

Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24

Headline Report

Staffordshire County Council

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of several overlapping chevron or zigzag shapes. The shapes are in shades of light blue and a vibrant magenta/pink color, creating a modern, abstract design.

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Introduction

Welcome to our Annual Monitoring Report for 2023-24.

As explained in previous reports, [legislation](#) requires local planning authorities to publish information at least annually that shows progress with plan preparation; and reports any information which relates to the monitoring of Local Plans and the effect of their policies and proposals, including any policies which are not being implemented. It also suggests that the report can help inform whether there is a need to undertake a partial or full update of the local plan.

This document has been prepared to meet that obligation. It is designed to provide a quick assessment of how effectively our Minerals and Waste Local Plans, known formally as the [Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Waste Local Plan \(2010-2030\)](#) and the [Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire \(2015-2030\)](#), are achieving their aims, and how we are doing as we work to implement them. It is structured around a series of headline statements, but if you want to find out more about the evidence we have used, then please consult the accompanying Background Report.

Based on the findings of this report, there is no current indication to suggest that we need to update either our Waste Local Plan or the Minerals Local Plan as we still have sufficient permitted mineral reserves, we have adequate facilities to process our waste, and our policies are working well, so there is still no immediate need to update our plans. Consequently, there is also no need to confirm a programme (or Minerals and Waste Development Scheme) for further plan preparation.

For future Annual Monitoring Reports, we will need to consider the government's ongoing review of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#); the government's [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(LURA\)](#) which contains new powers related to the plan-making system. In addition, the [Introduction of Bio-diversity Net Gain \(BNG\)](#) in February 2024 will require that we monitor and record all BNG connected with planning applications for which we are the planning authority.



Minerals

M1. Does the Plan make steady and adequate provision for Sand and Gravel?
YES

Discussion

The 10-year average sales of sand and gravel from Staffordshire sites is 4.886 million tonnes. This is less than the level of provision made in the Minerals Local Plan (MLP) i.e., 5 million tonnes of sand and gravel per annum, used to assess the allocation of additional sand and gravel resources to meet needs up to the end of 2030. Using the MLP level of provision would mean the landbank of permitted reserves as of 1 January 2024 would last for 12.6 years. This exceeds the target of maintaining a 7-year landbank.

Trend

2021	2022	2023
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

For data refer to our Local Aggregate Assessment which is based on annual surveys carried out on behalf of the West Midlands Aggregate Working Party.

M2. Does the Plan make steady and adequate provision for cement minerals?
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YES

Discussion

This indicator relies on data collected approximately every 3 years. The last survey was carried out in 2023.

Permitted reserves of limestone at Cauldon, and of Gypsum and Anhydrite at Fauld can be reasonably expected to still exceed 15 years supply as required by Policy 2 of the Minerals Local Plan. However, permitted reserves of shale at Cauldon do not, but an extension to the shale quarry at Cauldon is allocated in the MLP and an application has been now received in relation to the allocation. If permitted, this would increase shale reserves which based on current consumption at the cement works would provide a stock of shale reserves amounting to 31 years. The same application includes proposals for developing Cauldon Limestone Quarry serving the cement works together with the adjacent Cauldon Low Quarry, and if permitted, the proposals would secure a stock of limestone reserves of 67 years for the Cauldon Cement Works ([SCC/22/0136/FULL-ES](#)).

In relation to permitted reserves at Fauld Mine a permission was issued in January 2023 for the extension and consolidation of a permissions at Fauld Mine. The proposed extension involves 3 million tonnes of gypsum and anhydrite which at current rates of output amount to a 10-year stock of reserves ([ES.19/02/504 M](#)). These reserves combined with permitted reserves within other parts of the mine, result in a stock of reserves exceeding the minimum requirement of Policy 2 of MLP.

Proposals for the extension to Fauld Mine were considered to satisfactorily address the development considerations for the allocated extension to the mine. The reserves in the southern extension area of Fauld Mine are to be extracted in conjunction with permitted reserves in another part of the mine to achieve a blend of cement rock which meets the required cement rock specification and thereby, reduces the need to import gypsum from other mines for blending purposes.

Note that clay extracted from Keele and Kingsley Quarries in Staffordshire continues to be used to supply Tunstead cement works in Derbyshire.

Trend

2021	2022	2023
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Results for 2022/23 survey were undertaken confidentially by Staffordshire County Council.

M3. Does the Plan make steady and adequate provision for brick clay?
Mixed Response

Discussion

National planning policy requires that there is a steady and adequate supply of brick clay to support the continued operation of brick and tile works and this means ensuring that each clay product works is supported with a stock of permitted reserves equivalent to 25 years of clay use at the works. For the purposes of the Minerals Local Plan, data is collected in a periodic, confidential survey, but the data cannot be made public as they are commercially sensitive.

The most recent survey carried out in 2023, found that the Lodge Lane Works in Cannock was the only works in the county to have at least 25 years' supply of clay. The works at Wilnecote in Tamworth does not have a 25 years' stock but a permission was granted on 30 April 2019 (ref: T.16/02/905 MW) that allowed for the extraction of an additional 10 years' supply of clay. The Works also receives clays not locally derived (refer to permission T.18/01/905 MW granted March 2019). Supply of clay to the three works in the north of the county (i.e., Parkhouse, Chesterton and Keele) is based on supply from Knutton Quarry in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The stock of reserves is less than 25 years to maintain supply to all three works.

Note that clay extracted in Staffordshire is also used to support brick and tile manufacturing at works outside the county, some of which do not have associated clay quarries to provide their main supply. Whilst maintaining supplies to works outside the county is supported by national policy, it is not a current requirement of the MLP for Staffordshire to monitor the landbanks for clay product works outside the county.

Trend

2021	2022	2023
Mixed response	Mixed response	Mixed Response

Background

Results for 2022/23 based on a Periodic Confidential Survey of Industrial Minerals undertaken confidentially by Staffordshire County Council.

M4. Are the location policies for sand and gravel sites working?
YES

Discussion

During 2023, planning permission was issued for extensions at Croxden Quarry (ref: [SCC/21/0076/FULL-ES](#)) and Alrewas Quarry (ref: [SCC/21/0057/VOC](#))..

Trend

2021-2022	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Refer to list of mineral planning applications determined 1/4/23 – 31/3/24

M5. Are we doing all we can to reduce the impacts of mineral developments on the environment?
Yes

Discussion

Overall, we are taking available steps to reduce the impact of mineral workings on the environment in accordance with Policies 4 and 6 of the MLP.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Refer to the list of mineral planning applications determined 1/4/2023 – 31/3/24.

M6. Are we doing all we can to safeguard minerals, sites and infrastructure?
YES

Discussion

During 2023/24, we were consulted by District Borough Councils on 33 planning applications for non-mineral development which fell within Mineral safeguarding Areas and were not exempt from consideration or subject to [Standing Advice](#).

In all cases, we were able to conclude that the proposals would be unlikely to lead to the sterilisation of significant mineral resources and therefore did not conflict with the requirements of Policy 3 of the Minerals Local Plan.

We did record one holding objection in relation to a consultation from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in connection with the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan ([SCC/23/0035/CON](#)). The holding objection was in relation to a housing allocation which falls within a Mineral Safeguarding Area for building stone at Tearne House which includes Tearne Quarry which is subject to an extant mineral planning permission.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Refer to responses to consultations received from District Planning Authorities as recorded in Staffordshire County Council records.

M7. Are we coordinating our work with other minerals planning authorities across the region?
YES

Discussion

The West Midlands Aggregates Working Party (WMAWP) exists to provide a forum to bring Minerals Planning Authorities together to produce “ data on construction aggregate minerals, to support local planning on the provision of construction aggregate minerals, and to ensure compliance with the Duty to Cooperate. We continue to be represented at all the meetings.

Note also the findings for headline statement 7 under the waste section below regarding attendance of the RTAB.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

The West Midlands Aggregate Working Party has been established as a technical advisory group of mineral planning authorities and other relevant organisations covering the West Midlands Region.

M8. Are all aggregate mineral sites subject to a restoration strategy/plan that has been considered in the last 10 years?
Almost

Discussion

Restoration plans are important to ensure that quarries are reinstated at the earliest opportunity and that works are carried out to high environmental standards.

Of the 24 permitted aggregate sites (21 are Sand and Gravel and 3 are Crushed Rock sites) within the Plan area, four have no approved restoration strategy or detailed scheme. This is mainly because the quarries are non-operational and have not been subject to a recent review.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Almost	Almost	Almost

Background

SCC data obtained from planning permission relating to all quarry sites.

M9. Does the Minerals Local Plan need to be revised?
NO

Discussion

An interim [review of the Minerals Local Plan](#) as published as an appendix to the Annual Monitoring Report in December 2018, concluded that there was no need for a revision.

Since then, there have been no significant changes to national minerals policy, as might affect the MLP. At the time of writing, changes to the planning system have been introduced through the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(LURA\)](#), but we await regulations and guidance on how they may impact on planning for minerals.

The Plan policies are working as intended. Plan targets are being met, and there have been no significant changes to strategic priorities, or local circumstances.

As before, we are aware of the continuing need to monitor the provision of aggregates in the light of demands resulting from the construction of the HS2 railway.

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
No	No	No

Background

There have been no changes to national minerals policy in the NPPF policy since the last AMR was published, and the MLP remains consistent with national policy.

Demand for sand and gravel remains in line with planned provision and the impact of the construction of HS2 on sales and reserves of construction aggregates continues to be monitored.

Waste

W1. Is the rate of growth of waste production within the range that we planned for?
YES

Discussion

Reliable estimates of total waste arisings have been difficult to produce, though the Environment Agency's recently modified Waste Data Interrogator has proved useful. A 5-year review of the Waste Local Plan (published in December 2018) relied on population as a proxy. This suggested that arisings were unlikely to exceed forecasts within the plan period. This appears to be consistent with Environment Agency data for the total amount of waste treated in the plan area, though the origin of this waste is not recorded.

More reliable figures are available for Municipal Solid Waste, which makes up less than 10% of total arisings. The total figure is well below the original Regional Waste Forecast for both 2015/16 and 2020/21, while the landfill diversion percentages are significantly higher than the regional forecast.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Data collected from: [5-year Review of the Waste Local Plan](#) (published December 2018); [Environment Agency's 2023 Waste Data Interrogator](#) (Last Updated September 2024); Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council municipal waste management data; [Appendices of the Waste Local Plan](#).

W2. Is waste treatment capacity keeping pace with production?
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YES

Discussion

The number of waste related planning application during the reporting period was small. There were two applications that have led to an increase in treatment capacity, one of which has resulted in a new pre-operational site. An application for the operation of an inert waste recycling facility at Newbold Quarry (ref: [SCC/23/0031/FULL-MAJ](#) dated 2 December 2023) which allows for the recycling of up to 75,000 tonnes of waste per annum. In addition, a planning application to increase the permitted tonnage at the Four Ashes Facility from 70,000 to 100,000 tonnes, increasing capacity (ref: [SCC/22/0093/VOC](#) dated 25 April 2023).

To add, Poplars Landfill had a Variation of Condition approved 18 May 2023. This accommodated a void 'swap' for landfill waste, whereby approved void in the north of the landfill will be transferred away from nearby residential properties to the south of the site. The void swap will allow the retention of the Anaerobic Digestion (AD) Facility (subject to a separate application).

The planning authority is also not aware of the permanent cessation of any existing waste management facility.

The Waste Local Plan set a series of targets for additional capacity for Recycling, Organic Treatment, and Residual Treatment to support a movement of waste up the treatment hierarchy. All of these have already been met on time or ahead of time, with the exception of the 2020/21 and 2025/26 targets for recycling capacity which are yet to be achieved.

[The previous Government Announcement of reforms to household and business waste collections](#) including weekly collections of food waste introduced for most households across England by 2026 and the implementation timelines for Simpler Recycling policy update may have implications. There may be a need for additional waste management facilities/capacity to transfer, sort and process waste (e.g. to turn waste food into energy at anaerobic digestion facilities). However, at this stage, in the absence of an updated Municipal Waste Management Strategy produced by the Staffordshire districts/boroughs (the waste collection authorities) and the County Council (the waste disposal authority), there is no immediate need to plan for new facilities/capacity.

Besides, the Waste Local Plan is working well using criteria-based policies for such applications, to ensure that they are developed in the right place and there is no reason to suggest an immediate need to change this approach. Nonetheless, any future review of the Plan will need to examine the capacity and number and type of waste management facilities required over the plan period to achieve net self-sufficiency; and the need for updated criteria for new facilities/technology.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Data collected from: [5-year Review of the Waste Local Plan](#) (published December 2018); and from planning applications.

W3. Are we maintaining net self-sufficiency for waste management?
YES

Discussion

While not all of the waste arising within the Plan area is treated within the Plan area, the amount of waste exported for treatment elsewhere is much smaller than the amount of waste imported for treatment. We are, therefore, treating an amount of waste which is equivalent to 251% of the amount generated in the Plan area.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Based on [Environment Agency's 2023 Waste Data Interrogator](#) (last updated 12 September 2024).

W4. Are the location policies for waste sites working?
YES

Discussion

19 cases related to sites with existing waste-related permissions and one related in a new site. The new site relates to a new inert waste recycling operation at Newbold Quarry resulting in an increase in waste treatment capacity of 75,000 tpa ([SCC/23/0031/FULL-MAJ](#)). As well as an application at the Veolia Four Ashes facility to vary condition which enabled to further increase capacity by 30,000 (tpa)

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Data from County Council's applications register.

W5. Are we doing all we can to safeguard existing waste treatment sites?
YES

Discussion

The County Council was consulted on 0 District/Borough Council applications which might have impacted on waste management facilities.

We continue to receive fewer waste consultation area (WCA) consultations than mineral safeguarding area (MSA) consultations. As discussed in previous reports, this may reflect the large geographic extent of the Mineral Safeguarding Areas in comparison to the relatively small areas where management facilities might be affected, and also the relative difficulty for local planning authorities to identify where WCA consultations would be appropriate.

All Local Planning Authority's have been provided with GIS layers providing the locations of all waste sites that might require safeguarding.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Data from County Council's applications register

W6. Are we doing all we can to reduce the impacts of waste treatment facilities on the environment?
YES
Discussion

The impacts of waste treatment facilities on the environment are being well managed. Potential impacts are being controlled through conditions.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Data from County Council's applications register.

W7. Are we co-ordinating our work with other waste planning authorities across the region?
YES
Discussion

Meetings of the West Midlands Resource Technical Advisory Body provide a forum to discuss regional issues relating to waste management provision, and to ensure compliance with the Duty to Cooperate. Though the frequency of meetings has declined in recent years, and they have moved online in response to Covid-19, Staffordshire County Council has been represented at all meetings and has been fully involved in discussions.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Yes	Yes	Yes

Background

Data from minutes of RTAB Meetings.

W8. Does the Waste Local Plan need to be revised?**NO****Discussion**

A 5-year [review of the Waste Local Plan](#) was completed in December 2018 concluding that there was no need for a revision.

Since then, there have been no significant changes. The plan policies are working as intended, Plan targets are being met on time or ahead of schedule, and there have been no significant changes to National Planning Policy, strategic priorities, or local circumstance.

Trend

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
No	No	No

Background

[Review of the Waste Local Plan](#), subsequent AMRs, and reviews of changes to legislation and guidance.