

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

Outcomes from the Red Group – Facilitated by Emma Barnett

Workshop 1 - Sustainability Objectives

The Group considered the general sustainability objectives identified by the Council and discussed whether they were sufficiently comprehensive in terms of covering all of the key issues facing Dorset, whether they should be expanded or reduced or whether the detailed wording was appropriate. The six objectives were discussed in turn as follows.

Objective 1

The Group generally agreed that objective 1 was appropriate, however they felt that the reference to meeting 'peoples needs' should be clarified, as it was ambiguous. They discussed whether 'peoples needs' should be confined to people in Dorset or whether it should apply at all geographic levels i.e. locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. They concluded that as Dorset does not function in isolation, the objective should not be confined to the local area.

In terms of the sub-objectives, the Group felt that the reference to encouraging good environmental management to increase competitiveness should be clarified, as again it was unclear. It was noted that good environmental management could increase costs and therefore reduce competitiveness. Furthermore in a global market it would be difficult to achieve this objective, as businesses would not be operating on a level playing field; reference was made to cheap imports from places like China. The Group concluded that it would be better to identify minimum environmental standards as part of tender processes and to focus on local markets wherever possible. It was important to support local businesses that operate sustainable environmental policies. This would accord with the proximity principle and would also help to ensure that the objective was deliverable.

The Group agreed that it was important to encourage smaller industries in particular to support the local economy. They also strongly agreed with the reference to use of local materials, specifically local stone, as they felt this was essential in helping maintain Dorset's distinctive character, which in turn was important in terms of tourism.

Objective 2

As with the previous objective, the Group agreed with the general thrust of this objective. In discussing the reference to maximising access by public transport, cycling or walking, they felt that it did not really reflect the rural nature of the County or the large numbers of retired people. They concluded that the word 'maximise' should be replaced with either optimise or improve.

The reference to reducing the need to travel by road, rail and air again did not reflect the fact that Dorset was essentially reliant on road and rail. They noted that currently

large numbers of people work outside Dorset and therefore the aim should be to reduce the need to travel by encouraging local employment.

The Group felt that this objective should also refer to or emphasise individual responsibility in terms of the delivery of this objective.

Objective 3

In terms of encouraging safe, healthy and active lifestyles, the Group felt that over-regulation, particularly in terms of health and safety, would be the main problem in achieving the objective. Again individual's responsibility to have a duty of care and an awareness of risk was stressed as being particularly important.

The Group felt that the sub-objectives should also refer to the need to maximise access to the environment and to promote opportunities for recreation not just for tourists but also for local people.

In terms of physical and mental wellbeing, the Group felt it was important to refer to both formal and informal education. The importance of lifelong learning was raised.

The Group discussed whether the objectives relating to improving people's health and reducing health inequalities could be combined. They concluded that both could be improved by better 'joined-up' thinking however, some health issues would be locationally specific or confined to particular social problems.

Objective 4

The Group agreed with the headline objective but felt that some of the sub-objectives could be improved. In particular they noted that waste in general should be minimised and that it was not appropriate to limit the objective to hazardous waste.

The tension between a number of the objectives was also discussed. In particular the use of local materials e.g. local stone advocated in objective 1 could have an adverse impact on objective 4 in terms of the need to conserve and enhance landscape character and distinctiveness as much of the local stone is located within the AONB. The Group recognised that there was a need for balancing or understanding of competing interests.

The Group felt that objective 4 should include a reference to infrastructure provision. This will have a bearing on both objectives 3 and 4 but the link between the need for infrastructure and the delivery of these objectives is not always understood. Integrated thinking is essential as is a pro-active risk assessment of the various options. It is important that individuals understand the consequences of their actions e.g. climate change in real terms and that they have sufficient information to make informed choices.

Objective 5

The need for better integrated planning in its widest sense was highlighted by the Group in terms of the delivery of objective 5, particularly in relation to water resources. Again the Group felt that provision of sufficient information was essential in order to make an informed choice.

The Group supported the use of renewable energy as a principle, but felt that in practice it was not always well received e.g. the location of wind farms. They concluded that it would be more appropriate to rephrase the sub-objective to read 'investigate potential for renewable energy' as opposed to 'create opportunities for renewable energy'.

In terms of the use of raw materials, the Group questioned whether this meant those in Dorset or raw materials in general. Again they accepted that there was a need to take both economic and environmental factors into account but that the objective should be to use locally sourced materials wherever possible. The Group concluded that the sub-objective should refer to the need to minimise the use of primary rather than raw materials.

In terms of reducing the risk of flooding, the best way to achieve this objective was by not building in the flood plain. However, the Group noted that it was also important to take into account opportunities for flood risk management.

The Group felt that the sub-objectives should also refer to the requirement to re-use materials and energy in all new buildings. It was understood that Building Regulations are becoming more stringent in this regard.

The need to minimise the production of waste was widely accepted however the Group felt that this was dependent to some extent on the reduction of unnecessary packaging.

In conclusion, the Group felt that the integration and relationship between the sub-objectives was particularly important in terms of the delivery of the overarching objective. It was not appropriate to look at each sub-objective in isolation.

Objective 6

In terms of encouraging fair and inclusive communities, the Group recognised that everyone would have their own views and that it would be difficult to reach a consensus. They noted that it was difficult to encourage people to participate in the decision making process as many people do not want to be involved. The role of elected representatives was also discussed in terms of the overlap between representative democracy and participative democracy.

The Group questioned what local views are; are they parochial in terms of being specific to an area within Dorset, or are they the views of the County as a whole? It was accepted that in some cases parochial views would have to give way to wider communitarian views and that not all decisions would be popular. For this reason, the Group again raised the importance of access to information and the need to engage with people to promote understanding of the issues and implications of development. It was stressed that not everyone has access to the Internet.

Finally the Group felt that the objective should refer to the need for an understanding of individual responsibility in relation to global issues such as climate change.

General Sustainability Issues

In terms of the list of general sustainability issues circulated at the workshop, the Group felt that they were fairly comprehensive but suggested that they be expanded to include a reference to infrastructure and inclusivity. The reference to global issues should also refer to responsibilities.

Workshop 2 - A Vision for the Future

In determining an appropriate spatial vision for minerals planning in Dorset to overarch the core strategy, the Group first considered the key issues that should be addressed. These were identified as follows:

- Transport
- Environment – natural and built
- Maintain an appropriate level of minerals to meet demand nationally, regionally and locally
- Economic impacts
- Impact on resources e.g. agricultural land, water etc
- Opportunities for bio-diversity and geo-diversity
- Support for smaller industries

The Group discussed whether the vision should be Dorset specific and whether it should be time limited. They concluded that as it was intended to overarch the Core Strategy it should be a vision for Dorset but that the general principles should be capable of application at other levels. They did not consider that it was appropriate for the vision to be time limited as the principles advocated would continue to apply in the long term.

After much deliberation over the level of detail that would be appropriate in the vision, the Group agreed that a broad approach was preferable, with the detail being contained in the ensuing objectives. They agreed the following spatial vision:

'To maintain within Dorset a vibrant minerals industry that contributes to a prosperous economy operating within a sustainable framework which helps to deliver social, economic and environmental objectives.'

Workshop 3 – Objectives for Future Minerals Planning

The Group considered the seven objectives contained within the existing Minerals and Waste Local Plan and discussed whether they should be included in the Minerals Core Strategy.

Objective 1

The general consensus was that this objective was appropriate subject to the deletion of the references to waste disposal facilities. They concluded it should read:

'To develop a balance between the need for minerals and the need to protect the environment.'

Objective 2

The Group suggested objective 2 was reworded as follows:

'To encourage the most efficient use of all resources in order to reduce the requirement for new resources. To make the most efficient use of mineral wastes and by-products and to embrace new technologies to increase yields.'

Objective 3

The Group considered that this objective was unnecessarily complex and detailed. They suggested it was reworded as follows:

'To identify areas where the requirement for mineral workings can take place without prejudicing the county's built and natural environment and quality of life.'

Objective 4

The Group generally agreed with the premise of objective 4 but felt that it would benefit from being simplified. An after-use that detracts from the quality of the environment would not be agreed therefore its inclusion was superfluous. They suggested the objective was reworded as follows:

'To ensure that land taken for mineral working is restored practically and progressively to an agreed after use at the earliest opportunity.'

Objective 5

As with the previous objectives, the Group generally agreed with the aims but suggested that it specifically refers to enhancement of biodiversity and geo-diversity as follows:

'To seek, where appropriate and practicable, a positive contribution in terms of landscape enhancement, biodiversity, geo-diversity, public access or recreational use on restored mineral sites.'

The Group considered whether it would be appropriate to merge objectives 4 and 5 but concluded that although they dealt with similar issues, for the purposes of clarity it would be appropriate to keep them as separate objectives.

Objective 6

In terms of objective 6, the Group felt that it should be reworded so that it was clearer as follows:

'To minimise any impacts associated with the working and restoration of existing permitted sites to the best current standards'

Objective 7

The Group agreed with this objective subject to the deletion of the reference to waste disposal as follows:

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

Additional Objectives

The Group also discussed whether these revised objectives would be sufficient to deliver the spatial vision prepared in workshop 2 and whether or not they were compatible with the general sustainability objectives considered in workshop 1. Within this remit, they concluded that the following additional objectives would be appropriate:

'To recognise the importance of local building materials to preserve and enhance the character of the local built environment.'

'To enable the extraction of minerals prior to development taking place that would otherwise sterilise those minerals.'

The Group also considered whether a specific objective relating to sustainable transport methods would be appropriate, but concluded that it was not necessary as a separate objective as it was covered by both objectives 1 and 3.

Finally the Group discussed at length whether it would be appropriate to include an objective relating to the requirement for clear accessible information on minerals planning issues. Although there was widespread agreement that this was an objective that should be actively pursued, it was not necessarily appropriate to include it as a specific objective in the Core Strategy. The Group considered the Statement of Community Involvement, and generally agreed that this was an issue more appropriately dealt with in this document.