



The Planning
Inspectorate

Report to Shropshire Council

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an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

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PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

SECTION 20

**REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO THE
SHROPSHIRE CORE STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

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hierarchy and policy objectives, and the landfill diversion strategy. Policy CS19 also refers to cross-boundary waste flows and the principle of equivalent self-sufficiency, recognising that waste does not always respect administrative boundaries. This is particularly relevant in Shropshire, where some waste generated within the county is managed or disposed of in adjoining areas, such as Telford & Wrekin, Cheshire, Staffordshire and Powys. For new developments, minimisation and management of waste is part of the "sustainability checklist" required by Policy CS6.

98. When read with the Waste Technical Paper and other evidence documents, most of the basic information is available to support the waste strategy. There are no serious challenges to the waste strategy or the evidence base, and SC is not aware of any more recent information on waste that might suggest that the plan is unsound. SC expects the WMRTAB to continue to monitor the regional situation, to assist the LEP. As a strategic high-level policy, Policy CS19 and the explanatory text provide the basic framework to undertake further work at the SAMDev stage.

99. However, as submitted, Policy CS19 is very general and does not specify any quantities of waste to be managed or the broad location of future facilities. The explanatory text includes some key figures about waste generation and capacity, and the Key Diagram identifies broad locations for additional waste facilities. Following discussion, SC has agreed to specify in the policy the waste capacity "gap" that needs to be addressed (150,000 tonnes/yr) and confirm that sites will be allocated in the SAMDev [PC48]. SC also agrees to refer in the explanatory text to waste strategy targets for municipal and commercial/industrial waste set out in the WMRSS Phase 2 Revision and Shropshire's current municipal waste management contract [PC49]. These amendments will ensure that the minimum amount of information is included in the policy and explanatory text to meet the requirements of national policy in PPS10 and ensure the plan is sound. More detailed development management policies and site-specific allocations will be addressed in the SAMDev.

Strategic planning for minerals

100. Policy CS20 provides a high-level strategic policy for the provision of minerals in Shropshire, supported by an extensive evidence base and statements [FS1.32], including the Minerals Technical Background Report [EV115]. This report sets out the best available information about the location, scale, extent, type, production, markets and movement of minerals in Shropshire, along with the location of existing mineral workings. Being derived from national, regional and local information, in discussion with key mineral operators, it is robust, credible and up-to-date, and provides a sound basis for the minerals strategy of the CS. The CS includes details of the mineral geology of Shropshire (Fig 10), including broad mineral safeguarding areas based on the BGS data, and detailed boundaries will be defined in the SAMDev. Further information about the location of existing mineral sites and construction waste recycling sites is shown in the Minerals Technical Paper. SC has also agreed several changes to Policy CS20 and the explanatory text in response to the concerns of mineral operators and adjoining local authorities.

101. The main shortcoming of the policy is the provision of aggregates to meet the sub-regional apportionment. As submitted, neither the policy nor the explanatory text gives any indication of the scale of production, either currently or proposed during the plan period. This is because, at present, there is no agreed revised sub-regional apportionment for aggregates. A revised apportionment has been put forward by the RPB [FS3.32], which GOWM advised should be given similar weight to a submitted draft RSS¹. However, most members of the WMRAWP, including SC,

¹ Letter from Government Office for the West Midlands to WMRA (8 October 2009)

have questioned the status of the Interim Policy Statement (IPS) and do not support its assumptions and methodology for the revised apportionment. Having taken legal advice, and given the anticipated abolition of the WMRSS, SC argues that the IPS has little weight. Unless and until more robust evidence is assembled to justify higher levels of aggregates production, SC proposes to maintain the current level of production and current percentage contribution to the regional apportionment. This approach would be consistent with technical advice from the WMRAWP and is supported by the local minerals industry and by the evidence base. However, if this is the policy, then it should be included within the wording of Policy CS20.

102. Following discussion, SC has agreed to make the necessary amendments to the policy wording and explanatory text to indicate the current and expected scale of aggregates production [**PC50-51**]. The inclusion of these figures is crucial to determining the landbank and future production levels of aggregates. Issues about the overall and sub-regional apportionments for aggregates are matters to be determined by the WMRAWP, and it would be for other authorities (such as Staffordshire CC) to justify departing from this approach in their own LDFs.

103. In recent years, aggregates production has been consistently below the sub-regional apportionment figure for Shropshire. Although the current landbank for sand and gravel (at 2008) is equivalent to about 15 years production, almost 70% of resources exist at 3 sites which have remained unworked for over 5 years. The CS therefore recognises that further sand and gravel resources may need to be identified within the plan period to ensure continuity of production, and to allow local competition and flexibility. The Key Diagram identifies a range of broad locations for future sand and gravel working, and specific sites will be addressed in the SAMDev. However, in order to address concerns about possible mineral working in the AONB and avoid pre-empting decisions in adjoining local authorities, SC has agreed to delete the broad locations for sand and gravel working originally shown on the Key Diagram in the AONB and within Telford & Wrekin [**PC52**].

104. For crushed rock, the current landbank is equivalent to almost 40 years production, with sufficient resources available from existing sites for the current plan period. Policy CS20 would facilitate the production of other minerals, such as building stone, brick and fireclay, along with environmentally acceptable proposals for the exploration and working of hydrocarbon resources. There is a difference of opinion between SC and the Coal Authority about the extent of surface coal resources (Salop Formation), but there is no evidence that this area includes economically workable coal reserves, or that it has ever been worked for this purpose.

105. Consequently, with the agreed changes, Policy CS20 and the explanatory text would provide the basic framework for minerals provision over the plan period, meeting the minimum requirements of national policy in MPS1 and providing sufficient strategic guidance and spatial direction for the SAMDev.

Monitoring and Implementation

Issue 6 – Are the arrangements for monitoring the policies of the Core Strategy adequate, effective and soundly based, including details of the indicators, baseline information and targets/milestones to be used?

106. The supporting evidence sets out the arrangements for monitoring and implementing the CS [FS1.35]. Each policy in the CS is accompanied by a Delivery and Monitoring section, showing the range of delivery mechanisms for implementing the policy and the indicators for measuring its effectiveness. The AMR is the principal mechanism for regular monitoring of the CS, which will report on the indicators set