

West Sussex Minerals Local Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

January 2014

What is the Minerals Local Plan?

West Sussex County Council and the South Downs National Park Authority (the Mineral Planning Authorities) are required, by law, to plan for future mineral provision. In May 2011, the County Council decided to prepare a new Minerals Local Plan (MLP) for West Sussex in partnership with the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA).

The new Plan will set a strategy for mineral development to 2031, safeguard resources, allocate sites considered suitable for the production of minerals, and include a range of land use-specific and generic policies to sustainably manage future mineral development. The allocation of sites is important as it provides communities and the minerals industry with certainty about where mineral development can take place.

The Minerals Local Plan will provide a sound planning policy framework that provides a clear guide to operators and the public about:

- The most appropriate locations where mineral extraction may take place;
- The safeguarding of mineral resources with potential for future extraction and infrastructure such as wharves and railheads;
- The management of mineral workings to protect the environment and local communities; and
- The beneficial restoration and afteruse of mineral sites to promote biodiversity opportunities and the safeguarding of environmental features.

Current local minerals policy in West Sussex.

The adopted West Sussex Minerals Local Plan (2003) includes strategic and development management policies; it also allocates sites for sand and gravel extraction. The adopted Plan is now out-of-date and in the absence of an updated Local Plan, there is an increasing risk that inappropriate development could take place, or that future mineral supply requirements are not met. In addition, the need for a new local plan is a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Why is the Minerals Local Plan being produced jointly in West Sussex?

There are a number of benefits for the authorities, and their communities and businesses, in producing a joint Minerals Local Plan. Working jointly will also ensure a strategic view is taken and that both authorities have the same policies for dealing with planning applications for mineral development.

The Minerals Local Plan is being prepared by West Sussex County Council in partnership with the South Downs National Park Authority (for those parts of the South Downs National Park, which are within West Sussex).

What is the relationship between the Minerals Local Plan and existing or emerging Local Plans in West Sussex?

Responsibility for planning in West Sussex is split between the County Council, or the South Downs National Park Authority (within the Park area) and the district and borough councils. As Minerals Planning Authorities, the responsibilities of the County Council and South Downs National Park Authority include:

- planning applications for minerals, waste and our own development;
- minerals and waste planning policy.

The district and borough councils' responsibilities include all other planning applications, building control, tree preservation orders and the production of Local Plans covering issues not including minerals and waste.

Once adopted, the West Sussex Minerals Local Plan will form part of the development plan in West Sussex, against which applications for mineral development will be judged. Whilst such applications will be determined by the County Council or the South Downs National Park Authority (at sites located in the Park area), adopted and emerging Local Plans produced by district and borough councils are a material consideration in the decision making process.

How will the work carried out as part of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy, several years ago, be used to inform this new Plan?

The decision was made in May 2011 to stop progress on the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and produce a separate Waste Local Plan and Minerals Local Plan.

The Waste Local Plan (also produced jointly with the SDNPA) was prioritised and is now nearing the end of examination, with adoption anticipated in early 2014. Work on the Minerals Local Plan is now commencing.

Prior to May 2011, work on a Minerals and Waste Core Strategy was undertaken, this will be used to inform the development of the Minerals Local Plan where it is possible to do so. It is anticipated that a number of topic based Background Papers will be developed in 2014, which will draw upon previous work and be used to inform the development of the draft Plan. It will be necessary to engage with relevant parties, consultees and stakeholders to ensure that the information included in the Background Papers is both factual and relevant to the development of the joint Minerals Local Plan.

What difference will the South Downs National Park designation make?

National Parks have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty and their purposes should be given great weight in planning decisions. The South Downs National Park has two statutory purposes:

1. To conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
2. To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of these special qualities.

National planning policy guidance states that Local Planning Authorities should *'as far as is practical, provide for the maintenance of non-energy minerals from outside National Parks...'*. The joint Minerals Local Plan will need to examine whether this will be feasible; taking into account the geology of the Plan area which dictates where minerals can be found. This will be a key challenge for the partner authorities to address in the Minerals Local Plan.

The SDNPA and county councils of Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex commissioned a Soft Sand Study which provides initial evidence on the extent of the soft sand resource in the area and beyond, as well as exploring the potential for alternative options. The Minerals Local Plan will build on the findings of the study.

Why do we need minerals?

Minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life. It is therefore important that there is a sufficient and steady supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the County needs. However, since minerals are a finite natural resource and can only be worked where they are found, it is important to make best use of them to secure their long-term conservation.

Aggregate minerals are granular material used in construction and are essential in new buildings and maintaining the built environment. They are used in concrete, road stone, asphalt and numerous other construction materials; because of this, aggregates such as sand and gravel or crushed rock are essential for our economy.

What is the difference between primary and secondary & recycled aggregates?

Primary aggregates are materials that are directly extracted from the ground. They can be *crushed rock* aggregate, which is when hard rock is quarried from a rock face and broken into smaller pieces. The other type of primary aggregate is *sand and gravel*, which is material that has already been broken into smaller pieces by natural processes.

Secondary aggregates are the by-product of other mining or quarrying activities and this also includes materials such as Incinerator Bottom Ash which can be used as an aggregate.

Recycled aggregates are materials produced by the recycling of construction and demolition waste, for example crushed concrete.

What is the authorities' role in providing minerals to meet the future demand?

National aggregates policy is set out by the Government in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This requires the authorities to make provision for the supply of minerals in line with demand. Demand for minerals is established by analysing the rolling average of 10 years mineral sales data and applying other relevant local information, which may affect future demand for minerals.

The new MLP will address the main mineral deposits in the County, which include clay, sandstone, soft sand, sharp sand and gravel, chalk, and hydrocarbons (oil and gas). It will also address the need for mineral-related infrastructure, such as mineral processing plants, wharves and railheads for the importation and exportation of resources.

Will the South Downs National Park Authority or West Sussex County Council be extracting minerals?

Extraction of minerals will not be carried out by West Sussex County Council or the South Downs National Park Authority; instead extraction of minerals will be a matter for commercial operators, subject to planning permission, which will be

judged against the emerging or adopted Minerals Local Plan. Additionally, it is unlikely to take place on land owned by either Authority and instead would be a matter for negotiation between private landowners and commercial mineral operators.

What is the difference between a mineral resource and a mineral reserve?

There are a number of key terms that are applied when considering minerals planning; these include 'mineral resource' and 'mineral reserve'. A mineral resource is a known mineral that, due to its properties, is, or may become, of potential economic interest. Once the economic value of a resource has been proven and planning permission granted for mineral extraction, it is called a mineral reserve.

What is a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA)?

An MSA is an area of known mineral resources that is of sufficient economic or conservation value to warrant protection for future generations. NPPF paragraph 143 requires Mineral Planning Authorities to define MSAs in their Local Plan.

Where can I find out more information about onshore hydrocarbons in West Sussex and the South Downs National Park?

West Sussex County Council has produced a set of FAQs specific to the issue of onshore hydrocarbons (oil and gas). This is available online at:

- West Sussex County Council: [Frequently Asked Questions: Onshore Hydrocarbons](#)
- South Downs National Park Authority: [Frequently Asked Questions: Onshore Oil and Gas](#)

How can I get involved in the consultation process?

If you would like to be notified when consultations on the Minerals Local Plan are taking place, or to find out about future stakeholder events, please register your interest:

Email: mwdf@westsussex.gov.uk

Post: Strategic Planning, West Sussex County Council, County Hall,
Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RH