

RURAL PROOFING OF OPTIONS ON POLICIES ON MINERALS

1.1 Introduction

This paper presents the findings from rural proofing the draft options on Minerals Policies and is a key component for influencing the authors of the draft preferred RSS Spatial Option. In pro-actively assessing the development of the Policy Options for the RSS Phase Three Revision the following has been considered:

- Whether the various options are likely to have a potential different impact for rural areas/people or uncertainty from that elsewhere, because of the particular characteristics of rural areas; and
- Where necessary, exploring what adjustments or compensations might be made to reflect rural needs and circumstances and produce the desired outcomes in rural areas or avoid/mitigate any undesirable impacts. Where appropriate rural proofing may also highlight opportunities to maximise positive impacts in rural areas

The options and explanatory text have been appraised against the Commission for Rural Communities Guidance [published May 2009] and is designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems including the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Please note that the checklist is designed to complement and not substitute consultation with rural communities, businesses and organisations. It is meant to be applied from the early stages of policy making although it may also be used during implementation and evaluation.

1.2 Safeguarding Mineral Resources, Future Supplies of Construction Aggregates & Future Brick Clay Provision

Phase Three seeks to safeguard mineral resources – brick clays, natural building and roofing stone and aggregates - in the West Midlands as far as possible; producing new sub-regional apportionments for aggregates for the period to 2026; and examines the supply and demand for brick clays ensuring there is appropriate provision made in the region.

Options

The options being considered are:

1. Safeguard only regionally important minerals for the economy and development needs arising from Phase 2 revision (aggregates, brick clays, natural building and roofing stone).
2. Safeguard all mineral resources and regionally important minerals within the region.
3. Apportion future supplies by existing methods – future supplies coming from the same areas and in the same proportions
4. Apportion future supplies using different sub-regions – with impacts increasing or decreasing in certain parts of the region

5. Apportion future supplies using different sub-regions and methods – determined by future patterns of growth, resource availability and existing infrastructure
6. Apply a 25 year production supply requirement for brick clays and fire clays across the region
7. Apply a 25 year production supply requirement for brick clays and fire clays for individual brickworks
8. Apply a 25 year production supply requirement to only Mineral Planning Authorities with brick clay resources

1.3 Analysis

In reviewing how rural issues relate to the policy options on Minerals, i.e. setting out the questions to be explored by the Rural Proofing process, these options have been considered together. The table overleaf highlights which issues are likely to be relevant.

Table: Rural Proofing

RP Topic	Will the option/proposal.....	Options	Comments
Availability & Provision			
RP1: Availability of services	Affect the availability of public and private services?	√	All options are likely to help maintain and possible enhance the level of public and private services. The safeguarding of mineral resources will help sustain the rural economy through local employment – particularly for the more remote rural communities
RP2: Service Delivery	Be delivered through existing service outlets and how will you ensure rural residents can access services in areas where outlets are few and far between?		Not relevant
RP3: Private sector involvement	Be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership? Will the smaller and scattered population in rural areas provide a sufficient market to attract the private sector? Will there be similar opportunities for choice and competition? Does the private sector in rural areas have the capacity to deliver?	√	The location of many indigenous mineral resources coincides with remoter rural areas and with environmental and nature conservation designations. There are considerable economic and environmental opportunities for private sector landowners, land managers and businesses
Delivery Costs			
RP4: Cost of delivery	Be more expensive to deliver in rural areas where people are more widely dispersed or economies of scale harder to achieve?		Not relevant

RP5: Local delivery	Rely on local institutions for delivery? Will the policy be as effective in rural areas?	√	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs
Accessibility & Infrastructure			
RP6: Travel Needs	Affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel? Will the impact be different in sparsely populated or remote rural areas, where typically journey times are longer, public transport is poor, and travel options are limited or expensive, especially for low income groups?	√	There will be the continuing need to carefully examine transport/access issues; minimising the impact on the rural road infrastructure and on road safety considerations
RP7: Infrastructure	Rely on infrastructure (e.g. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery? How will the policy work in rural areas, where the existing infrastructure is typically weaker (e.g. roads, electricity grid), some infrastructure doesn't exist (e.g. cable TV, mains gas) and upgrading of infrastructure may be difficult or expensive?	√	The majority of the extraction and processing will be carried out in rurally isolated locations and the development of improved infrastructure is advocated. Consideration may be given to encourage or co-ordinate additional demand within local communities in order to make supply viable; or the use the public sector's collective demand to stimulate supply
RP8: Administrative Boundaries	Delivery of the policy be challenging at the edges of administrative areas?	√	Encourage reciprocal sharing of service provision across administrative borders where this makes sense. Local, sub-regional and regional administrative boundaries - Note: additional needs of and impacts upon rural communities either side of the Welsh Border: Border Proofing Welsh and English policies and delivery to ensure minimal impact.

RP9: New buildings or development sites	Depend on new buildings or development sites? Where will these be located in rural areas, given that there are few brownfield sites and fewer locations where housing or other development will be acceptable?	√	Clearly important to see policies embedded in county and district LDDs and MSAs mapped and defined ensuring any development will contribute to local character and distinctiveness
Communications			
RP10: Communication	Rely on communicating information to individuals and communities? How will they access information in rural areas, where there are fewer (formal) places to obtain advice and information?	√	A clear communications policy encouraging the support from rural communities is essential. Failure to properly manage the communications process will have implications for securing and maintaining supplies of indigenous mineral resources in the WM
Economies			
RP11: Impact on rural businesses	Impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed? Will it have a different effect on smaller businesses (which employ a greater proportion of the workforce in rural areas) or those sectors which are typically more significant in rural areas - farming and construction? Will the higher proportion of self-employed people in rural areas be affected by the policy (including women running part-time businesses)?	√	A positive effect
RP12: Impact on land-based industries	Have a particular impact on land-based industries and therefore on rural economies and environments? How will the policy affect the agricultural sector and water industries, which have a particular importance in many rural areas?	√	Identify 'win-win' solutions which deliver economic and environmental benefits. Where there are opportunities for restoration allow for and encourage a diverse range of rural enterprises

<p>RP13: Impact upon those on low income</p>	<p>Affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment? For those who work in rural areas, wages tend to be lower on average and a higher proportion of the workforce is engaged in part-time or seasonal employment. Will your proposal affect wage levels or people's access to quality employment? Will it affect the type of businesses that tend to pay low wages or offer seasonal/part-time work</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>It is believed that there will be a positive effect. However, check the effects of your policies against other (especially welfare) policies to ensure that the transition between wages/benefits and employment/unemployment is sufficiently flexible and supportive; consider measures to improve the choice of work (e.g. increasing skills, improving local childcare, improving transport to work).</p>
<p>Disadvantage</p>			
<p>RP14: Disadvantaged Groups</p>	<p>To be targeted at the disadvantaged? How will it target disadvantage in rural areas, which is not usually concentrated in neighbourhoods? Do the indicators to be used for identifying need measure deprivation issues that are particular rural features (e.g. access to services, access to job opportunities, low earnings and housing affordability)?</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>Likely to have a positive effect: providing opportunities for employment and support for existing businesses/community infrastructure in the remote rural locations; leading increased sustainability and vibrancy of the rural areas</p>