

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR PLANNING AND COMMUNITY STRATEGY**  
**TO THE EXECUTIVE**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2008**

**Partial Review of RPG9 and the South East Plan**  
**Review of Sub-Regional Allocation of Land-Won Aggregates**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 In its report on the South East Plan the Panel recommended that the method of calculating the amount of aggregates to be taken in the South East should be based more on likely demand rather than past sales. Consultants have prepared three options for calculating the distribution and the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) is consulting all Councils about them.
- 1.2 As the South East Plan forms part of the Development Plan for the Vale of White Horse, albeit this part administered by the County Council as minerals planning authority, changes to it are a matter for the Executive. Views on the options are to be submitted by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August.
- 1.3 The contact officer for the report is Peter Williams, Principal Planning Officer (Policy), tel' (01235 520202 ext 502) e-mail [peter.williams@whitehorsedc.co.uk](mailto:peter.williams@whitehorsedc.co.uk).

**2.0 Recommendations**

*It is recommended that Executive endorses the following response to SEERA:*

- (a) *that the 'Demand' option is supported as it is the most appropriate for the Vale and would reduce the proportion of aggregates to be taken in Oxfordshire;*
- (b) *that the concept of separate figures at a regional level for soft sand and sharp sand and gravel is supported as this is a more rational approach, as the materials serve different markets; and*
- (c) *that no further change in wording in the South East Plan is required apart from to reflect the new method of apportionment.*

**3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies**

- 3.1 This report relates to the Council's Vision in that it supports encouragement of a strong and sustainable economy which benefits all who live in, work in or visit the Vale, and the protection and improvement of our built and natural environment. The report does not conflict with any Council Strategies.

**4.0 Proposed changes to the calculation method**

- 4.1 The Draft South East Plan and RPG9 calculate the amount of land-won aggregate, which includes all types of sand, gravels and crushed rock, to be taken in the South East sub-

regions on the basis of previous levels of sales. The Panel's Report on the Examination of the South East Plan recommends that a more realistic method of calculation involving demand, supply and constraints should be developed. Consultants have developed three alternative ways of achieving this.

- 4.2 The three options for calculating the demand and how it should fall on the County areas involve: first a 'Demand' option which is based mainly (70%) on the quantity of houses to be built in an area; second an 'Environmental' option that mainly uses the level of national designations in an area (70%) as a basis i.e. the highest weighting is given to avoiding areas of greatest conservation and landscape importance; and third a 'Demand and Resources' option which is more evenly based using both house building (40%) and international nature designations (40%). All options have 10% of the weighting based on past sales.
- 4.3 The areas where minerals can be won in the Vale are mostly unaffected by national designations such as those based on landscapes, and there are few international designations in the District. The 'Demand' option would therefore be the most appropriate for the Vale. The 'Demand' option also leads to the lowest contribution from Oxfordshire for combined sand and gravel of 1.51 million tonnes a year (12.36% of the regional total) compared to the highest of 3.05 million tonnes a year (25.04% of the regional total) under the 'Environmental' option. (The combined demand and environment option would require Oxfordshire to produce 2.16 million tonnes a year).
- 4.4 Further it is considered that the most realistic option would be the demand option as this ties future minerals working more closely to the expected demand from housebuilding in an area, which is the prime determinant for aggregate production. It would minimise the distances over which these bulky goods have to be transported and thereby will reduce carbon emissions.

## **5.0 The need for a separate figures for sharp and gravel and for soft sand**

- 5.1 Part of the consultation asks whether there should be separate figures for sharp sand and gravel and for soft sand. This would be a more rational approach as they are two different materials serving different markets - soft sand is used mainly for mortar and sharp sand and gravel for concrete.

## **6.0 The need for related changes to Policy M3 and supporting text**

- 6.1 Policy M3 in the Draft South East Plan sets out the amount of minerals to be derived from each sub-area and the justification for the figures. The consultation asks whether any other change to the wording is required other than adjusting for the selected method of apportionment. It is considered that there is no perceivable benefit of any changes other than those required by a new basis for apportionment. No further changes should therefore be suggested.

## **7.0 The Next Steps**

- 7.1 The Assembly will draw on the results of consultation to identify a preferred option for the sub-regional allocation of aggregates, and will draft an amendment to the policy in the regional guidance. This is likely to be submitted to the Government in December 2008. There will then be further public consultation, managed by GOSE, followed if necessary by an Examination in Public. It is expected that the policy will be adopted in late 2009.

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR (PLANNING AND COMMUNITY STRATEGY)

Background Papers:       Draft South East Plan (March 2006)  
                                  South East Plan Examination Panel's Report (August 2007)