



**DRAFT SURREY MINERALS PLAN -
EASHING FARM**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)**

22 March 2007

KEY ISSUE/DECISION:

As part of the draft Surrey Minerals Plan, a minerals extraction site is being considered at Eashing Farm. Members are asked to comment on the proposal and any actions that they might wish to take.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked:

- (i) to comment on the proposal for a minerals site at Eashing Farm and the issues that have been raised about the proposal.

BACKGROUND:

1. Between from 28 April to 9 June 2006 Surrey County Council consulted widely on the draft Surrey Minerals Plan. This consultation stage is often referred to as the 'preferred option' consultation.

2. Issues raised as part of that consultation specifically in relation to Eashing Farm, concerned technical issues regarding the suitability of the site (such as its potential impact on nearby ecological sites), transport and traffic implications, the economics and drivers behind the proposal (including the value of Bargate stone mixed with the soft sand), and more general criticism of the County Council regarding the way the consultation was handled and the site identified.
3. More details regarding the issues raised, and the County Council's responses to them is contained in the Surrey Minerals Plan – Preferred Option Consultation – Feedback Report (September 2006) which is available in full on Surrey County Council's website:
www.surreycc.gov.uk/mineralsplan.
4. At its 15th June 2006 meeting (held at Wanborough Great Barn) the Local Committee received informal questions concerning the Eashing Farm site, including concerns about HGV movements.
5. At its 28th September 2006 meeting (held at Worplesdon Memorial Hall) the Local Committee received a report (Item 10) Draft Surrey Minerals Plan – Implications For Guildford. The minute from that meeting is attached as Appendix A. Representatives from Compton and Shackleford Parish councils, and SSHAC, addressed the Committee, raising objections about the draft Minerals Plan.
6. At its 14th December 2006 meeting (at Guildford Methodist Church) The Local Committee received informal questions, from Save Surrey Hills Action Committee (SSHAC) and local residents, on the following issues:
 - Conservation issues
 - Traffic and access issues
 - Reasons for inclusion of the site
 - Consultation process
 - Bargate Stone
 - Response to questions
7. At the same meeting Cllr Tony Rooth (SCC Member for Shalford Division) submitted a written question on the issue, which is attached, with the written answer, as Appendix B.
8. Further questions have been raised (by SSHAC) regarding
 - The manner in which Eashing Farm was included in the list of proposed sites in December 2005.
 - The possible lack of restrictions on HGV movements to and from the site, particularly in the context of increased traffic flows on the A3 in connection with the Hindhead Tunnel development.
 - Possible changes to the reasons originally given for inclusion of the site (i.e. the quality of the sand, the length of time for extraction).
9. Officers in SCCs Policy and Development service for Minerals and Waste have responded to many of the issues raised over the last 12 months:

- Attendance at the 28/9/06 Committee
- Providing a written response to the Member question at the 14/12/06 meeting
- Correspondence with stakeholders and the local SCC Member
- Compilation of the Preferred Option Consultation Feedback Report (September 2006)

(Unfortunately officers need to give priority to accessing the technical information and compiling their final report for the Executive in May 2007; they are therefore not able to attend the 22 March 2007 meeting of the Guildford Local Committee.)

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10. The current (see paragraph 15 below) Executive Forward Plan shows that on 22 May 2007 (previously scheduled for 11 May) the Executive will be considering whether to approve the Surrey Minerals Plan for submission to the Secretary of State, including the allocation of sites for sand and gravel extraction. It is not yet known whether, following the Preferred Option consultation and subsequent feedback, the Eashing Farm site will be included in the list of proposed sites for consideration by the Executive. The report will be published one week before the Executive meeting.
11. The Executive's decision is recommended for approval by Full Council on 12 June 2007. The agreed document will be known as the 'Submission Document'.
12. There will be a further six week public consultation period for submission of representations on the plan. The proposed final plan, and the representations received from this consultation will form the basis of the discussion at the public examination, expected to be held in Spring 2008.
13. The public examination will be chaired by an independent planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The inspector will hear evidence and look at submissions from interested parties to determine whether the minerals plan is sound. The inspector will need to establish that the plan has been prepared in accordance with the correct procedures, conforms with national planning guidance, the regional minerals strategy and other relevant plans, policies and strategies, is consistent and founded upon a credible evidence base, has clear mechanisms for implementation, and is flexible enough to deal with changing circumstances.
14. Following the public examination, the planning inspector will issue a report which will set out any amendments to the plan that they feel are necessary. The inspector's recommendations are binding, and SCC has no discretion in whether or not to accept them. Following issue of the inspector's report, SCC needs to follow various administrative procedures

before the minerals plan is finally adopted in Autumn 2008.

15. A report is due to go to SCC's Executive on 26th March concerning the timing of the final report to the Executive later in May. Members and interested stakeholders and public are advised to refer to the papers for this meeting, available on SCC's website on 16th March, for details. (It is likely that if there is delay in SCC submitting the Plan to the Secretary of State, the process outlined above (paragraphs 12-14) will also be delayed.)

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LOCAL COMMITTEE

16. There are no significant financial, community safety or equalities implications of the recommendation in this report for the Local Committee.
17. There are clearly significant implications relating to the environment, transport and quality of life for residents living in the vicinity of the proposed Eashing Farm site, should the site appear in the finally adopted minerals plan.
18. Any comments by the Local Committee are likely to be considered (e.g. by SCC's Executive) in the context of the whole draft Minerals Plan, the council's obligation to identify sites for minerals extraction, and the implications for all of Surrey's residents.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

19. The Local Committee (Guildford) and its Members have already played a significant role in supporting and encouraging public debate on this issue, and assisting the exchange of information between the local authority and residents. Members may wish to consider what future role they wish to play individually and collectively in relation to Eashing Farm.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Report to Local Committee (Guildford) 28-9-07, Item 10 'DRAFT SURREY MINERALS PLAN – IMPLICATIONS FOR GUILDFORD'

Extract from minutes of Local Committee (Guildford) meeting 28-9-06:

51/06 DRAFT SURREY MINERALS PLAN – IMPLICATIONS FOR GUILDFORD [Item 10]

Tony Swift (Clerk of Shackleford Parish Council) addressed the Committee, objecting to the inclusion of the Eashing Farm site in the draft Plan, including the following points:

- the many individuals and agencies who have raised objections
- dissatisfaction with the consultation process
- likely destruction of countryside and implications for people in the surrounding area.

John Dobson (Member of Compton Parish Council) urged that the proposal concerning Eashing Farm be rejected, including the following points:

- the objections of residents
- the likely intensity of traffic flow of HGVs using the site (up to 1 HGV every 6 minutes, 270 days per year)
- the need to consider the human rights implications on nearby residents.

Nigel Wilkes (Save Surrey Hills Action Committee) argued that the Eashing Farm site should be withdrawn from the list of possible sites, including the following points:

- the environmental, health and traffic implications of the proposal
- the range of individuals and groups that had raised objections
- implications for the family living within the site boundary.

Members discussed and the Principal Planning officer responded on the following issues:

- Government mineral requirement figures
- equipment to be used for extraction (including washing and crushing)
- the nature of the minerals at Eashing farm (sand/Bargate stone)
- the identification of the 18 sites across Surrey
- concerns or objections of various consultee agencies
- possible HGV traffic
- perceptions of the consultation process

Cllr Tony Rooth as local Member asked that all the consultation material be reviewed thoroughly and alternative sites for soft sand (as proposed in 2004) be revisited. He questioned the government figures and whether the Eashing Farm site should remain in the list.

Members noted the details of the draft Minerals Plan relating to Guildford and the feedback on the consultation, and agreed that the Committee receive a further item on this subject at its meeting on 22 March 2007 in order to influence the SCC Executive decision on 11 May 2007.

CLLR. TONY ROTH, SCC MEMBER FOR SHALFORD

Q1 In view of the request at the previous meeting, would the officers report on the progress of the current review of those PMZ sites originally designated for "inclusion" in the Minerals Development Framework in 2004 which do not now appear as the 18 "preferred areas" in the Preferred Option Consultation Surrey Minerals Plan?

In particular, would the officers ensure their review thoroughly and comprehensively explains the basis in detail on which

i) those previously "included" sites have now been "excluded" and should not be re-introduced in each case

i) Eashing Farm (designated in 2004 as AGLV and also adjacent to SSSI) is now considered "environmentally preferable" to various originally "included" (but now "excluded") sites, several of which were designated in 2004 with No SPA/AONB/AGLV/SSSI

ii) there is now no "access constraint" to Eashing Farm (which was shown to exist in 2004)

iv) Eashing Farm was first "included" in the Plan this year and should remain a "preferred area" notwithstanding the information and feedback received in during and since the consultation?

A SCC is currently reviewing the draft minerals plan, with the objective of producing a final draft for submission to the Secretary of State next June. This draft will then be the subject of a further six week consultation, with a public examination of the plan scheduled for Easter 2008. The submission draft plan will be published with a number of supporting documents (including a strategic environmental assessment/sustainability appraisal, and a methodology which explains how preferred areas were selected).

The preferred option consultation draft of the minerals plan (published in April 2006), represented the County Council's views as to how the need for minerals could be met with the least impact on Surrey's communities and environment when considering Surrey as a whole, based on the information available at the time. SCC received over 3000 representations on the draft plan, which have all been considered. In some cases the representations provided additional information which will be a factor in selecting the Potential Mineral Zones (PMZs) to be included as preferred areas in the submission draft plan. It is not possible to say at the current time which PMZs would be included in the submission draft plan, because there is still further technical work to carry out. However, SCC will be considering all the PMZs afresh, and the final technical decisions regarding the submission draft plan will be taken shortly before it is considered by the County Council Executive next May.

The Highways Agency and the County Councils Highways Officers have no technical objections to the proposed access to Hurtmore Road or the A3, subject to additional technical work being carried out if a planning application is submitted and proves satisfactory. The mineral company considers they have sufficient rights of access to achieve an acceptable access to Hurtmore Road.

(continues...)

Written question tabled at Local Committee (Guildford) 14-12-06

This table shows the PMZ number for each preferred area. In some cases the boundary of the original PMZ is different from the preferred area boundary.

Preferred area	Name	PMZ
A	Addlestone Quarry Extension	107
B	Knight and Bessborough Reservoirs	14
C	Hamm Court Farm	21
D	Milton Park Farm	6
E	Whitehall Farm	5
F	Home Farm Quarry Extension	104
G	Homers Farm	4
H	King George VI Reservoir	1
I	Land North of Thorpe (Muckhatch Lane)	9
J	Manor Farm	10
K	Queen Mary Reservoir	77
L	Watersplash Farm	12
M	Monkton Lane	75
N	Eashing Farm	71
O	Common Field	55
P	Mercers Farm	25 & 74
Q	Oxted Sandpit Extension	27
R	Runfold South Extension	72