

CHAPTER 1:

WHAT THIS PLAN NEEDS TO DO

- 1.1** The Site Allocations Policies have to identify the sites and areas of land that will be required to implement the Core Strategy's policies for working and safeguarding minerals and for managing wastes. The most directly relevant Core Strategy Policies are Policies 7, 9, 12 and 14. The policies list the types of sites and areas of land that need to be identified, these are described below.
- 1.2** The Core Strategy (paragraph 7.30) also states that more than the minimum number of sites should be identified. With this in mind, the Council has identified lists of its first preference sites and of reserve ones. The reserve list sites would be intended to come forward if the first preference ones are taken by other development, do not come forward for development, or prove to be unsuitable; for example, following more detailed assessment in a planning application. There are also site specific reasons for including some of them on the reserve list rather than as the first preference.
- 1.3** The sites and areas of land will have to be shown on the Proposals Map together with other information. At this consultation stage, separate maps of the sites and areas are included.

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) (sites of around 0.5 to 1 ha are needed)

- 1.4** At the time that the Core Strategy was prepared, there were twelve HWRCs in the plan area, plus one at Ambleside in the Lake District National Park. Core Strategy Policy 9 states that the plan will seek to identify nine new or enlarged HWRCs, with innovative solutions or alternative sites kept under review for smaller communities.
- 1.5** Since then a new HWRC has opened at Brampton, near Carlisle, and Kirkby Stephen has been extended and redesigned. Barrow HWRC already has planning permission for rebuilding and a small extension. The Site Allocations, therefore, now need to make provision for six new or extended HWRCs. Seven sites are identified, in Policy 1, as first preference ones and three as reserves. The main focus for innovative solutions is in the Alston area, where a number of possible sites have been investigated but none have been able to be progressed.

Waste treatment facilities (sites of around 2 to 3 ha are needed)

- 1.6** Core Strategy Policy 9 states that the plan will seek to identify eleven sites for facilities such as Mechanical and Biological Treatment plants, Materials Recovery Facilities and Transfer/Bulking Stations. Since then planning permissions have been granted for a Mechanical and Biological Treatment plant and Transfer Station at Hespian Wood near Carlisle, a Materials Recovery Facility at Kingmoor Rockcliffe near Carlisle and for a Materials Recovery Facility/Transfer Station at Flusco near Penrith. The Site Allocations, therefore, need to identify at least seven sites. Ten sites are identified, in Policy 2, as first preference ones and six as reserves.

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Energy from waste (EfW) (sites of around 2 to 4.5 ha are needed)

- 1.7** Core Strategy Policy 9 states that the plan will seek to identify two sites for Energy from Waste incinerators. As explained in Core Strategy paragraph 7.26, at the time it was written, flexibility was needed to accommodate the requirements of both of the bids for the municipal waste management contract. The contract has subsequently been signed and does not require Energy from Waste plants.
- 1.8** Since then, planning permissions have been granted for an EfW plant at the Port of Barrow, mainly using imported wood waste, and for a steam raising plant, using refuse derived fuel, near Kendal. There has been interest in developing additional EfW plants for the commercial and industrial waste streams both within and outside of the sites where the wastes arise. Four sites are identified, in Policy 3, as first preference ones and three as reserves.

Landfill

- 1.9** Core Strategy Policy 8 states that the plan will seek to identify 2 million cubic metres of non-inert landfill capacity in addition to the 5 million cubic metres remaining permitted void space in existing sites. Core Strategy paragraph 7.31 states that strategic areas for landfill provision will be in the south, north and west of the county with priority being given to the south. Since then a proposal for additional capacity at the Bennett Bank landfill near Barrow-in-Furness has been refused planning permission by the County Council. A decision on the appeal against that decision is expected by early 2010.
- 1.10** It seems clear from recent work for the Regional Waste Strategy, and with the economic downturn, that less landfill capacity is likely to be needed than stated in the Core Strategy. This will be kept under review in the Annual Monitoring Reports. Two sites are identified, in Policy 4, as first preference ones and two as reserves. Only a reserve site has been able to be identified in the south.

Low Level Radioactive Waste

- 1.11** Core Strategy Policy 12 states that the plan will make provision for the Low Level Waste Repository near Drigg to continue to fulfil a role as a component of the UK's radioactive waste management capability. Since then, it has become clearer that initiatives are needed within Cumbria, and throughout the UK, to divert the sub-category of Very Low Activity High Volume Wastes (or Very Low Level Waste - VLLW) away from the Repository. Two sites are identified, in Policy 5, as first preference ones and one as a reserve.

Sand and gravel

- 1.12** Core Strategy Policy 14 states that Preferred Areas and/or Areas of Search will be identified to enable a landbank of at least seven years to be maintained throughout the plan period, and Mineral Safeguarding Areas and/or Areas of Search for the indicative sand and gravel resources identified by the British Geological Survey. The landbank is to be based on the Regional Spatial Strategy's apportionment to Cumbria, which is currently 700,000 tonnes/year, i.e. a landbank of 4.9 million tonnes. Core Strategy paragraph 10.2 states that consideration will be given to whether the release of Preferred Areas should be phased over the plan period.

- 1.13** Since the Core Strategy was prepared, planning permissions have been granted for an additional 7 million tonnes of reserves at Overby, High House, Brisco and Kirkhouse quarries. The current (mid 2009) landbank is likely to be around twenty years and is not now likely to fall below 7 years within the plan period. This suggests that Preferred Areas or Areas of Search no longer need to be identified to be in accordance with the Policy. However, the landbank is disproportionately located within the north of the county and provision for the west and south needs to be considered in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 13. Other considerations are that, with the recession, there has recently been a substantial decrease in sales of sand and gravel and that some of the current planning permissions will expire within the plan period. A reserve list Preferred Area and four Areas of Search are identified, in Policy 6.

Crushed rock for general aggregate use

- 1.14** Core Strategy Policy 14 states that Mineral Safeguarding Areas and/or Areas of Search will be identified for the indicative hard rock resources identified by the British Geological Survey. Core Strategy paragraph 10.13 states that no further provision for the release of general crushed rock aggregate can be justified because of the size of the current landbank. One Area of Search for a limestone quarry is identified, in Policy 6, if this could secure environmental improvements.

High and very high specification roadstones

- 1.15** Core Strategy Policy 14 states that a Preferred Area or Area of Search will be identified for extending Ghyll Scaur Quarry for nationally important very high specification roadstone and Mineral Safeguarding Areas and/or Areas of Search for the high specification aggregate resources identified by the British Geological Survey. Two Areas of Search are identified in Policy 6.

Local building stones

- 1.16** Core Strategy Policy 14 states that Mineral Safeguarding Areas will be identified for resources of local building stones. One Mineral Safeguarding Area is identified on the maps.

Brickmaking mudstones

- 1.17** Core Strategy Policy 14 states that an Area of Search will be identified for extending High Greenscoe Quarry. An Area of Search is identified, in Policy 6.

Gypsum

- 1.18** Core Strategy Policy 14 states that a Preferred Area and/or Area of Search will be identified for working additional gypsum and a Mineral Safeguarding Area for the remaining gypsum resources. A Preferred Area is identified, in Policy 6, and Mineral Safeguarding Areas are shown on the maps. The Birkshead mine is working the last of the gypsum resources that can be worked by underground mining. In the sites that are identified, the gypsum is too shallow to be worked that way and would have to be quarried.

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- 1.19** Gypsum raises questions, about how the Mineral Safeguarding Areas should be defined, that are not found for other minerals. The geology map shows the outcrops of the gypsum beds, but significantly larger areas of land than the outcrop would be needed to extract the gypsum. For example, the earlier proposal for the Stamphill site, which is no longer a valid permission, was for an extraction area of around 25 ha but required an area three times as large as that to accommodate its operational needs, including screen mounds and temporary overburden storage.
- 1.20** The Mineral Safeguarding Areas show an initial estimate of the estimated areas of land that would be needed. These have raised concerns, in consultations, relating to the possibility that they could cause a long period of blight on properties. The issue may be exacerbated by the very localised occurrence of gypsum compared with the other minerals that are being safeguarded. It is not clear if or how this issue can be resolved, national policy requires the Framework to safeguard economically important minerals. Meetings and discussions are intended to continue during this final consultation period. These may result in the proposed boundaries of the Mineral Safeguarding Areas being refined.

Other mineral resources, secondary aggregate resources and potential railheads and wharves.

- 1.21** Core Strategy Policy 14 states that the need to safeguard these will be considered. The shallow coal resources and fireclay, one slag bank and two potential rail sidings are identified, on the maps, as safeguarding areas together with the areas of old planning permissions for underground lead and zinc mining.

Mineral Consultation Areas

- 1.22** These are for use in two-tier planning areas to identify where consultations are needed between county and district councils about development which would be likely to affect land with potential for mineral extraction and also about how mineral working could affect other existing or proposed land uses. The Mineral Consultation Areas will also have to be shown on District Local Development Framework Proposals Maps. It is intended that guidance will be produced, jointly with the districts, on the details of the consultation process; for example, the types and scale of development proposals for which consultations are necessary.
- 1.23** Core Strategy Policy 14 states that Mineral Consultation Areas will be identified, which include buffer zones around Preferred Areas, Areas of Search and Mineral Safeguarding Areas. A 250 metre wide buffer is being used to define the Mineral Consultation Areas. With the exception of gypsum, as explained above, the Mineral Safeguarding Areas have been defined as the extent of the mineral resources shown on the British Geological Survey maps.