

GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 MARCH 2011

Extract from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday, 16 February 2011

15/11 OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS & WASTE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY - PREFERRED MINERALS STRATEGY

(Agenda Item. 8)

The Cabinet considered a report (CA8) that summarised the findings of a local assessment of the requirement for aggregates supply produced by consultants for the County Council. This included locally derived figures for the levels of mineral supply that the Core Strategy should provide for, as an alternative to the top-down figures in the South East Plan.

The interim preferred strategy for mineral working agreed by Cabinet in October 2010 had been tested for deliverability using these supply levels against a preliminary assessment of potential sites. The report noted that the Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group had recommended that the strategy for sand and gravel should be amended by removal of the Radley/Nuneham Courtenay area and inclusion of the Cholsey area.

The local assessment of aggregates supply requirements will be made available and comments invited from industry and other key stakeholders over the next two months. A formal public consultation on the preferred minerals strategy, combined with a preferred waste strategy, will be undertaken in June/July 2011.

Councillor Anne Purse, Shadow Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure, commented that she had expressed reservations in November about the evidence base for the minerals strategy. There was now much more information and she was pleased to see the evidence supporting a lower figure. She now felt that the recommendations were more in line with other reports and pleased that thinking had caught up with her views.

Councillor Mathew, as a local Councillor for Eynsham stated that the area had provided the bulk of primary gravel in Oxfordshire and further afield for several years. He acknowledged the need for primary gravel but he asked for an equitable distribution and sustainability, with market driven pits close to the areas of need. He also asked for recognition of the cumulative effect on the local area and an acceptance of the heightened flood risk. He would wish to see infrastructure to match the development talking place and no more lakes permitted. There needed to be enforcement of planning conditions. He referred to the characteristics of the area including the Newbridge with a

weight restriction, the toll bridge at Swinford and existing developments in the area.

He referred to the sites at Stonehenge that had been granted permission and Gill Mill likely to be granted. Together with other sites it would mean the further obliteration of archaeological sites in the area. Local residents had been very patient and he asked that Cabinet support a more sustainable solution for Oxfordshire.

Responding to a question from Councillor Hudspeth Councillor Mathew confirmed that of course the Gill Mill site was subject to a decision by Planning & Regulation Committee and would have to await any such decision.

Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale welcomed the recent publication of the Atkins report and thanked officers and the Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure for their commitment to the project. She welcomed the lower figure for aggregates supply which negated the need to go looking for large new sites. If successful the locally derived figure could be the first success for localism.

The Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure in introducing the report commented that the gravel extraction tax should come back to the Council. Gravel could only be taken from where it existed but those areas should get the mitigation. The Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure proposed an additional recommendation to write to the Secretary of State and to the Chairman of the Planning & Regulation Committee to state that under the Coalition Government's Localism agenda the Council now endorse this as the emerging M3 figure when consideration is given to any application from this date onward.

Councillor Mitchell referred to representations received and considered by Cabinet Members from Eye and Dunsden Parish Council and OUTRAGE.

Generally Cabinet Members welcomed the Atkins Report and recommendations. Councillor David Robertson expressed some concern at the impact of current mineral workings in West Oxfordshire, noted that Councillor Mathew had referred to the issue of enforcement and asked for reassurance over enforcement activity. He added that he was aware that things had been promised and not delivered.

Councillor Chapman supported the reduced figures for aggregates supply but stated that she was unable to support the strategy because of the impact on West Oxfordshire. It was easy to go to a place that was already in use but the Council should spread the load. She believed that the policy was flawed and would be responding to the consultation.

Councillor Hudspeth responding to the comments made agreed to the need to look at enforcement; to learn from past practice to ensure future

permissions can be properly enforced. A financial contribution was needed from the start.

Martin Tugwell, Deputy Director Growth & Infrastructure, accepted that there had been a concentration in West Oxfordshire in the past but added that as part of the agreed strategy as new sites came forward they would be better located to where the demand is.

RESOLVED: (by 8 votes for to 1 against)

- (a) to adopt the locally derived figures for aggregates supply requirement in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report as the basis for the County Council's preferred spatial strategy approach for mineral working.
- (b) to agree the County Council's preferred spatial strategy approach for mineral working for consultation is:
 - i. sand and gravel – concentration of working in existing areas of working, at Lower Windrush Valley, Eynsham/ Cassington/Yarnton, Sutton Courtenay, Cholsey and Caversham;
 - ii. soft sand – working in three existing areas: south east of Faringdon; Tubney/Marcham/Hinton Waldrist; and Duns Tew;
 - iii. crushed rock – working in three existing areas: north of Bicester to the east of the River Cherwell; south of the A40 near Burford; and south east of Faringdon.
- (c) to agree that consultation on the preferred spatial strategy approach for mineral working be combined with consultation on a preferred waste spatial strategy, in June/July 2011.
- (d) that the Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure to write to the Secretary of State and the Chairman of the Planning & Regulation Committee to state that under the Coalition Government's Localism agenda we now endorse this as the emerging M3 figure when consideration is given to any application from this date onward.