

Note on the responsibilities of GMGU during Plan preparation and examination
Response to Inspector's pre hearing meeting agenda

Greater Manchester Geological Unit (GMGU) was established in 1986 as a joint arrangement between the ten Greater Manchester district authorities to offer advice on all earth science and minerals and waste planning issues. GMGU provides a range of technical services to AGMA, other local authorities and public bodies.

GMGU was managed on behalf of the ten AGMA authorities by Salford City Council. In September 2006, GMGU transferred into Urban Vision, a joint venture company previously established with Capita Symonds to provide Salford's planning and other environmentally related services.

The GMGU is an AGMA planning unit set up to provide minerals and waste planning support to the ten GM authorities. This includes providing support on 'county wide' strategic issues as well as development control support to individual districts. The Unit receives Core and SLA 'AGMA' funding to cover the cost of these services.

The services to districts include providing specialist support and advice on minerals and waste policies and specialist development control support in respect of minerals and waste planning applications.

The unit is also responsible for preparing the Joint Waste Development Plan Document and the Joint Minerals Development Plan Document on behalf of the 10 Authorities.

GMGU undertake the role of project management in production of the Joint Plans. They are required to undertake all aspects of plan production and consultation and act on behalf of the ten authorities.

The production of the plan is overseen by an AGMA Joint Waste Plan Committee supported by a Steering Group of officers with representative of each of the ten districts. The Joint Committee is represented by lead Members for planning and an officer from each of the ten authorities. The Joint Committee has power to approve the plan up to Publication and has been delegated to approve any minor changes following examination by each of the 10 Greater Manchester Full Councils.

As GMGU have responsibility for producing the plan, they will be acting on behalf of AGMA at the PHM and EiP. Should any changes be required to the plan during or after the hearing, GMGU have established a protocol to deal with this. See appendix 1.

Appendix 1

Waste Plan DPD

Changes to the Waste Plan During and After the Hearing

Introduction

A Plan should not be submitted for examination unless the submitting authorities consider it 'sound'. So, strictly speaking, there is no expectation of changes to the Plan. In reality there usually are a few changes, however minor.

The purpose of this report is to set out a procedure for responding to these changes during and after the Hearing. The Hearing will take place during June 2011. At the moment Inspector's reports are binding. Local Authorities have no scope for changing recommendations. Accordingly, a procedure is necessary to influence the Inspector's recommendations.

Pre Hearing Indications

The sort of changes proposed by the Inspector are unlikely to be a complete surprise. The Pre Hearing Meeting (PHM) may give some indications. The Agenda and list of questions to be explored at the Hearing, issued after the PHM, will give some insight into the topics to be considered. The representations made at Publication will also provide an indication of what could be covered or may directly seek changes to the Plan. In response to these representations it is proposed to produce statements of common ground with key representors. These will attempt to identify precisely what is in dispute and what is not as well as providing the opportunity to negotiate changes with objectors which may result in withdrawal of their objections.

- It is proposed to discuss these statements of common ground, the Hearing list of questions and potential responses to them with Steering Group Officers and Joint Waste Planning Committee Members prior to the Hearing.

During the Hearing

Inspectors appear to have different methods of working with regards to changes to the Plan under examination. It is possible that during the Hearing on the Waste Plan the Inspector will suggest that the Waste Planning Team try to reach an acceptable way forward with a particular representor. Any such agreement will need to be submitted to the Inspector during the examination or shortly after the Hearing closes. Alternatively, the need for minor changes will emerge in the course of a discussion and the Programme Officer will keep a rolling list of these

changes. The Inspector may require these changes to be placed on an examination website to allow parties to consider them.

- It is proposed to circulate these proposed agreements / changes to Steering Group Officers and Joint Waste Planning Committee Members for comment and agreement on the extent of any changes. Any resulting discussions will need to be approved by Joint Waste Planning Committee Members before submission to the Inspector.

Further Major Changes to the Waste Plan After the Hearing

Changes can occur after the hearing sessions but this is on a case by case basis and does not apply to all plans. If, following the hearing sessions, the Inspector establishes that *major* changes are required to ensure soundness then the Inspector will contact GMGU via the Programme Officer. GMGU will coordinate consultation with GM Districts. If the Districts agree to the changes then they will then need to make sure the changes are consulted upon together with a Sustainability Appraisal, or a review of the SA, (it is for the planning authorities to decide). The Districts do not have to agree to the changes but if they do not it could mean a finding of unsoundness.

The consultation is usually a focussed one (i.e. to the parties who made representations at publication and have taken part in the examination process) undertaken by the Programme Officer. There is no set time for how long the consultation lasts, but it is usually around 4 weeks. Depending upon what representations are received on this consultation the Inspector may decide that a further hearing session is required. *Minor* changes i.e. typos etc are not subject to this process.

- It is proposed that GMGU consult Steering Group Officers and Joint Waste Planning Committee Members if the Inspector proposes major changes and discuss any response / actions arising.