

**Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole Minerals Core Strategy
Stakeholder Meeting 1
7th March 2006**

Outcomes from the Purple Group – facilitated by Andy Turner

Workshop 1 - Sustainability Objectives

The group discussed the Draft Sustainability Objectives that were circulated at the workshop sessions. As the group began discussing the objectives they quickly came to the conclusions that many of the objectives are not directly relevant to the minerals Core Strategy.

The group all agreed that it is difficult to argue against the philosophy of the majority of the objectives, however they questioned the relevance of many to the Minerals Core Strategy and how the Strategy would be able to result in positive steps towards the goals outlined by the objectives.

As a general comment about the Draft Sustainability Objectives, the group felt that there are too many objectives and that they are too general and not focused enough to ensure positive outcome. As a result of them being so general the group also suggested that it will also be almost impossible to measure or monitor the outcome to determine if they are being achieved or in some cases deteriorating. It was also pointed out that some of the objectives also seem to be contrary to each other, trying to work in opposite directions. The group were also concerned about the timescales in which objectives are to be achieved, potentially weakening their importance.

The group suggested that the objectives should be focused with clear expectations and realistic outcomes, and should be a selected list rather than an endless list as it currently reads. Members of the group also suggested that many of them are too heavily influenced by central government and regional policy, such that they are out of the control of Dorset County Council.

The detailed comments on the objectives were as follows:

Objective 1

The group felt that mineral working has a key role to play in rural areas, and that the minerals core strategy needs to help strike a balance between the economy, the environment and the needs of supporting rural communities.

Objective 2

The group concluded that the core strategy had a limited role to play for these objectives, although it can encourage the use and provision of local resources, it will be difficult to reduce the need to travel, or increase access to public transport through the Strategy.

Objective 3

The group suggested that this set of objectives are almost entirely controlled by government and regional policy and other than minimising the localised environmental and social impacts of mineral workings there is little the Strategy can do towards achieving these objectives.

The group did note that the restoration of mineral working can provide key opportunities for recreational facilities, which might be loosely connected to the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles.

Objective 4

The group considered that all of the objectives listed are important although they once again suggested that it appears to be an endless list rather than having clear positive outcomes or goals.

Objective 5

The group agreed with the sustainability objectives although once again felt that the majority were outside the influence of the Minerals Core Strategy, and again lacked clear outcomes for the objectives.

Objective 6

The group suggested that the strategy is part of the mechanism for informing and involving everyone in the decision making process, but agreed that tackling poverty and inequality are completely outside the influence of the Minerals Core Strategy.

Overall the group felt that the majority of the objectives are important but not necessarily directly of relevance to the Minerals Core Strategy. However, the group considered that the objectives were not focused enough to ensure a positive outcome. They also felt that the objectives were not specific to the Dorset area, and could be applicable to any region of the country. Therefore they suggested a greater support for 'localism' – local jobs, local shops, local community, accessibility to local facilities, use of local resources and protection of the local environment. They also suggested that the objectives should seek a balance between economy & consumption, and have greater consideration of the short term (current society), whilst also encouraging a longer term view.

Workshop 2 – Spatial Vision

After discussing the various issue in workshop 1 the group developed the spatial vision below:

To allow minerals development to make an appropriate contribution to the supply, subject to environmental, social and amenity considerations. To maximise the sustainable benefit to the local economy and local community for now and future generations such that there is a long term enhancement to the natural environment.

The group wanted to encompass a number of elements into the vision, first and foremost that the vision should be positive in both allowing the minerals development to come forward but also in maximising the benefits that can result both to the economy and the environment. A key part of this was the sustainability of the benefits and not looking for the short term gain.

Another key thread to the groups discussion, as in workshop one, was that of local benefit, especially as the short term impacts of minerals workings are largely local in their affect. There was a very strong regard for the local community and the need to protect and enhance it. Balancing the need, the impacts, and the benefits was advocated by the group.

Other topics of discussion and for their possible inclusion into the vision were transportation, efficient use of resources, good working practices and recreation benefits. However the group agreed that all of these elements would be more suited to their inclusion in objectives and specific policies in the Core Strategy.

Workshop 3 – Objectives for Future Minerals Planning

The group discussed all of the objectives listed on the worksheet. The reworded objectives are listed below alongside specific points of discussion.

Objective 1

To develop a balance between the need for minerals and the need to protect the environment, which maximises their sustainability.

The group felt that this was an appropriate overarching summary of the aim set out in the spatial vision.

Objective 2

To encourage the most appropriate and efficient use of all resources, waste minimisation, re-use, recycling and where practicable the use of alternative less damaging technologies, in order to reduce the requirement for new resources to an unavoidable minimum.

At first the group considered removing or splitting off the second half of this objective, however after deliberating removing it altogether the group felt that the objective still had a part to play in the sense that minimising the need for primary minerals is a key part to ensuring their sustainable use / working.

Objective 3

To identify areas where the unavoidable minimum requirement for mineral working to take place without prejudicing the best of the County's environment or the amenities or living conditions of its residents and visitors, now and in the future.

The group felt that this is still an appropriate objective for the Core Strategy, however it was agreed that an argument could be put forward for either removing it altogether or amalgamating it with the first objective, as members of the group felt the essence was the same just not as specific.

The issue of whether the Minerals Framework will be site specific or use preferred areas was raised, and noted that it had not been a topic of discussion for the day. However the group agreed that it was not the aim of the workshops at this stage to consider this subject as future sessions would look to do this in developing specific policy.

Objectives 4 and 5

To ensure that land used for mineral working is restored at the earliest opportunity, and wherever practicable, progressively and to seek a positive contribution in terms of landscape enhancement, habitat creation, public access or recreational use on the restored mineral site.

The group felt that in light of the positive vein of the spatial vision that objective 4 was not strong enough and effectively allowed for development that does not result in positive or valuable restoration of site. It was therefore suggested that it be combined with objective 5 as shown above.

Objective 6

To seek the co-operation of the minerals industry in upgrading the working and restoration of existing permitted sites to the best current standards.

The group felt that this objective was still valid with the minimal wording changes above.

Objective 7

To prevent the unnecessary prejudice or sterilisation of valuable mineral resources by other forms of development.

The addition of 'prejudice' in this objective arose after discussions surrounding the impact of developments around mineral resources not necessarily taking their working into account, and potentially resulting in severely restricted sites or working practices. It was also noted that Minerals Policy Statement 1 needs to be referred to regarding this objective.

Other objectives which the group felt should be included were on the following subjects, although no final wording was put forward in the time remaining:

Seeking to maximise local employment and ensuring a recognised contribution to the rural economy.

To reduce the impact of mineral transport through geographical location and encouraging alternative transport modes.

Transport was seen as a key issue by the group, the discussion included the proximity principal, using appropriate routes, travel plans, and the relative merits of big and small operations.

Another point which the group wished to be noted was the need to ensure that the Core Strategy will fit with other Local Development Frameworks and policies to ensure a consistent and holistic, approach and outcome.

Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd
March 2006