

PUBLICATION DRAFT OF POLICIES MINERALS 13 AND 14

(To replace the current supporting text and policies which are shown after this section)

MOVEMENT OF MINERALS AND OTHER FREIGHT

- 3.33 This Plan aims to meet the local target for aggregate provision through safeguarding and allocation of sites. Leeds does not produce the right quality of aggregate needed for concrete-making and therefore will need to import aggregates from outside the District. In line with the strategic objective for a low carbon economy, Leeds aims to make the most of the opportunities in the District for the movement of freight by canal and rail. We propose to assist this by safeguarding existing sites that can be used for canal or rail-based freight purposes and allocating new sites where appropriate. This will help to ensure that important sites with freight potential are protected from pressure for other permanent uses and to encourage further investment in the canal and rail infrastructure. This will also help ensure we have sufficient sites for concrete batching and asphalt operations and that they are located in the industrial parts of the south-east of the District where their impact on the environment and housing is minimal. Supporting industries in this way helps to ensure their future survival by enabling them to operate more efficiently. Historically, Leeds had a strong basis in manufacturing and whilst the local economy has focused more recently on finance and law, by supporting manufacturing industry it helps to promote a strong, diverse economy.
- 3.34 The Freight Topic Paper 2014 includes a summary of existing and potential freight movements in and out of Leeds. Additionally, detailed evidence is presented in two studies, 'Potential for the use of Non-Road Freight Modes for West Yorkshire, April 2014' and the 'Marine Aggregate Report, 2013'. The Freight Study recognises that Leeds has a strong synergy with the Humber Ports and that the Stourton area offers genuine tri-modal freight development opportunities that would have much lower 'entry costs' than other similar schemes elsewhere in the country. This Plan aims to support these opportunities so that sites can be taken forward and actively marketed by interested commercial parties. The Marine Aggregate Study concludes that it is likely that in the medium to long-term land-won aggregate will be replaced by marine-won aggregate from the North Sea. This Plan needs to make provision for this in ensuring that marine-won aggregate can be transported into Leeds from the East Coast and Humber Ports using rail and /or canal.
- 3.35 The main focus of current rail freight activity is in the Stourton area where aggregate is brought to each of the mineral processing plants by rail. It is also the location of the Freightliner sidings which are one of the busiest rail container terminals in Britain. Over the plan period there is potential for further rail freight activity in that area and for aggregate to be conveyed onward to sites within a short distance of the rail sidings.
- 3.36 The Aire and Calder Navigation connects to the Humber Ports and has been identified by the Canal and River Trust as a Priority Freight Route. It has potential for greater use for freight movements. The focus of the following policies is to safeguard sites for unloading in order to protect the ability to use the canal for freight movement. The Canal and River Trust advise that freight activities can take on average two years to implement. To avoid sites being left vacant, temporary employment uses will be considered on protected wharf sites.

MINERALS 13: TRANSPORT MODES

1. The following existing rail sidings and wharves are safeguarded to protect them from development that would prejudice their long term availability for rail or canal freight.
Site 14 Canal wharf at Stourton
Site 15 Canal wharf at Old Mill lane, Hunslet
Site 16 Rail sidings at Pontefract Road, Stourton
Site 17 Rail sidings at Knowsthorpe Lane
Site 18 Canal wharf at Fleet lane, Woodlesford
2. Site 20 Skelton Grange Road, Stourton is allocated for provision of a new canal wharf and associated employment activities which will utilise movements of freight by canal.
3. Site 21 Bridgewater Road South is allocated for provision of new rail sidings and associated employment activities which will utilise movements of freight by rail.
Proposals are expected to incorporate suitable landscaping to protect views and amenity from nearby existing and proposed residential allocations to the north and the river/canal.
4. Short term / temporary uses which do not utilise rail or canal freight may also be accepted on sites 20 and 21 providing they do not prejudice the long term use of rail or canal for freight.
5. An Intermodal Freight Area is identified at Stourton where commercial activities that can make use of the rail and water freight opportunities are encouraged.
6. Site 19 Skelton Grange rail spur, provides rail access to the former power station site at Skelton Grange (site 200) and is safeguarded to preserve the future opportunity for rail freight.

3.37 There are limited opportunities for rail and wharf facilities in Leeds and it is important that the sites identified in this Plan have every opportunity to develop and flourish for these uses. Nevertheless the Council recognises that land should not be sterilised indefinitely if there is no reasonable prospect of the sites being used for such purposes. Applications for alternative uses on a safeguarded or allocated wharf or rail siding will be considered in terms of their benefits weighed against the loss of the non-road freight opportunity using the following criteria based policy:

MINERALS 14: CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT ON PROTECTED WHARVES AND RAIL SIDINGS

Canal wharves and rail sidings are protected from other development unless the applicant can demonstrate compliance with one of the following criteria:

1. The development is of a temporary nature and would not prejudice the longer term ability of the site to utilise movements of freight by canal or rail, or
2. The applicant is able to demonstrate that in the case of a safeguarded wharf/rail siding that an adequate replacement wharf/rail siding has been provided or
3. A sufficient supply of sites will remain in the district, readily available and of at least the same functional capability (including proximity to relevant economic centres), so as not to prejudice the objective of encouraging a shift from road freight, or
4. The applicant is able to conclusively demonstrate, through the provision of current and forecast marketing evidence, that the site is unlikely to ever be used for freight purposes.

PREVIOUS VERSION OF POLICIES MINERALS 13 AND 14 AND SUPPORTING TEXT

MOVEMENT OF MINERALS AND OTHER FREIGHT

- 3.33 Leeds will still need to import aggregates, so to minimise road use we need to improve the opportunity for the movement of freight by canal and rail. We propose to do this by safeguarding suitable sites for canal and rail-based freight purposes to ensure that they are protected from pressure for other uses and to encourage further investment in the canal and rail infrastructure. This will also help ensure we have sufficient sites for concrete batching and asphaltting operations and that they are located in the industrial south-east of the District where their impact on the environment and housing is minimal. Supporting industries in this way helps to ensure their future survival by enabling them to operate more efficiently. Historically, Leeds had a strong basis in manufacturing and whilst the local economy has focused more recently on finance and law, by supporting manufacturing industry it helps to promote a strong, diverse economy.
- 3.34 During the plan period there will be more pressure on the rail network with an expected growth of between 50 and 70% in passenger numbers. This means that some existing railway land at Holbeck is likely to be needed for stabling and moving trains around to free up capacity in the main Leeds City Interchange. Aggregate currently comes from Skipton and Derbyshire, road stone from South Wales and coal from Scotland. The main focus for further rail freight infrastructure is between Holbeck and Stourton. A minimum of 775 metres in length is needed for a fully functioning rail siding.
- 3.35 There is potential for greater use of the canal for freight movements but this has to be balanced with the pressure for leisure and recreation. Safeguarding sites means that planning permission will not be granted for permanent uses which would prejudice the use of the canal for freight. British Waterways advise that freight activities take on average two years to implement and so to avoid sites being left vacant, temporary employment uses will be considered.

MINERALS 13: TRANSPORT MODES

- 1. The Council supports in principle the creation of new sites for the development of non – road infrastructure associated with natural resource and waste facilities .**
- 2. Existing rail sidings and wharves are safeguarded to protect them from other development that would prejudice their long term availability for rail or canal freight. These sites are shown on the Policies Map.**
- 3. The site at Skelton Grange Road, Stourton is suitable for provision of a new canal wharf and the site at Bridgewater Road South is suitable for provision of new rail sidings and may be suitable for a canal wharf. These sites are shown on the Policies Map. These sites are allocated for employment activities which can utilise movements of freight by rail or canal. Temporary uses which do not utilise rail or canal freight will also be accepted providing they do not prejudice the long term use of rail or canal for freight. Proposals are expected to incorporate suitable landscaping to protect views from nearby residential properties and the river/canal.**
- 4. The Leeds to Castleford rail line between Holbeck and Stourton is identified as an area of search for an intermodal freight facility.**
- 5. The Skelton Grange rail spur, which provides rail access to the former power station site at Skelton Grange, is safeguarded to preserve the future opportunity for rail freight.**

3.36 There are limited opportunities for rail and wharf facilities in Leeds and it is important that the sites identified in this plan have every opportunity to develop and flourish for these uses. Nevertheless the Council recognises that land should not be sterilised indefinitely if there is no reasonable prospect of the sites being used for such purposes. It is therefore necessary to strike a balance between the policy objectives and making effective, efficient and sustainable use of land. To this end the Council will therefore undertake a review of the policy as part of its Authority Monitoring Report in the first such Report prepared after a period of 5yrs from the date of adoption. Given that there are only limited opportunities available it should not be assumed that lack of interest in the preceding 5 years will automatically result in the removal of the safeguarding policy from any or all of the sites in question. The Report will need to consider a range of issues including how circumstances have changed since adoption and forecasts of how the economy might change in light of sustainability issues. This will include the issue of viability and in this respect the redevelopment of safeguarded or proposed wharves/ rail sidings for other land uses will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that the wharf / rail siding is not likely to become viable or capable of being made viable for freight handling, or in the case of safeguarded wharves/ rail sidings where an adequate replacement wharf/ rail siding has been provided.

The following factors will be taken into account when considering viability:

- site size, shape, navigational access, road access, rail access (where possible), planning history, environmental impact and surrounding land use context, including existing uses, extant planning permissions and development plan allocations;
- geographical location, in terms of proximity and connections to existing and potential market areas and other freight-handling sites;
- the existing and potential contribution the site can make towards reducing road based freight movements;
- demand for the use of the site for waterborne/ rail-based freight having regard to marketing and other evidence.

3.37 Applications for alternative uses on a safeguarded or allocated wharf or rail siding will be considered in terms of their benefits weighted against the loss of the non-road freight opportunity using the following criteria based policy.

MINERALS 14: CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT ON PROTECTED WHARVES AND RAIL SIDINGS

Canal wharves and rail sidings are protected from other development unless the applicant can demonstrate compliance with the following criteria:

1. The development would not sterilise the longer term potential of the site for wharf or rail siding use, or
2. The applicant is able to demonstrate that in the case of a safeguarded wharf/rail siding that an adequate replacement wharf/rail siding has been provided or
3. The applicant is able to demonstrate that there are no suitable alternative sites for the proposed development, and
4. A sufficient supply of sites will remain in the district, readily available and of at least the same functional capability (including proximity to relevant economic centres), so as not to prejudice the objective of encouraging a shift from road freight, and
5. The applicant is able to conclusively demonstrate, including current and forecasted marketing evidence, that the site is unlikely to ever be appropriate for use as a freight interchange.