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 sites not been allocated in the Plan?

Netherset Hey
Site History

- The site was first put forward in the preparation of the Aggregates Local Plan 1989 – 2001 (adopted 1996), but was not allocated.
- It was again proposed for the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Minerals Local Plan 1994 – 2006 (adopted in 1999), and was not allocated.
- It was also submitted for consideration as part of the Issues and Options consultation in 2008.
- Comments were received in respect of the site option as reported to Planning Committee on 5 March 2009.

SA Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Alternative aggregate</th>
<th>RIGS</th>
<th>Maintaining supply</th>
<th>Protecting resources</th>
<th>Tranquility</th>
<th>Transport impacts</th>
<th>Greenhouse gases</th>
<th>Flood management</th>
<th>Biodiversity</th>
<th>Ground &amp; surface water</th>
<th>Soil</th>
<th>Air Quality</th>
<th>Historic environment</th>
<th>Local building materials</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Recreation and greenspace</th>
<th>Health and amenity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherset Hey</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>?+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?-</td>
<td>?+</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>?-</td>
<td>?-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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>Netherset Hey</td>
<td>Significant reserves but questionable whether access to the site is deliverable. There is also a predicted negative impact for SA Objective 15 (Landscape) which would be hard to fully mitigate. A number of potential adverse impacts would all require some degree of mitigation, and in the case of SA Objective 6 (Transport), it is not clear that this can reliably be provided.</td>
<td>Not a preferred site at present.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development Considerations

Development considerations were only produced for allocated sites.

Site selection

Overall, the sustainability appraisal identified two clear negative impacts and four potentially negative impacts for the proposed site. A long-term negative impact for Strategic Objective 11 (Soil) could be avoided through restoration, but the proposals viewed so far have suggested that a water-based restoration was envisaged, so restoration of soils is unlikely to be achieved. The impacts on Strategic Objective 15 (Landscape) would also be difficult to mitigate, and the proposed restoration is uncharacteristic of the area.
The potential adverse impact for Strategic Objective 6 (Transport impacts) reflects the absence of a satisfactory road access, but this would be greatly mitigated if it were possible to arrange for the extracted mineral to be transported by rail. Other potential adverse impacts for Strategic Objective 8 (Flood management), Strategic Objective 16 (Recreation and greenspace), and Strategic Objective 17 (Health and amenity) will need to be addressed through careful consideration of site layout, operating conditions, and restoration.

We concluded that, on balance, the SA impacts of the proposed allocation were uncertain, and this is reflected in the “?” score in the site assessment table. The site offers a significant resource (positive score), but the dependence on developing a rail link to enable development, and the construction of HS2 very nearby, create uncertainties relating to the proposal and call into question the potential of this site to make a contribution to the supply of aggregates within the Plan period. This is reflected in the negative score for deliverability in the site assessment table.

Finally, the site represents a completely new area of working sand and gravel, well away from the main resource areas. This led to another negative score in the site assessment table.

With one positive score, one uncertain score and two negatives, the site does not compare favourably with other site options, and was not selected for allocation.

Key representations, points raised, and outline responses

The site was not included in the published Plan, and none of the representations that were received made any reference to the site. However, when the site was included in an earlier consultation on options for the emerging Plan in October and November 2008, six responses were received, citing objections including:

- Noise/Vibration
- Dust/ Air pollution
- Highways/Transport
- Visual Impact/Landscape
- Water Resources/Hydrology/ Flooding
- Impact on amenity of locality
- Ecology/Wildlife
- Existing Development (inc. residential)
- Recreation/Leisure/Public Footpaths
- National/Regional recognised sites/designations – Historical/Archaeology/SAM’s/Battlefield/ Listed Buildings
- Need/Sufficient Reserves Elsewhere/County Large Producer/Viability

HS2 Update

Below is the latest information from HS2 Limited (dated 29 March 2016) with regard to the potential impact of HS2 on the Silverdale branch line that would provide rail
access for the Netherset Hey site. While the information does not rule out the possibility of rail access, it indicates that current plans do not envisage the retention of the disused line in a form that would allow use by rail traffic.

Apologies this reply coming a little late in the day but please find the following lines from the HS2 Ltd team by way of response on this matter.

HS2 is proposing to cross over the West Coast Mainline, the former Silverdale Branch line and the Madeley Chord on a viaduct (see plan extract below). At present the Madeley chord is disused and disconnected from the West Coast Mainline and the Silverdale branch is covered in heavy vegetation having been disused for some time.

The HS2 alignment must clear the West Coast Mainline, including electrical clearance to OHLE. To then provide clearance for Diesel haulage to use the disused Madeley chord and Silverdale Branch would increase the height of the viaduct structure and potentially the impact on the local environment. To provide for potential future electrification of the disused Silverdale Branch would increase the height of the viaduct structure even further, with increasing impact on the local environment.

HS2 would welcome further information regarding the proposed use of the Silverdale Branch for the Netherset Hey site as we would seek to avoid building an inappropriately high viaduct through the valley, should there not be a proper need.

We would also suggest Network Rail be consulted on the proposal and asked for feedback on suitability of the disused infrastructure.

I trust this response if of assistance to yourselves/the Inspector however if further information or a meeting is needed than HS2 Ltd would be happy to attend such a meeting together with Network Rail representatives in attendance if appropriate.

Kind regards,

James Fox | Safeguarding Planning Manager | HS2 Ltd
Policy 1.6 and Use of Sustainable Transport

The statement submitted on behalf of Madeley Aggregates Limited for consideration by the Inspector concludes that the new Minerals Local Plan is unsound as it does not reflect Government Policy on encouraging sustainable transport. To address this issue, amendments are sought by the respondent to Policy 1.6 and the supporting text in paragraph 7.11 so that considerable weight is given to proposals that will use sustainable transport modes.

Policy 1.6 provides flexibility in the Plan for changing circumstances in demand and supply and opportunity for sand and gravel proposals that would secure ‘significant material planning benefits’. The supporting text in paragraph 7.11 provides examples of potential ‘significant material planning benefits’ based on circumstances that have been accepted as exceptional circumstances in the use of policy 38 of the current Minerals Local Plan but does not intend to limit consideration of those benefits.

While the requirement to requirement of the NPPF for the use of sustainable modes of transport is acknowledged (refer to paragraph 35), it is also a requirement that the Plan should be deliverable over its period. As indicated above there are uncertainties relating to the use of the rail link and no information has been provided to demonstrate the extent of mineral resources that would be necessary to justify the costs in providing a suitable rail connection with associated rail handling infrastructure. Recent studies indicate that the cost of works can range from £1m to £25m depending on the complexity of the connection.¹

The proposed amendment to Policy 1.6 is not supported as it is not considered necessary to set out specific ‘significant material planning benefits’ as this would restrict the flexibility of the policy. Furthermore, the benefits of modes of transport would need to be considered alongside the merits of provision from a particular site and therefore, the benefits of a proposal need to be considered broadly. The circumstances for the provision of sand and gravel in Staffordshire, is based on a strategy for identifying sites that involves local sourcing to reduce the transport impacts and the location of reserves relative to markets is equally a factor in the sustainable provision of sand and gravel. It is considered that the proposed amendments are not necessary.

¹ Refer to the Aggregates Strategic Research Programme (2009 – 2011) and Project 10 “Distributing bulk minerals to future markets”