

## STATEMENT BY SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

September 2014




### **MATTER 11: SAFEGUARDING MINERALS AND MINERALS FACILITIES**

#### **Background Documents referred to within Statement**

- Options consultation paper (Doc Ref SD17d)
- Building Stones Topic Paper (Doc Ref SD8b)
- Preferred Options consultation paper (Doc Ref SD18a)
- Minerals Safeguarding Topic Paper (Doc Ref SD8g)
- Mailing List (Doc Ref CD1)
- National Planning Policy Framework (Doc Ref NE3)
- BGS Minerals Safeguarding in England (Doc Ref TD7)
- Representations Received (Doc Ref SD7)
- Mineral resource information Somerset map (Doc Ref TD39a)
- Schedule of Proposed Changes (Doc Ref SD6b)
- Options summary (Doc Ref SD17a)
- Planning Practice Guidance
- Hinkley Point C Supplementary Planning Document (Doc Ref TD68)
- Somerset Waste Core Strategy (Doc Ref RL2)
- Response to Pre-Submission Consultation Representations (Doc Ref SD6a)
- Somerset Minerals Plan (Doc Ref SD1)

**Document Control Sheet**

	<b><u>Position</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
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For the forthcoming Hearing, the Inspector has requested that Somerset County Council briefly summarise their position on each discussion topic. The following is a brief summary of Somerset County Council's response to Matter 11: Safeguarding Minerals and Minerals Facilities, examining the **Issue: Whether the minerals safeguarding provisions are the most appropriate.**

**1. Have the full range of minerals which need safeguarding been identified and included within the Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs)?**

**SCC Response**

- 1.1. Yes, the full range of minerals which need safeguarding in Somerset have been identified and included within the MSAs in the Somerset Minerals Plan. This includes minerals that are being extracted in Somerset (crushed rock and various types of building stone) and resources that are not currently worked (such as other specified types of 'needed' building stone and surface coal).
- 1.2. As stated in chapter 8 of the Somerset Minerals Plan, national policy states that in preparing Local Plans local planning authorities should not identify new sites or extensions to existing sites for peat extraction. As a result, Somerset County Council is not safeguarding peat resources in Somerset.
- 1.3. The County Council has consulted on its approach to safeguarding, having taken an iterative approach to preparing its Plan as well as consulting on its evidence base (via a Topic Paper on safeguarding). The following paragraphs

provide additional detail on how the County Council's approach to safeguarding has evolved.

- 1.4. In the **Options consultation paper (Doc Ref SD17d)**, the County Council listed a range of mineral types for safeguarding including: Carboniferous limestone, Silurian andesite, Blue Lias, White Lias, Budleigh Salterton Pebble Beds, Inferior Oolite, Forest Marble, Cornbrash, Ham Hill Stone, Sand and gravel (recent and Permo-Triassic) and peat.
- 1.5. Furthermore in that Options consultation paper, the County Council referred to a short-list of minerals that have been worked historically and may become economic again; that list included brick clay, shallow coal, building stones identified in historic buildings and Devonian sandstone with a high polished stone value.
- 1.6. Responses to that consultation indicated significant support from stakeholders to the proposed approach. Other mineral types mentioned in stakeholder responses included Draycott Stone, Calcareous Grit, Marlstone, Doulting Sandstone, Wedmore stone and Greenstone; and a question was raised if soil could be considered a mineral in this context.
- 1.7. The approach to building stone safeguarding – which takes into account Draycott Stone, Calcareous Grit, Marlstone, Doulting Stone and Wedmore Stone – has been considered by the County Council in the **Building Stone Topic Paper (Doc Ref SD8b)** and is informed by stakeholder feedback and technical research.
- 1.8. Technically 'Greenstone' refers to a basic, coarse-grained, igneous rock, which does not occur in Somerset. The County Council believe that the respondent is referring to part of the Silurian outcrop of volcanic rocks (termed 'Andesites' and 'Tuffs') that occur near Stoke St Michael (east of Shepton Mallet) and by Old Wells Road. These igneous rocks are used very locally and on a very minor scale as building stone (an occasional walling stone etc); they are mainly crushed and used as aggregate. The quarry at Moons Hill works these strata and extensive reserves remain.
- 1.9. Whilst soil is an important resource, it is not considered a mineral type that requires safeguarding.
- 1.10. It is noted that brick clay was mentioned by the County Council in its Options consultation paper. However, it is further noted that the peak of the Somerset brick industry was essentially within the 18th and 19th century. The brickyards declined in the 1960s due to exhaustion of the best clays and availability of cheaper alternatives; the last Somerset brickyard at East Quay, Bridgwater, closed in 1964. The vast majority of the former brick and tile clay pits have now been completely infilled, overgrown and/or sterilised by subsequent development. It is extremely unlikely that the production of Somerset bricks or tiles from local clays will ever become practical or viable commodities again; the main areas of brick and tile production in the UK have moved from Somerset. Neither the **BGS Mineral Resource Information report (Doc Ref TD39)** nor accompanying map identify brick or tile clays in Somerset as a mineral resource for extraction, exploration or development purposes, hence

they are not safeguarded in the submitted Minerals Plan (and were not proposed for safeguarding in the Preferred Options or Pre-submission Plan, without receiving any objection for stakeholders).

- 1.11. Following the Options consultation, the County Council's **Preferred Options paper (Doc Ref SD18a)** was informed by the Options consultation, and a list of mineral types for safeguarding was prepared and included in that consultation as Table 3.
- 1.12. The **Safeguarding Minerals Topic Paper (Doc Ref SD8g)** was developed in an iterative way. An early draft was circulated in November 2012 to approximately 80 different stakeholders, including representatives of neighbouring authorities, district authorities, trade associations, industry, respondents to the Options paper who stated they wanted to be involved in the identification of MSAs and other key consultees.
- 1.13. Subsequently, version 1 of the safeguarding topic paper was published in January 2013 alongside the Preferred Options.
- 1.14. The topic paper was revised in late 2013 and Version 2 of the safeguarding topic paper was published in January 2014.
- 1.15. Of note, Somerset County Council has consulted with the British Geological Survey (BGS) during the plan-making process - as listed in the **mailing list (Doc Ref CD1)** – and the County Council's approach to safeguarding has been informed by guidance from BGS (**BGS Minerals Safeguarding in England, Doc Ref TD7**).

**2. Bearing in mind that economic viability will change over time, why are the minerals (apart from coal) identified in the chapter on "Other Minerals" (clays, gypsum, barites, iron, lead, salt) not proposed to be safeguarded?**

**SCC Response**

- 2.1. The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Doc Ref NE3)** states [in extract] that in preparing Local Plans, planning authorities should "*define Mineral Safeguarding Areas and adopt appropriate policies in order that known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development...*". In its approach Somerset County Council has aligned with this requirement of the NPPF.
- 2.2. The list of other minerals (extracted from paragraph 12.1) is informed by prior activity in Somerset.
- 2.3. As stated in paragraph 12.1, the MPA is not aware of any plans to recommence working for any of these mineral types listed and thus these mineral types are not identified for safeguarding.
- 2.4. Clay, gypsum, barytes, iron, lead and salt were not mentioned in any responses to the Options consultation and are not listed by the British Geological Survey (BGS) in their Minerals Resource Information report on

Somerset (Doc Ref TD39) and accompanying map as a mineral resource for extraction, exploration or development purposes. More information on “other minerals” is included in the County Council’s response to matter 12.

- 2.5. The County Council has undertaken detailed consultation on its approach to safeguarding, including with industry and the BGS, and is confident that it has identified the right minerals for safeguarding.

### **3. Why is coal treated differently to these “Other Minerals” by being safeguarded?**

#### **SCC Response**

- 3.1. The approach to coal safeguarding aligns with relevant guidance from the British Geological Survey (BGS) and the Coal Authority (see the **BGS Minerals Safeguarding in England – Doc Ref TD7**).
- 3.2. The Coal Authority responded to SCC consultations, most recently in SCC’s consultation on the pre-submission Plan (see comments from R84.1 in the **Representations Received – Doc Ref SD7**).
- 3.3. The Coal Authority supports SCC’s approach, subject to a minor amendment to supporting text in paragraphs 9.40 (which has been included in the **Schedule of Proposed Changes – Doc Ref SD6b**).

### **4. Do the MSAs reflect the best estimate of viable resources and do they cover the full extent of the known resources for the specified minerals? If not, explain why. Please provide a mineral resource map for Somerset.**

#### **SCC Response**

- 4.1. A mineral resource map for Somerset is provided as **Doc Ref ED15a**. A more detailed map of the mineral resources of Somerset has been published by the British Geological Survey (**Doc Ref TD39a**).
- 4.2. The approach to safeguarding is explained in **Mineral Topic Paper 6 (Doc Ref SD8g)** and for building stone in **Mineral Topic Paper 2 (SD8b)**.
- 4.3. The approach to safeguarding of crushed rock acknowledges that in an area such as the Mendip Hills, which has seen significant quarrying activity in various locations over a long period of time, it would be impractical and potentially undermine the proposed policy to safeguard the entire resource.
- 4.4. A representative of the minerals industry (R106) commented as follows during the Options consultation:

*“It is not practical to safeguard the entire geological deposit of all minerals that are currently being worked or may become economic again when the extent of the deposits is so widespread. If the extent of the deposit was small and isolated such as for sand and gravel, or of a particular type of stone such as the igneous basalt material worked at Moons Hill then the entire deposit could realistically be safeguarded. The deposit of carboniferous limestone is*

*extensive in Somerset, as are a number of building stones deposits. There is probably sufficient carboniferous limestone to quarry for many, many generations. It does not all need to be safeguarded.*

*The problem with safeguarding almost everything and therefore reviewing all contrary planning applications is that all applications will be allowed unless they are close to existing quarries or Preferred Areas. How can an application for, say a new house in a Greenfield location, sitting on limestone, but miles from the nearest quarry, ever be refused? How can extraction in advance of a competing development ever be required for limestone deposits? The result is that no one will ever pay any real attention to the safeguarding policies, they will be diluted and ineffective.*

*Only when an application is close to a quarry/Preferred Area or limited geological outcrop will Safeguarding ever be likely to be enforced. Consequently safeguarding should be restricted to a zone around existing quarries and limited geological deposits such as basalt or sand and gravel (and Preferred Areas if there ever are any). Such zones around quarries are already identified in the existing Minerals Local Plan. A finite, clear and understandable zone is much more likely to be applied and be effective.”*

- 4.5. A recent development has been the proposal to maintain a separate landbank for Silurian Andesite. The safeguarding area for crushed rock around the Moons Hill Quarry has been shaped in response to feedback from the quarry operator John Wainwright & Co Ltd (see change number 105 in document the **Schedule of Proposed Changes – Doc Ref SD6b**).
- 4.6. Having reviewed the proposed changes to the safeguarding areas in light of recent discussions on maintaining a separate landbank for Andesite, the County Council has noted that the safeguarding area around Moons Hill Quarry covers all but the western-most edge of the Andesite resource. The County Council therefore proposes a further change to the safeguarding area (reflected in Change No. 105a **Doc Ref SD6c**) to ensure that the whole of the Andesite resource is safeguarded.
- 4.7. The approach to safeguarding taken for building stone is explained on pages 18-21 of **Mineral Topic Paper 2 (Doc Ref SD8b)**. The MSA maps within that paper cover the whole resource for each ‘needed’ building stone type in Somerset with the following exceptions:

MSA Map 2: The White Lias and Blue Lias occur extensively in the MPA area and it is deemed impractical to regard the whole outcrop of these building stone types to constitute the MSA. Nine areas have been selected (three for White Lias, six for Blue Lias) which comprise the key geographical areas known to have been historically important for the quarrying of these building stones and which includes the recognised named stone variants Camel Hill Stone (White Lias), Thurlbear Stone, Curry Rivel Stone and Keinton Stone (all Blue Lias). For each of these nine areas, the MSA boundary is defined by the extent of a circle of 2km radius (diameter 4km) and includes all the outcrop of White Lias and Blue Lias stone which lie within that circle. The centrad point of each of the nine MSA circles is defined in Table 4. The 2km radius size of

these MSAs was chosen to contain the main known historic quarries for the needed building stones, and to ensure that adequate future resources of named stone variants were included within the MSA.

MSA Map 4: Inferior Oolite limestones (in a broad sense) have a wide distribution within the MPA and encompass a number of distinct building stone types including Doultling Stone, Cary/Hadspen Stone and Misterton Stone. Only Misterton Stone has been identified as a needed building stone amongst the suite of other Inferior Oolite limestones that occur in Somerset, namely: Doultling Stone, Cary/Hadspen Stone, and a pale form of Inferior Oolite limestone that occurs at Shepton Mallet. These other limestones are all actively quarried with long extant permissions and extensive reserves. Misterton Stone occurs in an irregular broken outcrop pattern, extending eastwards from near Seavington St Mary via Crewkerne and Misterton to near Milborne Wick, Charlton Horethorne and Blackford. (North of the A303 the Inferior Oolite facies changes to Cary/Hadspen Stone type). The MSA boundary defined here in Map 4 only relates to the Misterton Stone facies of the Inferior Oolite.

MSA Map 8: Lower Carboniferous limestones (in a broad sense) also have a wide distribution within the MPA and encompass a number of distinct building stone types including Hotwells Limestone, Clifton Down Limestone, Burrington Oolite and Black Rock Limestone. Extensive reserves of all these limestones remain and it is assumed that the large currently active Carboniferous Limestone quarries in the Mendip Hills would (with appropriate extraction arrangements) be able to readily supply sufficient quantities of these stones. Therefore they are not included within the MSA boundary. This approach would leave a number of 'niche' Carboniferous Limestones used as building stones unavailable or still potentially in short supply, namely Vallis Limestone, Chinastones, Cheddar Limestone, Cheddar Oolite and Cannington Park Limestone. These have limited outcrops in Somerset and are mainly no longer worked. The MSA boundary defined here in Map 8 incorporates the outcrop of all these 'niche' Carboniferous Limestone types.

- 4.8. The safeguarding area for sand and gravel is shaped by the data from the British Geological Survey (BGS) including the complete resource identified by BGS for the Budleigh Salterton Pebble Beds and the superficial deposits (including both sub-alluvial and River Terrace deposits).
- 4.9. The safeguarding area for surface coal has been updated in response to updates supplied by the Coal Authority and the Plan's approach to safeguarding coal is supported by the Coal Authority. Quoting from the Coal Authority's response (R84.1) to the pre-submission consultation: "*The Coal Authority supports the overall approach to mineral safeguarding and in particular supports both the designation of the entire surface coal resource in Somerset in the Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) and consequential Mineral Consultation Areas for inclusion in District level Local Plans. The approach to designating MSAs unconstrained by other designations is in line with the good practice advice in the BGS/Coal Authority 2011 Guide to Mineral*

*Safeguarding in England which is set out in the new NPPG as the relevant advice. It is also considered to be in line with the objectives of National Planning Policy in paragraphs 143 and 144 of the NPPF.”*

**5. What is the justification for including general minimum buffer widths around low and high output aggregate quarries? Is this in line with the PPG?**

**SCC Response**

- 5.1. Somerset County Council has adopted a systematic approach for safeguarding mineral resources as stated in the Planning Practice Guidance.
- 5.2. Having adopted an approach to safeguarding the crushed rock resource based on known crushed rock quarry sites as outlined above and in **Mineral Topic Paper 6 (Doc Ref SD8g)**, it is appropriate to add a suitable buffer around the identified site.
- 5.3. The use of buffers in mineral safeguarding is acknowledged in guidance from the British Geological Survey (BGS) – see the **BGS Minerals Safeguarding in England (Doc Ref TD7)** – and Somerset County Council has been mindful of this guidance in its approach.
- 5.4. The extent of the buffer has been informed by consultation – in the Options paper (see page 24 in the **Options summary – Doc Ref SD17a**) and the Preferred Options (see Table 4 on page 66 in the **Preferred Options – Doc Ref SD17b**).

**6. Would a suitable alternative be a buffer beyond the MSA resource?**

**SCC Response**

- 6.1. It is considered that this question has been addressed by Somerset County Council via its responses to questions 4 and 5 above.

**7. If so, what should this buffer be (if any) for each resource and how does it take account of the risks of sterilisation of part of the resource, bearing in mind that buffers are likely to vary between minerals and the likely method of extraction?**

**SCC Response**

- 7.1. It is considered that this question has been addressed by the Somerset County Council via its responses to questions 4 and 5 above.



**8. Should the MSAs plus a buffer constitute the extent of the Mineral Consultation Areas (MCAs) or should the MSAs and MCAs coincide?**

**SCC Response**

- 8.1. Given Somerset County Council's approach to safeguarding different mineral types, it is considered reasonable for the MSAs and the MCAs to coincide. This is the simplest approach that delivers robust safeguarding and clarity in implementation.
- 8.2. Furthermore, bearing in mind its bespoke approach to safeguarding different mineral resources, no advantages have been identified to an approach that sets a consultation area that is slightly bigger than the MSA. It is noted that the **Planning Practice Guidance** defines an MCA as follows "*a geographical area, based on a Mineral Safeguarding Area, where the district or borough council should consult the Mineral Planning Authority for any proposals for non-minerals development.*" Clearly this does not state that the MCA should be larger than the MSA.

**9. With respect to minerals facilities, is the use of Combwich wharf by EDF Energy for Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power Station a good enough reason to exclude it from safeguarding?**

**SCC Response**

- 9.1. Detail on plans associated with Combwich Wharf are included in a **Hinkley Point C Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Doc Ref TD68)** jointly prepared and issued by West Somerset Council and Sedgemoor District Council (October 2011).
- 9.2. The SPD highlights the strategically important nature of Combwich Wharf associated with development proposals for Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power Station. As such it is not considered appropriate or necessary for the Somerset Minerals Plan to safeguard Combwich Wharf.

**10. Is there any other reason for excluding Combwich wharf?**

**SCC Response**

- 10.1. Safeguarding a second wharf on the same water course – the River Parrett – could potentially undermine the primacy of Dunball Wharf as a site for landing marine-dredged sand and gravel in Somerset.
- 10.2. Whilst it is considered unlikely that a proposal for alternative development at Combwich wharf would come forward (noting the role of the wharf with respect to EdF's interests at Hinkley Point), the site also has significant transport-related constraints. Set in this context, and considering the nature of both wharfs, it is considered appropriate for the Minerals Plan only to safeguard Dunball.

**11. If recycling and secondary aggregates sites (as listed in the current Local Aggregate Assessment) are to be safeguarded (as provided for in Plan paragraph 11.26) should reference to this be made in Policy SMP9?**

**SCC Response**

- 11.1. Policy SMP9 in the Somerset Minerals Plan states that planning permission should not be granted for non-mineral development that would...*“prejudice the use of safeguarded operation and/or permitted mineral sites (including quarries, mines, associated plant and infrastructure and facilities)”*. It is considered that facilities which generate recycled and/or secondary aggregates are covered by this generic description.
- 11.2. Furthermore it is noted that waste sites are safeguarded by the **Somerset Waste Core Strategy (Doc Ref RL2)** adopted in February 2013 i.e. this would cover facilities permitted by Somerset County Council as Waste Planning Authority.
- 11.3. Notwithstanding the safeguarding coverage provided by the County Council’s Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework, it is noted that the District Local Planning Authorities play a key role in safeguarding industrial development. For example, as noted by the Planning Practice Guidance, *“In areas where there are county and district authorities, responsibility for safeguarding facilities and sites for the storage, handling and transport of minerals in local plans will rest largely with the district planning authority. Exceptions will be where such facilities and sites are located at quarries or aggregate wharves or rail terminal”*. The County Council’s approach aligns with this guidance.

**12. Are there any planned minerals facilities within the County that have not been safeguarded?**

**SCC Response**

- 12.1. No. There are other facilities in the supply chain for the construction and stonemason industries (for example) that make use of quarried material which the Somerset Minerals Plan has not explicitly safeguarded; however, these are businesses that are not restricted to quarry sites and planning applications for such processing facilities are largely determined by District LPAs.
- 12.2. John Wainwright & Co Ltd (see the representation R41.1 from the **Representations Received – Doc Ref SD7**) has asked that their facilities to process coated roadstone at Moons Hill Quarry be specifically safeguarded; however, it is considered that this is covered by the safeguarding of the entire area around Moons Hill and policy SMP9.

**13. Policy SMP9 provides for non-mineral development to proceed in MSAs in certain circumstances including where it is demonstrated that the mineral concerned is not of economic value. How is it envisaged that this will be demonstrated? Does this mean economically viable at the time of application or some other time in the future?**

**SCC Response**

- 13.1. The assessment would be made at the time of the application with reference to the evidence available, in particular (from a Somerset perspective) **Mineral Topic Paper 6 (Doc Ref SD8g)** and **Mineral Topic Paper 2 (Doc Ref SD8b)**.
- 13.2. It is noted that this wording is in line with formal guidance from the British Geological Survey (BGS). On page 30 of the **BGS guidance (Doc Ref TD7)** the Development management example policy includes reference to “*The applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the MPA that the mineral concerned is not of economic value*”. Furthermore in its section headed “Recommended text for inclusion in the local list of information requirements” there is a reference to “*An estimate of the economic value (for example quality and quantity) of the mineral resource*”.

**14. Does reference to “temporary planning permission” within the “Exemption list” need further clarification as to what would be considered to be “temporary”. Often wind farms or solar panel farms are considered temporary despite being given planning permission for in the order of 25 to 30 years. Is it envisaged that such a long timescales will be classed as “temporary”? If so, is this appropriate?**

**SCC Response**

- 14.1. Somerset County Council agrees that further clarification may be needed on what would be considered temporary. Consequently, a further change is proposed to the relevant bullet point in Table 6, as shown in the Appendix to this statement and Change No. 117 in the **Schedule of Proposed Changes, v2 (Doc Ref SD6c)**.

**15. Should there be any other types of exclusion to those listed?**

**SCC Response**

- 15.1. None identified by the County Council.

**16. In delineating the MSAs has proper regard been given to other relevant plans, emerging plans, strategies and policies, and have any identified conflicts been resolved?**

**SCC Response**

- 16.1. In their response to the pre-submission Minerals Plan, South Somerset District Council (SSDC) objected to the safeguarding policy. SSDC's representation (see the **Representations Received – Doc Ref SD7 – R61.1**) states that the policy is too restrictive. SSDC suggest the addition of the following criterion to policy SMP9: *“e) there is an overriding need for the non-mineral development which can be shown to provide wider sustainability benefits”*.
- 16.2. SSDC state highlight a concern that there is some overlap between the MSAs and *South Somerset's emerging Local Plan proposals at the Chard strategic site allocation, and 'directions of growth' at Somerton, Langport/Huish Episcopi, Wincanton, and Ansford/Castle Cary*.
- 16.3. In response (see the **Response to pre-submission consultation representations – Doc Ref SD6a**) Somerset County Council stated that this policy does not prevent other forms of development in the areas shown in Map 9, which if they are non-mineral development, are within the determining power of the relevant planning authorities.
- 16.4. Policy SMP9 is shaped to enable the County Council (as Mineral Planning Authority) to enter into discussions with the relevant district or borough council and developer about the best way to develop while recognising the mineral resource in the area. It could appropriate, for example, to prior extract the mineral resource before development begins.
- 16.5. Somerset County Council also expressed uncertainty to South Somerset District Council that the proposed wording would deliver the clarity being sought. In particular the wording would undermine the potential scope for prior extraction of the mineral i.e. it could be used as a justification for considering the policy at a District level but not discussing the proposal with Somerset County Council.
- 16.6. Added to this, as stated in paragraph 11.19 of the **Somerset Minerals Plan (Doc Ref SD1)** mineral safeguarding is not precluded by the presence of urban areas and environmental designations as sterilising development takes place in these areas. Defining MSAs in urban areas avoids disputes over the definition of what constitutes an urban area and the need to amend MSAs to reflect urban expansion. **BGS guidance (Doc Ref TD7)** indicates that these areas should only be removed from MSAs in exceptional circumstances; for example where the mineral extraction method would be incompatible with working in a built up area, such as blasting required for hard-work extraction. No such exceptional circumstances have been identified (also acknowledging that in South Somerset safeguarding focuses on building stone and sand and gravel rather than hard rock).

- 16.7. Mendip District Council (R314) has also commented on the safeguarding policy in the pre-submission consultation. It does not object to the identification of the MSAs but would welcome confirmation that the strategic allocations would not be constrained by this policy. In addition, it highlights that Mendip District Council will be seeking to make additional housing and employment allocations in a site allocations DPD starting this year. Mendip District Council would welcome an ongoing dialogue in the preparation of its site allocations document (Local Plan Part II).
- 16.8. In response to Mendip DC's comments, Somerset County Council reiterates the same points made in paragraphs 16.3 and 16.4 above. For Mendip District Council, there is the additional consideration of crushed rock resource; but the mechanism for dialogue remains the same. The crucial point is that a clear mechanism is in place to prompt dialogue, with proposals considered on a case by case basis with reference to policies in the Development Plan.

**17. Does exclusion of land from a MSA weigh against prior extraction of a mineral, should it be present?**

**SCC Response**

- 17.1. No, the proposed approach taken in the Minerals Plan does not weigh against prior extraction of minerals outside MSAs – not least due to the economic incentive of making best use of the county's resources.

**18. Should there be provision for the prior extraction of minerals outside MSAs?**

**SCC Response**

- 18.1. The proposed approach taken in the Minerals Plan does not preclude the prior extraction of minerals outside MSAs.
- 18.2. The MSAs take full account of need for mineral within the plan period and therefore it is not considered essential that prior extraction takes place outside of MSAs prior to non-mineral development. Any proposal for extraction outside of MSAs will be considered on its own merits on a case by case basis.

**19. Overall, are the MSAs for minerals and facilities the most suitable in location and extent?**

**SCC Response**

- 19.1. Yes, the MSAs for minerals and facilities are the most suitable in location and extent informed by the evidence available, including the geological occurrence and geographical extent of the mineral resource. Somerset County Council has not taken a "one size fits all approach" but has worked in detail to deliver a powerful, clear approach to safeguarding.

**APPENDIX: PROPOSED FURTHER CHANGES ON SAFEGUARDING  
(integrated within Doc Ref SD6c)**

**Table 6 – 6<sup>th</sup> bullet point**

Applications for temporary planning permission where the development can be completed and the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit extraction within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed.

END