

Division(s):

## **CABINET – 15 OCTOBER 2019**

### **MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN: PREFERRED SITES AND REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES**

**Report by Director for Planning & Place**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the inclusion of the preferred sites in the draft plan for consultation, and to delegate the final approval of the draft Plan for consultation to the Director of Planning & Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment.

2.

#### **Sharp Sand and Gravel**

**SG20b – Land between Eynsham and Cassington**

**SG42 – Nuneham Courtenay**

#### **Crushed Rock and Soft Sand**

**SS12 & CR12 – Land at Chinham Farm (Chinham Hill)**

**SS18 & CR22 – Hatford West Extension**

#### **Waste Sites**

**011 – Finmere Quarry, Finmere**

**026 – Whitehill Quarry, Burford**

**103 – Lakeside Industrial Estate, Standlake**

**229 – Shellingford Quarry, Shellingford / Stanford in the Vale**

**249B – High Cogges Farm, Witney**

**274 – Moorend Lane Farm, Thame**

**279 – Rear of Ford Dealership, Ryecote Lane**

**287 – Ardley Fields, Ardley**

**289 – Overthorpe Industrial Estate, Banbury**

#### **Executive Summary**

3. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 12 September 2017. The Core Strategy states that Part 2 of the Plan – Site Allocations will be prepared after the Core Strategy. A programme for the Site Allocations Plan is set out in the latest (ninth) revision of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme which was approved by the Cabinet on 22 January 2019. The target date for adoption of the Site Allocations Plan is November 2020.
4. Public consultation on site options (Issues and Options consultation document), took place from 8 August to 3 October 2018. All the minerals and waste sites that had been nominated for possible inclusion within the Site Allocations Plan were contained within this consultation.

5. Following this consultation, we then appointed consultants Adams Hendry to undertake informed site assessments of all the nominated sites.
6. Officers then went through these assessments to check for consistency and to bring in some more recent planning histories of the site.
7. In regards the nominated waste site assessments, Adams Hendry drew conclusions and made a number of recommendations from which we have drawn the reasonable alternatives.
8. In the case of the minerals sites, the assessments by Adams Hendry reached conclusions on each of the sites but did not undertake the comparisons and the recommendations as to which sites should be allocated in the Sites Plan.
9. This exercise has been undertaken by officers who have now concluded the reasonable alternatives and the preferred options for the mineral sites. A summary of these findings with officer comments, are contained within Annex 1 and 2 of this report. The OCC officer comments are to be read as a whole in reaching a judgement as to the suitability for allocation.
10. The Minerals and Waste Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) met on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The CAG members considered the sites that emerged from the Adams Hendry assessment of the minerals and waste sites. The discussion and views of members at that meeting have informed this report.
11. The next stage of the Plan preparation is consultation on the preferred sites and the reasonable alternatives.

## **Assessment of Preferred Sites**

### **Sharp Sand and Gravel**

12. Policy M3 of The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (OMWCS) set out that the split between northern Oxfordshire and Southern Oxfordshire should be approximately 25%:75% to achieve an approximately equal split of production capacity by 2031.
13. This has resulted in requirements of:  
Northern Oxfordshire-0.583 million tonnes + 5% contingency = 0.612 million tonnes;  
Southern Oxfordshire-3.054 million tonnes t + 5% contingency = 3.207 million tonnes;  
Total Oxfordshire – 3.637 million tonnes + 5% contingency = 3.819 million tonnes
14. The Site Assessment was in two parts. Stage 1a looked at all the sites nominated and assessed these against a number of criteria. Those that did not meet the criteria within Stage 1a did not progress to Stage 1b, which was a more detailed site assessment.

15. 18 sand and gravel sites were assessed in the Stage 1b process. Of these six were not considered suitable to be allocated in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Sites Plan (OMWSP). These sites, and the reasons they are not suitable are:
- (a) SG17 – Land at Culham. The site is a new site within an SRA. It would not normally be considered unsuitable for that reason alone, but it is also in an area where the highway network is at severe capacity, there is potential harm to heritage assets, it is in flood zones 2 and 3, and it could impact the strategy in the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034.
  - (b) SG23 – Windrush North, Gill Mill. The allocation would not result in additional mineral being worked until after 2031.
  - (c) SG27 – Vicarage Pit, Cogges Lane. The allocation would not result in additional mineral being worked until after 2031.
  - (d) SG60 – White Cross Farm. The site is the subject of an application that would involve restoration to a marina. The development of a marina in that location would be contrary to development plan policy and it has not been suggested that the material would be excavated for any other reason.
  - (e) SG63 – Finmere Quarry. The site is outside the strategic resource area (SRA) and would not therefore be in accordance with the principal locations for working aggregates minerals as set out in policies M3 and M4 of the OMWCS.
  - (f) SG67 – Sutton Wick Quarry. The site is outside the strategic resource area (SRA) and would not therefore be in accordance with the principal locations for working aggregates minerals as set out in policies M3 and M4 of the OMWCS.
16. The following sites remain as reasonable alternatives.

Northern Oxfordshire:

Extensions to existing quarries

SG18 - Land near Standlake.

New quarries

SG08 – Lower Road, Church Hanborough

SG20 – Land between Eynsham and Cassington.

SG20a – Land between Eynsham and Cassington

SG20b – Land between Eynsham and Cassington

SG29 – Sutton Farm, Sutton

Southern Oxfordshire:

Extensions to existing quarries

SG11 & SG65 – Land situated NE of Sonning Eye

New Quarries

SG9 and SG59 – Land at Drayton St Leonard & Berinsfield

SG42 - Land at Nuneham Courtenay

SG62 - Appleford

17. Policy M4 of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy states that there will be a priority for the extension of existing quarries where environmentally acceptable.

#### Northern Oxfordshire

18. In northern Oxfordshire, the priority for allocation of extensions to existing quarries would lead to the allocation of site SG18 Land at Standlake. However the quarry to which this site would be an extension is not currently operating, and so there is a concern that the site if allocated would not be delivered within the plan period. The site would have an estimated yield of 0.5million tonnes. This would be below the requirement needed in the northern area.
19. The best of the proposals for new quarries would be site SG20b. This would require mitigation to ensure it did not affect sensitive receptors and would need to show that there would be no harm to the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation. The site has an estimated reserve of 1.86million tonnes which would be well above the requirement for northern Oxfordshire.
20. Site SG20b Land between Eynsham and Cassington is therefore the preferred option for northern Oxfordshire.

#### Southern Oxfordshire

21. In southern Oxfordshire, the priority for allocation of extensions to existing quarries would lead to the allocation of site SG11 & SG65 Land situated NE of Sonning Eye. This site however, is not due to come into use until 2029, which is at the end of the plan period, and would give only 0.34million tonnes during the plan period. This would be well below the requirement needed in southern Oxfordshire.
22. Site SG62 Appleford is proposed as an extension to an existing quarry but appears in fact to be a new stand-alone quarry. The site would have a lifetime of 3 years and would produce 1.1million tonnes of sand and gravel over the lifetime of the site.
23. There would still be a requirement for a further 1.9mt of sand and gravel in the southern Oxfordshire area. The two remaining sites would have yields of 3.9million tonnes (SG42 Land at Nuneham Courtenay) and 6mt (SG9 & SG59 Land at Drayton St Leonard & Berinsfield). Of these two sites, SG42 Land at Nuneham Courtenay would have fewer constraints, it would yield less mineral reserve but still be well above the remainder of the amount needed for the south of the County. Therefore, SG42 Land at Nuneham Courtenay is the preferred option.

#### Total Sand and Gravel Reserve

24. Taking all those sites together would give a total reserve of 5.76 million tonnes:  
Northern Oxfordshire (Site SG20b)      1.86 million tonnes (32%)

Southern Oxfordshire (Site SG42) 3.90 million tonnes (68%)

25. As well as being above the requirement for the county this would not achieve the rebalancing of production from northern Oxfordshire to southern Oxfordshire to the extent set out in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy. It does however move towards rebalancing the production capacity of the Minerals sites within the North and South of the County.

### **Soft Sand and Crushed Rock**

26. The requirements for soft sand and crushed rock are:  
Soft Sand – 0.641 million tonnes + 10% contingency = **0.705 million tonnes**;  
Crushed Rock – 1.978 million tonnes + 10% contingency = **2.176 million tonnes**.
27. The County Council's Planning and Regulation Committee on 15th July 2019 resolved to grant planning permission, subject to completion of a legal agreement, for the western extension to Shellingford Quarry (MW.0104/18). This would permit a reserve of 1.8million tonnesof Limestone and 1mt of soft sand over a 22 year period to 2041, which would be an average rate of 127,000 tonnes per annum . Proportionately, that would equate to approximately 82,000 tonnes per annum of limestone and 45,000tonnes per annum of soft sand.
28. Assuming the working started in 2020 future that would give approximately 11 years of supply within the plan period:  
11 x 82,000 = 0.902million tonnes of limestone  
11 x 45,000 = 0.495million tonnes of soft sand
29. This would leave a further requirement of  
Soft sand 0.21 million tonnes  
Crushed Rock 1.274 million tonnes
30. Of the 15 soft sand and crushed rock sites assessed in the Stage 1b process, two were not suitable to be allocated in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 2 – Sites Plan (OMWSP). These sites are CR07 Adjacent to Whitehill Quarry, Burford and CR10 Burford Quarry, SW extension, both because they would not come into use until after 2031 and would not therefore increase the reserve within the plan period.
31. Given that crushed rock is the larger requirement needed, and that some sites would provide both crushed rock and soft sand, it would be sensible to look at the crushed rock allocation first.
32. There are therefore 10 reasonable alternatives for Crushed Rock
- (a) CR13 – Dewars Farm Quarry East Extension
  - (b) CR15 – Land off the B4100 Baynards Green
  - (c) CR19 – Dewars Farm Quarry South Extension
  - (d) SS-03 & CR17 – Hatford Quarry South Extension

- (e) SS07 & CR24 – Home Farm Shellingford
  - (f) SS12 & CR12 – Land at Chinham Farm
  - (g) SS15 & CR11 – Hatford Quarry North Extension
  - (h) SS16 & CR21 – Hatford Quarry Stanford Extension
  - (i) SS18 & CR22 – Hatford Quarry West Extension
  - (j) SS19 & CR23 – Home Farm Carswell
33. CR13 Dewars Farm Quarry East Extension and CR19 Dewars Farm Quarry South Extension are extensions within the SRA, but would not come into use until 2029 and would give only 2 years of extraction within the plan period.
34. Sites CR15 Land off the B4100 Baynards Green, SS07 & CR24 Home Farm Shellingford, and CR19 & CR23 Home Farm, Carswell would be within the SRA but would be new sites rather than an extension. These do not therefore accord with the preference for crushed rock provision as set out in the Core Strategy.
35. Of the remaining sites:
- (a) SS03 & CR17 Hatford Quarry South Extension would have a significant impact on landscape and the Hatford Conservation Area
  - (b) SS15 & CR11 Hatford Quarry North Extension would have high ecological impacts and moderate landscape impacts.
  - (c) SS16 & CR21 Hatford Quarry Stanford Extension would have high landscape impacts and moderate ecological impacts.
36. Site SS12 & CR12 Land at Chinham Farm would have only a moderate loss of ecology and landscape which could be mitigated at planning application stage, and indeed the site had been granted planning permission in 2011, but the planning permission lapsed. The site would yield just 0.1million tonnes of crushed rock, but it would deliver 0.3million tonnes of soft sand. A further site for crushed rock would need to be allocated.
37. SS18 & CR22 Hatford Quarry West Extension would have the potential for high ecological impacts and moderate landscape impacts which would have to be mitigated at application stage. The site would yield 1.2million tonnes of crushed rock and 0.2million tonnes of soft sand.
38. Allocating sites SS12 & CR12 and SS18 & CR22 would provide:
- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Crushed Rock                              | 1.3 million tonnes |
| SS12 & CR12 Land at Chinham Farm          | 0.1 million tonnes |
| SS18 & CR22 Hatford Quarry West Extension | 1.2 million tonnes |
| Soft Sand                                 | 0.5million tonnes  |
| SS12 & CR12 Land at Chinham Farm          | 0.3 million tonnes |
| SS18 & CR22 Hatford Quarry West Extension | 0.2 million tonnes |
39. This would meet both the crushed rock and soft sand requirements of Oxfordshire for the plan period.

## Waste

40. Fifty waste sites were nominated for potential inclusion within the Plan. Like the Minerals assessments, the waste site assessment was in two parts. Stage 1a looked at all the sites nominated and assessed these against a number of criteria. Those that did not meet the criteria within Stage 1a did not progress to Stage 1b, which was a more detailed site assessment. Following assessment of the sites Adams Hendry drew conclusions and made a number of recommendations. A summary of the findings to the Stage 1b of the waste assessments can be seen in Annex 3
41. Unlike Minerals the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy does not set out a limit for Waste Management provision for the Plan period and encourages the movement of waste up the waste hierarchy.
42. The assessment of sites has resulted in the recommendation of the following sites as suitable for allocation in the Sites Plan:
  - (a) 010 Sutton Courtenay Landfill, Sutton Courtenay / Appleford
  - (b) 011 Finmere Quarry, Finmere
  - (c) 026 Whitehill Quarry, Burford
  - (d) 103 Lakeside Industrial Estate, Standlake
  - (e) 229 Shellingford Quarry, Shellingford / Stanford in the Vale
  - (f) 249B High Cogges Farm, Witney
  - (g) 274 Moorend Lane Farm, Thame
  - (h) 279 Rear of Ford Dealership, Ryecote Lane
  - (i) 287 Ardley Fields, Ardley
  - (j) 289 Overthorpe Industrial Estate, Banbury
43. There are two sites for which the recommendation from the consultants is inconclusive:
  - (a) 009 – Sites C and D at Yarnton; and
  - (b) 224 – Ambrose Quarry, Ewelme.
44. Site 009 at Yarnton consists of two areas: Area D has been granted planning permission on appeal partly because it was considered to be previously developed land. The second area, Area C, is part of a mineral extraction area with permission to extract until 2022, with restoration to follow. It would therefore not be suitable for a waste site without exceptional circumstances for its release from the Green Belt.
45. Site 224 Ambrose Quarry is a dormant quarry with a long-term restoration scheme required by 2044. The site could be used for short term uses and might benefit from further infilling to achieve a better restoration, but the site is not suitable for allocation as a waste site.
46. Site 010 Sutton Courtenay is in an area where land is safeguarded for highway improvements in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031, and has therefore been removed from the list of reasonable options.

47. As mentioned above, the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy seeks to enable waste to be moved up the waste hierarchy, away from landfill and towards increased re-use, recycling, composting and recovery of resources for waste. To that end there is no requirement to choose between suitable sites, rather they should be made available to allow more options for facilities to come forward. The sites as listed in paragraph 31 above should therefore all be considered preferred sites for allocation in the Sites Allocation Plan.

## **Conclusion**

48. For the reasons given in this report the sites that should go forward for consultation as the preferred options for allocation in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 2: Sites Plan are:

### Sharp Sand and Gravel

- SG20b – Land between Eynsham and Cassington
- SG42 – Nuneham Courtenay

### Crushed Rock and Soft Sand

- SS12 & CR12 – Land at Chinham Farm (Chinham Hill)
- SS18 & CR22 – Hatford West Extension

### Waste Sites

- 011 – Finmere Quarry, Finmere
- 026 – Whitehill Quarry, Burford
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## **Financial and Staff Implications**

49. The Minerals & Waste Local Plan is included within the work priorities of the Communities Directorate and is in part being progressed within the existing mainstream budget for the Council's minerals and waste policy function. Increased funding will be required in 2019/20 and 2020/21, in particular to provide the funding required to take the plan through examination and to adoption. There are no additional staff implications.

## **Equalities Implications**

50. None have been specifically identified.

## **Legal Implications**

51. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), the County Council is required to prepare a minerals and waste local plan. The European Waste Framework Directive, 2008 (2008/98/EC), as transposed through the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, requires waste planning authorities to put in place waste local plans. These requirements have in part been met by adoption of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and will be fully met by preparation and adoption of the Site Allocations Plan.

## **Risk Management**

52. If a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan, including both a Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan, is not adopted (for example, if the Site Allocations Plan was abandoned or found to be “unsound” following examination), the County Council would not have a full, up to date and locally-determined land-use policy framework against which to determine applications for new mineral working and waste management developments in Oxfordshire. Such a diminution of local control over these operations would leave the authority with much less influence over the location of future minerals and waste operations and make it heavily reliant on the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy for Waste, which are considerably less comprehensive and detailed in their coverage of these matters.

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Background papers: None

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