

Agenda Item IMD33

NOTICE OF INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

ITEM NO.	IMD 2015-33
TITLE	Considering response to consultation on the Proposed Submission Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Angus Ross, Executive Member for Environment
DATE AND TIME OF DECISION	9:30 am on Monday 12 th October 2015
VENUE	SF1
REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED ON	Friday 2 October 2015

**INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION
REFERENCE IMD: 2015-33**

TITLE	Considering response to consultation on the Proposed Submission Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Angus Ross, Executive Member for Environment
ON	Monday 12 th October 2015
TIME	9:30 am
WARDS	Charvil; Bulmershe & Whitegates; Remenham, Wargrave & Ruscombe and Sonning
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director for Environment

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

That the final Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Member for Environment:

- 1) approves the comments outlined in this report; and
- 2) that they be submitted as a formal response to the consultation on the Proposed Submission Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Proposed Submission Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy details how they envisage meeting the need for minerals (principally sand & gravel) together with waste disposal over the period to 2031. Oxfordshire County Council is consulting upon their document from 19 August until 30 September July 2015.

The proposed response of Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation is that the Council:

- Acknowledges that the strategy appropriately accommodates the waste expected to be generated by Wokingham Borough together with Bracknell Forest and Reading through to 2031;
- Acknowledges the potential of land between Caversham and Shiplake for sand & gravel extraction whilst indicating that pending construction of the Third Thames Bridge, any HGVs must be routed away from the existing bridges across the River Thames between Reading and Henley;
- Considers that Oxfordshire has complied with the Duty to co-operate in preparing their Local Plan; and
- Therefore Wokingham Borough Council is not objecting to the plan.

As the consultation period ended before Wokingham Borough Council was able to formally agree its response, a holding response has been sent to Oxfordshire County Council. This holding response informed Oxfordshire of the authority's provisional position as detailed in this report. Once this report has been considered by the Executive Member(s), Oxfordshire County Council will be notified of Wokingham Borough Council's formal response.

Background

Oxfordshire County Council produced a submission Core Strategy in April 2012. Following concerns of the Inspector on a number of issues during its examination (including whether it complied with the Duty to Co-operate) the Plan was withdrawn on 9 July 2013.

Wokingham Borough Council objected to the plan in 2012 on the following grounds:

- a) That the approach to waste disposal did not take into account the existing waste disposal contract of the Council's RE3 partnership (with Bracknell Forest and Reading for central Berkshire) to landfill and compost refuse in Oxfordshire to 2031; and
- b) The proposed expansion of Caversham quarry (close to the boundary of the two authorities at Sonning) could have a negative impact upon the existing road network.

Following the withdrawal of their earlier Core Strategy, Oxfordshire County Council have produce a new plan upon which they are consulting. It is therefore necessary to consider if the earlier concerns of the authority had been addressed.

Analysis of Issues

Waste disposal

Through the re3 partnership (Bracknell Forest, Reading & Wokingham Council's), municipal waste is sorted and then disposed/processed at a number of locations (see the re3 Environmental Reports) including at Sutton Courtney in Oxfordshire.

Although re3's contract with the operators of Sutton Courtney enables waste to be disposed of until 2031, this had not been acknowledged in the 2012 version of the Plan (the Core Strategy). This was why the Council objected to the Plan.

The 2015 version of the Local Plan acknowledges that waste will be disposed of in Oxfordshire from Berkshire through to 2031 (the end date of both Oxfordshire's new Core Strategy and the re3 contract). Since this waste movement is accommodated by the Plan (paragraph 5.56 and Table 12), the earlier concerns of the authority have now been addressed.

Conclusion – The Oxfordshire Core Strategy appropriately accommodates forecast waste from Berkshire through to 2031.

Expansion of Caversham quarry

Paragraph 4.31 of the Plan acknowledges that an extension of Caversham quarry was approved in 2014 to allow extraction of 1.86 million tonnes. Policy M3 of Oxfordshire's Plan indicates that further extraction could occur on the section of the Thames between Caversham and Shiplake alongside other locations in Oxfordshire. Policy M3 indicates that the extent of the additional areas for extraction will be identified in a future Site Allocations Minerals & Waste Plan.

Although policy M3 indicates that the Thames Valley between Caversham and Shiplake is suitable for extraction, transport policy C10 indicates how lorry routes using the River Thames crossings from Reading to Henley-upon-Thames should be avoided. Consequently, the approach of the plan should reduce negative impacts upon the Borough's highway network.

It is recognised that the provision of a Third Thames Bridge near Reading could provide an appropriate lorry route for transporting minerals extracted at Caversham.

Conclusion – The approach of the Plan is likely to minimise traffic impacts upon the borough associated with additional extraction of minerals at Caversham. There is the potential for the Third Thames Crossing to contribute towards addressing harmful traffic impacts associated with additional lorry movements.

Other matters

In addition to the plans’ strategy addressing Wokingham Borough Council’s earlier concerns, it is considered that the remainder of Oxfordshire’s proposed Minerals and Waste Core Strategy is also unlikely to affect Wokingham borough. This is because the main locations for new waste facilities are those Oxfordshire towns expected to accommodate a significant proportion of the county’s growth – Abingdon, Bicester, Didcot and Oxford (see figure 12 – waste key diagram in the proposed Plan). The other locations for minerals are likewise remote from the borough (closest area is around Wallingford). Consequently Oxfordshire’s approach to minerals and waste is unlikely to affect Wokingham borough. However, should the Oxfordshire’s Plan be revised following consultation, Wokingham Borough Council will need to reconsider its views on the document.

Conclusion – That there are no other factors likely to affect the Borough within the 2015 Core Strategy.

Duty to Co-operate

Oxfordshire County Council to address the Inspector who examined the 2012 Core Strategy’s concerns regarding the Duty to Co-operate has consulted the regional minerals and waste groups regarding the contents of their evidence base. As both Oxfordshire and Wokingham Councils are members of these groups (South East England Aggregate Working Party (SEEAWP) and South East Waste Planning Advisory Group (SEWPAG) respectively), they have been engaged in this process. Oxfordshire County Council has also had meetings with the central Berkshire authorities to discuss their approach to minerals and waste. It is therefore considered that the Duty to Co-operate test has been fulfilled in the preparation of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan to date.

Conclusion – That Oxfordshire County Council has complied with the Duty to co-operate with respect of the 2015 Core Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial	None	Yes	n/a

Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	None	Yes	n/a
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	None	Yes	n/a

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The budget is based on what we know at this point of time. Further issues, including any arising from future versions of Oxfordshire's Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy, could have financial implications.

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including property and priorities?)

As Oxfordshire County Council has acknowledged their role in providing a facility to accommodate refuse from the borough through to 2031, this will ensure the authority can continue delivering the principle of maintaining its waste collection and recycling service as covered by the existing re3 contract.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Director - Resources	No comments received
Monitoring Officer	No specific comments on report – 18/9/15
Leader of the Council	In full agreement with the recommendations – 20/9/15.

List of Background Papers

Consultation documents from Oxfordshire County Council available at:
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/minerals-and-waste-core-strategy>.
 Details of the Environmental Performance within the re3 partnership – see
http://www.re3.org.uk/environment_performance.asp.
 Report for the Individual Executive Member Decision by Councillor Angus Ross on 10 April 2012.

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