



Bedfordshire
county council



Mr Roy Romans
Minerals and Waste Planning
Bedfordshire County Council
County Hall
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Bedford
MK42 9AP

Your ref: 200/MW/LDF/9
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Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Development Framework Minerals Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan

Officer Response from the Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint Technical Unit

Dear Mr Romans,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on your Minerals Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan Preferred Options consultation document. At a recent meeting of the Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint Committee Senior Management Group, it was agreed that the Joint Committee should make a formal response to your consultation, but preliminary officer comments should be submitted before your response deadline. As such, the comments below are officer comments only, pending consideration by the Joint Committee on 29th November 2007. A full response from the Joint Committee will be submitted to you following that meeting. However, for the purposes of this exercise, I would like to draw your attention to the following comments:-

Section 4 Question 1: - Time Period of the Plan:- I agree with the suggested plan end date of 2021 on the grounds that it aligns with the planning horizons of the merging Core Strategy.

Section 8 Question 5: - Safeguarded Railhead Site at Legrave Road, Luton:- Regarding imports (land won crushed rock and marine dredged sand and gravel), all supplies are dependent on inland transport, either from hard rock quarries or wharves in other parts of the country. For this part of the county, the railhead at Legrave Road, Luton is strategically important taking imports of marine sands and gravels from landing wharves in the Thames estuary. The current Minerals & Waste Local Plan provides for safeguarding of this existing railhead facility and to this end, this preferred option is supported.

Question 8:- Central Leighton Buzzard suffers from traffic congestion, part of which arises from HGV traffic bearing silica sands from the south of the town to the processing plant in the north, a cause of genuine concern for residents. Taken with the growth area agenda, it is likely that any future intensification of extraction will result in an increase in traffic congestion within the town which cannot be supported.

Site Allocations DPD

Question 22:- The principle of extending this site is supported. The site represents an eastward extension of the existing Grovebury Road site which within the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review 2004 has been identified as R7 "Open Space" land. In accordance with restoration requirements, the purpose of the Grovebury Road site is to meet the open space requirements of the southern Leighton Buzzard urban extension which is located to the north of the A505. Any new proposal to extend the Grovebury Quarry site must not compromise the local plan objective of providing accessible and useable open space (including access to proposed waterside recreation areas). This includes means of access both to the site and also to the countryside beyond.

Question 23:- Given the growth area agenda, it is highly likely that any extension to the Grovebury Road site will provide future growth area opportunity in the form of open space provision. To this end, any restoration scheme should provide future open space (be it either informal or formal) provision.

Question 24:- The rejection of site MD13 is fully supported given its relation to Wayside Farm, the village of Billington and the attendant highway issues. Whilst its future use as green infrastructure is supported, this option cannot be supported given the harm it would cause to residential amenity.

Question 25:- The rejection of site MD14 is supported given the cumulative impact with other operations in the vicinity together with its impact on Rights of Way and increased highway generation.

Question 26:- The rejection of site MD43 is supported given its proximity to Heath and Reach and in particular, the village school. Moreover, the cumulative impact of further quarrying within the area would result in a demonstrable negative impact upon the local populous.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Saccoccio
Planning Officer