

28th July 2012



Strategic Planning (Ref: Minerals Local Plan),
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Dear Sirs

MINERALS LOCAL PLAN - BACKGROUND PAPERS INFORMAL ENGAGEMENT

Please find attached comments on the Background Papers from the Mineral Products Association.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Payne', is written in a cursive style.

DAVID PAYNE
Senior Planning Advisor
Mineral Products Association

The Mineral Products Association is the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, lime, mortar and silica sand industries

Registered in England as Mineral Products Association Limited No. 1634996
Registered at the above address

West Sussex Minerals Local Plan Informal Engagement - Background Papers, Draft MPA comments, 28th July 2014

Background Paper 2 Minerals in West Sussex

Q1.1. It is understood that consented reserves of Silica Sand lie within the plan boundary.

Q1.2. The Spatial Strategy should be consistent in its use of terms such as “other minerals” and/or “non-aggregates.”

Q2.2. Given the distribution of resources it is likely that provision for adequate supply of soft sand will require allocation of sites within the National Park. Given constraints and potential difficulties of identifying suitable sites perhaps the 70/30 split may be more deliverable but still require provision for at least 3mt of soft sand over the Plan period.

Q2.3. The Local Aggregates Assessment identifies construction projects and predicted housing numbers (2012 projection) that will affect demand (para 3.4) and also that soft sand sales have not declined as much as sand and gravel, made a more pronounced recovery post 2009, and are predicted to increase in the near future (para 3.5). In order to substantiate the ‘feeling’ that the economic activity in the coming 10-15 years will not result in a significantly increased demand for aggregates supplied in West Sussex the authority should consider more fully the level of construction activity that has occurred over the last 10 years against that forecast to occur over the plan period, including by reference to the information in the LAA.

Q2.8. Para 4.19 should be more balanced and properly reflect the fact that the NPPF also requires great weight to be given to the benefits of mineral extraction including to the economy when determining planning applications. The NPPF acknowledges that there may be circumstances which reflect national need in terms of mineral supply or where a proposal has benefits for the National Park in question, where development may be appropriate. This will be a factor when considering the circumstances necessary for permitting extraction within the National Park, particularly the ‘need’ and ‘cost’ tests given the distribution of soft sand resources and the estimated shortfall in reserves over the Plan period.

It is notable that the Lower Greensand, which is present within the plan area, and in particular the Folkestone Formation, contains an important national resource of industrial silica sand.

We also believe that the reference at Para 2.17, is incorrect where it states ‘...the distinction between silica & construction sands is based principally on their end-use applications and market specifications, rather than a fundamental difference in the two raw materials in the ground.’ There are distinct differences in chemistry, grain size and shape and colour in sands used for industrial applications and those used as aggregates.

Background Paper 3 Site Assessment and Identification Methodology

Q3.1. There will need to be a degree of pragmatism and flexibility applied between Step 2 - identification of sites 'acceptable in principle' and the detailed site assessments in Step 3. Table 1 acknowledges that the impact of development at a given site will be influenced by a number of site specific issues. The desk-based exercise (Step 2) will be inherently limited in the detail that can be considered, and may suggest that sites should not be considered further based on simple consideration of constraints, which may not be borne out by the site assessment.

Background Paper 4 Safeguarding Minerals Infrastructure

Q4.1. The strategic importance of the existing wharves to supply the South East beyond West Sussex is underplayed given the non-availability of Newhaven and Littlehampton. Shoreham Harbour is the most strategically important port between Southampton and the Thames, in a region that is more dependent on marine aggregates than any other in the UK. The Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan proposes re-location of wharves from the Western Arm but also that there is no net loss in wharf capacity at the Port. Re-location will require safeguarding of *potential* wharf sites and capacity in line with NPPF.

Paragraph 2.4 is a little misleading, as it should recognise (as in paragraph 4.18 and 5.3) that the reason Brighton & Hove and East Sussex rely on Shoreham so heavily is that the capacity of the other ports (Newhaven and Littlehampton) has reduced significantly over the last 10 years to zero (for marine aggregates). The wharves and railheads study on which the scenarios are based fails to appreciate or properly consider the strategic importance of the facilities at Shoreham to support marine aggregate imports beyond West Sussex. Consequently, the options considered and the conclusions reached ignore the wider strategic value of these facilities beyond Shoreham Port. The landings figures referred to in paragraphs 3.11 and 4.3 do not include historic landings into Newhaven (in 1990 0.799mt was landed at Newhaven for example).

The suggestion in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.13, that additional capacity could be provided by the port terminus if required hardly represents safeguarded capacity, as envisaged by the NPPF. The port is a commercial operation, and will be driven by whatever activities generate the most revenue for them. There is also a concern that the approach drives operators into the commercial port area, where they become captive customers of the commercial terms applied by the port.

Finally, we have concerns about the potential effects on competition of the proposals in the JAAP which could result in removal of two operators from the local market with the assumption that the capacity they provided will be met by the remaining operators.

Background Paper 5 Safeguarding Mineral Resources

Q5.1. The BGS sheet identifies known resources of Lower Greensand which should be safeguarded in the appropriate manner. We would suggest an additional plan, 1e: Industrial Sand.

Q5.2. As above.

Q5.3. The 250m radius for MCAs around minerals sites appears to be appropriate and we are not aware of any evidence to suggest that this should be reduced.

Q5.4. The 250m radius for MCAs around safeguarded infrastructure sites appears to be appropriate and we are not aware of any evidence to suggest that this should be reduced.

Q5.5. Preparation in due course of a Supplementary Planning Document on implementation of safeguarding policy, including how to undertake a resource assessment, may be helpful. We are aware that other authorities are preparing such guidance.

Q5.6. The exemptions appear to be sensible. It should be clarified that 'minerals site' includes minerals infrastructure such as wharves and railheads.

Q5.7. The safeguarding process described is appropriate.