

# Land Use

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## 1.1 Land Use

### Policy context

#### The Johannesburg Declaration of Sustainable Development 2002

This declaration was signed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, where the principles of international commitment to sustainable development were reaffirmed, 30 years after the Stockholm Summit and ten years after the Stockholm and Declaration of 1992.

#### Objectives, Targets and Indicators

Undertake to strengthen and improve governance at all levels, for the effective implementation of Agenda 21.

#### Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice (EU Sixth Environment Action Programme)

The latest Environment Action Programme gives a strategic direction to the Commission's environmental policy over the next decade, as the Community prepares to expand its boundaries. The new programme identifies four environmental areas to be tackled for improvements:

- Climate Change;
- Nature and Biodiversity;
- Environment and Health and Quality of Life; and
- Natural Resources and Waste.

#### Objectives, Targets and Indicators

Recognises that land use planning and management decisions in the Member States can have a major influence on the environment, leading to fragmentation of the countryside and pressures in urban areas and the coast. Also includes objectives on stabilising greenhouse gases, halting biodiversity loss, reducing pollution and resource use. Under the EAP framework, thematic strategies are being developed on:

- Air quality;
- Soil protection;
- Sustainable use of pesticides;
- Waste prevention and recycling;
- Sustainable use of natural resources; and
- Urban environment.

#### European Commission White Paper on the European Transport Policy (2001)

This paper describes what has been achieved so far both at the Union and the Member State levels and what should be done in the near future.

#### Objectives, Targets and Indicators

The principal measures suggested in the White Paper include:

- Revitalising the railways;
- Improving quality in the road transport sector;
- Striking a balance between growth and air quality;
- Transport and the environment;

- Turning inter-modality into reality;
- Improving road safety;
- Adopting a policy on effective charging for transport;
- Recognising the rights and obligations of users;
- Developing high-quality urban transport; and
- Developing medium and long-term environmental objectives for a sustainable transport system.

### European Spatial Development Perspective 1999

By adopting the ESDP, the Member States and the Commission reached agreement on common objectives and concepts for the future development of the territory of the European Union. The aim of spatial development policies is to work towards a balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union. The ESPD aims to ensure that the three fundamental goals of European policy are achieved equally in all the regions of the EU, through:

- Economic and social cohesion;
- Conservation and management of natural resources and cultural heritage; and
- More balanced competitiveness within the European territory.

### Objectives, Targets and Indicators

European cultural landscapes, cities and towns, as well as a variety of natural and historic monuments are part of the European Heritage. Its fostering should be an important part of modern architecture, urban and landscape planning in all regions of the EU.

A big challenge for spatial development policy is to contribute to the objectives, announced by the EU during international conferences concerning the environment and climate, of reducing emissions into the global ecological system.

### PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

The document sets out the key policies and principles and the Government's vision for planning. It includes high level objectives and sets out the framework for specific policies further developed in the thematic Planning Policy Statements which will substitute the current PPG documents.

### Objectives, Targets and Indicators

Sustainable development is the purpose of planning. Communities need to be actively involved in the planning process, which is not simply regulations and control but must become a proactive management of development. These overarching objectives inform specific objectives such as promotion of urban and rural regeneration, local economies, and inclusive, healthy and safe communities.

### PPG 2 – Green Belts

The Guidance outlines the underpinning aims of the Green Belt policy and its contribution to sustainable development objectives.

### Objectives, Targets and Indicators

There should be a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. When any large scale development or redevelopment occurs within the Green Belt, it should contribute towards the objectives provided in para. 1.6 of the guidance note. The ODPM has recently published a Draft of the Town and Country Planning (Green Belt) Directions 2005 and these will be reviewed before the publication of the sustainability report.

**PPG 3 – Housing**

PPG3 provides guidance on planning for the provision of new housing on a Regional basis and on the allocation of land for housing by local authorities.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

Industrial and commercial developments are vital for the wealth of an area but need to be carefully placed so to minimise dependency of businesses and customers from road transport and integration with existing and planned transport and housing developments and plans.

**PPS 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas**

Quality of life and the environment in rural areas need to be enhanced through the sustainable development of communities and their environment.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

Requires that development within and outside existing villages should be permitted where it meets local economic and community needs, where it maintains or enhances the environment and does not conflict with other policies. Priority should be given to the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape in AONBs and National Parks.

**PPS 11 – Regional Spatial Strategies**

PPS11 provides policies that need to be taken into account by Regional Planning Bodies in their preparation of revisions to RSSs.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

The Regional Spatial Strategy should provide for a fifteen to twenty year period, taking into account the following matters:

- Identification of the scale and distribution of provision for new housing;
- Priorities for the environment, such as countryside and biodiversity protection; and
- Transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals extraction and waste treatment and disposal.

**PPS 12 – Local Development Frameworks**

Outlines a new style of land use planning, streamlining programme for policy agreement and ensuring community engagement throughout the process.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

The MLDDs should accord with national guidance. No relevant objectives, targets and indicators. The LTP should be consistent with the regional transport strategy, and the policies in the Minerals Development Framework and District / Borough wide Local Development Frameworks.

**PPG14 – Development of Unstable Land**

PPG14 examines the impacts of instability on development and land use. How instability should be tackled in the planning process and how it might be treated by development plans and in considering planning applications is also included.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

The MLDDs should accord with national guidance. No objectives, targets and indicators.

**PPS 22 Renewable Energy**

This Statement sets out the Government's planning policies for renewable energy, which planning authorities should have regard to when preparing local development documents and when taking planning decisions.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

Regional spatial strategies and local development documents should contain policies designed to promote and encourage, rather than restrict, the development of renewable energy resources, except where these developments are likely to have an adverse effect on designated conservation sites (historic and natural), or designated landscapes. Targets should be expressed as the minimum amount of installed capacity for renewable energy in the region, expressed in megawatts, and may also be expressed in terms of the percentage of electricity consumed or supplied. Targets should be set for achievement by 2010 and by 2020. Regional targets have been set and these have been expressed for each strategic planning authority.

**PPS 23 – Planning and Pollution Control**

This Guidance advises on matters relating to how the development control process should deal with pollution which may arise from or may affect land use.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

A strategic approach should be taken to the location of potentially polluting developments and the location of sensitive developments. Development presents the opportunity of remediation and developing on contaminated land in order to reduce the risks currently posed by such land. Where new potentially polluting activities are planned a proactive approach should be taken between the developer and the pollution control authorities.

There are no specific targets or indicators.

**Sustainable Communities Plan (Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future) 2003**

The Plan sets out a long-term programme of action for delivering sustainable communities in both urban and rural areas. It aims to tackle housing supply issues in the South East, low demand in other parts of the country, and the quality of our public spaces.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

To transform Regional Planning Guidance into a Regional Spatial Strategy which increases delivery and targets for brown field development; affordable housing issues; in rolling forward annual new housing provision; identifies strategic employment locations; clearly defines transport priorities; addresses waste and renewable energy and reinforces urban and rural renaissance.

**DETR (2000): Government Urban White Paper: Our Towns, Our Cities, the Future. Delivering an urban renaissance.**

Sustainable economic growth is based on thriving towns and cities, which are the economic hubs of large areas.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

To arrest urban decline by taking an integrated approach to policies on housing, planning, transport and education in and for cities and towns.

**DETR (2000): Government Rural White Paper: Our Countryside, the future – A deal for rural England**

To maintain and protect a living and vibrant countryside, the government has identified a number of key actions, all informed by the principles of sustainable development.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

There are five objectives, which will be transposed into the PSA and Service Delivery Agreements:

- Facilitate sustainable economies;
- Maintain and stimulate communities ensuring fair access to services;
- Conserve rural landscape and wildlife;
- Increase opportunities to enjoy the countryside; and
- Promote collaboration amongst all Government tiers to ensure responsiveness to local communities' requests.

**Defra (2005): Securing the Future: The Government's Sustainable Development Strategy**

This is a review of the original sustainable development strategy produced in 1999.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

The new objectives included within the strategy are:

- Living within environmental limits;
- Ensuring a strong healthy and just society;
- Achieving a sustainable economy;
- Promoting good governance; and
- Using sound science responsibly.

**Luton Local Development Framework**

The first document that has been produced by Luton Borough Council is the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The purpose of the LDS is to manage the contents of the LDF by setting out details regarding the preparation of each document, including resources and timetables. The LDS provides for a transition from one planning system to another and involves "saving" relevant existing policy documents and indicating how they will be replaced under the new legislation.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

- To deliver the spatial planning strategy for the area.
- Implement the East of England Plan.
- To create a strategic framework as recommended by the Milton Keynes Strategy.
- To guide Land Allocations Development Plan Documents (DPDs).

**Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9)**

Bedfordshire and Luton have recently moved from the South East and become part of the East of England Region, but RSS14 is still a draft document and will not be published until late 2006. Bedfordshire and Luton now neighbour the south east, therefore, it is useful to understand their policies and plans to prevent cumulative impacts across the region from occurring.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

Greenfield development should only take place after other alternatives have been considered. Green field development should have full regard for social, environmental and transport costs of the location.

**Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS14) of the East of England (Draft Revision)**

Bedford now lies within the East of England region for planning purposes. RSS14 is based on the principles of the UK's Strategy for Sustainable Development and sets out a strategy to guide planning and development in the East of England to the year 2021. It aims to improve the quality of life and sets out proposals which will influence where people choose to work and live and how to move about the region. The final RSS14 is due to be published in late 2006.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

- To deliver more integrated patterns of land use, movement, activity and development.
- To make use of previously developed land and existing buildings and use land more efficiently in meeting future development needs.
- In rural areas, focus development on market towns to reduce the need for long distance commuting.
- To focus development and redevelopment on urban areas, including Bedford and Luton/Dunstable.
- At least 60% of all new development to take place in or using previously used land or buildings.

**The South East Plan Core Document – Draft for Public Consultation 2005**

The consultation draft of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England was published in January 2005. It is due to be published in its final form in late 2006 and provide a regional development framework in the South East for the next 20 years. As this region neighbours Bedfordshire and Luton, it is important to have a knowledge and understanding of the policies and plans of the South East to prevent the occurrence of cumulative impacts across boundaries.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

- Increase in the overall level of accessibility to essential services.
- More and better quality housing.
- More prudent use and management of natural resources.
- Encourage the development of sustainable construction practices.
- Development plans should include policies to achieve effective management of mineral extraction, wharves and rail depots and high quality after-use and after care.
- Show a sustained improvement in the region's quality of life over the period to 2026.

**Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy**

The Strategy provides a sub-regional strategy for the period 2001 to 2021 and a long-term vision for the sub-region towards the year 2031. It provides guidance regarding the scale, location and timing of development and transport, employment and social infrastructure needed to achieve sustainable communities. It seeks to identify key growth areas to accommodate the economic success of London and the South East. The special framework policies relate to housing, transport and employment and areas for regeneration.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

- Ensure development contributes to an improved environment, by requiring high standards of design and sustainable construction and provide green space and related “green” infrastructure.
- To achieve a major increase in number of new homes in the area, meeting the needs for affordable housing and a range of types and sizes.
- Locate development in the main urban areas to support urban renaissance, regeneration of deprived areas, recycling of land and sustainable development patterns.

**Bedfordshire County Council: Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011**

The Bedfordshire Structure Plan was adopted in 1997 and is intended to provide long term guidance over a period of at least 15 years in relation to development and land use change in the County. It aims to strengthen the local economy whilst contributing to sustainable development. Under the terms of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, County Structure Plans will no longer be prepared – they will be replaced by Regional Spatial Strategies, which for Bedfordshire and Luton will be RSS14. However, until RSS14 has been adopted, policies in the Structure Plan 2011 will remain in force.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

- Make provision for 49,300 new homes in the period 1991-2011.
- To focus housing and economic development within and adjoining the main urban areas and in the strategic corridors of South West of Bedford and East Bedfordshire.
- To restrain new development in the open countryside.
- Restrain new development in villages outside of the strategic corridors.
- Encourage the re-use of derelict, vacant and under-used land.
- Continue to move the weight of new development to the north of the County.
- Maintain Green Belt in the south of the County.
- Reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, including the promotion of mixed use development to establish a closer relationship between housing development and the availability of employment opportunities.

**Bedford Borough Council Local Plan**

The Bedford Local Plan was adopted in 2002 and sets out policies and proposals to encourage development to occur in suitable forms and locations with the aim of improving the quality, convenience and sustainability of the environment. The Local Development Framework process will gradually replace the Local Plan and deliver the spatial planning strategy for Bedford.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

- Identify housing development sites, having an ultimate physical capacity to provide in the order of 6,349 new dwellings.
- The mix and range of housing types and sizes should reflect the needs of the community, particularly those who require smaller homes.
- To not allow development on land designated as an important open space, as shown on the proposals maps of the Local Plan.
- Identification of approximately 80 hectares of additional employment land to foster local economic growth and provide for a range of economic development.
- Redevelopment of playing fields and allotments for other purposes will not be permitted except in particular circumstances.

**Bedford Borough Council LDF Core Strategy and Rural Issues Paper Sustainability Appraisal**

- The Local Development Framework is a series of documents which will gradually replace the Local Plan and deliver the spatial planning strategy for Bedford. These will set out the Council's policies for meeting the community's economic, environmental and social aims for the future where they affect the development and use of land. Preparation of the Local Development Framework will be a continual process with new documents being prepared at different stages to ensure that they are up-to-date.
- The Core Strategy will set out the long term vision and overarching policies for the Borough. Consultation is taking place in connection with preparing the 'Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan'. The 'Options Paper' will be out to consultation until 14 October 2005.
- In order to ensure that the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan contributes to the aims of sustainable development, the Council is required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal of its policies and proposals. This document underwent consultation in parallel with the Policies Options paper.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

- Provide for 16,270 dwellings in the Bedford growth area and 830 dwellings in the residual area in the period 2001-2021 and ensure that a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures are provided to meet the market and affordable housing needs.
- Protect and maintain employment sites identified as being of importance and identify a strategic location for high value knowledge based industries.
- Restrain growth in the more rural, less sustainable locations within the Borough but maintain a focus on local needs.

**Mid Beds Local Plan (First Review Deposit Draft)**

The Plan guides development and the use of land over the next 10 years. The policies and proposals for land use and transportation are used to give planning advice and form the basis for determining planning applications.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

- Ensure that land is identified to provide for sufficient new homes in Mid Bedfordshire.
- Ensure that sufficient land is identified to meet the needs of business and industry in the period to 2006.
- Ensure that as far as practicable major new development contains a mix of land uses, in particular employment as well as residential.
- Maintain the open character of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt.
- Establish permanent Green Belt between Ampthill and Flitwick, Ampthill and Maulden and east of Flitwick.
- Re-use of the Sandvik site as defined on the proposals map, for commercial purposes will be supported by the Council but it will seek to encourage proposals which provide for environmental and visual improvements to the site.

**South Bedfordshire Local Plan (Review Deposit)**

The Local Plan was adopted in 2004 and provides comprehensive planning guidance for development in the area up to the year 2011. It develops the policies and general proposals of the Structure Plan and relates them to precise areas of land in the area. It sets out policies for environmental planning and management, in particular relating to conservation and improvement of the environment, efficient use of land and resources and the management of traffic.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

- That all proposals for new development and change to the environment in South Bedfordshire will be expected to contribute towards achieving the Local Plan's principles of sustainability and in particular should contribute to improving environmental quality.
- Within the Green Belt, planning permission will not be given except in very special circumstances for development.
- The principal housing objective is to meet the housing needs of the District by aiming to ensure that the Structure Plan housing allocation up to 2011 is met without conflicting with the sustainability principles and development strategy.
- Within the main employment areas, planning permission will not be granted for uses other than B1, B2 or B8.
- Outside of the employment areas, new development within B2-B8 will only be permitted where the proposal can be accommodated without unacceptable harm to the amenity of the surrounding area.
- Ensure that all new development is well related to the transport network and does not lead to unacceptable congestion.
- Promote self sustaining settlements and to minimise the need to travel beyond them.

**Luton Local Plan (Second Deposit Draft)**

The Local Plan is to guide development and the use of land. It contains policies and proposals for land use and transportation.

**Objectives, Targets and Indicators**

Planning development for the loss of residential housing or land will be refused.  
 Within the existing key employment areas development will be allowed if it can meet the need and could not be provided elsewhere.  
 Select sites avoiding areas of nature conservation, landscape value and biodiversity interest, and sites of archaeological interest.

**Baseline Review****Land Use Strategy**

- 1.1.1 This section reviews the spatial and land use strategy in Bedfordshire County and Luton Borough and specifically its relation to provision of minerals over the plan period.
- 1.1.2 The spatial strategy for Bedfordshire is contained within a number of documents from regional to local level.
- 1.1.3 At a regional level Bedfordshire is situated in the East of England Region (although it was up until recently part of the South East region). However, Bedfordshire also has close connections with the East Midlands, the South East and London. The East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) has developed a draft East of England Plan which sets out a draft Regional Spatial Strategy to guide development in the East of England for the period to 2021, including policies on housing, economic development, the environment, waste management and mineral extraction. This document will provide the framework for local authorities to produce more spatial strategies for their areas in the form of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs).
- 1.1.4 Until this document is adopted, however, the spatial strategy for Bedfordshire remains that encompassed within the Bedfordshire and Luton Structure Plan 2011, the Borough Local Plans and RPG9 Regional Planning Guidance for the South East. This includes the modifications emplaced by the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy. The strategy of these documents is to:
- Make provision for 49,300 new homes in the period 1991-2011.
  - To focus housing and economic development within and adjoining the main urban areas and in the strategic corridors of South West of Bedford and East Bedfordshire.
  - To restrain new development in the open countryside.
  - Restrain new development in villages outside of the strategic corridors.
  - Encourage the re-use of derelict, vacant and under-used land.
  - Continue to move the weight of new development to the north of the County.
  - Maintain Green Belt in the south of the County.
  - Reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, including the promotion of mixed use development to establish a closer relationship between housing development and the availability of employment opportunities.

- 1.1.5 Regional guidance on minerals development is contained in the draft East of England Plan. The plan reports the revised national and regional guidelines for aggregates provision in England 2001-2016 which were published in June 2003 and sets the planning framework by which these guidelines will be met. The new guideline figures reflect a more sustainable approach. The lower call on land won reserves and greater use of alternative sources, including recycled material, are more realistic in terms of current and expected levels of demand and sources of supply. The issue of landbanks is still an issue for Bedfordshire despite the reduction in land won sources because following the Public Inquiry into the current MWLP, the Inspector recommended that more work should be done in order to identify appropriate landbanks for aggregates and industrial sands.
- 1.1.6 The issue of aggregates recycling is also an important one and a decision needs to be made as to whether this is within the scope of the MLDF.

### Adjacent Areas

- 1.1.7 Strategies that are of particular note include:
- The South East RSS;
  - London Spatial Plan; and
  - Proposals for the Review of the East Midlands Regional Plan
- 1.1.8 These plans all advocate significant growth in areas such as Milton Keynes and Northampton which will cause demand for building materials to increase, affecting Bedfordshire. This is exacerbated by the low levels of landbank in Northamptonshire. The effect on Bedfordshire of increased aggregate demand is currently unknown. However, some work is underway to determine the effect of the Growth Area in Milton Keynes and the South Midlands.
- 1.1.9 A study is being carried out by the British Geological Survey (BGS) and the National Stone Centre (NSC) regarding the provision of aggregates for the Sustainable Communities Growth Zone in Milton Keynes and the South Midlands. This project is due for completion in early 2007 and includes Bedfordshire as part of the study area.
- 1.1.10 The study will consider the following issues:
- The area embraces three regions – so there are interregional considerations;
  - The area has experienced high and targeted levels of construction growth in the past which may offer some useful pointers to the future;
  - Much of the area has been geologically mapped recently but there are still areas of uncertainty;
  - The market flows (typical of most of England) are open ended but some market watersheds can be considered from which it may be possible to define/confine the supply/demand linkages more specifically;
  - A “typical” sand and gravel spread of deposits is overlain with a typical north to south flow of hard rock to meet specific aggregate needs;

- There are areas with apparently significant sand and gravel deposits within the Study Area which have not or barely been exploited – why?;
  - Recent and proposed transport links could be responsible for modifying supply/demand patterns;
  - Is it possible to augment the extensive existing borehole records already held by BGS with carefully selected new boreholes and palaeogeographic analysis, to unravel the pattern of glacial and fluvial deposits?; and
  - Environmental sensitivity analysis already developed by BGS be coupled with demand analysis and sophisticated resource data, to produce a powerful digital tool for planners?
- 1.1.11 The project has already completed an examination of:
- Past construction trends
  - Past production/distribution trends
  - Evolution of planning policies/responses
  - Consideration of contribution from secondary aggregates
  - Borehole records including sifting for **relevant** records; establishment of ratios/cut offs
  - Initial work on palaeo-geography of the area
- 1.1.12 The immediate next steps are to:
- Define the market and its response to past trends
  - Identification of market/supply anomalies
  - Gauging the scale and location of future demand
  - Building resource models to establish potential target areas for further investigation
  - Application of environmental sensitivity analysis
  - Drilling programme
- 1.1.13 The results of the next stages of the project will be reported in the SA if applicable.

### Sources of data

- Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011  
<http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/BedsCC/SDsps.nsf/Web/ThePage/Bedfordshire+Structure+Plan+2011>
- Bedfordshire County Council [www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/](http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/)
- Luton Borough Council Local Plan <http://www.luton.gov.uk>
- Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan  
<http://www.bedford.gov.uk/bedford/planning/CS%20Scoping%20Report%20final.pdf>
- Mid Bedfordshire DC – Local Development Scheme
- Mid Bedfordshire DC – Tourism <http://www.midbeds.gov.uk/tourism/default.asp>

- South Bedfordshire Local Plan (Adopted 2004) Review  
[http://www.southbeds.gov.uk/Local\\_Plan/contentsfr.html](http://www.southbeds.gov.uk/Local_Plan/contentsfr.html)
- Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan: First Review: Deposit Draft Incorporating Proposed Modifications (PM).

## Trends

This whole paper is related to trends. There is nothing to add at this stage.

## Data Gaps

- 1.1.14 None identified

## Implications for minerals planning and SA in Bedfordshire

### Key issues from the policy context:

How the Minerals Local Development Framework should address land use and spatial planning

- 1.1.15 The plan must take into account various Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes, ensuring wherever possible that mineral developments do not compromise the openness of green belt land, take into consideration its impacts on traffic through transportation of materials and personnel, and avoiding adverse impacts on rural and urban communities (for example through maintaining a high-quality environment and providing local economic benefits). The plan also needs to consider how it will plan for the regional guidelines for aggregates provision in England 2001-2016 which were published in June 2003.

### Relevant objectives for the SA:

- Consider the potential for incompatible development proposals and ensure that the MLDF takes account of the local and regional spatial development plans.
- To contribute to the strategic framework as recommended by the Milton Keynes Strategy.

### Key issues arising from the baseline review:

- Pressures on land to deliver residential development may lead to challenges in protecting mineral deposits from sterilisation where they are workable and there is a demand for them.
- Limited areas designated as natural habitat and woodland exist within the County and therefore these will need to be protected.
- The county contains areas of high quality agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) that current local planning policy recommends should be avoided for development. This could lead to conflict if mineral deposits are within these areas.

- Large active workings and further reserves of sand exist around Leighton Buzzard and chalk and lime south and west of Dunstable. These raise major issues in terms of their restoration and after use.
- Many of the sand deposits are variable in quality and are only worked intermittently as demand dictates. This means the workings will be a long-term feature in the countryside.

#### **Key issues arising from the scoping consultation:**

Are these the key sustainability issues under this topic area? or are there others?

- after-use of sites
- restoration – tie in with other aims and objectives, such as biodiversity, leisure (PPS17) etc
- phasing of mineral extraction – can be tied to development planning to provide sustainable solution
- sand and brick production, if local, can be linked with the growth area to reduce transport distances
- bullet 1 too narrow – not just a threat from residential development, other threats such as forestry, industrial
- general comment – bullet points are too judgemental
- bullet 5 – should possibly come under landscape topic area
- bullet 4 – coordinated strategy for restoration, i.e. greensand. Development of strategic masterplans for the planned restoration/ afteruse of concentrations of mineral sites, e.g. river valleys such as Ivel, to avoid ad hoc, piecemeal approach
- bullet 5 – major issue, needs to be clarified
- flooding – flood control/enhance land uses, irrigation can improve poor land
- Flooding issues in Upper Ouse Valley – consider imaginative restoration
- Loss of agricultural land, and therefore local productivity, is an issue and should be a consideration but also suggested that this shouldn't necessarily be a major constraint. The drive to avoid and restore the best and most versatile farmland is not so important as it once was – policies seeking protection and restoration of grade 1/2/3a land should be flexible. However, need to factor in the potential to grow food locally and minimise import distances, as well as impact on rural economy and jobs.
- Restored river valley sites could be used for biomass production (sustainable energy coppice).

What are the main implications of these issues for minerals and waste planning?

- Will create conflicts and pressures
- Development may need to be focused on old sites rather than sterilising new. Potential for landscaping that will mitigate visual impact of residential development and transport infrastructure will already be in place.
- need to be used with imagination, i.e. coordinated strategy, to create improvements in the long term
- coordinated strategy using all spheres of influence, i.e. biodiversity, historic environment, local groups not just narrow range. i.e. planners need a broader vision
- use of land for mineral extraction is extremely low (under 0.5%) so land use may not be a particularly significant character

What sustainability objectives do you think should be set for each of these topic areas?

- None suggested.