

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Sites

Inspectors Matters, Issues and Questions Additional Statements

Submitted on behalf of Aggregate Industries UK Ltd

SAND AND GRAVEL MS-2 SAND AND GRAVEL AREA OF SEARCH

Issue 177 – is the Area of Search the most appropriate area?

Response

The AOS is not the most appropriate area as it does not allow consideration of sites coming forward within the Dorset AONB. The Plan is therefore not positively prepared or consistent with national policy.

Aggregate Industries UK Ltd (hereafter referred to as the Company) operate the Chard Junction Quarry which is currently in production with around two years sand and gravel reserves remaining. The Quarry is included within Policy MS-1 (Production of sand and gravel).

The Company are currently promoting an extension to Chard Junction Quarry at Westford Park Farm. Assessment work for this proposal is at an advanced stage, a Scoping Opinion has been issued by Dorset County Council, Public Consultation events have taken place and a Planning Application is to be submitted shortly.

The sand and gravel Area of Search (AOS) of the Minerals Sites Plan are identified in Figure 2 and designated through Policy MS-2 which would facilitate the development of unallocated sites from within the AOS provided criteria set out in the policy are met. The AOS has been identified from within the Resource Blocks which the British Geological Survey (BGS) identified and considered to contain economically viable sand and gravel reserves. The resource blocks are identified in Figures 9 and 10 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014). The BGS assessment excluded all areas within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The proposed Westford Park Farm extension lies within the AONB.

Although the AOS approach is used by several Mineral Planning Authorities to identify potential future mineral provision without allocating specific sites it is considered that Policy MS-2, as currently worded, is too restrictive and prevents sites coming forward, such as Westford Park Farm in the Dorset AONB being properly considered. An additional criterion should be included in the Policy to allow the proper consideration of such sites which may meet the exceptional circumstances tests and be in the public interest.

The exclusion of all the Dorset AONB from the Resource Blocks and the subsequent AOS could lead to a moratorium for any future working in the AONB which is not justified and contrary to the NPPF and a further criterion is required to allow the proper consideration of sites which meets the exceptional circumstances tests and are in the public interest.