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Sustainability Appraisal Addendum for Gloucestershire's Addendum to the Minerals Local Plan Site Options and Draft Policy Framework Consultation Document

Additional Site Option

Final Report
Prepared by LUC
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Introduction

- 1.1 Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) undertook consultation on the Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan Site Options and Draft Policy Framework Consultation Document (June 2014) from Monday 23rd June to Monday 18th August 2014.
- 1.2 Eighteen sites (some containing more than one parcel of land) were presented for consultation. The information provided was based upon factual desk-based assessments and where appropriate, included input from technical experts and statutory consultees. The 18 sites represented a combination of proposals put forward by landowners, the minerals industry and/or were previously allocated preferred areas within the 2003 Minerals Local Plan, which have not yet been granted planning permission for working.
- 1.3 Since the consultation in 2014 GCC has been considering the responses received. One of these responses presented an additional site option to the Council. In order for the Council to consider this additional option objectively alongside the previously consulted upon sites, it is necessary to subject it to public consultation, prior to making any decisions as to which sites should go forward into the draft new Minerals Local Plan.
- 1.4 The Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan Site Options and Draft Policy Framework Consultation Document (June 2014) (hereafter referred to as the "MLP Consultation Document"), was subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), in line with the requirements of the SEA Directive, culminating in the SA Report (May 2014) published for consultation alongside the MLP Consultation Document in June 2014. The additional site option which has now been identified following the 2014 consultation is also required to be subject to SA, which is the purpose of this SA addendum. As the SA addendum supplements the SA work presented in the full SA Report, it does not need to address all of the requirements of the SEA Directive again (**Table 1.1** in the 2014 SA Report signposts where each of the requirements of the SEA Regulations has been met in that report).

Additional site option

- 1.5 The additional option that the Council has identified and which has been subject to SA is presented in a similar fashion to the previous 18 site options. The additional option is presented in the Gloucestershire Addendum to the Minerals Local Plan Site Options and Draft Policy Framework Consultation Document: Additional Site Option (January 2015) (hereafter referred to as the "Addendum MLP Consultation Document").
- 1.6 The additional site option seeks to introduce the possibility of a depth extension to part of the existing Stowfield Quarry located within the Crushed Rock Forest of Dean mineral resource area. The additional site option is referred to as **CRFD3 (C) Stowfield**.

Methodology

- 1.7 The additional site option identified by the Council has been subject to SA using the same methodology that has been used in the SA process for the MLP Consultation Document, as described in detail Chapters 2 and 4 of the SA Report for the MLP Consultation Document (May 2014).
- 1.8 The likely effects of the site option on each of the 18 SA objectives in the Gloucestershire SA framework and assumptions has been assessed and is presented in a detailed SA matrix which can be found in **Appendix 1**. Colour coded scores have been used to identify likely significant effects, as shown below:

Table 1: Key to SA Scores

++	The policy is likely to have a significant positive impact on the SA objective(s).
+	The policy is likely to have a minor positive impact on the SA objective(s).
0	The policy is likely to have a negligible or no impact on the SA objective(s).
+/-	The policy is likely to have a mixture of positive and negative impacts on the SA objective(s).
-	The policy is likely to have a minor negative impact on the SA objective(s).
--	The policy is likely to have a significant negative impact on the SA objective(s).
?	It is uncertain what effect the policy will have on the SA objective(s).

Summary of SA Findings for Additional Site Option CRFD3 (C) Stowfield

- 1.9 The SA findings for the additional site option (**CRFD3 (C) Stowfield**) are presented in full in **Appendix 1**. The SA scores for the additional site option are also summarised in **Table 2** alongside the other Forest of Dean crushed rock site options that were already appraised as part of the SA Report (2014) for the MLP Consultation Document. The summary of SA findings for the previous 18 site options can be found in Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.99 – 5.126 of the 2014 SA Report. A high level summary of the SA findings for the additional site option and the previous 18 site options is presented below.
- 1.10 There is a mix of potentially positive and negative effects arising from the use of any of the site options for mineral extraction, however, for a number of the SA objectives, no effect is expected to occur. The potential for significant negative effects has only been identified for some of the sites on the SA objectives relating to biodiversity (SA Objective 7), landscape (SA Objective 8), cultural and recreational assets (SA Objective 10), geodiversity (SA Objective 11), historic environment and heritage assets (SA objective 12) and soil/land quality (SA Objective 14). The additional site option to extend the depth of the existing Stowfield Quarry has been found to have two potential significant negative effects: on geodiversity and landscape due to the site being located within the existing consented Stowfield Quarry which is designated as a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS)¹ and is located within the Wye Valley AONB. Mitigation of the potentially negative effects on any of the site options could be achieved through implementation of good operational practices, and requiring certain surveys or detailed assessments to be undertaken as part of the planning application process. These requirements are included within the policies in the MLP Consultation Document (June 2014), and will need to be included within any specific briefs for the sites that are ultimately selected for allocation in the MLP.

Next steps

- 1.11 The SA findings for the additional site option should be taken into account by the Council as it decides which sites to take forward in the Minerals Local Plan process.

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January 2015

¹ While the government has proposed to change the name of Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) to Local Geological Sites; in Gloucestershire they are still referred to as RIGS.

Table 2: Summary of SA scores for potential site options within the Crushed Rock Forest of Dean resource area (including the additional site assessed as part of this SA Addendum - CRFD3 (C) Stowfield).

SA Objective	CRFD1 (a) Stowe Hill/Clearwell	CRFD1 (b) Stowe Hill/Clearwell	CRFD1 (c) Stowe Hill/Clearwell	CRFD2 (a) Drybrook	CRFD3 (a) Stowfield	CRFD3 (c) Stowfield	CRFD4 (a) Hewelsfield
Social							
1. Health and wellbeing.	-?	-?	-?	-?	0	0	-?
2. Amenity of local communities.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Economic							
3. Sustainable economic development.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Employment opportunities.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
5. Safety of commercial or military aerodromes.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Conservation of minerals resources.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environmental							
7. Biodiversity.	-?	-/+?	-/+?	0	-/+?	-/+?	-/+?
8. Landscape.	-?	-?	-?	0?	--?	--?	--?
9. Restoration of mineral sites.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
10. Material, cultural and recreational assets.	-	-	-	-	-	0	-
11. Geodiversity.	-?	0	-?	0	-?	--?	0
12. Historic environment, heritage assets and their setting.	-?	-?	-?	-?	--?	-?	-?
13. Flooding.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Soil / land quality.	-	-	-	-	0	0	--
15. Air quality.	-	-	-	-	0	0	-
16. Water quality and quantity.	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
17. Impacts of lorry traffic on the environment and communities	-?	-?	-?	-?	+	+	-
18. Climate Change.	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

Appendix 1

SA Matrix for Additional Site Option CRFD3 (C) Stowfield

CRFD3 (C) Stowfield

SA Objective and Sub Questions	SA Score	Justification
1. To promote sustainable development and sustainable communities and improve the health and wellbeing of people living and working in Gloucestershire as well as visitors to the County.	0	<p>The site is not within 100m of any sensitive receptors. The closest sensitive receptor is Scowles Caravan Park located approximately 300m to the southeast of the site boundary, while the closest settlement, which is the village of Scowles, is located over 300m to the southeast of the site. Therefore, the site is expected to have no effects on the health of local residents and communities.</p> <p>In addition, it is assumed that mineral extraction at any of the potential sites will be well operated and that dust avoidance and suppression measures implemented by the operators should be sufficient to avoid any potential health effects.</p>
2. To safeguard the amenity of local communities from the adverse impacts of mineral development.	-	<p>The site is not within 100m of any sensitive receptors. The closest sensitive receptor is Scowles Caravan Park located approximately 300m to the southeast of the site boundary, while the closest settlement, which is the village of Scowles, is located over 300m to the southeast of the site. Therefore, the site is expected to have no effects on the amenity of local communities.</p> <p>The site is not within 100m of any areas allocated for new residential development in the Forest of Dean District Council Adopted Core Strategy, therefore there should not be any landuse conflict.</p> <p>The site is located within 1km of the settlement Staunton and Scowles and is proposed as a deepening to the existing Stowfield Quarry, therefore, continuing crushed rock extraction activity in this area could have a minor negative cumulative effect on the amenity of the local community due to the potential continued noise and vibration associated with the mineral extraction operations. Noise and vibration effects may be more likely as the site would work crushed rock which would require blasting prior to excavation. However, the extent of these effects is very dependent on the scale of the operations and type of activities undertaken within the site as well as any potential mitigation measures proposed, which would be assessed at the planning application stage. While there may be some unavoidable short term effects due to noisy activities, it is assumed that mineral extraction at any of the potential sites will be well operated and that mitigation measures implemented should be sufficient to avoid any potential long term amenity effects.</p>

SA Objective and Sub Questions	SA Score	Justification
3. To promote sustainable economic development in Gloucestershire giving opportunities to people from all social and ethnic backgrounds.	0	No effect is likely as mineral sites are unlikely to present opportunities for spin off employment or other opportunities due to sites being self-served by the operators that own them.
4. To provide employment opportunities in both rural and urban areas of the County, promoting diversification in the economy.	+	All potential mineral sites regardless of their location are likely to have a minor positive effect on increasing employment levels. This is because all of the sites could have a direct and indirect positive effect on increasing employment levels during site preparation, operation and restoration, which could result in a small amount of job creation for local people in both rural and urban areas. However, job creation from new mineral extraction sites is not expected to be significant within the Gloucestershire economy; and given that the overall number of mineral sites likely to be developed in the County will not be a large number each year, the total numbers of new employment opportunities likely to be provided within the County is not considered to be significant.
5. To ensure that mineral sites do not compromise the safety of commercial or military aerodromes.	0	The site is not within an aerodrome safeguarding area and is therefore not expected to have an effect on this objective.
6. To conserve minerals resources from inappropriate development whilst providing for the supply of aggregates and other minerals sufficient for the needs of society.	0	New potential mineral sites would not be inappropriate development as they are contributing to extraction of mineral resources, not limiting the ability to extract resources, and would therefore have no effect on this objective, which primarily relates to areas being designated as Mineral Safeguarding and Consultation areas to safeguard from sterilisation by <u>non-mineral</u> development.
7. To protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity in Gloucestershire.	-/+?	<p>The eastern boundary of the site is within 50m of Dingle Wood SSSI and the northern area of the site is located within Blakes Wood Key Wildlife Site. The western boundary of the site is also within 1km of Staunton Woods Key Wildlife Site. The southwest corner of the site is within approximately 1km of Wye Valley Woodlands SAC and Swanpool Wood & Furnace Grove SSSI.</p> <p>The GCC site assessment notes that this site is made up of the proposed additional site deepening and the existing consented quarry. There are already mitigation measures in place and a S106 fund has been secured to benefit the Wye Woods 1 SNA and a range of notable species in surrounding local areas nearby. The quarry is to be restored by a mixture of minimal landscaping and natural re-colonisation processes. Subject to the observations of statutory advisors a significant effect on Wye Valley Woodlands Sites SAC, Dingle Wood SSSI and Swanpool Wood & Furnace Grove SSSI is unlikely but any new/revised development upon this land should still be assessed for</p>

SA Objective and Sub Questions	SA Score	Justification
		such impacts at the planning application stage. Therefore, the site could have some minor negative effects in the short term, although mitigation would be possible, and minor positive effects in the long-term could be achieved through restoration.
8. To protect, conserve and enhance the landscape in Gloucestershire.	--?	The site is located within the existing consented quarry which is located within the Wye Valley AONB and could therefore have a significant negative effect on this asset. However, the effect on the landscape would be uncertain as a more detailed assessment would be required once proposals regarding the potential deepening are known at the planning application stage. Furthermore, the bunding and tree planting which is present at the existing quarry may provide mitigation to the proposal. The GCC site assessment states that landscape and visual impacts are a key issue that requires careful consideration in considering a depth extension.
9. To restore mineral sites to a high standard in order to achieve the maximum after use benefits including the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, and delivery of green infrastructure where possible.	+?	The restoration of minerals sites is increasingly adopting innovative practice and therefore, any minerals site could have positive effects on landscape character, biodiversity, amenity and recreation in the longer term, once restored. However, this would be very dependent on the exact nature and proposed design of the restoration of the minerals site, which would not be known until the planning application stage.
10. To protect conserve and enhance Gloucestershire's material, cultural and recreational assets.	0	<p>The PRoW footpath RST/18/1 is within 150m of the western boundary of the site, however, the GCC PRoW Team has identified that no effects are expected on PRoW. The existing PRoW also runs past the existing consented quarry which is an established site, and therefore it is unlikely that deepening of the quarry will further impact on recreation assets or recreational activities.</p> <p>Furthermore, the GCC PRoW Team state that mineral developments could well offer opportunity of enhancement but at this stage and without checking on the ground or consulting the parishes it is too early to be exact.</p> <p>Therefore, the site is not expected to have an effect on recreation assets or recreational activities.</p>
11. To protect conserve and enhance geodiversity in Gloucestershire.	--?	<p>The working of and restoration of minerals sites is increasingly adopting innovative practice and there may be opportunities to incorporate and preserve important geological features within the site. However, this would be very dependent on the exact nature, working and proposed design of the restoration of the minerals site, which would not be known until the planning application stage.</p> <p>The site is located within the existing consented Stowfield Quarry which is designated</p>

SA Objective and Sub Questions	SA Score	Justification
		as a Regionally Important Geological Site local site and could therefore have a significant negative effect on this objective. However, this would be very dependent on the exact nature, working and proposed design of the restoration of the minerals site, which would not be known until the planning application stage. However, the GCC assessment recommends that if quarrying is extended, or any infilling takes place, one rock face along the complete E-W section of the existing consented quarry is preserved, with an access ramp or path along it.
12. To protect conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting.	-?	<p>The Scowles located north of Blake's Wood and located in Blake's Wood, which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, are located within 100m of the northern and eastern boundary of the site. There are also Scowles (registered as Scheduled Ancient Monuments) located in Dingle Wood approximately 50m to the east of the site. Additionally the northern boundary of the site is within 500m of Staunton Conservation Area and the listed buildings located within it, the closest being Church Farmhouse (Grade II) located approximately 780m away. Therefore, the site could have a minor negative effect on the setting of these assets, however the effects would be uncertain as a more detailed assessment would be required once proposals are known.</p> <p>The GCC assessment notes that advice on planning applications for the existing quarry has covered the protection of the scowles, and the recording of other archaeological features across the site. Also, that no further archaeological mitigation is required as this has already been undertaken within the existing quarry</p>
13. To prevent flooding, in particular preventing inappropriate development in the floodplain.	0	The site is within flood zone 1 which has a low probability of flooding and is therefore not expected to have an effect on flood risk areas. Therefore, no effect is likely to occur on this objective.
14. To protect and enhance soil / land quality in Gloucestershire.	0	The site is not within Grade 1, 2 or 3 agricultural land and is therefore not expected to have an effect on protecting or enhancing soil/land quality. Furthermore, the GCC assessment notes that as the land lies within the current permitted boundary of the existing quarry, the soil and overburden has already been considered under the extant planning consent.
15. To protect and enhance air quality in Gloucestershire, helping to meet local, national and international objectives for air quality.	0	The site is within 300m of the A4136 but is not within 1km of an AQMA; therefore the site is expected to have a negligible impact on protecting air quality, although this impact is very dependent on the type of mineral site, the scale of the operations and the type of activities undertaken within the site and potential mitigation measures proposed, which would be assessed at the planning application stage. Although, the

SA Objective and Sub Questions	SA Score	Justification
		GCC assessment states that a potential depth extension would be considered using the existing access and infrastructure and should therefore not breach the current productive capacity.
16. To protect and enhance water quality and quantity in Gloucestershire, and to ensure that minerals development does not compromise sustainable sources of water supply.	?	<p>The site is not within a source protection zone but the site overlies a Principal aquifer which may provide a high level of water storage and support water supply and/or river base flow on a strategic scale. GCC state that GCC Minerals Local Plan (2003) identifies that there is a large potable groundwater supply at Redbrook which must be protected. There are also many smaller licensed and unlicensed supplies in the vicinity. Ground conditions in the vicinity of Staunton make septic tank effluent disposal problematical. The result is a layer of sewage effluent below the ground surface around Staunton. Proposals for mineral working should not breach the clay layer. Any proposals for mineral working would require pre-application monitoring of groundwater conditions. In particular the location of the impermeable base to the Lower Dolomite formation should be ascertained. Proposals for mineral working should not breach this impermeable layer. Furthermore GCC state that hydrological impacts are a key issue that requires careful consideration in considering a depth extension.</p> <p>However, at this stage in the planning process it is not possible to determine the impacts of minerals sites on water quality (surface or groundwater) or water use and efficiency as it will very much depend on the proposal (mineral type, design, method of working etc.), which would be assessed at the planning application stage.</p>
17. To reduce the adverse impacts of lorry traffic on the environment and communities through means such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) reducing the need to travel b) promoting more sustainable means of transport e.g. by rail or water c) sensitive lorry routing d) the use of sustainable alternative fuels 	+?	<p>This site is within 300m of the A4136 and the GCC assessment states that a potential depth extension would be considered using the existing access and infrastructure and should therefore not breach the current productive capacity. Therefore the site is likely to have a minor positive effect on reducing the impacts of lorry traffic on the environment and communities as traffic associated with the site should not have to travel far on local roads. However, the effects would be uncertain as the potential for effects will depend on the exact nature and design of the site, which would not be known until the planning application stage.</p>
18. To reduce contributions to and to adapt to Climate Change.	?	<p>At this stage in the planning process it is not possible to determine the impacts of minerals sites on their ability to reduce contributions to and to adapt to climate change as it will depend on the proposal, which would be assessed at the planning application stage.</p>