

CABINET – 24 MAY 2011

OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: MINERALS AND WASTE CORE STRATEGY – PREFERRED STRATEGY

Report by Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure)

Introduction

1. The Minerals and Waste Core Strategy will set out the vision and strategic objectives together with the spatial strategy, core policies and implementation framework for the supply of minerals and management of waste in Oxfordshire over the period to 2030. Detailed site allocations will be identified in a subsequent document.
2. In preparing the Core Strategy the County Council must carry out consultation before a proposed document is published for formal representations and then submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination by an inspector. This should include consultation on the options that have been considered and the Council's preferred strategy.
3. On 16 February 2011, Cabinet adopted locally derived figures for Oxfordshire's aggregates supply requirement, based on work done by consultants Atkins; and agreed a preferred spatial strategy approach for mineral working for consultation. Cabinet also agreed that consultation on the preferred minerals strategy should be combined with consultation on a preferred planning strategy for waste, in June/July 2011.
4. A set of proposed minerals policies based on this preferred strategy, together with a set of planning strategy options for waste and a suggested preferred strategy and policies for waste were considered by the Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group on 9 May 2011. Subject to a number of comments being addressed, the Working Group agreed to recommend that Cabinet agree a preferred minerals and waste core strategy for consultation based on these proposed strategies and policies; and that authority to finalise the consultation document be delegated to the Deputy Director (Growth and Infrastructure) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure.

Proposed Preferred Minerals Planning Strategy

5. The report by Atkins on Local Assessment of Aggregates Supply Requirements for Oxfordshire was published on the County Council's website in February 2011 and comments were invited. Comments have been received from the minerals industry and local environmental organisations. These are available in the Members' Resource Centre and are summarised in Annex 1. This annex also includes proposals for addressing key points raised. These proposals were endorsed by the Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group on 9 May 2011.
6. Annex 2 sets out the proposed vision and objectives and preferred strategy for minerals in Oxfordshire. The strategy comprises a set of core minerals policies. Policy 1 proposes a stretch target of 0.9 million tonnes a year for secondary and recycled aggregates. Policies 2 and 3 incorporate the aggregates supply figures and the strategy for the location of mineral workings previously agreed by Cabinet. Other policies cover aggregates rail depots; safeguarding of mineral resources and facilities; and restoration of mineral workings. In addition, Annex 4 sets out proposed common core policies for both minerals and waste on climate change; environmental protection; flooding; and transport and rights of way.

Proposed Preferred Waste Planning Strategy

7. The waste strategy must make planning provision for the facilities that will be required for the management of all wastes in Oxfordshire over the period to 2030. This includes not only municipal waste, which is collected and managed by the District and County Councils, but also wastes that are produced and managed by the private sector, including: commercial and industrial waste; construction, demolition and excavation waste; hazardous waste; and radioactive waste. A total of approximately 2 million tonnes of waste is produced in Oxfordshire each year. In addition, waste is brought into the county from elsewhere for disposal at landfill sites, under commercial arrangements that are not within the control of the County Council.
8. The management of waste in Oxfordshire has changed markedly in recent years. From a past position of most waste being disposed by landfill, approaching half of all waste is now being recycled or recovered for other use. This change is expected to continue as a result of investment in new waste facilities, in line with the waste hierarchy: prevention; preparing for re-use; recycling; other recovery; disposal. National policy is for waste management to move up this hierarchy, with disposal being the option of last resort.
9. The amount of waste produced in Oxfordshire is expected to grow as the population and economy increase. Production of waste is expected to be concentrated at the main urban areas of Oxford, Banbury, Bicester, Witney, Abingdon Didcot and Wantage and Grove, and the need for new waste management facilities is expected to be mainly at or near these locations. An assessment of the need for new waste management facilities has been carried out, and is available in the Members' Resource Centre.

10. Annex 3 sets out the draft preferred planning strategy for waste. The initial part of this annex provides the context for the strategy. The vision and objectives for waste are listed at paragraphs 23 – 25. The next section details for each type of waste the existing waste management facilities and the requirements for additional facilities. The options that have been identified for meeting these requirements are set out at paragraphs 61 – 84. These options have only been the subject of limited assessment and technical consultation, but an initial draft preferred planning strategy for waste is put forward at paragraphs 85 – 104.
11. For municipal waste, the strategy is already largely established through existing and planned facilities, apart from requirements for:
 - A new household waste recycling centre at Banbury, to replace the site at Alkerton (a proposal for a new household waste recycling centre at Kidlington to serve Oxford and surrounding area is already at the planning application stage);
 - Two transfer stations in the western and southern areas of the county for the transfer of residual municipal waste to the permitted Ardley energy from waste plant.
12. For the other waste types, the main elements of the suggested strategy are:
 - 7 or 8 additional recycling plants for commercial and industrial waste close to towns in the northern and southern areas of the county and Oxford and nearby areas;
 - A treatment plant for treatment of and recovery of resources from residual commercial and industrial waste (which is not recycled) in the Abingdon / Didcot / Wantage & Grove area;
 - 6 or more permanent recycling plants for construction, demolition and excavation waste (to produce recycled aggregates and soils) and smaller temporary recycling facilities located at landfill and quarry sites;
 - Additional landfill capacity from around 2020 for inert (construction, demolition and excavation) waste which cannot be recycled, at quarries that require infilling for restoration;
 - Storage of intermediate level radioactive nuclear legacy waste at Harwell and Culham, pending removal to a national disposal facility;
 - Disposal of low level radioactive nuclear legacy waste from Harwell and Culham at suitable landfill sites within Oxfordshire or (if none is available) elsewhere.
13. Draft policies to support the draft waste strategy are set out in Annex 3 at paragraphs 105 – 114. These include policies on: waste management targets; amounts of waste to be provided for; self sufficiency and waste imports; provision of additional waste management capacity; safeguarding of waste management facilities; location of waste management facilities; Green Belt; Areas of

Outstanding Natural Beauty; landfill; and hazardous and radioactive wastes.

Next Steps

14. Public consultation on the preferred minerals strategy and policies, and on both the waste strategy options and the initial preferred waste strategy and policies, will be undertaken in June/July 2011, in accordance with the timetable agreed by Cabinet on 16 February 2011. That will in turn shape the content of the Core Strategy document to be submitted to Government for independent examination. This is timetabled for early in 2012. Depending on responses to the consultation, further consultation may be necessary, particularly on the waste strategy. This could be undertaken later this year, in which case submission of the Core Strategy would be in mid 2012.

Sustainability Implications

15. Sustainability appraisal is being carried out as an integral part of preparation of the Core Strategy. A sustainability appraisal of the preferred strategies for minerals and waste is being prepared and will be made available alongside the consultation document.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

16. The Council has a statutory duty to produce the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy. It will contribute to the Council's strategic objectives of world class economy, healthy and thriving communities and environment and climate change.

Financial and Staff Implications

17. The programme of work for the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy is included within the Directorate work priorities. This report does not raise any additional financial or staffing implications.

Risk Management

18. The Minerals and Waste Development Framework is a high risk project. The complexity of the Minerals and Waste Development Framework process and the potential implications for major mineral working and waste management proposals emphasise the importance of good project management and regular reporting on risk management.

RECOMMENDATION

19. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **Agree that the County Council's draft Preferred Minerals and Waste Core Strategy be based on the proposed strategies and policies in Annexes 2, 3 and 4.**

- (b) **Agree that public consultation be carried out on the preferred strategy and policies for minerals and on the strategy options and draft preferred strategy and policies for waste.**
- (c) **Delegate authority to finalise the consultation document to the Deputy Director (Growth and Infrastructure) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure.**

Martin Tugwell
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Background papers:

Responses received in February and March 2011 to Local Assessment of Aggregates Supply Requirements for Oxfordshire, Atkins, January 2011.
Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework, Draft Waste Needs Assessment, May 2011.

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May 2011