

10. Minerals and Waste



Can recycling

MINERALS

Introduction

10.1 The minerals policies of the previous Structure Plan have been extensively revised in this Plan, for three reasons:

- (a) Fresh guidance has been issued by Government since the previous policies were prepared, in particular MPG1 “General Considerations and the Development Plan System” (1996) and MPG6 “Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England” (1994).
- (b) The Suffolk Minerals Local Plan was adopted in May 1999. This has allowed the deletion from the Structure Plan of detailed policies on matters now addressed in the Local Plan.
- (c) More concise policy wording can be used without altering the basic policy approach.

10.2 The new policies seek to implement the Government’s objectives in respect of sustainable minerals development:

- (a) to conserve minerals as far as possible, whilst ensuring an adequate supply to meet needs;
- (b) to ensure that the environmental impacts caused by mineral operations and the transport of minerals are kept, as far as possible, to an acceptable minimum;
- (c) to minimise production of waste and to encourage efficient use of materials, including appropriate use of high quality materials, and recycling of wastes;
- (d) to encourage sensitive working, restoration and aftercare practices so as to preserve or enhance the overall quality of the environment;
- (e) to protect areas of designated landscape or nature conservation value from development, other than in exceptional circumstances and where it has been demonstrated that development is in the public interest;
- (f) to prevent the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources; and
- (g) to facilitate the increased use of recycled aggregates.

Sand and gravel landbank

10.3 Even with effective recycling, and aggregate imports, new aggregates will be required for the foreseeable future. The sole indigenous source of such aggregates in Suffolk is sand and gravel.

10.4 MPG1 requires that minerals planning authorities (MPA) seek to maintain a “landbank” of planning permissions for minerals extraction. MPG6 advises this should be equivalent to at least 7 years working. The actual land bank requirement is based on the annual provision in the Minerals Local Plan, which in turn reflects the sub-regional apportionment of the guidance for East Anglia in MPG6. The County Council will seek to recognise fluctuating demand by reviewing and monitoring existing reserves of sand and gravel.

MP1 The County Council will seek to maintain a stock of planning permissions for the winning and working of sand and gravel in Suffolk sufficient for at least seven years extraction. In maintaining this stock, favourable consideration will be given to mineral working within sites proposed in the Minerals Local Plan.

Marine Dredged Aggregates

10.5 Historically marine dredged aggregate has contributed significantly to the county’s consumption of aggregates. However in recent years this has declined with the impact of recession on the construction industry. MPG6 makes an assumption that 10 million tonnes of marine dredged sand and gravel will be supplied to the East Anglia region between 1992 and 2006. It is estimated that 6.5 million tonnes might be landed in Suffolk over this period. The County Council is consulted by the Government on applications to dredge off the immediate coast. The Council will continue to highlight any potential adverse impact of dredging particularly on the coastline and marine environment with the determining body, and will update this advice in the light of scientific evidence.

Rail and port facilities for minerals handling

10.6 Structure Plan transport policies seek to maximise the amount of freight and bulk material transported by means other than road. Consequently existing wharves and rail depots used for aggregate and cement handling should be retained as far as possible.

MP2 The County Council will seek to safeguard all existing rail depot facilities and port facilities for the handling of aggregates and cement identified in the Minerals Local Plan. Loss of such sites will only be acceptable if suitable alternatives are made available.

Landbank for chalk

- 10.7 Chalk is used in industrial processes and for treatment of acidic agricultural land. Workings in Suffolk are characteristically long lived and low output operations. Calculation of a “landbank” will be based on an average of the last three years’ production in Suffolk for which figures are available.

MP3 The County Council will seek to maintain a stock of planning permissions for the winning and working of chalk sufficient for at least 10 years extraction. When considering planning applications, regard will be paid to the ability of the limited number of existing operators to meet demand.

Safeguarding of mineral reserves and resources

- 10.8 As a contribution to sustainable development, every effort should be made to safeguard minerals resources which are or may become of economic importance, against other forms of development. To this end, Minerals Consultation Areas have been defined in the Suffolk Minerals Local Plan. District Councils are requested to consult with the MPA in respect of specific planning applications in this area. The Minerals Local Plan allows for the extraction of mineral from sites in advance of other forms of development, to prevent sterilisation of sand and gravel, chalk and clay resources.

MP4 The County Council will protect permitted mineral reserves and potential resources as far as is reasonably practicable from development which might preclude their later extraction.

The Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast

- 10.9 Policy ENV7 provides strategic guidance for the consideration of development proposals in these areas. Policy MP5 provides additional guidance in respect of mineral workings and reflects other key requirements of Government guidance.
- 10.10 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 require that in certain circumstances applications for major projects such as mineral working will require the preparation of an Environmental Statement by the applicant. Within the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural

Beauty and Heritage Coast, the submission of such a statement will normally be required as a basis for the rigorous examination of mineral working proposals.

MP5 Mineral working and associated development will not be acceptable within the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including the Heritage Coast, where:

- (a) the development is unnecessary in terms of national considerations of supply; and/or
- (b) there would be a material adverse impact upon the landscape or ecology.

Special Landscape Areas

- 10.11 Government guidance requires that the level of protection given to these locally designated areas should be less than that to the areas of national importance and referred to in MP5. The following policy provides the appropriate level of protection.

MP6 Special Landscape Areas will be safeguarded from mineral working and associated development that would have a material adverse impact on their particular landscape qualities. Where such development does take place, the impact will be minimised through control of the method and phasing of working, screening, landscaping during and after working and proposals for restoration.

Extensions to existing mineral workings and associated development

- 10.12 Extensions to mineral workings and associated development can have less of an impact than new workings on greenfield sites, because they can use existing infrastructure such as processing plant and means of access.

MP7 Favourable consideration will be given to proposed extensions to mineral workings and associated development where there is no material conflict with other relevant policies of this Plan.

Borrow Pits

- 10.13 MPG1 indicates that MPAs should continue to consider proposals which are not identified in their Minerals Local Plans. Policies MP4 MP5,

MP6 and MP7 will be particularly relevant. There may be instances where these sites have environmental advantages over those already identified. The County Council as MPA considers that the most likely example will be borrow pits, which reduce or eliminate altogether the number and length of trips made by road.

- MP8 The County Council will give favourable consideration to proposals for mineral working and associated development solely to serve a major civil engineering or transport project where**
- (a) the proposed site lies close to the construction location;**
 - (b) the operation will be concluded and the land reclaimed no later than the completion of the project; and**
 - (c) there is no material conflict with other relevant policies of this Plan.**

General Considerations/Schemes of Working

10.14 Policy MP9 refers to the role of the Minerals Local Plan in providing detailed policy guidance against which proposals for mineral working and associated development will be assessed.

- MP9 When considering proposed mineral working and other associated development, the County Council will have regard to Suffolk Minerals Local Plan proposals for mineral working and policies on the following matters:**
- (a) environmental protection and enhancement, including the protection of residential amenity;**
 - (b) site operation;**
 - (c) transportation, including highway safety, and routes for associated HGV movements;**
 - (d) site reclamation;**
 - (e) withdrawal of permitted development rights.**

After use

10.15 When considering proposals for the after use of mineral workings favourable consideration will be given to restoration to agriculture, forestry, recreational uses and nature conservation uses, and in particular to the creation of priority wildlife habitats as defined in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan provides

specific local guidance and will be implemented in partnership with conservation agencies and other organisations. Other uses will be considered on their merits.

Recycled Aggregates

10.16 Government requires planning authorities to take a positive approach to the use of recycled materials to reduce the demand for primary aggregates. These issues are addressed in the following section on waste.

WASTE

Introduction

10.17 "Waste Strategy 2000" sets out the Government's strategy for managing waste in England and Wales. The strategy is designed to ensure that the UK moves towards sustainable waste management and complies with the EU Landfill Directive requirements for reducing biodegradable waste going to landfill. It places emphasis on the need to tackle the quantity of waste produced and to break the link between economic growth and increased waste.

10.18 Encouraging waste reduction is not directly related to land use. County Council policies on waste minimisation are being pursued through the Waste Minimisation Plan and through initiatives such as the Suffolk Waste Minimisation Partnership.

10.19 Where waste is produced the national Waste Strategy expects it to be managed in accordance with the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO). In determining the BPEO, decision makers are expected to involve the public and consider the following:

- (a) the waste hierarchy: this requires waste to be treated with priority given to reduction, followed by re-use, followed by recovery (recycling, composting, energy recovery). Only if none of these offer an appropriate solution should waste be disposed of;
- (b) the proximity principle: This requires waste to be disposed of as close to the place of production as possible; and
- (c) the need for national, and where practicable, regional self-sufficiency in managing waste.

10.20 The County Council accepts there is a need for an adequate network of waste facilities in Suffolk arising from the desirability of recovering or disposing of waste close to where it is produced.

This is known as the proximity principle. Policy WD1 seeks to articulate this principle and to provide a framework for the preparation of a Local Plan dealing with waste matters. Notwithstanding WD1, it is accepted that in exceptional circumstances there may be a case for facilities to recover or dispose of specialist waste generated mainly from outside Suffolk.

- 10.21 The County Council recognises that waste management and disposal policy and practice is currently an area of rapid change, particularly as the Landfill Tax takes effect. The Council is working in partnership with all Suffolk Districts to produce a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. This may have land use implications. The policies in this part of the Structure Plan will be kept under review to ensure that they provide an appropriate strategic planning framework for these activities.

WD1 The County Council will seek to maintain adequate provision for the management of waste generated within Suffolk. In maintaining this provision favourable consideration will be given to management facilities identified in the appropriate Local Plan. Regard will be had to the Government’s developing framework for sustainable waste management.

Waste Recovery

- 10.22 Recovery is a broad term which includes recycling, composting and energy generation. Recycling involves processing waste to produce a usable raw material or product e.g. crushing old concrete to produce constructional hardcore. Composting involves the aerobic degradation of organic wastes such as kitchen wastes to produce a material containing plant nutrients i.e. compost. There are a number of methods of recovering energy from waste, the most common being the generation of electricity through the burning of landfill gas.
- 10.23 Policy WD2 emphasises the priority to be given to waste recovery over waste disposal as part of the management strategy.

WD2 To encourage the recovery of waste materials and reduce the need for waste disposal by means of landfilling, the County Council will give favourable consideration to proposals for the recycling of waste and for the recovery of energy from waste, where there is no material conflict with other relevant policies of this Plan.

Recovery and transfer of waste materials at existing mineral working and landfill sites

- 10.24 One opportunity to encourage the production of secondary aggregates and recovery of other materials is to promote the use of existing mineral workings or landfill sites for this purpose.

WD3 Within active mineral workings and landfill sites the County Council will give favourable consideration to proposals for the recovery of wastes for subsequent transfer providing:

- (a) the proposed development is temporary and ancillary to the mineral workings or landfill site;
- (b) by virtue of any additional mitigation measures, the prolonged reclamation of the site would not lead to an adverse impact upon residential or rural amenity; and
- (c) there is no material conflict with other relevant policies of this Plan.

Recovery and transfer of waste materials at other sites

- 10.25 Generally, sites located on the urban fringe will be close to the largest sources of demolition and construction wastes and also close to potential markets for the recycled product. Other “freestanding” developments that have in the past been permitted in the county include waste composting, waste transfer facilities, and waste recycling operations fully enclosed within buildings.

WD4 The County Council will give favourable consideration to proposals for the recovery and subsequent transfer of waste materials at locations other than current mineral workings and landfill sites provided:

- (a) where the proposed development is to take place close to or within urban areas it does so within purpose designed facilities and is situated close to a principal road;
- (b) there is no material conflict with other relevant policies of this Plan.

Staffed Household Waste Sites

- 10.26 Staffed Household Waste Sites (previously known as Civic Amenity Sites) where the public are able

to take their household wastes including those for recycling and composting have been established at the following locations:

Fen Lane, Beccles; Somersham Road, Bramford; County Council Depot, Brome; Rougham Hill, Bury St Edmunds; Shotley Road, Chelmondiston; Carr Road, Felixstowe; Foxhall Road, Foxhall; Aldham Road, Hadleigh; Coupals Close, Haverhill; Culford Road, Ingham; Sir Alf Ramsey Way, Ipswich; Lovers Lane, Leiston; Wilde Street, Lowestoft; County Council Depot, Mildenhall; Exning Road, Newmarket; Blyth Road, Southwold; off A14, Stowmarket; Sandy Lane, Sudbury.

10.27 Some of the above sites are subject to temporary planning permissions which will require renewal or replacement. Entirely new facilities may also be developed.

WD5 The County Council will give favourable consideration to proposals for staffed Household Waste Sites at or adjoining active landfill sites subject to there being no conflict with other relevant policies of this Plan. The County Council will only allow proposals for the continued siting of such facilities following the cessation of landfilling provided:

- (a) the development would not be detrimental to residential or rural amenity; and
- (b) there is no material conflict with other relevant policies of this Plan.

WD6 When considering proposals for the siting of staffed Household Waste Sites at locations not related to active landfill sites, regard will be paid to:

- (a) the accessibility of the site to the public;
- (b) the period for which permission is requested; and
- (c) other relevant policies of this Plan.

Waste Disposal

10.28 Even where effective provisions for waste recovery are in place, there will continue to be a need for the disposal of unusable residues. The landfilling of former mineral workings is currently the cheapest method of disposal of non-hazardous wastes although waste incineration may become increasingly financially attractive as landfill costs increase. The County Council regards waste disposal, whether by landfill or incineration, very much as a last resort, although disposal to landfill

will continue to be the main means of managing waste in the short term in Suffolk owing to high levels of permitted voidspace. The need for and nature of new facilities for waste management and disposal will be considered in the preparation of the Suffolk Waste Local Plan. Proposals for major new disposal facilities will need to demonstrate a pressing local need to be favourably considered in advance of the emerging Local Plan.

Landfill

10.29 Policy WD7 sets down strategic considerations relevant to proposals for landfilling.

WD7 The disposal of waste by the landfill of worked out mineral sites will only be acceptable where:

- (a) there would be no material adverse effect on the quality or availability of ground or surface water;
- (b) restoration and aftercare schemes demonstrate that land can be brought back to agricultural or other use at an appropriate standard;
- (c) there would be no significant loss of residential or rural amenity;
- (d) the need for landfilling as a waste disposal option is identified in the appropriate Local Plan.

Waste disposal above existing ground levels

10.30 The final contours of completed landfill or landraise sites are domed to make allowance for settlement, and to provide adequate surface water drainage. Doming also maximises the amount of void space available for infilling. Doming can however also be an intrusive element in the countryside.

WD8 Proposals for the disposal of waste above former or existing ground levels in landfill and landraising sites will only be permitted by the County Council where they accord with policy WD7 and where it can be shown that:

- (a) the proposed gradients, doming, levels and profiles can be assimilated naturally into adjoining land contours;
- (b) the proposals are necessary to achieve satisfactory drainage and reclamation; and

- (c) **there is no material conflict with other relevant policies of this Plan.**

General restrictions on waste disposal/reclamation and after care

- 10.31 The County Council is the appropriate planning authority for the determination of applications relating to waste water treatment. Continued population growth will increase demands on waste management systems. The EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive is now in force preventing the disposal of sewage sludge at sea. Additional and upgraded sewage treatment facilities are required to compensate for this change. It is expected that there will be increased quantities of biosolids (sludge) for disposal. The present practice of landspreading and treatment are being reviewed at national level. Other options for the disposal of biosolids include incineration and composting.
- 10.32 The previous Structure Plan (incorporating Alterations 1, 2 and 3, June 1995) contained a number of detailed policies concerned with waste disposal. Policy WD2 of that Plan set out a range of matters to be taken into account in considering proposals for waste disposal, including cross references to other policies in that plan. Policy WD3 referred to experience gained in landfill and restoration that may be of value in assessing new proposals. Policy WD4 set out requirements to be met to ensure satisfactory operation, restoration and after care of waste disposal sites. All of these policies have been deleted as they are more properly the concern of the Waste Local Plan.
- 10.33 Policy WD9 refers to the role of “the appropriate” Local Plan. In this case the Waste Local Plan will, once prepared, provide detailed policy guidance against which waste facilities will be assessed. Pending adoption of the Waste Local Plan the County Council will continue to apply policies WD2, WD3 and WD4 of the previous Structure Plan for development control purposes. These three policies are set out in Appendix 2 to this Explanatory Memorandum.

WD9 When considering proposed waste facilities and associated development the County Council will have regard to appropriate Local Plan proposals for such development, and policies on the following matters:

- (a) **environmental protection and enhancement, including the protection of residential amenity;**
- (b) **site operation;**

- (c) **transportation, including highway safety;**
- (d) **site reclamation.**

Provision for waste recovery and disposal facilities in the Waste Local Plan

- 10.34 “Waste Strategy 2000” sets a number of national targets for waste management. In making provision for waste facilities in the Suffolk Waste Local Plan, the County Council will have regard to these national targets and any regional guidance available. The national targets will be kept under review, but currently consist of the following:
- (a) by 2005 to reduce the amount of industrial and commercial waste sent to landfill to 85% of that in 1998;
 - (b) to recover value from 40% of municipal waste by 2005;
 - (c) to recover value from 45% of municipal waste by 2010;
 - (d) to recover value from 67% of municipal waste by 2015;
 - (e) to recycle or compost at least 25% of household waste by 2005;
 - (f) to recycle or compost at least 30% of household waste by 2010;
 - (g) to recycle or compost at least 33% of household waste by 2015.