Staffordshire County Council’s Statement

Day 8:

PROVISION FOR SAND AND GRAVEL

Issue: Whether the provision in the Plan for allocated sites for sand and gravel extraction is justified

2. Why have the following allocations been made in the Plan?
Inset Map 14: Area of Search West of A38
The new Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire 2015 to 2030
Response to Inspector’s Questions – Provision for Sand and Gravel

Site History

- The current Plan is based on a locational approach including no working west of the A38.
- Three site options have been submitted for consideration in preparing the new Plan that are within the area of search – Wychnor South, Wychnor North and Alrewas West.

SA Profile

![SA Profile Table]

For justification of scores, please refer to detailed assessment sheets

SA Summary Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Summary from assessment</th>
<th>Allocation status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of Search West of A38</td>
<td>A broad area encompassing a sand and gravel resource in which development has not been encouraged in the past. Assessment predicts negative impacts for SA Objective 8 (Flood management) due to the presence of areas of Flood Zone 3, and for SA Objective 17 (Health and amenity) because of the large number of houses close to the area. Both of these impacts can be effectively mitigated by design, layout and operation as the detailed proposals for new quarries within the AoS are developed.</td>
<td>Preferred Allocation</td>
</tr>
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Development Considerations

Note proposed changes are shown in **blue and underscored**

- This is a large and complex area, so any proposals for quarrying within the Area of Search **will need to assess the way in which resources can be quarried** without unacceptable adverse impact on local communities and the environment in accordance with the policies in the Plan.
- The prospective developers have identified a potential interest in **two sites within the Area of Search** and it is anticipated that when the Plan is reviewed **it will be possible to more clearly define these two sites as ‘preferred areas’**.
The new Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire 2015 to 2030
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- The prospective developers will need to engage with key stakeholders – land owners, local residents, the Parish, District and County Councils and their representatives, the Environment Agency, the Highway Agency, National Grid and potentially the Central Rivers Initiative when proposing their ‘preferred areas’ for inclusion in the Plan when it is reviewed.

- At this time our preference would be the potential sites identified on land to the south of the A513 but in any event the proposals to define ‘preferred areas’ within the current Area of Search would need to have regard to the following development considerations: will need detailed assessment.

- Wychnor Park is an area of high sensitivity to change, so high levels of landscape mitigation would be required to avoid adverse impact.

- Some areas north of the A513 retain historic field patterns and water meadows, and these should be retained where possible.

- Careful consideration should be given to screening around Kings Bromley to ensure satisfactory visual mitigation. The phasing of any workings between Kings Bromley and Alrewas will need to minimise the erosion of landscape character ensuring that previous mineral workings to the east of Alrewas and west of Kings Bromley are subject to restoration works prior to commencement of development within the area of search.

- Proximity to sensitive properties within and adjacent to the area of search should be considered as well as the canal conservation area including Fradley Junction and the Alrewas and Kings Bromley conservation areas. Appropriate stand offs should be defined to safeguard amenity and structures.

- The presence of the Bourne/Bilson Brook. Should sub-water table working be necessary then evidence will be required that such activities will not impact on flows in the brook.

- The need to ensure that there is no net loss of floodplain storage as a result of the excavations. Any excavated material should be stored outside of the extent of the 1 in 100 year (with climate change) floodplain. Any ancillary development should be located in areas of lowest risk.

- Proposals may need to consider proximity to the HS2 construction areas for phases 1 and 2 of the route.

- Proposals for mineral working and restoration should take into account the need to safeguard pipelines and associated infrastructure as well as overhead power lines.

- New mineral site infrastructure should be designed to minimise impact on the area and consideration should be given to the most effective use of plant in developing the resource.
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- Across the whole area, retention of small woodland blocks, riparian vegetation, hedgerows and trees will help with mitigation of visual impact, and advance planting should also be considered.
- There is a high risk of best & most versatile land being present, so this should be considered in designing the restoration of site proposals.
- Consideration should be given to the public rights of way affecting the area.
- Transport Assessment is required and should ensure that HGV traffic does not travel through Kings Bromley village.
- Restoration of mineral workings in this area should contribute where applicable to the Staffordshire Washlands project, the Staffordshire BAP River Gravels Ecosystem Area objectives and to the objectives of the National Forest. There is also the potential to extend the Central Rivers Initiative into this area.

Site selection
The allocation of specific sites within the new Mineral Local Plan has not resulted in the identification of sufficient resources to meet anticipated demand throughout the plan period, so additional sites are needed. Rejected sites have been shown to be unsuitable.

Strategic alternatives for identifying the required additional resource were tested through the SA process, and the identification of an Area of Search west of the A38 was found to represent the most sustainable alternative. Other areas could not provide the required resource in one location, and a spread of smaller sites could not offer reliability as many would lie well away from current patterns of supply and distribution.

The boundaries of the Area of Search have been refined, and development considerations drafted to minimise or mitigate adverse impacts as far as is possible, and these have allowed us to conclude that the sites within the area of search can be developed in an acceptable way.

The site offers a substantial mineral resource, and several quarry proposals have been put forward in the past, but there would inevitably be a significant time delay before specific proposals could come forward. This has led to a lower score for deliverability within the Plan period, but it is also consistent with the intention to avoid development in this area until other resources are used up.

The site scores well for its location immediately adjacent to the main resource area of the Trent Valley, maintaining the general policy, and significantly out performing any practical alternative sites.

Key representations, points raised, and outline responses
Opposition has been substantial, with representations challenging all aspects of the decision making process from the strategic choice of the area to the detail of the location of potential sites in relation to high pressure gas mains. The County
Council, however, remain convinced that the allocation can be delivered in an acceptable manner, and that there are no practicable alternatives available.