



## **Independent Examination of the Hampshire Portsmouth, Southampton, New Forest National Park & South Downs National Park Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update – Submission Plan (July 2024)**

### **Post Hearing Note 2**

by L Fleming BSc (Hons) MRTPI IHBC

Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

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#### **Examination Website Link:**

[Examination Library | Environment | Hampshire County Council](#)

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1. The Hampshire Portsmouth, Southampton, New Forest National Park & South Downs National Park (the Local Authorities) Minerals and Waste Plan: Partial Update – Submission Plan (July 2024) (the Plan) was submitted to the Secretary of State on 29 July 2024 for independent examination. Hearings were held between Tuesday 4 and 13 February 2025 with an additional virtual hearing session held on 9 September 2025 focussed on the proposed allocation for mineral extraction at Purple Haze.
2. My comments below are based on all that I have read, heard and seen to date. However, I emphasise that the Examination is not yet concluded, with consultation on proposed main modifications (MMs) still to take place. Therefore, the comments in this letter are without prejudice to my final conclusions on the Plan, which will be set out in my report to be published following consultation on the proposed MMs and taking account of any representations on them.
3. As indicated at the close of the hearing on the 9 September 2025, I am now writing to set out the next steps for the Examination of the Plan.



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4. Evidence on the potential hydrological impacts of mineral extraction at Purple Haze on the Ebblake Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (part of the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area and Ramsar site and the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation) (EX38) was considered at the additional hearing on the 9 September 2025. EX38 has informed a statement of common ground between the Local Authorities and Natural England (EX40) which was also considered at that hearing and updated following it (EX41).
5. I am now satisfied that the Plan is likely to be capable of being made sound and legally compliant through MMs relating to the Purple Haze Allocation which would ensure no adverse effect on the integrity of relevant nature conservation sites in line with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended). This is subject to the Local Authorities updating its appropriate assessment as detailed in its Habitats Regulation Assessment as discussed at the hearing on the 9 September 2025.
6. Furthermore, I am also satisfied that subject to those MMs and others proposed, particularly those which would identify “Preferred Areas” for soft sand extraction in the Plan area, the Plan would also be likely to be able to ensure a steady and adequate supply of minerals as required by national policy.
7. The Local Authorities proposed MMs relating to Purple Haze and Preferred Areas were discussed at the hearing on the 9 September 2025 as detailed in their hearing statement (M9.22). Based on those, and others discussed at the other hearings, I now invite the Local Authorities to prepare a schedule containing the proposed wording for all the MMs discussed as necessary for soundness and legal compliance reasons so far. That schedule should be submitted to me for my detailed consideration.
8. Once I have agreed the wording of the MMs with the Local Authorities, I will invite Local Authorities to publish the final schedule of proposed MMs for a period of public consultation. The nature and duration of the consultation should reflect that of the consultation held at Regulation 19 stage, where appropriate. This means it should last at least six weeks
9. The MMs will also need to be the subject of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), insofar as necessary. These documents will need to be published alongside the proposed MMs when they are consulted upon.
10. Any consequential Submission Policies Map Changes and any Additional Modifications being proposed by the Local Authorities should be set out in



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separate schedules and published alongside the MMs for completeness, although these are outside of the scope of my Examination.

11. Over the duration of the Examination, the Local Authorities at my request, have produced a number of pieces of evidence such as EX38. These are all available on the Examination Website. The MMs consultation should make it clear that interested parties can comment on any of those documents, insofar as they relate to the proposed MMs and the soundness of the Plan.
12. If, following the MMs consultation, I consider that a further hearing session is necessary to discuss matters raised in the representations, I will advise the Local Authorities accordingly. However, currently I do not anticipate any further hearing sessions will be required.
13. Please can the Local Authorities publish this note on the Examination Website, as soon as possible. This note is solely intended to keep interested parties up to date while the Local Authorities progress the necessary work at my request, I am not inviting any responses to it. Any unsolicited material will be returned.

L Fleming

INSPECTOR