

Appendix B

**Joint Core strategy for the Black Country Minerals Spatial
Planning Objectives & Policies Preferred Options:**

**Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options: Summary of
Consultation Responses**

1 Safeguarding the Black Country Minerals Resources

Consultation comments & evidence

- Safeguard known mineral resource in the Black Country against sterilisation from other development by identifying new MSAs (including buffer zones) that cover all known mineral resources where they exist
- All known Etruria Marl resources and Coal outcrops (containing fireclay) should be safeguarded;
- All minerals in the Black Country should be defined within MSAs
- Broad extent of MSA to be shown on the Core Strategy Key Diagram
- Need to know where mineral deposits are present in commercially economic quantities;
- Each mineral type should be clearly distinguished on the key diagram;
- Mineral resource located in the Green belt needs to be considered;
- Further information is required regarding Fireclay resources and stockpiles;
- Detailed boundaries should be defined in a separate DPD
- Down dip areas covered by overburden should also be shown when defining details MSA boundaries;
- MSA policy should be included in Core Strategy identifying how the authorities will deal with other forms of development affecting mineral resources
- Need to strike a balance between the need for minerals and other types of future development
- MSAs should be drawn widely to include developed urban land, whereby future extraction could occur during the redevelopment of urban areas (within regeneration zones) for example, shallow coal reserves/resources and restoration of former coal extraction sites;
- Development should be timed to enable mineral extraction to occur, but restricting it to a few sites to ensure a safe and socially tolerable environment whilst extraction occurs.
- Authorities should strongly implement a policy of prior extraction before permanent forms of development – achieved by placing onus on developer to demonstrate extent and quality of mineral resource, and whether prior extraction is feasible
- The role of local mineral resources in terms of listed building conservation should be considered. The key minerals of particular value to the Black Country Conservation Areas include igneous dolerite (Rowley Rag), Etruria Marl and Gornal Stone (limestone).
- Relationship with adjacent Mineral Planning Authorities, whereby where MSAs occur cross-boundary, MSA policy should be consistent with surrounding MPAs MSA policy.
- A balance will need to be struck between the need for raw materials upon which modern life depends and the sterilisation of those resources by development.

2 Continued Supply of Non- Energy Minerals in the Black Country

Consultation comments & evidence

- Should identify locations within the Black Country where extraction will take place to maintain regional self-sufficiency and local availability of supplies in the longer-term and reduce dependence on importation of materials/the need to transport them long distances, for at least the next 25 years.
- Only areas of proven mineral resources should be identified as preferred areas and subject to the consideration of potential impacts on the environment. The areas resulting in least environmental impact should have priority.
- Mineral Industry representatives do consider that there is adequate mineral resources to continue contributing to the regional and sub-regional apportionment, particularly in the case of sand and gravel aggregate.
- The possible categorisation of sites in terms of remaining years worth of supply (i.e.

Category 1 – sites with 25+ years of supply, Category 2 – sites with 15-24 years supply and Category 3 – sites with less than 15 years supply.

- Although there is an increased need for housing development in the Black Country, few additional brickworks would be needed. The main focus should be on the development of existing works as oppose to new works.
- Links with energy mineral sites (i.e. coal) where there may be opportunities to extract fireclay for specialist brick manufacture.

3 Energy Minerals

Consultation comments & evidence

- Large areas of the Black Country are underlain by shallow coal reserves. Many of these areas have either been historically heavily exploited, or have been sterilised by other forms of development. The Core Strategy should allow small-scale extraction of shallow coal reserves/resources and other minerals prior to redevelopment within areas where reserves are known to be present to avoid sterilisation
- Potential extraction opportunities prior to restoration of former coal extraction sites.
- Should also consider cross-boundary issues where coal sites exist on adjacent mineral planning authority boundaries.
- Provision should be made for treatment required for ground stability, where old workings exist.
- Where possible, stabilisation should be achieved by the extraction of remaining reserves instead of grouting.

4 Prudent Use of Mineral Resources

Consultation comments & evidence

- Should reflect the importance of secondary/recycled aggregates in meeting future requirements by making provision for increased production and restricting quantities of inert construction and demolition waste sent to landfill
- Need to consider wider issues relating to use and conservation of mineral resources such as re-use and recycling of buildings and building materials – suggestion that we include targets for re-used/recycled materials in new development. To include local demolition material also.
- Need to protect existing secondary and recycled aggregates production facilities from other development where these are located, for example within strategic corridors.
- Locally obtained materials should be the most favourable option where practicable, minimising transport, encouraging local labour in construction projects.

5 Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment and Protecting Local Communities

Consultation comments & evidence

Open space and Environmental Quality:

- Environmental quality is an important issue for the Black Country – impacts of mineral extraction are long-term, therefore need to minimise adverse effects and maximise benefits (e.g. opportunities for recreation) and secure timely/appropriate restoration and after-use
- Maintaining representative exposure for tourism, education and general amenity should be aimed for.
- Impact on the Green Belt should be considered by the Core Strategy.

Geodiversity, biodiversity and Nature Conservation:

- Mineral extraction should respect wildlife corridors and other important environment assets and restoration schemes should be designed to be beneficial for biodiversity, geodiversity (e.g maintaining exposures of features of geological importance);
- Mineral extraction should be encouraged subject to assessment of the geodiversity and biodiversity resources and incorporating those needs into any landfill management plans.
- There are existing SSSIs and SINC sites which should be protected from future mineral working.
- Many of the Black Country's existing geological SSSIs are former quarries and new quarries will reveal new exposures which may be of regional value.
- The Core Strategy should identify potential to restore sites to deliver biodiversity gains and features of geological interest.
- The quarrying of SINC's would have to demonstrate a very good case, where the benefits to residential amenity would outweigh the loss of the nature conservation value of the designation and the areas to be relinquished could be enhanced to provide replacement habitats.

Site restoration:

- Restoration of mineral working have potential to contribute to the environmental assets of the area, however it is acknowledged that inert materials for restoration purposes may be in short supply, and may be more appropriately used as alternatives to primary minerals. Therefore restoration schemes should take account of this issue.
- Restoration schemes in the Black Country should consider how a positive contribution could be made towards the strategic objective of the Black Country Urban Park / Landscape Plan.

Water quality / Groundwater protection zones:

- Where mineral resources are within groundwater protection zones or near surface watercourses need to have policies in place that will prevent pollution from mineral extraction and subsequent restoration and possible damage to the canal network arising from mineral extraction;
- The effect of restoration through landfill on groundwater protection zones 1, 2 and 3, major aquifers and high water tables should also be considered.

Protection of local communities:

- The concentration of development can present issues with identifying buffer zones around mineral sites to protect local amenity. However the buffer zone would not need to be so wider if it was non-residential uses

6 Climate Change, Air Quality and Transportation of Minerals

Consultation comments & evidence

- Where suitable opportunities exist should encourage minerals and other bulky materials to be transported by rail or inland waterways rather than via the local highway network
- Need to restore former mineral workings by landfill may contribute to climate change where the fill includes biodegradable waste – where this is the case landfill gas must be safely extracted and generated energy utilised
- Industry representatives acknowledge that road congestion arising from all forms of development is an issue in the area, and have indicated that there may be limited scope to rail link existing mineral operations. However the cost of reinstating rail head can be prohibitive. It is also considered unlikely that there is scope to extend the existing freight rail network.
- Waterways provide 'green' transport routes and are available for the movement of local goods. The Regional Freight Strategy highlights this.
- Government policy encourages local planning authorities to secure planning obligations from development or regeneration of sites on the waterside.
- Wharfs are recognised as being an essential part of the waterways infrastructure.
- The inland waterway network is suitable for short-hauls, high volume, predominantly low value products which are not time sensitive and for addressing niche market goods, where it can provide a cost effective alternative to the local road network.
- Freight carriages however should be compatible with the waterways' roles for leisure, sport and recreation.
- Safeguarding of wharfs – a blanket approach to safeguarding all existing and potential wharf sites for freight purposes will not, in itself, generate freight activity. Wharves should only be safeguarded where there is a prospect of future sustainable use and where the site is suitable in terms of access, facilities etc and would not have an adverse impact.
- Developers are encouraged to identify and promote strategically important wharf sites.