

B1.6.3 Mineral Safeguarding Assessment

Assessment of proposed Epping Forest Local Plan site allocations

Essex County Council and Epping Forest District Council have assessed all sites proposed for allocation in the Submission Version of the Epping Forest Local Plan that have not already gained planning permission, for their impact on mineral resources. These sites include strategic growth locations and other development sites. The assessment was carried out in August 2016, and in September 2017 to inform the deliverability assessment, to ensure that finite mineral resources are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development in line with national planning policy requirements (NPPF para 143). The list of sites which were subject to the assessment includes all those supplied to the County Council on 29 July 2016 and 25 August 2016 as well as those identified for deliverability assessment in September 2017.

These strategic growth locations/other development sites identified as potentially being suitable for allocation were assessed to understand whether the whole site or a proportion lies within a mineral safeguarding area; whether that proportion was over the minimum site size threshold identified in the Essex Mineral Local Plan (MLP) Policy S8, and what proportion of this potentially workable area was outside of 250m of the settlement boundary in Epping Forest, taken as the Green Belt boundary.

The August 2016 assessment concluded that none of the sites identified as potentially being suitable for allocation, which included all sites proposed for allocation in the Epping Forest Draft Local Plan are within the thresholds identified in MLP Policy S8. This means that a Mineral Resource Assessment is not required in relation to any of these sites, and therefore the County Council will not request the inclusion of references to mineral resource safeguarding within the site allocation policy in the Epping Forest Local Plan.

The September 2017 assessment concluded that one site, SR-0267A, was within the thresholds identified in MLP Policy S8 for a sand and gravel minerals safeguarding area. Based on advice from Essex County Council, it was recommended that this site should be given a score of (0) against criteria 2.8 (Impact on Minerals Deposits). The outcome of the site selection work concluded that this site should not be allocated, and therefore a Mineral Resource Assessment is not required in relation to any of the sites proposed for allocation in the Submission Version Local Plan.

Reference to Minerals and Waste matters in the Epping Forest Local Plan

Minerals - General introductory text

The Essex Minerals Local Plan and Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan in Essex are part of the statutory Development Plan, and must be considered alongside the Epping Forest Local Plan. It is suggested that the Epping Forest Local Plan makes reference to the Minerals Local Plans - the following text may be of use:

'Essex County Council is the Minerals Planning Authority for the District, and is responsible for preparing planning policies, and assessing applications for mineral development. The Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014) forms part of the statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the Epping Forest Local Plan. The role of the Minerals Local Plan is to ensure a steady and adequate supply of mineral resources to facilitate development over the Plan period and beyond.

Currently unworked sand and gravel deposits are subject to a Minerals Safeguarding policy within the Minerals Local Plan. The safeguarding policy requires the minerals planning authority – Essex County Council - to be consulted on development proposals covering 5 hectares or more within the sand and gravel minerals safeguarded area. The Mineral Safeguarding Areas within Epping Forest District are shown on the Policies Map. Regard should be had to the requirements of the Minerals Local Plan where a development falls within a Mineral Safeguarding Area.

The Minerals Local Plan also designates Mineral Consultation Areas at a distance of 250m around active quarries, mineral infrastructure and mineral deposits permitted for extraction. Essex County Council must be consulted on all non-mineral related development within these areas.'

Reference to waste planning matters should be included in the introduction to the Epping Forest Local Plan and may also be necessary within the Policies and supporting text. It is considered that consideration of the draft Plan as a whole will be needed to inform this additional text. Therefore, this will be supplied by the County Council in response to consultation on the draft Plan, as necessary. If further discussion is needed in advance of the consultation, please contact the M&W Team.