

West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (the Plan) – Main Modifications (MMs)

At the end of the hearing sessions, I advised that I would write to the Councils to advise if I require any further MMs to be drafted for consultation.

Without prejudice to my final findings, I would like to make the Councils aware that I am likely to recommend the deletion of the soft sand strategy from the Plan, due to concerns that it is not justified or consistent with national policy. Please can the Councils draft potential MMs to delete the soft sand strategy and the proposed Ham Farm site allocation from the Plan, for public consultation. Given the nature of my concerns and having regard to the discussions at the hearing sessions, I consider that the most appropriate approach in order to address this matter, would be for the Councils to undertake a focused single issue soft sand review of the Plan to be completed as soon as possible after the adoption of the Plan. This would ensure that the Plan can be adopted in a timely manner, without the potential for significant delay.

I am of the view that a soft sand policy is still needed to refer to the calculated shortfall and the Councils' commitment to the early review. I also consider that the approach to safeguarding the soft sand resource (as part of Policy M9) should remain as part of the Plan.

Turning to other matters, please could the Councils draft a potential MM to ensure that Policy M9 itself refers to the safeguarding maps in Appendix E of the Plan. In addition, please can the Councils change the reference to 'Inset Maps' in Policies M10 and M11, along with the appendices to 'Policy Maps'.

Again, without prejudice to my final findings, I am also requesting that the Councils draft potential MMs to Policy 7a (a) (ii) and Policy 7a (b) (ii) to remove reference to the site selected being the 'least sensitive' and instead refer to the site selected being an acceptable and deliverable location. A potential MM is also necessary to the supporting text at Paragraphs 6.7.11 and 6.7.12 to reflect such a change.

It has come to my attention that Policy M5: Clay at (a) (i) refers to the maintenance of a 'landbank'. The National Planning Policy Framework at Paragraph 146, requires that minerals planning authorities plan for a steady and adequate supply of industrial minerals by providing a 'stock of permitted reserves' of at least 25 years for brick clay. I would be grateful if the Councils can draft potential MMs to address this matter within Policy M5 and also within the monitoring framework.

Jonathan Manning

INSPECTOR

