

North East England Aggregates Working Party Note of Meeting

Meeting Date:	Thursday 7 December 2023	Meeting Venue:	Meeting held via video call
Meeting Chair:	Claire Teasdale	Note Taker:	Jack Freeman

Attendees:

North East AWP Chair:
Claire Teasdale (CT)

North East AWP Secretary:
Kevin Tipple (KT) (also representing Northumberland County Council)

Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC):
Niamh Murphy

Mineral Planning Authority representatives:
Chris Carr – Gateshead Council
Adam Howarth – North Tyneside Council
Jack Freeman – Northumberland County Council
Jason McKewon – Durham County Council
David Nelson – Darlington Borough Council
Jamie Simpson – Sunderland City Council
Helen Smith – Hartlepool Borough Council
Luke Waterson – Newcastle City Council
Sidonie Kenward – Marine Management Organisation

Aggregates industry representatives:
Mike Hodges – Heidelberg Materials
Nick Horsley – Mineral Products Association
John Carlon – British Aggregates Association
Richard Barradell – Tarmac

Apologies:

Susannah Buylla (Northumberland National Park Authority), Rachel Cooper (South Tyneside Council), Christina Davey (DLUHC), Nick Everington (The Crown Estate), Fiona Hurworth (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council), Rebecca Ravelin (Gateshead Council).

Agenda:

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies
2. Notes and actions from the meeting held on 24 June 2023
3. DHLUC and Aggregates Working Party update
4. Annual Report 2022
5. Local Aggregate Assessments
6. Industry updates
7. Mineral Planning Authority updates
8. Any other business
9. Date of next meeting

Item	Details	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <p>CT welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made and apologies noted.</p>	
2.	<p>Notes and actions from meeting held on 24 June 2022</p> <p>The notes of the last North East England AWP meeting held on 24 June 2022 were circulated with the meeting agenda. The notes and actions were reviewed.</p> <p>CT stated that all the actions within had been addressed or were relevant to matters on the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p>The notes of the meeting were agreed.</p>	
3.	<p>DLUHC and Aggregates Working Party update</p> <p>Niamh Murphy provided an update on behalf of DLUHC.</p> <p><u>2023 Aggregate Minerals Survey (AM2023)</u> The contract for the 2023 Aggregate Minerals Survey has been awarded to British Geological Survey (BGS) who have been the contractor for past surveys.</p> <p>An inception meeting with DLUHC and BGS was held on 16 November 2023. BGS are now working on the method report for the survey, and it is intended to share and discuss this with the project steering group. A meeting of the steering group is planned for January 2024.</p> <p>Survey forms for the site operators and the mineral planning authorities are to be issued 1 March 2024 with returns to be provided by 1 May 2024.</p> <p>Each mineral planning authority needs to provide contact details for the survey to DLUHC and confirm their agreement for these details to be shared with the contractor. Any of the MPAs that are yet to be this should email KT as soon as possible.</p> <p><u>Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill</u> The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill has now gained Royal Assent and thus has become the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act. The updated NPPF is due to be published in the next few weeks before the end of 2023.</p> <p><u>Planning Fees</u> Nick Horsley referred to the increase in planning application fees from 6 December 2023 and expressed that the industry is very disappointed that provision has not been made for the fees to be ringfenced to the planning service. This was something that had been argued for in many of the consultation responses. Without ringfencing the fees to the planning service, it is likely that the increase in fees will not result in an improvement in the service provided. Niamh Murphy stated that the concerns were recognised and would be shared.</p>	<p>Action 1: MPAs to provide contact details for the survey to KT to pass on to DLUHC and BGS</p>

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	<p>In relation to the planning fees, CT added that there was also an increase in fees that MPAs charge for mineral and landfill site monitoring visits. This increase is likely to have a bigger impact on smaller operators.</p> <p><u>Biodiversity Net Gain</u> KT referred to the recent publication of the guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain. Niamh Murphy stated that the plan is for the draft guidance to be finalised before implementation in January 2024.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Annual Report 2022</p> <p>KT had circulated the report prior to the meeting for comment and a further revised draft, which incorporates some corrections and information from the County Durham LAA.</p> <p>KT advised that the main headlines from the report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales of primary aggregates in 2022 decreased compared to sales recorded in 2021. However, these remain at broadly similar levels to those sales in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. • Reserves decreased at the end of 2022 compared to those in the previous year. These reserves are at the lowest reported levels in the last 10 years. This is due to the levels of new reserves granted planning permission being lower than sales and the downward re-assessment of reserves at some sites. • In terms of planning applications, an extension to Divethill Quarry in Northumberland was granted in 2022. No other relevant permissions granted in 2022 but there are some significant schemes shown as pending in the report. Some of these pending applications have been granted in 2023 and this will be picked up in next year's annual report. <p>Jason McKewon thanked KT for circulating the report and stated that he will cross-check with the Durham LAA, which may lead to discussion about data.</p> <p>It was agreed that comments would need to be provided by Tuesday 12 December. KT advised that the annual report needs to be finalised and submitted to DLUHC by the end of December 2023.</p> <p>Subject to the minor amendments being incorporated into a final draft it was agreed that the annual report could be finalised and submitted to DLUHC.</p>	<p>Action 2: Comments on the Annual Report 2022 to KT by Tuesday 12 December 2023.</p> <p>Action 3: KT to finalise annual report and send to DLUHC by the end of December 2023</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Local Aggregates Assessments</p> <p>CT invited representatives from each of the Mineral Planning Authorities to provide a short presentation on the Local Aggregates Assessments that have been submitted to the AWP.</p> <p><u>Northumberland LAA</u></p> <p>KT advised that the Northumberland LAA has been jointly prepared by Northumberland County Council and Northumberland National Park Authority.</p>	

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	<p>The LAA shows there has been an upwards trend in crushed rock sales and downward trend in land-won sand and gravel. The downward trend in sand and gravel sales does not reflect wider trends and the declining sales is due to sites being worked out and not immediately being replaced with new capacity.</p> <p>Annual provision rates are based on the three-year sales average for crushed rock (reflecting the upward trend in sales) and the ten-year sales average for sand and gravel (reflecting the ten-year average for this material is currently higher than the three-year average). Housebuilding and major infrastructure/construction projects were examined to understand if there are projects that could have a significant influence on demand. The sales averages reflect levels of activity likely to be seen in coming years.</p> <p>The LAA identifies a shortfall of sand and gravel supply in medium- to long-term was identified (and within the plan period for the Northumberland Local Plan). However, the analysis in the LAA considers that the site allocations in the Local Plan and the planning applications that are currently pending should help to address this.</p> <p>Northumberland has a large landbank of 41 years for crushed rock but the analysis in the LAA shows there a need to consider productive capacity issues to help maintain supply due to the likelihood that reserves will be worked out at some sites in the coming years and some sites having planning permission end dates in the coming years too. The analysis in the LAA considers that the site allocation in the Local Plan and the planning applications that are currently pending should help to address this.</p> <p>It was agreed that the AWP were generally satisfied with the LAA provided. Some comments have been provided on some of the detail within the document and these would be provided alongside the formal response of the AWP.</p> <p><u>County Durham LAA</u></p> <p>Jason McKewon provided the meeting with an overview of the County Durham LAA. The submitted LAA follows the same structure as last year.</p> <p>Chapter 4 looks at supply and demand pressures including infrastructure projects and housebuilding for impact on demand. Sales of sand and gravel were 554,000 tonnes which is historically high and means sales from County Durham accounted for over 50% of North East land-won sand and gravel sales in 2022. This compares with around 30% in 2013. The three-year sales average is therefore much higher than the ten-year sales average. The three-year average (excluding 2020) was chosen as the basis of the annual provision rate as it was thought to be more representative than the ten-year average. Reserves have fallen, and currently stand at just over 4 million tonnes, leaving a landbank of 7.4 years. This creates a shortfall to 2035 of just over 3 million tonnes and a shortfall of 7.5 million tonnes to maintain a 7-year landbank at the end of the plan-period in 2035. The LAA advises that this shortfall is to be addressed through site allocations in the Local Plan.</p> <p>Sales of crushed rock were just over 3,000,000 tonnes in 2022, which equates to 58% of sales from North East England. The annual provision rate is based on the three-year sales average as this better reflects where the market</p>	

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	<p>currently is. The landbank is currently 37.7 years landbank exists. Crushed rock reserves have fallen by over 53 million tonnes in last ten years. Just over half of this was due to sales, with the rest due to operators revising their reported reserves.</p> <p>CT asked whether there were substantial decreases when operators revised down their reserves. KT stated the example of Force Garth Quarry which was discussed at previous AWP meeting where there had been a substantial reduction in reserves. Nick Horsley stated there were various reasons why reserves tend to go down when re-calculated. Geological site investigations become more detailed following the grant of planning permission as operationally, boreholes are generally drilled on a tighter grid pattern, refining the initial borehole investigations Archaeology and Tree Preservation Orders can have an impact on reserves post the granting of planning permission. The introduction of water abstraction licencing – in Wales initial estimates suggest as much as a third of reserves may be lost from landbanks due to time limited and constrained water abstraction licences. Jason McKewon brought up the example of Coxhoe Quarry where pylons go across the site.</p> <p>KT added that changes to the reserves reported by operators had been raised in meetings between DLUHC and the AWP secretaries. It was agreed that in principle the figures provided by operators should be accepted. Nick Horsley agreed with this and stated that there was a legal responsibility from a financial perspective for reserves to be recorded accurately by operators.</p> <p>It was agreed that the AWP were generally satisfied with the LAA provided. Some comments have been provided on some of the detail within the document and these would be provided to Durham County Council in the feedback. It was also suggested there was a need to ensure that the terminology being used is consistent.</p> <p><u>Tyne and Wear LAA</u></p> <p>Jack Freeman provided a summary of the Tyne and Wear LAA which had been prepared by Northumberland County Council on behalf of the five Tyne and Wear authorities.</p> <p>For land won sand and gravel, an annual provision rate of 228,000 tonnes and there is a landbank of 21.6 years for this material at 31 December 2022. Supply comes from a single site and sales have been steady indicating that this site is likely to be operating at productive capacity. For this reason, Local Plans and decisions on applications should in principle support additional areas for extraction where environmentally acceptable.</p> <p>Landings of marine sand and gravel have been rising steadily over the last four years and exceed sales of land-won sand and gravel from Tyne and Wear over this period. Based on the findings of AM2019, the sub-region is fairly self-sufficient in sand and gravel if the supply of marine dredged sand and gravel is considered with import levels broadly similar to exports.</p> <p>For crushed rock, an annual provision rate of 418,000 tonnes was proposed. There is a landbank of 11.3 years, which is slightly above the minimum requirement in the NPPF. Reserves are contained in two sites and sales have been steady over a period of time suggesting they are operating at capacity. Reserves at Marsden Quarry are likely to be exhausted when current</p>	

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	<p>permission for extraction expires in 2027, with Eppleton Quarry unlikely to have additional production capacity to make up for any loss of production capacity at Marsden Quarry. Without additional provision, Tyne and Wear will not be able to meet this LAA provision rate in the medium-term.</p> <p>Sales of crushed rock imported by sea have been relatively steady but make a small contribution to overall supply. The findings from AM2019 show that over half of consumption of crushed rock in Tyne and Wear were imports to the sub-region.</p> <p>Jason McKewon commented that the LAA supported additional areas for extraction, and there was a need to allow flexibility for future sites to be brought forward. There was also a need for industry to engage and respond to calls for sites.</p> <p>Chris Carr agreed that there was a need for industry to come forward with sites where they might be interested. A fresh call for sites would be issued and the MPAs can only respond positively if proposals come forward for consideration.</p> <p>KT stressed the importance of windfall policies in Local Plans if there are issues with sites going forward, and that this could be included in LAA conclusions. It was agreed that the AWP were generally satisfied with the LAA provided. Some comments have been provided on some of the detail within the document and these would be provided alongside the formal response of the AWP.</p> <p><u>Tees Valley LAA</u></p> <p>Helen Smith advised that the 2021 Tees Valley LAA was recently finished. It was also advised that work is planned to update this with 2022 data. It is anticipated that a draft would be circulated to the AWP in January 2024. Staffing issues and other work priorities have delayed progress.</p> <p>KT agreed to coordinate the comments from AWP members on these LAAs to inform the AWP response. The AWP responses will be circulated to members before they are finalised and issued to the relevant MPAs. It is intended that these will be issued to the MPAs no later than 22 December 2023.</p>	<p>Action 4: KT to co-ordinate AWP response to LAAs and send to MPAs.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Industry update</p> <p>CT invited roundtable updates from the industry representatives in attendance.</p> <p>Mike Hodges, Heidelberg Materials: Mike Hodges advised that Hanson has now changed its name to Heidelberg Materials in the UK.</p> <p>In relation to Biodiversity Net Gain, there are concerns that some planning authorities are requiring more than the required 10% net gain in draft Local Plan Policies.</p> <p>Richard Barradel, Tarmac: Richard Barradel advised that Neil Beards has now retired and has left Tarmac. Richard confirmed that he is now covering the North East region.</p>	

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	<p>Richard also asked about experiences in how climate change policies interact with mineral plans and allocations.</p> <p>Jason McKewon stated that there had been a very strong push for making climate change issues prominent when preparing County Durham’s Policies and Allocations Document. It was hoped that the document strikes the right balance between mitigation and adaptation. JM felt that net zero should be at the economy level and should not be looked at the project level. When viewed in isolation it was unlikely that all planning applications would be net zero.</p> <p>KT agreed that there was a need to look at the bigger picture of why construction materials were needed and how these materials have a role in the delivery of projects to support net-zero. Looking at minerals extraction projects in isolation was likely to lead to a conclusion that there would be a negative impact on climate change.</p> <p>Nick Horsley referred to a recent planning application in Gloucestershire where failure to deliver net zero was cited as a reason for refusal. He added that there is work being done by companies to reduce carbon emissions and there is an industry roadmap for this.</p> <p>Jason McKewon referred to a request for mineral sites to explore rail transportation however normally aggregate markets are more localised and there were capacity issues on rail lines in the North East which limits the feasibility of this. Mike Hodges added that he had experienced issues with delivering a railway siding to supply aggregate into Leeds due to objections.</p> <p>Kris Furness, Breedon: Kris Furness advised that Breedon had recently been involved in the examination hearing sessions for the Durham Minerals and Allocations DPD.</p> <p>Nick Horsley, Mineral Products Association:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2042 planning permissions – The Mineral Products Association have recently received counsel advice on this matter. This advice is currently being reviewed but in summary it suggests that if 2042 was intended to be an absolute cut-off date for these planning permissions the legislation at the time would have said so. It also advises that the mechanism to extend planning permissions beyond 2042 could be through an application to amend conditions under Section 73 or could be done through the ROMP process. The Mineral Products Association is discussing this with DLUHC. • Mineral planning factsheets – The Mineral Products Association has commissioned BGS to produce two new factsheets. The first will look at High Specification Aggregates (High PSV stone) and work is underway to update information on these materials. Previous research is now over 20 years old. The second factsheet will be an update of the Industrial (Silica) Sand factsheet. • Environment Agency delays – The industry is still experiencing issues with the time it is taking to deal with licencing applications. There are also reports from MPA members that the discretionary advice service is not available due to a lack of staff resource. • Restoration Awards – An event was held in London on 28 November 2023 for the quarries and nature photo competition. This event was also used as an opportunity to launch the restoration and biodiversity 	

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	<p>awards for 2024. The awards are an important way to showcase the best examples of biodiversity enhancement at minerals sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPI North West Minerals event – An event was successfully held in Crewe on 19 October 2023. There were 46 attendees and the event included a visit to an industrial sand quarry. Such an event may be appropriate in the North East in the future. <p>John Carlon, British Aggregates Association No additional matters to raise.</p>	
7.	<p>Mineral Planning Authority updates</p> <p><u>Hartlepool and the Joint Tees Valley Minerals and Waste DPDs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hartlepool – The Local Plan was adopted in 2018. The plan is still considered to be up-to-date and it is unlikely that a new plan will be prepared until the reforms require this. • Tees Valley Minerals and Waste DPDs – These DPDs were adopted in 2011. There are currently no plans to commence work on a review. <p><u>Darlington Borough Council</u> David Nelson advised that the Darlington Local Plan was adopted in 2022, but the nutrient neutrality issue has stalled progress with the delivery of the planned development.</p> <p><u>Sunderland City Council</u> Jamie Simpson advised that work is to commence next year to review the Core Strategy and Development Plan.</p> <p><u>Newcastle City Council</u> Luke Waterston advised that Newcastle City Council is at an early stage of evidence gathering for the Local Plan. This work has not reached a formal stage.</p> <p><u>North Tyneside Council</u> The North Tyneside Local Plan was adopted in 2017. A five-year review was undertaken in 2022 and it was concluded that the Local Plan remains sound and it is not proposed to undertake further work to update the plan.</p> <p><u>Gateshead Council</u> Chris Carr advised that Gateshead Council is currently undertaking some early consultation for a new Local Plan. The consultation can be accessed from the Council’s website and is open until Friday 5 January 2024. The consultation is high level and includes a question on mineral safeguarding.</p> <p><u>South Tyneside Council</u> Rachel Cooper was unable to attend the meeting but provided a written update which was shared at the meeting. South Tyneside Council is currently working towards a consultation on a Final Publication Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) in January/February 2024. It is then intended to submit the Local Plan later in 2024.</p> <p><u>Durham County Council</u></p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan – The County Durham Plan was adopted in 2020. There are no timescales for review but preparatory work on evidence base is planned in 2024. • Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations document – This document was submitted for examination in July 2023 and the examination hearing sessions were held in September 2023. The next step will be a main modifications consultation and then it is anticipated the document can be adopted in 2024. • Planning applications/decisions – In May 2023 a revised application was received for a proposed eastward extension to Hulands Quarry for the extraction of 9.79 million tonnes of Carboniferous limestone. This is still being considered. <p><u>Northumberland County Council</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan – Northumberland Local Plan was adopted in March 2022. • Decisions on planning applications – A new sand and gravel site was granted permission in April 2023 involving the proposed extraction of 5.8 million tonnes. This will make a big impact on the level of permitted reserves in Northumberland reported in the 2023 survey. • Applications pending – Two planning applications for crushed rock sites are currently pending determination: Shiel Dykes (5 million tonnes); and Northside (3 million tonnes). <p><u>Northumberland National Park Authority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan – The Northumberland National Park Local Plan was adopted in July 2020. • Decisions on planning applications – Planning permission was granted in January 2023 for a lateral extension to Harden Quarry consisting of an additional 2.5 million tonnes of rock. The planning permission allows extraction to continue at the site until 2054. The site produces a red-coloured stone. <p><u>Marine Management Organisation</u></p> <p>Monitoring of marine plans has been taking place for the majority of this year ahead of the next statutory reports due in 2024 for the marine plans in the North East, South East, South, South West and North West. MMO have completed the monitoring and evaluation phase, this included monitoring the marine aggregate policies, and the next stage has commenced to write up the findings.</p> <p>The main piece of policy work will be within the East and MMO is preparing to launch the process to replace the East Marine Plan. The first stage will be the opening of the statutory consultation on the Draft Statement of Public Participation (SPP) (equivalent to a LPA’s Statement of Community Involvement), and an invitation to submit matters to be included in the marine plan. There will also be Call for Evidence engagement as the process progresses.</p>	
8.	Any Other Business	

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	A minerals training event, similar to the one recently held in North West England was discussed. Nick Horsley agreed to contact the North East Region RTPI to discuss holding a similar event in North East England.	
9.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be arranged for May or June 2023. The date and time will be confirmed in due course and may need to change to fit with any key actions around the Aggregate Minerals Survey.</p> <p>CT thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting.</p>	Action: KT to arrange next AWP meeting.

List of actions from the meeting on 7 December 2023:

Action number	Action	Owner
1.	MPAs to provide contact details for the survey to KT to pass on to DLUHC and BGS	MPA reps and KT
2.	Comments on the Annual Report 2022 to KT by Tuesday 12 December 2023.	All AWP members and KT
3.	Finalise annual report 2022 and send to DLUHC by the end of December 2023	KT
4.	Co-ordinate AWP response to LAAs and send to MPAs.	KT
5.	Arrange next AWP meeting.	KT