
Meeting: Executive
Date: 15 February 2011
Subject: Mineral Safeguarding Areas consultation
Report of: Cllr Nicols, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development
Summary: The report proposes that the Executive approve the contents of the Mineral Safeguarding Areas consultation document for public consultation and note the intended timetable for the progress of the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework.

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities
Contact Officer: Lester Hannington, Principal Minerals and Waste Planning Officer.
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive
Key Decision Yes
**Reason for urgency/
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The safeguarding of mineral resources will contribute to managing growth effectively, as it ensures the effective management of resources and protects them for future generations.

Financial:

There are no additional financial implications of this proposed area of work, beyond the budget agreed for the Minerals and Waste Planning Shared Service.

Legal:

It is a requirement of Mineral Policy Statement 1 that Mineral Planning Authorities develop Mineral Safeguarding Areas. Central Bedfordshire Council is a Mineral Planning Authority.

Risk Management:

Safeguarding minerals avoids the potential sterilisation of scarce resources.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

There are no staffing issues raised by the consultation document.

Equalities/Human Rights:

There are believed to be no issues in respect of equalities, or implications for human rights arising from this proposed consultation.

Community Safety:

There are no issues raised in respect of community safety.

Sustainability:

The safeguarding of mineral resources is consistent with sustainable development, since it makes the effective use of scarce resources, and protects them from needless sterilisation for the benefit of future generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

that the Executive:

1. (a) **Approve the Mineral Safeguarding Areas Consultation Document for the purpose of public consultation.**
- (b) **Delegate authority for any minor changes of wording to be agreed by the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development.**
2. (a) **Note the intended stages for the future progress of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.**

Reason for Recommendations: To enable progress on the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework to be maintained.

Progress on the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework

1. The Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework is a suite of planning policy documents which are being developed by a shared service on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedford Borough and Luton Borough Councils. Since Local Government Re-Organisation took place in April 2009, a revised Local Development Scheme (the project plan for the production of the documents) for Minerals and Waste has been agreed with Government, but will need to be further revised in the near future with Local Government Elections in May 2011.
2. The 2009 Local Development Scheme set out the intention to merge the two draft Core Strategies, (one for minerals, and one for waste), and two site allocation plans, into a single combined Minerals and Waste Core Strategy. Before the previous consultation documents on minerals and waste could be brought together to create a combined Core Strategy, a consultation was carried out in the summer of 2010 on a Preferred Options Stage Waste Core Strategy. This further consultation was needed as the Waste Core Strategy was not as advanced as that for minerals.
3. One additional document needs to undergo public consultation before the combined Minerals and Waste Core Strategy is developed. This is in relation to Safeguarding Mineral Resources. Following consultation on Mineral Safeguarding, the intention is to develop a combined Minerals and Waste Core Strategy in the first half of 2011. The combined Minerals and Waste core Strategy will begin reporting to Executives followed by public consultation, after the Local Government elections.

Mineral Safeguarding

- 4.. A range of mineral resources are present within the administrative areas of Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. These include clay, sands and gravels, silica sands, Fuller's Earth, and chalk. There is an active quarrying industry in the locality, with sands and gravels being worked to provide construction materials; silica sands being worked for use in specialist industrial uses; and chalk for use in cement manufacture and as building stone.
5. Surface developments can sterilise mineral resources, by preventing access to them. The process of Mineral Safeguarding is the means whereby the presence of valuable mineral deposits is taken into account in decisions concerning surface developments. Mineral Safeguarding is not about identifying sites for future extraction, but about conserving scarce mineral resources for the benefit of future generations.

6. The consultation document will include detailed plans of the areas containing economically valuable mineral resources, and which are to be subject to a Safeguarding Policy. The Policy will become part of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy concerning how proposals for surface development will be decided in areas identified as Mineral Safeguarding Areas. According to the quality and significance of the mineral present, and of the surface development proposed, the decision may be to allow the surface development to take place; allow it only after prior extraction of the minerals present; or refuse the surface development.

Conclusion and Next Steps

7. The Executive is asked to approve the draft Minerals Safeguarding document to enable public consultation to commence. In addition, following the Local Government Elections in 2011, a Pre-Submission Draft of the combined Minerals and Waste Core Strategy will be reported to the Executive before further public consultation takes place.

Appendices:

Appendix A – draft Mineral Safeguarding Areas consultation document.

Appendix B - draft Mineral Safeguarding Area plans.

Appendix C - consultation methods and stakeholders

Background Papers: None.

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands.