

## MINERALS - SPATIAL VISION AND OBJECTIVES

### Key Issue - General

**Whether the Spatial Vision and the Objectives are sufficiently focussed, consistent with national policy, aligned to the RSS, spatial and locally distinctive; also whether they give adequate direction to the strategic policies. (National Policy, PPS 12, Paras 4.1-4.3)**

### Specific Issues and Matters for Discussion:

#### Whether the objectives are focussed on the key issues to be addressed

1. *What are the key issues facing the county, issues that have informed the spatial vision and objectives? What is perceived to be the role of the county in respect of minerals-related matters?*

The aim of the Council's Minerals Development Framework is to strike an appropriate balance between contributing to national, regional and local requirements for minerals, bearing in mind that Leicestershire has a particularly important supply role to play because it is a mineral rich county and one of the principal producers of minerals in the country, whilst at the same time ensuring that minerals extraction is socially and environmentally acceptable. The key issues facing the County in seeking to fulfil this aim are reflected in the objectives set out in Para 3.7. They may be summarised as follows:

Supply of Minerals (Objective 1)  
 Use of Recycled and Secondary Materials (Objective 2)  
 Safeguarding Mineral Resources (Objective 3)  
 Resource Management (Objective 4)  
 Environmental protection/enhancement (Objectives 5 and 7)  
 Transportation (Objective 6)  
 Restoration and afteruse (Objectives 7 and 8)

These issues are derived from the Monitoring and Key Issues report (2003) (MIN 31), the Issues and Options report (2005) and the Preferred Options document (2006).

Initial work in developing the LMDF involved a monitoring report relating to the existing Minerals Local Plan. This examined the performance of the current policies and the continuing relevance of the plan's proposals, in the light of changing circumstances, including those occurring at national and regional levels. The monitoring report identified key issues, which formed the basis for an extensive consultation exercise during May and June 2003.

This exercise informed the development of an Issues and Options report that was published for consultation in June 2005. Issues and Options report presented 13 issues and alternative policy approaches 9 of these issues related to the future provision of particular minerals within the County, namely sand and gravel, igneous rock, limestone, other construction materials (gypsum, brickclay and fireclay), and coal. The other issues related to recycled materials, restoration, after-use and site management.

After the Issues and Options report, four other issues were identified related to environmental effects, transportation, planning control and safeguarding resources. These were set out in chapter 12: "Alternative Policy Options" of the Preferred Options document.

**Whether the vision is expanded into the key specific objectives that need to be addressed**

2. *How meaningful is the objective of meeting national, regional and local requirements? Are those requirements identified in the DPD with a reasonable degree of specificity?*

Objective 1 shows the Council's commitment to ensuring that the County makes an appropriate contribution to the supply of minerals for the economy and society, in accordance with the intentions of MPS1 (MCD 2). It is intended to form the link, as advised in PPS12 (MCD 1), between the high level spatial vision and the more detailed policies related to the supply of minerals within the County as set out in the Core Strategy (Policies CS1-9).

Policy CS2 specifies the contribution that the County should make in order to meet the sub-regional apportionment requirements for aggregates provision (sand and gravel, and crushed rock). Specific contributions are not identified for the provision of other minerals extracted within the County as there are no national or regional targets for such minerals. The DPD does however indicate the shortfall in landbank provision (based on the advice contained within MPS1) for particular brickworks within the County during the Framework period. The Council does not consider that further specificity is appropriate in the absence of national and regional requirements or detailed resource information.

3. *Should "secondary materials" be defined in the Glossary (Para 3.7, Objective 2)? Are the "recognised national and regional requirements" for usage of recycled and secondary materials identified in the DPD?*

'Secondary Aggregates' is defined in the Glossary of Terms (Appendix 1). These are the same as 'secondary materials'. Para 4.76 states that a range of materials such as crushed concrete, road planings, and mineral wastes can be recycled and used as substitutes for primary aggregates.

The regional requirement for alternative (secondary and recycled) materials is set out in Para 4.77, namely 95Mt for the period 2001-2016.

4. *What are the policies that flow from Objectives 2 and 4? Are the objectives regarding recycling, use of secondary materials, efficient use of high quality minerals and minimisation of waste directed at other plans or programmes? [GOEM]*

Policy CS10 deals with resource management. This policy supports objectives 2 and 4 in seeking to reduce the demand for primary minerals and encourage the use of high quality minerals for appropriate purposes.

Objectives 2 and 4 reflect the aspirations of Leicestershire's Sustainable Community Strategy (MIN 11) which aims to achieve a reduction in the County's contribution to climate change and the production of less waste; together with those of the Charnwood, Harborough, Melton and North West Leicestershire Community Strategies (MIN 13, 15-17) to reduce their

impact on climate change/reduce their carbon footprint. These objectives will consequently also figure in other plans and programmes.

Para 4.78 identifies the role that the Minerals Development Framework has to play in facilitating the increased use of alternative materials, including suitably located recycling facilities at mineral sites, to enable the regional target of supplying alternative materials to be met. It recognises that policies for the processing of construction and demolition waste, road planings and other wastes suitable for aggregate production will be contained in the Waste Development Framework.

The objectives are not directed at other plans or programmes but are reflected in the WDF and it is expected that District Councils will have supporting policies in their LDFs.

5. *Should the objectives refer to protecting people (or safeguarding their living conditions) rather than communities? Should the protection to be afforded to the natural and built environments be in respect of "unacceptable" effects of mineral development?*

The reference to the protection of local communities in objective 5 reflects advice contained in PPS1 (MCD 26) and MPS1 (MCD 2). The Council acknowledges however that PPS1 and MPS1 also refer to the impact on people. The Council therefore accepts that objective 5 could be changed to protecting 'people and local communities' without altering the intention of the objective.

The wording of Objective 5 reflects the national objectives for minerals planning in MPS1, one objective being to protect internationally and nationally designated areas of landscape value and nature conservation importance *from minerals development* (Para 9 6<sup>th</sup> bullet point).

Objective 4 in the Preferred Options document had referred to the 'unacceptable effects' of mineral development. Natural England felt that this needed rewording as 'unacceptable' is subjective and open to challenge.

6. *Should there be reference to avoiding effects on the River Mease SAC?*

The Council does not consider that it is appropriate to make particular reference to the River Mease SAC in the objectives.

PPS12 (MCD 1) indicates that the strategic objectives should form the link between the high level vision and the detailed strategy. PPS 9 (MCD 28) states that specific policies should not be included in development frameworks regarding internationally important sites, such as the River Mease SAC, as they enjoy statutory protection. No further guidance regarding the River Mease SAC is therefore provided in the Core Strategy. It would therefore not be possible to provide a link from an objective which refers to the River Mease SAC and a detailed policy, as advised in PPS12.

7. *Should there be reference to Green Infrastructure strategies for the 6Cs area and the role that minerals could play in respect of biodiversity and other aspects of Green Infrastructure? [CBC]*

The Spatial Vision refers in general terms to enhancement of the character and quality of the environment. The Council does not consider that it is necessary to make specific reference to biodiversity and the provision of Green Infrastructure.

Objective 8 already makes reference to biodiversity in the context of the reclamation of mineral workings. The Council does not consider that it is necessary to make specific reference to the provision of Green Infrastructure in the objectives. Objective 7 promotes the delivery of measures for environmental, recreational, economic and community gain, and Objective 8 refers in general terms to enhancement of the natural environment through the reclamation of mineral workings.

The Council recognises that the restoration of mineral sites can contribute to the development of the County's Green Infrastructure and biodiversity. Policy CS17 sets out the strategy for the reclamation and future use of mineral sites. This policy seeks the creation of new wildlife habitats together with public access and improvements to the public rights of way network in appropriate cases. The Council has no objection to reference to green infrastructure being included in Policy CS17 and Para 4.118 - [See LCC Response to Minerals – Environmental Matters (Question 20)], and in the list of reclamation matters for inclusion in planning applications (Policy DC20, Box 7) - [See LCC Response to Minerals – Development Control Policies (Question 26)].

8. *Should the protection and enhancement of Charnwood Forest be a specific objective? [CBC]*

The Council does not consider that it is necessary to include the protection and enhancement of Charnwood Forest as a specific objective. Objective 5 makes general reference to the protection of the natural environment from minerals development. This is developed in Policy CS11 which sets out the strategy for environmental protection. These provide the context for Policy CS13 which sets out the strategy for minerals development within or adjacent to Charnwood Forest.

9. *In the context of reclamation (Objective 8), should there be reference to the natural and historic environment? [EH]*

The Council has no objection to objective 8 being amended to refer to the natural *and historic* environment as suggested by English Heritage.

10. *Are there other locally distinctive and spatial aspects of the county that ought to be reflected in the objectives, for example Strategic River Corridors, Green Wedges, open countryside or building materials?*

Whilst it is recognised that certain areas of the County warrant special attention, as mentioned in Para 4.93, the Council does not consider that it is necessary to reflect this specifically in the objectives. Objective 5 makes general reference to the protection of the natural environment from minerals development. This is intended to form the link, as advised in PPS12 (MCD 1), between the high level spatial vision and the more detailed policies set out in the Core Strategy. The objective is developed in Policy CS11 which sets out the strategy for environmental protection and provides the context for Policies CS12 (Strategic River Corridors), CS14 (National Forest), and CS15 (Green Wedges). Policy CS6 addresses the provision of building and roofing stone to preserve and enhance the character and local distinctiveness of buildings in the County.