

# **Publication draft Herefordshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan Overview**

## **About the Minerals and Waste Local Plan**

1. The publication draft of the Herefordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) sets out the council's preferred strategy for meeting the county's minerals and waste needs until 2041. It is supported by a comprehensive and up to date evidence base and has undergone extensive consultation. Its main purpose is to provide guidance to developers, local communities and other interested parties on where and when minerals and waste development may be expected over the plan period, as well as how it will be managed to reduce adverse impacts and maximise benefits.
2. The MWLP has been produced taking into account of national policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, whilst also ensuring close co-operation with neighbouring and regional local authorities on cross-boundary issues. Regard has also been given to other plans and strategies produced by the council and other organisations.
3. The MWLP has been subject to independent assessment:
  - ✓ Sustainability Appraisal, which assessed the social, economic and environmental impacts of the MWLP throughout the development of the document;
  - ✓ Habitats Regulations Assessment, which assessed any impacts on European sites; and
  - ✓ Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), to assess flood risk in the plan area, and the risks to and from surrounding areas as a result of minerals and waste development.
4. The publication draft MWLP is the final stage of consultation. Following a statutory 6-week period of public consultation, during which representations can be made on legal compliance with relevant legislation and matters of soundness (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework), the plan will be submitted, along with any proposed changes and other submission documents, for examination by an independent planning inspector.
5. When adopted, the MWLP will be another element in the Herefordshire Local Plan and will sit alongside the Core Strategy, which sets the overall strategic planning framework for the county. It will form a statutory 'development plan document' and the council will use it, alongside the Core Strategy, as the starting point for making decisions on planning applications for minerals and waste activities.

## **Minerals in Herefordshire: Overview**

6. Mineral resources in Herefordshire are relatively limited in range, primarily consisting of aggregates for use in construction and a small amount of building stone. Aggregates comprise sand and gravel; crushed rock (limestone); and secondary or recycled material gained from quarry and waste operations.
7. Herefordshire provides for 40% to 50% of its own sand and gravel demand and 20% to 30% of its crushed rock demand. The latter may be due to the particular quality of the limestone, which is quite soft and not suitable for roadbuilding. The most significant

import of sand and gravel is from Staffordshire (30% to 40%) and of crushed rock is from Powys (40% to 50%).

8. Although there is a railhead at Moreton-on-Lugg, which is used to transport sand and gravel from Wellington Quarry to the south east of England, the mineral travelling by rail freight through the county is mainly crushed rock from quarries located in Wales. Otherwise, minerals travel by road as there is no other transport mode available.
9. Concrete batching plant, concrete block making plant and coating plant operate on working quarries and industrial estates around Herefordshire.

### Issues and Challenges for Minerals

- a. ensuring continuity of minerals supply to meet the social and economic needs of the county up to 2041;
- b. maximising the use of alternative sources of supply of minerals, such as secondary and recycled aggregate, to reduce demand from primary land-won minerals;
- c. maintaining the required landbanks for sand and gravel and crushed rock but, as far as practicable, providing for these outside the AONBs;
- d. continuing to provide a supply of building stone for the repair and maintenance of Herefordshire's traditional buildings and for new built development;
- e. addressing the potential positive and negative impacts of exploiting unconventional hydrocarbon resources such as shale gas as well as planning for conventional forms of energy minerals;
- f. safeguarding important mineral resources and infrastructure from sterilisation by other uses in order to meet local and regional needs by current and future generations;
- g. ensuring there are sufficient safeguards in place to minimise the impacts of minerals extraction on communities, the environment and other important assets;
- h. providing for a range of enhancements, including ecological services and biodiversity, particularly through reclamation of workings; and
- i. developing an appropriate locational strategy for minerals supply reflecting, where practicable, the likely levels of economic and housing growth and future requirements for minerals.

### Waste in Herefordshire: Overview

10. Waste is generated from a wide range of domestic, commercial and industrial activities. The main types are:
  - a. Local Authority Collected Waste (LACW), which includes household waste and other wastes collected by local authorities;
  - b. Commercial and industrial (C&I) waste; this includes waste from businesses and manufacturing companies;
  - c. Construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) waste; these wastes can be produced through a wide range of building projects, from home renovation to major redevelopments;
  - d. Hazardous waste; waste is generally considered hazardous if it is harmful to humans or the environment, particularly if it is toxic, corrosive or an irritant, e.g. asbestos, brake fluid or printer toner.
  - e. Agricultural waste includes both natural (such as animal manure, animal bedding and crop waste) and non-natural (such as plastic wrapping or bottles).

- f. Low level radioactive waste (non-nuclear), such as is used in research laboratories; and
  - g. Wastewater, which is used water from any combination of domestic, industrial, commercial or agricultural activities, e.g. surface run-off or storm water, and any sewer inflow or sewer infiltration. In Herefordshire, this waste stream is managed by Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water and Severn Trent Water.
11. Evidence shows that around 80% of waste managed in facilities operating in Herefordshire was generated within the county. These facilities (including transfer, re-use and recycling) also receive waste from other authorities, principally those in Wales, the West Midlands and Gloucestershire.
  12. The concentrated areas of population in Hereford and the market towns are the largest producers of waste, and this is generally reflected in the pattern of waste management facilities in the county.
  13. There are a number anaerobic digestion and biological treatment facilities dispersed around the county, reflecting the strong agricultural sector.
  14. There are no residual waste management facilities in Herefordshire, such as energy from waste plant or landfill sites.
  15. Herefordshire has historically worked with Worcestershire County Council to manage the authorities' LACW and this collaboration resulted in the production of a Joint Waste Management Strategy and joint procurement of strategic waste management capacity (Envirosort and EnviRecover). These facilities are located in Worcestershire, the arrangement means that long-term capacity is available to manage Herefordshire's LACW.
  16. Wastes are exported from Herefordshire, predominantly for materials recovery, energy recovery and disposal to landfill. The most significant of these movements is to the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff. This indicates a need for more residual waste management capacity in Herefordshire.

## Issues and Challenges for Waste

- a. enabling a circular economy to develop within Herefordshire and considering opportunities to co-locate waste management facilities with complementary uses;
- b. promoting the management of waste further up the waste hierarchy i.e. reducing the amount going to landfill and encouraging the re-use, recycling, composting and recovery of waste, as well as supporting an overall reduction in the generation of waste;
- c. developing an appropriate locational strategy for new waste management facilities, reflecting, where practicable, the likely levels of economic and housing growth and future requirements;
- d. supporting the delivery of the additional waste management capacity expected to be required, taking account of cross-boundary movements, where relevant;
- e. incorporating flexibility to reflect uncertainties resulting from waste data limitations and evolving technologies and practice; and
- f. ensuring there are sufficient safeguards in place to minimise the local impacts of waste management on communities, the environment and other important assets.

## General Issues and Challenges for Minerals and Waste

- a. establishing policies that are appropriate across the diverse characteristics of the plan area;
- b. developing an appropriate approach to the protection and enhancement of the plan area's important landscapes, and natural heritage assets;
- c. ensuring minerals and waste development contributes to and supports economic growth, both within the plan area and nationally, including the employment opportunities that they provide;
- d. seeking to reduce carbon emissions, particularly in relation to the transportation of minerals and waste; and providing opportunities to assist in adapting to the effects of climate change, such as reducing flood risk and enhancing habitat connectivity;
- e. considering accessibility to major transportation networks and sustainable transport infrastructure, recognising the constraints on opportunities for the movement of minerals or waste;
- f. recognising the potential for mutually beneficial links between minerals and waste activities, such as utilising specific waste streams in the sustainable reclamation of mineral workings; and
- g. ensuring an element of flexibility and adaptive management is built into the MWLP.

## How the MWLP addresses the issues and challenges

17. The MWLP sets out an overarching ambitious and aspiration 'Vision' for sustainable minerals and waste development in the county and set of 'Objectives' is listed; developed with reference to those contained in the Core Strategy, national policy, local priorities and responses from consultation exercises.
18. A set of strategic policies and general principles is set out, which are to be read alongside relevant Core Strategy policies. These relate to:
  - a. sustainable development
  - b. movement and transportation
  - c. environmental quality and local distinctiveness
  - d. landscape and townscape
  - e. biodiversity and geodiversity
  - f. green infrastructure
  - g. historic environment and heritage assets
  - h. addressing climate change
  - i. resource management
  - j. access to open space and recreation from minerals and waste development
  - k. sustainable design and energy efficiency (including aviation safety, dust, land instability, noise, odour, utilities, vibration, and visual intrusion)
  - l. renewable and low carbon energy generation
  - m. sustainable water management and water resources
  - n. transportation within sites
  - o. reclamation of sites

## Minerals Policies

19. The overarching 'Spatial Strategy' for minerals development (with the understanding that minerals extraction can only take place where the mineral occurs) is based on a review of the underlying geology and the natural and built environment of Herefordshire.

20. *Sand and gravel workings* - to be focussed within the large expanse of reserve that wraps around the northern and eastern sides of the county and at Shobdon to the north west of Hereford ('preferred areas'). Specific sites for future extraction are allocated adjacent or near to existing permitted sites at Upper Lyde, Shobdon and Wellington. Only where the preferred locations cannot be demonstrated to fulfil a reasonable level of demand, will proposals for sand and gravel extraction outside of these areas be permitted.
21. *Crushed rock workings* – recognising the advantages of working an areas efficiently, specific sites for future extraction are allocated adjacent or near to existing permitted sites. Reserves at Leinthall and Perton are identified. In addition, the MWLP identifies preferred areas for limestone working to the north of the county and to the east of Hereford. Only where the preferred locations cannot be demonstrated to fulfil a reasonable level of demand will proposals for limestone extraction outside of these areas be permitted.
22. *Building Stone* – primarily sandstone is extracted from small quarries called delves, generally by hand, with just one or two workers on site. They are backfilled with the soils, overburden and mineral wastes, thus minimising their impact. There are six delves currently permitted and active, all of which could be suitable to gain permission for an extension of time to enable extraction to be completed. Three of these sites would also be suitable, in principle, for a lateral extension or deepening of workings: Black Hill Delve, Llandraw Delve and Westonhill Wood Delves.
23. New sites may be appropriate where: the building stone is important to ensure the preservation of local distinctiveness; the workings are small-scale; and the proposal is limited to the production of non-aggregate materials (e.g. building stone, dimension stone and roof tiles). Key development criteria are set out, which should be addressed within any proposals.
24. *Key Development Criteria* – in addition to the policy framework in the MWLP, the allocated sites are accompanied by 'key development criteria' that present particular issues to be comprehensively addressed in association with any development proposal.
25. *Borrow pits* – often required in the course of large-scale civil engineering construction projects. A policy is set out which subjects these to the same environmental considerations as other mineral workings and such sites will be conditioned to ensure that their reclamation is achieved as part of the main construction project, and that their aftercare and after-use are properly controlled.
26. *Safeguarding* - being a finite resource, it is important that reserves of minerals are appropriately safeguarded to avoid sterilisation from non-minerals forms of development. A specific policy is in place to ensure that such development is appropriately controlled.

## **Waste Policies**

27. The waste strategy is to plan for sustainable waste management in Herefordshire, which would deliver: a reduction in the amount of waste generated; an increase in the amount of waste re-used, recycled or reused to recover energy; and a decrease in the amount of waste disposed to landfill.
28. Through the Core Strategy, Herefordshire has a number of strategic employment sites. These have good potential to deliver the circular economy, where engineering, creative industry, manufacturing, waste and research sectors can combine resources to enable

material (including wastes) to be kept at their highest value for as long as possible. Such businesses could produce electricity, heat and phosphorous for beneficial use. This could enable national and local priorities on climate change to be realised.

29. The policy priority is to provide a positive framework for the delivery of additional waste management capacity, addressing all levels of the waste hierarchy, except non-hazardous disposal, but making development opportunities for residual waste treatment facilities particularly attractive.
30. In accordance with national waste policy, and recognising the importance of waste infrastructure, the MWLP incorporates the principle that the applicant of a new (non-waste) development should ensure that the intended project does not unreasonably restrict an existing waste business.
31. The MWLP sets out specific waste policies, relating to:
  - a. solid waste management requirements – setting out tonnages for the different waste streams as a guide, to enable monitoring over time;
  - b. agricultural waste – the aim of this policy is to reduce phosphate release into the River Wye Special Area of Conservation;
  - c. wastewater management;
  - d. preferred locations for solid waste treatment facilities – focussing the majority of such development on existing industrial areas in Hereford and the market towns;
  - e. preferred locations for construction, demolition and excavation waste management facilities – the existing waste recovery facility at the former Lugg Bridge Quarry is the preferred location for additional capacity, followed by industrial areas in urban areas, and lastly active mineral workings. Inert wastes may be sustainably disposed of in quarries at Shobdon, Upper Lyde or Wellington; and
  - f. waste management operations – this policy related to a wide range of waste treatment facilities and recognises the beneficial role that sustainable materials recovery and waste recovery have to play.
32. The MWLP's final sections relate to the delivery, implementation, and monitoring of the policies it has set out.