



31 January 2006

**County Durham Minerals & Waste  
Development Framework – Minerals  
Issues & Options Report**

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**Report of the Acting Director of Environment**

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**Purpose of Report and Presentation**

1. To update Members on work undertaken during 2005 to prepare the Council's new style Minerals Development Plan Documents (DPDs).
2. To brief Members and seek their initial views on key minerals planning issues.
3. To seek continued Member involvement throughout the preparation of the Council's emerging Minerals DPDs.

**Background**

The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced important changes into the planning system in England including the requirement for local planning authorities to replace the existing system of statutory Local Plans with new 'Local Development Frameworks'. As a County Planning Authority, responsible for minerals and waste planning matters the Council is required to prepare a 'Minerals & Waste Development' Framework comprising six minerals and waste DPDs.

Once adopted the new minerals and waste DPDs will replace the existing County Durham Minerals Local Plan (adopted December 2000) and the County Durham Waste Local Plan, (adopted April 2005) and will provide the basis for determining all future minerals and waste planning applications in County Durham.

**What Minerals documents will be prepared:**

Three minerals DPDs will be prepared:

**Minerals Core Strategy** - This DPD will set out overarching minerals policies a strategic vision, strategic objectives and a spatial strategy for minerals development and the protection of the environment;

**Minerals Development Control** – This DPD will set out detailed development control policies and will provide the principal basis for determining all new planning applications for minerals development; and

**Minerals Core Strategy** – This DPD may allocate new areas of land for future minerals working.

### **Preparing the new Minerals Development Plan Documents**

Priority is being given to the preparation of minerals DPDs with the target of adopting the minerals DPDs during 2008 and the waste DPDs during 2010.

The new planning act requires us to consult local communities and other stakeholders throughout the preparation of the minerals DPDs. Early consultation was undertaken during January-March 2005 on a Key Issues Paper. We received over 36 responses, including proposals from the minerals industry for new crushed rock and sand and gravel quarries and extensions to existing sites.

### **Minerals Issues and Options Report**

This document set out a range of important minerals planning issues to inform the approach of the three new minerals DPDs. We consulted on the report in November and December of last year.

Questions posed included the policy approach that should be taken to aggregates (sand and gravel and crushed rock), opencast coal and brick clay, building stone and environmental protection. The report also set out existing Minerals Local Plan allocations without planning permission and new industry suggested extensions/ sites:

- A new rock quarry in Weardale (Eastgate Quarry);
- Extensions to rock quarries at Heights Quarry near Eastgate, Hulands Quarry near Bowes, Bishop Middleham Quarry, Crime Rigg Quarry and Witch Hill Quarries near Sherburn and Aycliffe Quarry;
- Extensions to Stainton and Windy Hill building stone quarries
- Sand and gravel extraction at Harperley, east of Wolsingham and at Hummerbeck south of West Auckland;
- An extension to the existing brick clay quarry near Eldon Brickworks; and
- Five open cast coal sites at White Lea near Sunnyside (Wear Valley), Bradley near Leadgate (Derwentside), Castle Dene/Hurbeck (Derwentside), Randolph near Evenwood), Marley Hill (Derwentside/Gateshead) (now withdrawn).

To date we have received over 110 representations from interested parties. While many of the respondents have provided views on a number of the questions, we have received numerous objections to many of the industry proposed sites especially the opencast coal sites at White Lea, Randolph and Marley Hill. A number of objections have also been received against proposed extensions to crushed rock quarries especially Aycliffe and Hulands Quarry's and the proposed extension to Stainton building stone quarry.

## **Next steps**

Over the coming months we will be considering the representations received to the Minerals Issues and Options Report and undertaking an appraisal of the sites submitted by the minerals industry. Industry proposed sites will be considered on the basis of **need** and **environmentally acceptability**. We will then brief Members of the results of the appraisal of sites and the approach of the Minerals Preferred Options Report. We aim to publish the Preferred Options Report towards the end of 2006.

Following consultation on Minerals Preferred Options we will prepare and submit minerals DPDs to the Secretary of State. Objections at this stage will be examined by a Independent Planning Inspector who will hold a Inquiry to test the soundness of each minerals DPD. The Inspector will then prepare a report which is binding upon the Council.

**D A MILLER**  
**Acting Director Of Environment**

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