

## **The Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan**

### **A quick guide to the Autumn 2007 consultation**

#### **Introduction**

The paperwork for the consultation on the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework is rather long and may be daunting to some readers. We have to follow Government rules for their preparation, and it is difficult to produce a document that will survive the detailed scrutiny it will receive in an easy-to-read format. We have therefore produced this layman's summary of the main points from it. It sets out the main issues on which we are consulting, and where to find them in the full document. We hope you will find it helpful.

Whilst every effort has been made in it to give an accurate picture of the proposals, this summary should not be relied upon as an authoritative statement of policy – you should always refer back to the relevant part of the main document.

There are two consultations running in parallel. The first is on the **Core Strategy**, which sets out our central policy objectives for dealing with minerals and waste:

- how we propose to manage mineral resources, safeguarding them from development that would prevent their extraction;
- how we propose to identify the sites that will be brought forward for extraction during the life of this Plan (which runs to 2026);
- how much capacity for waste management we need, and the principles that will decide how many sites we will need, where they should be and the different types of waste management uses that might go on them (though we try to avoid being too prescriptive about this).

We have already had one consultation on the issues and options for dealing with minerals and waste, and the results of this have helped us to draw up our **preferred options** in this document. The outcome from this present consultation will be the plan that we submit to the Government, that will in due course be the subject of a public examination.

The second consultation deals with **detailed minerals and waste development control policies and preferred areas**. When completed, this will set out how individual planning applications will be dealt with, and which sites will be brought forward, for mineral extraction or for different waste management activities. This consultation is at an earlier stage – at this time, we are simply setting out the issues that development control will need to address, and identifying all the **Minerals Safeguarding Areas** – the possible sites with viable mineral deposits that might need to be safeguarded from other types of development. Not all of them will find their way into the final plan and one of the purposes of this stage of the consultation is to get your views on the advantages and disadvantages of each one. This will help us in drawing up our preferred options.

We do not have an entirely free hand in drawing up our proposals. There are at least two other key players in the process.

First, each of the Berkshire unitary authorities is a waste management authority in its own right. They prepare their own waste management strategy, which deals with things like policy on recycling and how to deal with that part of the waste stream that cannot be recycled (for example, do we compost it? Burn it? Bury it in landfill sites?) It is not our job to tell them how to do it – rather, our purpose is to help them carry it out, by making sure that there are enough sites of the right kind and in the right places for their purposes.

Second, the building of large-scale waste facilities like incinerators or recycling facilities depends for the most part upon private firms being willing to make the investment in them. Without that willingness to invest, we cannot make development happen simply by identifying sites. So turning the sites which are finally chosen from proposals in a plan to reality on the ground is a three-way partnership, between the plan, the commercial operators who make the

investment and the waste management authorities, who offer the commercial operators the reassurance that there will be a market for their facility.

Similarly with mineral extraction, we can only extract them from where they occur naturally, and it depends upon commercial operators deciding that there is a market for them to turn proposals in the plan into reality.

## **The Core Strategy – preferred options**

### **Minerals**

The **preferred objectives** for minerals planning are set out on page 26:

- A. To balance demand for minerals with protecting the quality of life of residents, the needs of the economy and the protection of the environment;
- B. To make efficient use of mineral resources, through recycling minerals and secondary aggregates;
- C. To provide a stock of permitted reserves in line with current Government guidance;
- D. To minimise environmental impacts by identifying **Preferred Areas** for Future Working (minerals sites we would expect to come forward for extraction within the life of this plan);
- E. To restore sites to a beneficial after-use;
- F. To prevent unnecessary sterilisation of mineral deposits.

**Policy M1** (page 28) sets out the principles by which Minerals Safeguarding Areas will be identified, protecting deposits for possible future extraction.

**Policy M2** (page 31) sets the overall target for mineral production in Berkshire at an average of 1.57 million tonnes a year to 2026, in line with current Government policy.

**Policy M3** (page 31) seeks to ensure that there are always sufficient planning permissions to provide a seven years' supply of sand and gravel.

**Policy M4** (page 32) creates a presumption in favour of granting planning permission for mineral extraction within Preferred Areas.

**Policy M5** (page 34) sets out how applications for mineral extraction outside Preferred Areas will be dealt with.

**Policy M6** (page 35) creates a presumption in favour of proposals to extract building sand from locations identified as areas of search.

**Policy M7** (page 39) creates a presumption in favour of allowing facilities for processing recycled or secondary aggregates to locate in active quarries, subject to local considerations.

**Policy M8** (page 40) supports proposals for new rail depots for the importing of aggregates.

**Policy M9** (page 40) protects the existing rail depots at Theale and Colnbrook, plus other safeguarded sites, from development that would prejudice their use for this purpose.

**Policy M10** (page 42) sets out the circumstances where *borrow pits* will be acceptable. Borrow pits are sites outside preferred areas, from which minerals are extracted temporarily to meet specific local needs – usually for a large building project nearby – as an alternative to importing minerals by lorry.

**Policy M11** (page 43) deals with the circumstances in which the extraction of chalk, clay and other minerals not at present worked in Berkshire would be acceptable.

**Policy M12** (page 44) explains how proposals for the extraction of oil and gas will be dealt with.

**Policy M13** (page 46) sets out principles for the restoration of sites used for mineral extraction.

## **Waste**

The **preferred objectives** for waste policy are set out on page 48. They are:

- G. To balance demand for waste sites with protecting the quality of life of residents, the needs of the economy and the protection of the environment;
- H. To create a spatial planning context within which Berkshire can achieve net self-sufficiency in waste treatment and disposal;
- I. To help achieve regional self-sufficiency in waste management and disposal;
- J. To encourage waste treatment higher up the waste hierarchy (that is, more re-use, recycling and recovery of materials, more energy recovery and minimising the amount of waste needing final disposal);
- K. Locating waste management facilities so as to reduce travel distances and encourage alternative, more sustainable, forms of transport;
- L. Safeguarding existing waste facilities, where appropriately sited, from competing forms of development.

**Policy W1** (page 50) establishes the principle of Berkshire being self-sufficient in its waste management capacity, and also able to meet part of London's residual needs. It sets out how much capacity this would require.

**Policy W2** (page 52) establishes a commitment to provide waste management and disposal capacity in line with Government targets.

**Policy W3** (page 54) sets out a policy for the spatial distribution of waste facilities, with larger, more centralised facilities in urban areas in east Berkshire and a larger number of more localised waste and transfer facilities in the west.

**Policy W4** (page 57) sets in policy the principle of trying to reduce the distance waste has to be transported for treatment and encouraging more sustainable, non-road borne, modes of transport.

**Policy W5** (page 59) sets out the policy of having **Preferred Areas** for the location of waste facilities. It is complemented by a criteria-based policy approach that would address the provision of waste facilities outside Preferred Areas.

**Policy W6** (page 61) sets out the principle that the plan does not look to specify particular technologies, but rather to find sites that can take as wide a range of treatment activities as possible. Technologies for waste *disposal* are considered separately.

**Policy W7** (page 63) Proposals for waste *treatment* facilities outside Preferred Areas only have to demonstrate need if they could prejudice core strategy aims. Proposals for waste *disposal* outside Preferred Areas must demonstrate need.

**Policy W8** (page 65) says there is no distinction in policy terms between treatment facilities for Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), Commercial and Industrial Waste (C&I) and Construction and Demolition Waste (C&D).

**Policy W9** (page 66) proposes to identify sufficient sites for managing specialist waste to make Berkshire self-sufficient.

**Policy W10** (page 67) safeguards a list of waste sites from other forms of development.

**Policy W11** (page 69) calls for Local Development Documents to include a policy requiring new development to provide facilities for on-site waste separation and storage, and to promote the re-use of demolition materials.

## Development control policies and Preferred areas – issues and options

**Appendix C** provides lists and maps of candidate sites for:

- (i) Mineral Safeguarding Areas (shown by individual local authority);
- (ii) Preferred Areas for mineral extraction of sharp sand and gravel
- (iii) Areas of Search for soft sand (areas where there are thought to be viable deposits of soft sand, and where we would normally be in favour of extraction);
- (iv) Safeguarded rail depot sites.

**Appendix D** identifies sites which lay come within a Mineral Safeguarding Area and which have been identified in Local Development Documents for development (for housing, business premises or other permanent buildings). The Appendix says that development should only be permitted there if:

- (a) the mineral deposit can be shown **not** to be commercially viable;
- (b) the mineral can be extracted prior to development;
- (c) the development is temporary and would allow mineral extraction afterwards;
- (d) there is an overriding case for the surface development proceeding.

**Appendix E** shows possible candidate Waste Preferred Areas by local authority area. It sets out the planning context for each one and suggests the range of waste activities that might be appropriate there.

**Appendix F** identifies existing waste management facilities in Berkshire. These would be protected from other forms of development under Policy W10.

You need to look through these appendices, to see whether they affect land or property in which you are interested.

### How to respond

We would welcome your comments on any aspect of these consultation documents. You can **see the full documents** at your local library or planning office, or on our **website** – [www.berks-jspu.gov.uk](http://www.berks-jspu.gov.uk) . You can download the full documents from the website, or if you want a **paper copy** of the plan or the response form, you can **phone us** on 01628 796518. You can also **e-mail us** at [minerals.waste@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:minerals.waste@rbwm.gov.uk) to receive an **electronic version** of the documents or the response form.

Comments should be with us by 5<sup>th</sup> November. Please use the **standard response form**.

You can **reply by post** to:

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St Mary's House  
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Or **by e-mail** to the address above.

**Joint Strategic Planning Unit  
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