
- 6.32 The companies restoration intentions for this site would not include the backfilling of the sites with household/hazardous waste.
- 6.33 No further new issues have been identified as a result of the preferred options and the officers recommend that it is included in the submission draft.

7. Chapter 8 - Sequential Test Tier 3: New Sites

- 7.1 There are 18 Tier 3 (new site) nominations. Of these, 7 are located in a cluster to the south of Willington and Cople, and may be considered together.
- 7.2 This site has been put forward as a logical extension to the Willington sites. The material would travel from the extraction site to the existing processing plant at Willington through the current permitted Dairy Farm Site, and any HGV's would use the existing access in Willington and therefore would remove the concerns from Great Barford residents of access over their bridge

MD1 – Land off New Road, Sandy

Question 10

Do you agree with the rejection of site MD1? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation

7.3 Site rejection supported

MD2 – College Farm, Salford

Question 11

Do you agree with the rejection of site MD2? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation

7.4 Site rejection supported

MD5 – Holme Green, Biggleswade

Question 12

Do you agree with the rejection of site MD5? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation

7.5 Site rejection supported

MD26 – Medbury Farm

Question 13

Do you agree with the rejection of site M26? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation

7.6 Site rejection supported.

MD30 – Land North of Bedford Road, East of Willington

Question 14

Do you agree with the rejection of site MD30? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation

7.7 Site rejection supported.

MD40 – Land at Potton Road, Biggleswade

Question 15

Do you agree with the rejection of site MD40? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation

7.8 Site rejection supported.

MD45 – Land West of New Road, Sandy

Question 16

Do you agree with the rejection of site MD45? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation

7.9 Site rejection supported. One respondent disagreed with rejection stating it had few constraints and was away from housing.

Sites South of Willington

(MD31, MD32, MD33, MD34, MD35, MD39, MD47)

Question 17

Do you agree with the rejection of site MD31, MD32, MD33, MD34, MD35, MD39, MD47? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation

7.10 Site rejections supported.

Other Sites

MD6 – Blunham/Roxton, MD7- Blackcat, Chawston, MD15 – Land South of Broom Village, MD27 – Land South West of Beeston

Question 18

Do you agree with the rejection of sites MD6, MD7 and MD27? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation

7.11 Site rejections supported. One respondent objected to the rejection of the sites stating that the sites other than at Broom had fewer constraints and the potential for landscape and ecological improvements on restoration. Their extraction could provide respite for communities around Broom

Land South of Broom Village

Question 19

Do you agree with the identification of site MD15? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation

7.11 The consultation resulted in local opposition to this site. Local residents consider that having already borne the existing Broom Quarry and recent extension, the area should not be expected to provide further resources, with fears that development may delay completion of restoration at existing quarries.

7.12 Residents are of the opinion that a “breathing space” of around 15 years should be given before any further reserves are allocated in this area. Further concern was expressed in relation to the proximity of the site to the village causing disturbance by noise, dust and pollution etc. Several consultees expressed concern regarding impacts of HGV transport, stating that allocation will result in an unacceptable increase in the amount of HGV traffic using the B658 and will be an added danger for other road users.

7.13 In terms of biodiversity the site is within 1.8KM of Southill Lake and Woods SSSI. Natural England make the point that future applications would need to demonstrate no adverse impact to this site via potential hydrological regime and that restoration should contribute towards local and/or national BAP targets along with Green Infrastructure initiatives.

7.14 Some residents expressed concerns that extraction could have detrimental affect on 18th century trees on field boundaries, with potential bat roosts.

7.15 In relation to rights of way, site allocation could affect existing rights of way. However, restoration could provide public access improvements in the longer term.

7.16 English Heritage do not disagree with the identification of site MD15 as a preferred site, subject to the proposals meeting any archaeological conditions and constraints suggested by the County Archaeologist for the preservation of significant archaeological remains. Although they did not comment during this consultation, comments received during the issues and option consultation stated that providing the Roman riverside settlements are excluded there is no archaeological reason why the bulk of this site should not be allocated for mineral extraction, they were however concerned about the impact on the rectilinear field system.

7.17 Most of this site is grade 1 or 2 best and most versatile agricultural land.

Question 20

Are there any other operational or restoration considerations for site MD15 that we should take into account?

Summary of Consultation Responses

7.18 Bridleway No 4 crosses road to the west of Broom with a short section of the road linking the BW. Additional safety measures may be required if additional traffic is anticipated here. Restoration has potential to significantly improve equestrian access.

7.19 English Heritage make the point that there is a scheduled iron bridge at Holme, very close to the north-eastern corner of the suggested site area. Attention should be paid to this at an early stage to ensure it will not be adversely impacted by traffic movements relating to the extraction works, and it should be subject to very strict controls.

Officers Response

7.20 The responses to both question 19 and 20 identify no further new issues and the officers recommend that its inclusion is maintained in the submission draft.

7.21 This site has a current planning application which together with planning applications for part of MD7 – Blackcat and MD26 – Medbury Farm, will be considered by the Development Control Committee on 24 January 2008. The planning application decisions may have implications for the site allocations plan. For example, if approved, the reserves at any of these sites will be added to our permitted landbank and consequently the plans “mineral need for the plan period” would be reduced with an effect of reducing the amount/size of potential sites that the plan would need to identify.

7.22 In light of this decision the officers recommend reviewing the site allocations plan before it reaches submission draft.

8. Chapter 10 Permitted Capacity

Question 21

Do you agree that productive capacity for concreting aggregates is adequate for the plan-period? Please give reasons in your answer.

Summary of Consultation Responses

8.1 Tarmac, again reiterating a point made on the Core Strategy suggest need for some flexibility in productive capacity to respond to demand, stating that the combined maximum productive capacity of our three concreting sand and gravel sites is just below the stated requirements, and thus flexibility in plant capacity is required.

9. Chapter 11- Building Sands

9.1 See the responses to the “Overall need” in relation to Building Sand objections and Officer Recommendations

10. Chapter 12 - Specialist Silica Sands

10.1 Four sites have been proposed for silica sand working. Of these one (MD21 – Grovebury Road) is an extension, whilst the other three are new sites (MD13, land north of Billington; MD14, Land at Mile Tree Farm, Heath & Reach; MD43, land between Gig Lane and Eastern

Way, Heath & Reach). These sites are considered below and there is a combined officers recommendation for all these sites after all the sites.

MD21 – Grovebury Road

Question 22

Do you agree with the identification of site MD21? Please give reasons with your answer.

Question 23

Are there any operational or restoration considerations that we should take into account?

Summary of Consultation Responses

- 10.2 There was some local concern regarding this site. Several consultees made the point that the site has been identified as R7 “Open Space” land within the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review 2004. South Bedfordshire District Council make the point that any new proposal to extend the Grovebury Quarry site must not compromise the local plan objective of providing accessible and useable open space (including access to proposed waterside recreation areas). This includes means of access both to the site and also to the countryside beyond. Rights of way would be affected, and thus diversion of footpaths would be required along with new bridge provision. The Ramblers Association would like to see existing rights of way remain intact throughout life of quarry, and reiterate the point the restoration could provide scope for new footpath link.
- 10.3 Other nearby residents in the immediate vicinity are concerned by the possibility of mineral extraction up to their immediate boundary and expect any approval to minerals extraction to include the fullest protection of their property and the local amenity.
- 10.4 A couple of consultees questioned whether the site should be categorised as a silica sand site at all when a high percentage of the output from the original site is used for the production of concrete blocks and concreting applications.
- 10.5 In terms of biodiversity, site is within 4.7km of Nares Gladley Marsh SSSI. However, Natural England make the point that since this is not in hydrological continuity with the site, it is unlikely to have any adverse impact. However, there could be possible impact on BAP and/or legally protected species, and surveys and mitigation would be required. However, restoration could contribute towards local/national BAP targets along with Green Infrastructure initiatives.

MD13 – Land north of Billington

Question 24

Do you agree with the rejection of site MD13? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation Responses

10.6 The minerals industry object to the rejection of this site, however the public do support its rejection.

MD14 – Land at Mile Tree Farm**Question 25**

Do you agree with the rejection of site MD14? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation Responses

10.7 The minerals industry object to the rejection of this site, however the public do support its rejection.

MD43 – Land between Gig Lane and Eastern Way**Question 26**

Do you agree with the rejection of site MD43? Please give reasons with your answer.

Summary of Consultation Responses

10.8 Site rejection is supported, though restoration could have enhance rights of way.

Officers Response to Specialist Silica Sands Sites (MD21, MD13, MD14, MD43)

10.9 The Councils are currently expecting a detailed report into the need and requirements of Silica Sand from an Independent Consultant which we believe will affect the sites identified or not identified in the Preferred options report.

10.10 Also WBB Minerals have put a new site forward for consideration of inclusion within the plan for Specialist Sands. This site is included at the back of this report. This is required to undergo Sustainable Appraisal (SA) and Consultation.

10.11 Based upon the findings of this report, and the SA and Consultation requirements with the new site, the Councils may need to make changes to the preferred options and therefore the Officers

recommend that further work is undertaken before a submission draft is prepared.

11. Chapter 13 - Building Stone

Question 27

Do you agree with the identification of site MD18? Please give reasons with your answer.

Question 28

Are there any operational or restoration considerations that we should take into account?

Summary of Consultation Responses

- 11.1 This site has attracted some local opposition. Local residents and others raise concerns about loss of amenity and disturbance resulting from mineral working. The site is within an area of high value landscape character in the upper valley of the river Great Ouse and is designated an Area of Great Landscape Value in the Bedfordshire County Structure Plan, and that quarrying would damage this landscape. Local roads are not suitable for heavy goods vehicles.
- 11.2 Several residents have expressed concern regarding loss of habitat and species (otters and bats). Natural England have pointed out that the site is adjacent to the river Great Ouse and 6KM upstream of Stevington Marsh SSSI, and that any application would need to demonstrate no adverse impact to this site through changes to the hydrological regime. However, should permission be granted site restoration has potential to restore this site to calcareous grassland which could enhance biodiversity and amenity.
- 11.3 A significant Right of Way (part of the Ouse Valley Way) crosses the site, with tennis club and recreational facilities adjacent. The Ramblers Association, whilst not objecting to the winning of stone from this site, would wish to have uninterrupted use of this footpath and for any necessary diversion to be minimal. It should however be separated from any access track constructed to carry stone from the site.
- 11.4 Despite general support in principle for a local supply of building stone, this is very much subject to the stone on this site being suitable, with fear that demand could exceed the type of operation currently envisaged. Once permitted it could be difficult to limit the scale of the operation.

Officers Response

- 11.5 No new issues were raised in response to the Preferred Options. However from the responses received in relation to Statement 9 of the Core Strategy, the Officers believe it necessary to undertake further

work on assessing the requirements for building stone in the Upper Ouse Valley over the plan period. The outcomes of this further work may make significant changes to the Core Strategy and require the Site to be either excluded or included in the Site Allocations Plan and therefore could result in the requirement for further consultation before the submission draft could be prepared.

12. Chapter 15 - Appendix – Preferred Option Site plans

Summary of Consultation Responses

- 12.1 One respondent notes that whilst reference is made to Historic Environment Areas, which relate to areas of archaeological interest) on the Site Plans there is a need to also consider the impact on listed buildings, conservation areas and other historic buildings and areas. A number of sites under consideration are identified as having the potential, if worked, to have a significant harmful impact on the setting of listed buildings and/or conservation areas.

Officers Response

- 12.2 The concerns in relation to nature and building conservation are addressed through the saved General Environment policies contained in the Adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2005) and will be considered as part of the Plan preparation and development control decision

13. Summary

- 13.1 The main issues raised with the Minerals Site Allocations Plan are:
- Move the issue of “Need for Mineral” from the Site Allocations Plan to the Minerals Core Strategy
 - Removal of Ivel Farm (MD36) by the Operator
 - Further information required on Brooklands Farm (MD28)
 - Silica Sands Study
 - Introduction of new site by WBB Minerals requiring to undergo Sustainability Appraisal and full consultation
 - Insufficient information in relation to Statement 9 – Building Stone

14. Next stages

- 14.1 To ensure the Site Allocations Plan is “sound” at Examination Stage and to resolve the issues raised through the consultation period further work is required on the minerals plan. This work will be undertaken in the New Year.

- 14.2 Following completion of the work we intend to inform members of the possible resulting changes through a Members Seminar in early March.
- 14.3 Following this, the Officers propose to undertake a second “Preferred Options” consultation. This will be for a further 6 weeks and notifications will be sent to all those registered on our database and public notices placed in local papers.