

**FD.EVR12**

# **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan**

## **Policy 12: Radioactive and Nuclear Waste**

**March 2019**

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# 1. Introduction and National Policy Context

## Introduction

- 1.1. Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council are reviewing their joint adopted Minerals and Waste Development Plan and supporting documents. These comprise the following documents (with adoption date):
  - Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) (July 2011)
  - Site Allocations DPD (February 2012)
  - Block Fen and Langwood SPD (July 2011)
  - Location and Design of Waste Management Facilities SPD (July 2011)
  - RECAP Waste Management Design Guide SPD (February 2012)
- 1.2. The above Local Development Documents are to be replaced by a single Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) covering the period to 2036. The new Local Plan will set the overall spatial framework and development management policies for sustainable mineral and waste management development across the plan area.
- 1.3. This Evidence Report provides a narrative on the development of and justification for Policy 12: Radioactive and Nuclear Waste in the emerging new Local Plan.

## National policy

- 1.4. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provide the basis of national planning policy. Of specific relevance to Policy 12 are the following areas of the NPPG:

*“Waste planning authorities should plan for the sustainable management of waste including:... Low level radioactive...”* (Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 28-013-20141016)

*“Significant flows of some industrial wastes, and particularly hazardous industrial wastes and low level radioactive wastes, may arise at clearly defined locations, and have specific treatment and disposal needs.”* (Paragraph: 037 Reference ID: 28-037-20141016)
- 1.5. On 25 January 2018, the Government laid before Parliament the draft National Policy Statement (‘NPS’) for Geological Disposal Infrastructure (‘GDI’) which set out the Government’s proposed framework for future development consent orders for a GDI in England. A GDI is a facility made of specially-engineered vaults and tunnels located deep underground (between 200 and 1,000 metres below the surface) that are designed to host permanently the higher activity radioactive waste that cannot be stored at existing surface facilities.

## 2. Local Context in Relation to Policy 12: Radioactive and Nuclear Waste

- 2.1. The relatively soft, sedimentary nature of the geology of the plan area is not considered suitable to allow the construction of appropriate structures for the long term storage and

disposal of intermediate and higher activity radioactive wastes. However, controlled disposal of low level radioactive waste does take place at authorised landfill sites.

- 2.2. Where authorised disposal takes place, there are limitations on the type of container, the maximum activity per waste container, and the depth of burial below earth or ordinary waste.
- 2.3. Within the plan area, and locations nearby, the Councils understand that the low level disposal of radioactive waste takes place (or could take place) at the following locations:
  - Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire
  - Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridgeshire
  - Thriplow Pet Crematorium, Cambridgeshire

### 3. Minerals & Waste Local Plan Policy

- 3.1. The Preliminary Draft Plan was published on 16 May 2018 and consulted on over a six week period to 26 June 2018.
- 3.2. Within the Preliminary Draft was Policy 14: Radioactive and Nuclear Waste (now numbered Policy 12). The two councils consider it necessary to include a policy which reflects the proposed approach and suitability of the local area to accommodate such waste, and provides a policy framework for developers and decision makers.
- 3.3. During the Preliminary Draft Consultation, there were no representations made on this policy. Our evidence relating to quantity of arisings suggests that there is currently no evidence to warrant development of facilities for the management of hazardous and radioactive wastes within the plan area. No other new evidence has been brought to our attention.
- 3.4. Therefore, only minor factual updates and a reordering of the policy have been made for the Further Draft Local Plan.

### 4. Alternative Reasonable Options

- 4.1. The following alternative options have been considered (including in the Sustainability Appraisal Report):
  - Option 1: (proposed policy): This option, which retains the existing policy approach from the adopted plan but as one merged and slightly reworded policy, provides a brief but clear framework for dealing with such proposals. Such proposals are few and far between, and none may arise during the life of the Plan. Nevertheless, this preferred option provides a clear policy stance in relation to radioactive and nuclear waste.
  - Option 2: No policy - rely on national policy. Whilst there is some merit to this option, in the interests of both preparing a slim Local Plan and having regard to the fact that the policy is not actually allocating anything, it has been rejected because having a policy sets out a clear (and quick) position for developers and the community as to how such waste will be considered in the plan area.
- 4.2. An option of a complete 'blanket ban' on all forms of radioactive waste is not a reasonable option to consider, because there is at least some theoretical prospect that a facility for low

level radioactive waste might come forward in the plan period and it would not be reasonable to suggest, in the plan, that such waste disposal facilities would be automatically refused. As such, this is not listed as an alternative reasonable option..

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1. This evidence report demonstrates the rationale for the inclusion of this policy in the Further Draft Plan, and also demonstrates a summary of the issues raised at the earlier Preliminary Draft stage, and how the Councils have considered those issues raised.
- 5.2. Any representations received at the Further Draft consultation stage will be carefully considered, and this Evidence Report will be updated prior to the third and final consultation stage due in late 2019.