

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND SPORT

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	4 April 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	CENTRAL AND EASTERN BERKSHIRE JOINT MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Page	PORTFOLIO:	Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport
SERVICE:	Planning	WARDS:	All
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan, Issues and Options Consultation, which it is intended will be undertaken during June and July 2017. This consultation/community involvement will then feed into the preparation of a draft local plan.
- 1.2 Reading Borough Council is preparing the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan jointly with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council. The Plan is being prepared by the Environment and Planning Services of Hampshire County Council. Draft consultation documents for the Issues and Options Consultation are attached or are available on request. They are at an advanced stage of preparation but will be subject to some further drafting.
- 1.3 The Issues and Options stage of local plan preparation involves consulting broadly on what the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan should address and how it should address it.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Issues and Options for the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (Appendix 1) be approved.
- 2.2 That community involvement on the Issues and Options for the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan and associated supporting documents be authorised;
- 2.3 That the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the Issues and Options for the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, prior to community involvement.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The unitary authorities in Berkshire have responsibility for planning for the future production of minerals and for the management of waste disposal within the Berkshire area. Minerals and waste is an area of planning which is strategic in nature and as such is better planned for on a larger geography than an individual unitary authority. As such Bracknell Forest, Reading, the Royal Borough and Wokingham Councils are pursuing a joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Slough BC does not wish to take part in this joint arrangement, but will have a watching brief. West Berkshire Council is currently preparing a Minerals and Waste Local Plan for the area of its district.
- 3.2 In September 2016, Policy Committee approved a Joint Working Agreement between Hampshire County Council (HCC), the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM), Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), Bracknell Forest Borough Council (BFDC) and Reading Borough Council (RBC) for the preparation of a Minerals and Waste Local Plan for the Central and Eastern Berkshire area. The plan will cover the area of the 4 Berkshire authorities and it will guide minerals and waste decision-making in the Plan area up to 2036. The Councils currently rely on a Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire (Adopted in 1995 but subject to Alterations in 1997 and 2001) and the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (1998). These were prepared and adopted by the former Berkshire County Council and are now out of date. The policies in the existing minerals and waste plans for Berkshire were designed to guide development until 2006. Although the 'saved' policies are still used, their effectiveness is now very limited.
- 3.3 The 4 authorities are working with the Environment and Planning Services of Hampshire County Council (HCC) to produce the plan with the costs of the work being shared equally between the four authorities. HCC is the Minerals and Waste Authority for Hampshire

and has a dedicated in-house team of specialist planners. The team have a track record of successful completion and adoption of minerals and waste local plans on behalf of groups of authorities in Hampshire. They have the capacity to undertake this work in accordance with an agreed programme. The programme accords with the programme for the preparation of the plan set out in this council's Local Development Scheme the latest version of which was agreed by this Committee on 25th November 2014 (Minute 17 refers).

- 3.4 The preparation of the Joint Minerals & Waste Plan will need to accord with current planning policy and guidance on minerals and waste. These are contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance along with the Waste Management Plan for England which was published in December 2013, and the National Planning Policy for Waste which was published in October 2014.

4. THE PROPOSAL

a) Current Position

- 4.1 The first stage in the preparation of any local plan involves evidence gathering with analysis, culminating in a consultation on Issues and Options. HCC are collecting the various evidence for the plan and undertaking various forecasting to be able to plan for future needs for minerals extraction and waste facilities in the plan area. This evidence gathering includes a call for sites under which stakeholders are invited to put forward sites for consideration for future mineral extraction or waste facilities. That exercise is being undertaken between 13th March and 5th May 2017 (i.e. it is ongoing at the current time, see <http://www.reading.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste> for further information)

- 4.2 As part of the governance for the preparation of the plan, the four authorities have set up a Joint Board with representation from each of the authorities made up of portfolio holders and one additional representative for each authority. The Board acts as an advisory body for the preparation of the plan. The Board met on 7th March 2017. It received a presentation on the issues and options and provided comments on the proposed arrangements for the issues and options consultation that is detailed in this report.

b) Option Proposed

- 4.3 A draft Issues and Options paper, based on this initial evidence gathering, and various associated documents have now been prepared. These set out factual information relevant to planning for future minerals extraction and waste treatment in the plan area. They include reference to national and other relevant policy; set out issues arising; and ask questions about options for resolving those

issues going forward with the plan. Subject to the approval of each of the Berkshire authorities, it is intended that consultation on this document and various associated documents will be undertaken during June and July 2017.

- 4.4 The consultation paper identifies the importance to the economy of maintaining an appropriate supply of minerals including recycled aggregates to serve activity, particularly construction activity, in the area. Where possible such minerals should be supplied from local sources or, where not available locally, from sustainable sources further afield delivered by sustainable transport. Berkshire has good local supplies of sharp sand and gravel but does have to import various other aggregate and mineral products. A significant role of the plan will be to ensure that there are appropriate local facilities for the delivery and storage of such products that minimise potential transport issues.
- 4.5 In relation to planning for waste, the document sets out to identify sufficient opportunities to meet the identified needs of the area for waste management for all waste streams. This includes waste produced by households, businesses, industry, construction activities, government and non-government organisations, etc. By its properties, waste can be classified as non-hazardous, inert and hazardous and plans need to deal with each type. The role of the Joint Minerals & Waste Plan will be to meet national policy ambitions locally; to deliver sustainable development through driving waste up the “waste hierarchy”, recognise the need for a mix of types and scale of facilities, and make adequate provision for waste management, including disposal.
- 4.6 The Issues and options consultation document refers to a separate Minerals Background Study and a Waste: Data Report that go into some detail on each of the areas. The document summarises the issues identified and sets out numerous questions seeking responses on how the plan should address these issues.
- 4.7 The issues and options consultation paper is supported by a number of reports which set out the evidence for the contents provided. These reports include:
 - *Minerals: Background Study* - sets out the types, availability and movements of minerals in the plan area and what issues may affect future demand.
 - *Waste: Data Report* - sets out the amounts of waste that needs to be managed, how it is currently managed and what the future waste management may be.
 - *Methodologies Report* - sets out the proposed methodologies for assessing sites (including traffic and landscape assessments)

- *Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) Scoping Report* - sets out how policies and sites will be assessed to ensure the Plan will not have any significant impacts on the Central & Eastern Berkshire environment, communities and economy.
- *Habitats Regulations Assessment: Methodology and Baseline* - sets out the European designated habitats that need to be considered during the Plan preparation and the proposed assessment methodology for assessing the potential impact of the Plan.
- *Consultation Strategy* - sets out how communities and key stakeholders will be consulted during the plan-making process.
- *Equalities Impact Assessment* - sets out how the Plan will be assessed during preparation stages to ensure it is not having an impact of particular sectors of Central & Eastern Berkshire's communities.

Draft versions of these documents are available to Councillors on request. Finalised versions will be made available on the Council's website as part of the consultation

- 4.8 Consultation will be undertaken jointly by Hampshire County council with the Joint authorities. The consultation exercise is being designed to meet the policies and practice set in the Statement of Community Involvement adopted by each of the joint authorities. Consultation will be undertaken with a wide range of parties, including those on the Council's Local Plan consultation database, during June and July 2017. The consultation will involve sending emails/ letters to individuals, organisations, councillors, and internal officers. Advertising and details will be placed on the RBC website. The results of the consultation will inform the preparation of a draft local plan for which approval is programmed to be sought in the early part of 2018.
- 4.9 Approval for the Draft Issues and Options document, and to other documents that will inform the plan, is sought from Committee. As work on these documents is on-going, delegated authority is sought for the final versions to be agreed by the Head of Planning Development and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport. Committee are also requested to authorise the undertaking of the community involvement described in this report
- c) **Other Options Considered**
- 4.10 The alternative options that could be considered is to produce an outline plan rather than an issues and options discussion paper.
- 4.11 Producing an outline or skeleton plan as part of the consultation could help to bridge the gap between a discussion paper and a full draft plan, However, it is considered that including such an outline at

this stage would pre-judge the outcome of consultation on the identified issues, and could discourage the public from getting involved in the consultation if the impression is given that there is already a preferred strategy.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan will contribute to achieving the Council's following strategic aims:

- Seeking to meet the 2016-19 Corporate Plan objectives for "Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active."
- Seeking to meet the 2016-19 Corporate Plan objectives for "Providing homes for those in most need."
- Seeking to meet the 2016-19 Corporate Plan objectives for "Providing infrastructure to support the economy."

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Consultation will be undertaken with a wide range of parties including those on the Council's Local Plan consultation database for a period of at least six weeks. The Consultation will be designed to meet the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement for planning consultations. This will involve sending emails/letters to a number of individuals, organisations, councillors, and internal officers. Advertising and details will be placed on the RBC website.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Council has had regard to the general equality duty imposed by the Equality Act 2010 (S.149). This requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation etc.; to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not; and to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

7.2 A separate Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared to guide the preparation of the plan. This sets out how the Plan will be assessed during preparation stages to ensure it is not having an impact of particular sectors of Central & Eastern Berkshire's communities.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Local Plans documents are produced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The process for producing local plans is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 18 states that a local planning authority

should consult on what a local plan should contain. The Issues and Options consultation fulfils this Regulation 18 requirement.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The cost preparing the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan is being shared equally amongst the 4 commissioning Joint authorities. This was agreed by Policy Committee In September 2016, in approving the joint preparation of a Minerals and Waste Local Plan for the Central and Eastern Berkshire area. The preparation of the plan over its currently programmed 4 year period equates to a figure in the region of £56-70k per authority per annum. This has been agreed by the other 3 authorities. Reading Borough Council's share will be paid from the current Planning budget.

Value for Money

- 9.2 The preparation of Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan will ensure that there is proper planning for minerals and waste in the area, that such developments are appropriate to their area, that significant effects are mitigated, that contributions are made to local infrastructure, and that there are no significant environmental, social and economic effects. Robust policies will also reduce the likelihood of planning by appeal, which can result in the Council losing control over the form of development, as well as significant financial implications. Production of the local plan, in line with legislation, national policy and best practice, therefore represents good value for money.

Risk Assessment

- 9.3 There are no direct financial risks associated with the report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--3>
- National Planning Practice Guidance - <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>
- Waste Management Plan for England - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-management-plan-for-england>
- National Planning Policy for Waste - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-for-waste>