

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:**           **CABINET**

**DATE:**                   **TUESDAY, 15 APRIL 2014**

**REPORT BY:**           **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

**SUBJECT:**               **REGIONAL TECHNICAL STATEMENT**

**1.00**   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.01    To inform Councillors about the First Revision to the North Wales Regional Technical Statement for the strategic provision of aggregate minerals and the implications for Flintshire and other local authorities within North Wales.
- 1.02    To inform Councillors about departure from Welsh Government Policy and Policy Guidance and the reasons for the approach being recommended.
- 1.03    To advise how the Welsh Government will address conflict between the First Revision Regional Technical Statement and published Policy and Guidance.
- 1.04    To formally endorse the First Revision Regional Technical Statement as a collaboratively produced document with other North Wales local authorities which will have the status of a material consideration in the preparation of the Flintshire Local Development Plan and for use in making development management decisions.

**2.00**   **BACKGROUND**

- 2.01    Minerals Planning Policy Wales Minerals Technical Guidance Note 1: Aggregate (MTAN1) 2004 introduced a requirement for local planning authorities to work collaboratively, in conjunction with the Regional Aggregates Working Party (RAWP) to prepare and agree a revision to the Regional Technical Statement (RTS) at 5 yearly intervals.
- 2.02    The RTS review has been undertaken and coordinated by an independent consultant appointed by Welsh Government working closely with the North Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party (NWRAP). The RTS makes recommendations for apportionment and allocations for each Local Authority within the North Wales Region.
- 2.03    The Revision to the RTS requires political endorsement by a majority of the respective Councils that make up the North Wales region to allow it to be published and used for preparation of aggregate policy within Local

Development Plans and reviews, or the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) as is appropriate.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.01 The RTS sets out the apportionment of aggregate mineral resources that is necessary at a sub regional or county level, and make recommendations on whether new permitted reserves will need to be brought forward during the plan period. Each authority has to contribute to an apportionment for hard rock and sand and gravel for the duration of the LDP. In many instances there are sufficient existing permitted reserves of aggregate to meet this, but where there is a shortfall, additional allocations will need to be made. The RTS recommendations take account of the location of rock deposits, environmental and sustainability factors, and the location of markets.
- 3.02 Shortfalls in the apportionment can be met by: allocations defining areas of search, preferred areas for mineral working; or making site specific allocations. The provision is to ensure that an adequate supply of minerals necessary for the construction industry is maintained to meet demand from housing, employment and infrastructure development which promotes economic growth.
- 3.03 The review process involves departures from published policy guidance in the published Minerals Technical Advice Note (MTAN 1: Aggregates), such as the use of a 10 year baseline period for calculating the land bank instead of the previous 3 years (as recommended by MTAN1); the potential for the landbank to exceed a 20 years limit, and the treatment of reserves held in dormant mineral planning permissions.
- 3.04 The Welsh Government has been engaged with the progress of the RTS and will be issuing a clarification letter to address the departures above to avoid policy conflict, and will also set out the material consideration status of the RTS.
- 3.05 Flintshire already maintains landbanks of permitted reserves, however these are insufficient to meet the recommended apportionment. The key recommendation for Flintshire is the need to make a minimum allocation of 3.84 m tonnes hard rock to provide a total apportionment of 78 m tonnes to cover a period of 25 years (in conjunction with Wrexham CBC), and to make a minimum allocation of 1.4 m tonnes sand & gravel to provide a total apportionment of 4.4 m tonnes of sand & gravel over a period of 22 years.
- 3.06 The recommended allocations above are modest in scale when considered over a time period in excess of 20 years, and there should be not difficulty in identifying suitable locations. Greater detail about the RTS review is set out within the attached Appendix.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 That Members endorse the First Revision of the North Wales Regional Technical Review.
- 4.02 Note the departure from published planning policy and guidance and note that clarification letters will be issued by the Welsh Government in the interim until the policy and guidance is revised.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 None

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 None

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 The First Draft RTS takes account of environmental factors at regional level, such as regional movement of minerals, occurrence of mineral, location of existing workings and has assessed environmental and sustainability factors. There are no significant direct interactions at a regional or sub-regional level in North Wales which would compromise the ability to make provision for future provision of aggregate, or which would harm the environment. The recommendations for specific apportionment and consequential allocations have potential for social and environmental interactions if carried forward into Local Development Plans and Supplementary Planning Guidance. This is a matter that should be addressed as part of the production of the Local Development Plan, or upon consideration of a planning application for new aggregate workings. Mineral allocations will constrain other forms of development.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.01 Provision of minerals for house building, highways, infrastructure, commercial and industrial development is a major factor in economic growth and minimising transportation costs.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.01 None

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

- 10.01 None

## **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Consultation was a requirement of the RTS process, and proportionate stakeholder consultation has taken place over the period October to December 2013 in compliance with the Welsh Government Contract. The comments made in response to consultation have been considered by the RTS Sub Group and are set out in a Response to Consultation document. Where necessary or appropriate, the draft RTS has been amended.

## **12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Technical Summary.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Regional Technical Statement Main Document  
Regional Technical Statement Appendix A North Wales  
Regional Technical Statement Response to Consultation

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