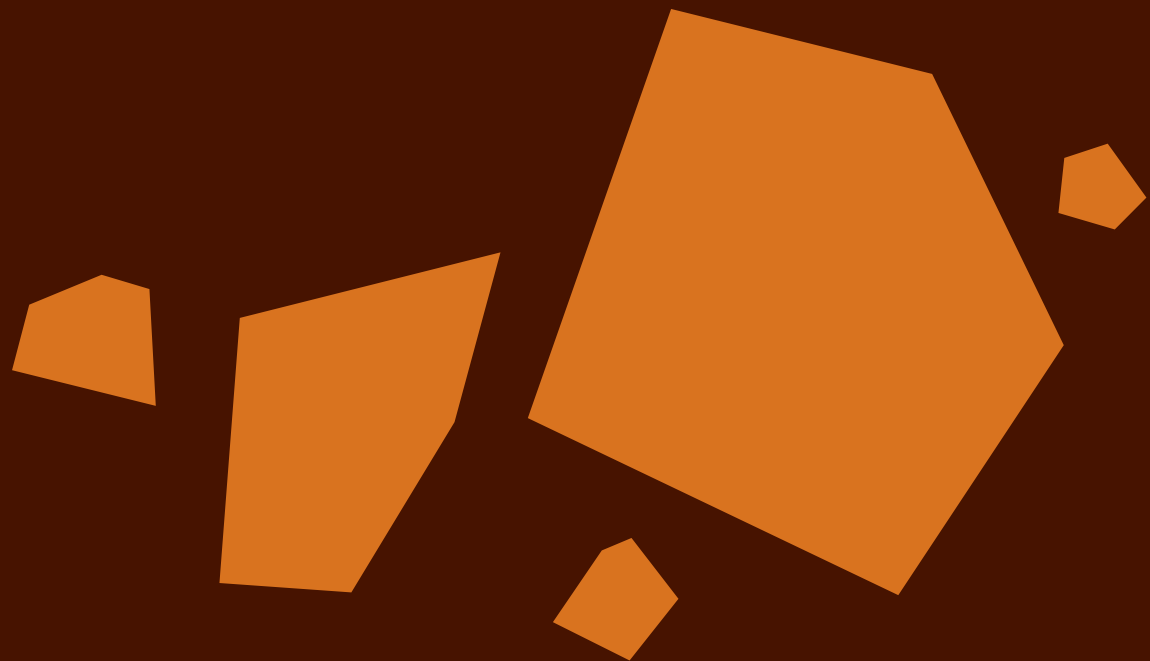




Additional Sites - Sustainability Appraisal Report



Background

The Minerals and Waste Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in May 2011. A Planning Inspector was appointed by the SoS and hearing sessions took place from September to October 2011. The hearing sessions have been adjourned to allow for further consultation on some major changes to the DPD. These changes will be subject to consultation in January 2012.

Under Policy WM2 of the DPD, these major changes have resulted in the removal of Heysham Port and Huncoat/Whinney Hill as Large Scale Built Waste Management Facilities in the Lancaster/Morecambe and East Lancashire catchment areas respectively. Where possible, local sites identified under Policy WM3 are being promoted as large scale sites under Policy WM2. In the Lancaster/Morecambe area, the Lancaster West Business Park is now being considered as the large scale site, and in East Lancashire, Lomeshaye Industrial Estate along with a additional site is being considered. The additional site is Altham Industrial Estate. (The additional site, as with other sites within the DPD, is a existing industrial estates).

Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004, it is considered necessary to appraise these three sites.

It should be noted that the Lancaster West Business Park and Lomeshaye Industrial Estate have already been subject to appraisal as sites for local waste facilities within the Interim Sustainability Report (January 2010). However, being promoted to large scale sites may have implications in terms of their sustainability. Firstly, the potential capacity for waste facilities increases and secondly, the type of facility is not restricted and allows for the technologies specified in Appendix B of the DPD Part 1. The potential effects could theoretically increase and the two sites are therefore reconsidered in this appraisal.

Methodology

Reference is made to the methodology used earlier in the plan making process within the Interim Sustainability Report (January 2010) most notably Sections 2, 3.5 and 4.1.

Sustainability Implications

Lancaster West Business Park, Middleton

The following issues have been identified in this area:

Local Environment:

The area includes extensive tracts of derelict and potentially contaminated land left by the closure of the former Shell/ICI works which once dominated the area. Soils in the area carry a significant risk of having been contaminated by previous industrial processes.

Landscape:

Most of the site is screened to the west and the south by existing, established tree cover, but is more visible from the east, particularly from along the A683. Planting being put in place as part of the municipal waste facility, should help minimise future visual impacts. The introduction of large scale buildings may require further landscape enhancement.

Natural Heritage:

Part of the extended area (south-west of the former oil depot) consists of marshy grassland with ditches and drains and is designated as a local wildlife site for its range of scarce and sensitive plant species. The site opens into farmland to the east, which in similar situations elsewhere in Lancashire often supports important wintering bird populations. Bird surveys undertaken for recent planning applications within the site have not recorded any similar populations here.

Local Amenity:

The small village of Middleton lies to the south-east. Properties at Old Trafford Park lie immediately west of the extended area, although a thick belt of woodland separates the two. North of this is a riding school. The promotion of the site to a large scale site under Policy WM2 has also been accompanied by a change in the boundary of the site which excludes the belt of woodland to the south. This will provide a landscaping buffer between any potential development and residents in Middleton village itself.

Transport:

The industrial estate is a short distance from the A683, which is part of the primary route network and will join up with the M6 link road, when constructed. There are relatively few accidents on the local access roads, which are not major through routes. Given the good access the promotion of the allocation to a large scale site under Policy WM2 will have relatively little impact on the local network.

Recommendation:

Ensure adequate landscaping on the eastern boundary if large scale buildings are introduced.

New development adjacent to the BHS may require a landscape buffer between it and the BHS.

Lomeshaye Industrial Estate, Pendle

The following issues have been identified in this area:

Natural Heritage:

The industrial estate lies in the Pendle Water valley and includes an area of freshwater swamp / grassland adjacent to the river, which is designated as a BHS. Other BHS sites (predominantly ancient woodland) can be found to the west of the estate. The promotion of this allocation to a large scale site could put more pressure on the BHS. A buffer may be required where new build occurs adjacent to the BHS in order to protect the interests of the BHS.

Landscape & Heritage:

The industrial estate is dominated by modern-style industrial and commercial buildings, with only one industrial-age mill complex and associated terraced housing on the edge of the estate. The estate is on the urban fringe, overlooked by ancient enclosure-type farmland. In the middle of this is Old Laund Hall (a Grade II listed farm), with an abundance of footpaths. The view is dominated by thick hedgerows.

Flood Risk:

Around half of the business park falls within Flood Zone 3 and several major flood events have occurred in recent years. A major flood defence scheme has since been implemented, although the risk of overtopping or breaching remains.

Transport:

The industrial estate has direct access to the M65. The promotion of the allocation to a large scale site will not have a significant impact on the local road network.

Recommendations:-

Avoid damage to freshwater habitats

New development adjacent to the BHS may require a landscape buffer between it and the BHS.

Identify opportunities for habitat re-creation and flood water storage

Altham Industrial Estate

The following issues have been identified in this area:

Landscape:

The site is bounded on 3 sides by Greenbelt. The southern boundary has relatively little screening and this part of the site has the most impact on the openness of the Green Belt and surrounding landscape. This is the location of the proposed extension to the site. Any new development along this boundary will need careful consideration, particularly if it introduces tall structures.

Natural Heritage:

Altham Clough Wood BHS lies along the western boundary of the site. It is protected in order to safeguard the woodland habitat. If new build is proposed adjacent to the BHS then a landscaping buffer may be required in order to protect and enhance the woodland.

Cultural Heritage:

The site is bounded to the north by 'St James, Altham' Conservation Area and has 7 listed buildings within close proximity which will need to be taken into account by any new development. Shuttleworth Hall, a historic designed landscape to the south east of the site, could also be affected by further development.

Local Amenity:

The site, (highways, verges, landscaping) is well maintained and has less visual clutter than most industrial estates. New development will need to be of a high standard.

Local Environment:

The site has water courses to the west (Clough Brook) and east (Shorten Brook) and also within the site itself. Await EA comments on potential contamination.

Recommendations:-

Proposals for new development within the proposed extension, and elsewhere along the southern boundary, will need to carefully consider landscape implications in relation to the Green Belt, particularly where large scale buildings and structures are introduced.

New development along the western boundary will require a landscape buffer between it and the BHS.

Steve Browne BA DIP LA ALI MRTPI MBA

Director of Strategy and Policy

Lancashire County Council

John Donnellon BA MA

Service Director of Built Environment

Blackpool Council

Neil Rodgers BA MPhil DMS MRTPI InstLM

Head of Planning

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

www.lancashire.gov.uk

