

Executive Summary



Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council have embarked upon a review of the Minerals Local Plan for the area under the new system imposed by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. As part of this review the Council's appointed Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd to act as independent facilitator for the Minerals Development Framework Forum. The purpose of the Forum process was to guide the core strategy, strategic aims and detailed objectives to be contained in the Minerals Development Framework Document.

At the start of the process a core group of 63 participants signified their intention to be involved in the Forum. A suite of 9 meetings were held during 2004/2005 and attendance at each meeting averaged out at 21 attendees. Over the course of the meetings the following issues were discussed and debated leading to a series of valuable outcomes to inform the emerging planning documents.

The Forum process used a number of techniques to engage the participants including formal presentations, site visits, active and passive group work and question sessions. Web based links and an on-line forum were established to assist in information dissemination. The process started from a blank sheet of paper and the outcomes were not pre-determined or contrived.

Officers of both authorities actively participated in the process by providing information and answering questions. Both officers and the facilitators sought not to guide the Forum members but to facilitate their development and secure outcomes based on aims and objectives set for each meeting.

The outcomes from the process included:

- Valuable contributions to the Statement of Community Involvement for Wiltshire
- Definition of the approach to meeting Government forecasts of aggregate demand
- The role of recycled aggregates
- Relative importance of constraints and how they should be applied when considering the identification of future mineral sites
- Definition of a spatial vision :-

'To consider all the mineral locations in the County and Borough to apply a SWOT / capacity analysis to each location in order to identify a sequence of possible locations for the future.'

- Definition of primary aim of the Plan and associated objectives
- Clarity and definition relating to strategic options for meeting the government's demand for aggregates.

The final meeting of the Forum provided a valuable opportunity for reflection on the success of the process from various viewpoints. Overall the process was considered a resounding success and participants agreed that this type of 'front-end'

consultation is valuable and provides an opportunity to influence the planning process. A number of lessons were learnt as the process unfolded and these are set out in detail in the Report.

As a result, the County and Borough Council's elected Members are invited to:

- (i) fully endorse the Forum process and the value of the process to future planning for minerals in the area;
- (ii) endorse the outputs of the Forum and use these to shape the emerging core strategy and subsequent documents;
- (iii) endorse the continued role of the Forum and its value as a test bed for the emerging documents;
- (iv) endorse officers convening the Forum at appropriate junctures in the plan preparation process; and
- (v) endorse appropriate linkages between the Minerals Forum and the newly reconvened Waste Forum¹.

¹ *Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd has been appointed to independently facilitate the Waste Forum*