



Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation

Minerals Background Paper

June 2007

Further Information

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BLACK COUNTRY CORE STRATEGY

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1. The Importance of Minerals

1.1 Mineral resources are vital to the regional and local economy and are a major source of export revenue nationally. In 2002, it was estimated that mining and quarrying contributed more than £25.5 million to UK Gross Value Added (GVA). It is also estimated that in 2002, mining, quarrying and associated industries (including construction) contributed around 16% of all UK GVA.¹

1.2 Minerals are also essential requirements for new development. For example, builders need **brick clay** for making bricks and tiles, and builders and engineers need **aggregates** (sands and gravels and crushed rock) for hardcore, building roads and landscaping. Aspirations towards future housing and economic growth within the Black Country will depend on maintaining local supplies of building materials as well as importing materials that cannot be sourced locally.

1.3 There are three types of minerals:

- **Primary** – minerals produced from quarrying or marine dredging
- **Secondary** – minerals produced as by-products of quarrying other materials or from other industrial processes
- **Recycled** – minerals produced from construction, demolition or excavation wastes

1.4 The Black Country is rich in mineral resources. The main minerals present in the Black Country are: ironstone, fireclay, coal, limestone, sands and gravels, hard rock and brick clay. The brick clay that occurs in parts of Dudley and Walsall is Etruria marl, which is a rare mineral nationally. At the present time only sand and brick clay are actively exploited. Until very

¹ The Economic Importance of Minerals to the UK (2004), British Geological Survey/ ODPM, available on UK Minerals website: http://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/free_downloads/home.html

recently, hard rock was also quarried, but the quarry producing this has recently closed. The Black Country also produces significant quantities of construction, demolition and excavation waste through redevelopment schemes, which has the potential to be recycled.

1.5 Minerals are a finite resource. There is also limited flexibility over the locations where working can take place, since minerals can only be worked where they naturally occur. Much of the Black Country's mineral resources are already sterilised by development, and realistically, large-scale exploitation of minerals is unlikely to take place within the built-up areas of the Black Country. However, in some circumstances, it may be possible to extract minerals in advance of redevelopment schemes.

1.6 Quarrying is currently concentrated in particular areas within the Black Country where significant mineral resources are known to exist, such as Stubbers Green, Aldridge and Stonnall in Walsall and Kingswinford in Dudley. Most of the Black Country's existing quarries are subject to permissions that require them to be restored by landfill once quarrying ceases. This means that in the longer-term, the Black Country will be able to provide additional landfill capacity for the deposit of waste residues that cannot be re-used, recycled or recovered for other uses.

2. Key Policy Issues for Minerals

2.1 National policy guidance on minerals is set out in **Minerals Policy Statement 1 (MPS1)** and the associated **Planning and Minerals: Practice Guide** (November 2006). The key policy requirements for development plan policies are:

- To provide clear guide to mineral operators and the public about the locations where mineral extraction may take place within the Black Country, and
- To ensure that the Black Country will be able to contribute appropriately towards national, regional and local mineral requirements for the supply of minerals, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

2.2 This means that as well as considering the demand for materials, the Core Strategy must consider the other social, economic and environmental effects of quarrying such as impacts on the local landscape, water resources, and biodiversity and geodiversity, and impacts of the transportation of mineral products on the highway network, local communities and air quality. It also means that the extraction of primary minerals will be expected to be kept to a minimum by promoting resource efficiency and making as much use of secondary and recycled materials as possible.

2.3 The Core Strategy will be expected to make provision for the future supply of aggregates and brick clay (and possibly other minerals) up to 2026, in line with the current requirements set out in MPS1, as well as the regional and sub-regional requirements set out in the **National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England 2001 – 2016** and the **Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (RSS)**². The national and regional guidelines set out the aggregates supply requirements for each

² Currently Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11) (June 2004), Government Office for the West Midlands, available on the WMRA website: <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=49>

region, which should be apportioned to individual mineral planning authorities or sub-regions through the RSS.

2.4 Within the West Midlands RSS there is a requirement for the West Midlands Metropolitan area³ to provide 0.506 million tonnes of sand and gravel per annum between 2001 and 2016. The Black Country currently contributes towards this, and will be expected to continue to do so in the future, until such time as the requirement changes. Recent reviews of the National Guidelines propose no changes to the regional aggregates apportionments and recommend that for the time being, mineral planning authorities preparing long-term plans should roll-forward the existing requirements beyond 2016.⁴ At present, the RSS does not require the Black Country to make provision for any other minerals. However, MPS1 advises that as well as maintaining 7 year landbanks (i.e. 7 year's supply of permitted reserves) of sand and gravel, authorities should maintain a minimum of 25 years' supply of brick clay to brickworks.

2.5 The Core Strategy will also be expected to include policies aimed at safeguarding the Black Country's proven mineral resources against needless sterilisation by non-mineral development, in line with the advice in MPS1 and draft Guide to Mineral Safeguarding in England published by the British Geological Survey in April 2007. The latter recommends a step-by-step approach, involving firstly, assessing which is the best information available, secondly, deciding which minerals are likely to become of economic importance in the foreseeable future, thirdly, deciding which resources should be safeguarded, and finally, deciding how to implement this through planning policy.

2.6 The Core Strategy policy towards minerals will also have to take into account the aspirations of the RSS Phase 1 and Phase 2 Revisions in terms of housing and economic growth, tackling climate change and transforming

³ The West Midlands Metropolitan area is the whole of the former West Midlands County area, i.e. the metropolitan authorities of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton. However, the only authorities that currently contribute towards the sub-regional sand and gravel apportionment are Solihull and Walsall.

⁴ National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England 2001 – 2016: Third Monitoring Report (September 2006), DCLG, available on DCLG website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1503133>

the Black Country environment. In addition, it will be expected to embrace the key themes of local community plans and strategies (e.g. environmental improvement, reinforcing local pride, promoting economic growth and prosperity), the emerging Black Country Geodiversity Action Plan, and provision for minerals by neighbouring mineral planning authorities in their emerging Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks/ Local Development Frameworks.

2.7 The RSS minerals policies are now under review as part of the RSS Phase 3 Revisions. At present too early to say what impact this is likely to have on the Black Country's future mineral supply requirements. It will be necessary to review the emerging Core Strategy policy towards minerals when the RSS review is at a more advanced stage and we have a clearer idea of what the requirements may be, but in any event, the Core Strategy will be expected to provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate future requirements even if these should change.

3. Baseline Evidence for Minerals

3.1 In this section we have set out the latest available information on minerals in the Black Country. This is a “snapshot” of the position at April 2007. It will be apparent that there are gaps and that caveats are attached to some of the information. The authorities may undertake or commission further work to address deficiencies in the evidence base, where necessary and where this is realistic/ practicable within the timescale available. The Minerals Background Paper will be reviewed and updated at later stages in the development of the Core Strategy, to reflect any new information that becomes available.

Mineral Resources

3.2 When planning for minerals, authorities are expected to use the best available information on mineral resources within their area and to consider the social, environmental and economic benefits and constraints of working them (MPS1, paragraph 12). The best and most up-to-date information available on the extent of mineral resources in the Black Country is the geological maps, memoirs and **Mineral Resource Information for Development Plans – West Midlands: Resources and Constraints**, published by the British Geological Survey (BGS). The mineral resource document is in the form of a written report and a mineral resource map.

3.3 These documents indicate that the following mineral resources are present in the Black Country:

- **Sand and Gravel** – River deposits and glacial deposits in various locations throughout the Black Country, also significant solid deposits of Sherwood Sandstone (Triassic) outcrops on the western fringe of Dudley (Wall Heath, Wordsley and Wollaston), in Sandwell (Warley, Londonderry and West Smethwick), on the eastern side of Walsall (Stonnall, Aldridge, Streetly and Great Barr) and in Wolverhampton (Bushbury, Blakenhall and Penn)

- **Limestone** – Isolated outcrops of Much Wenlock (Silurian) Limestone in Dudley (Castle Hill, Wren’s Nest and parts of Gornal) and Walsall (parts of Walsall Town Centre and Cuckoo’s Nook, Aldridge)
- **Dolerite** – Isolated outcrops of Rowley Rag in Dudley (Tansley Hill, south of Town Centre, Milking Bank and Cooper’s Bank) and Walsall (Pouk Hill), with more extensive outcrops in Sandwell (Rowley Regis) and Wolverhampton (Wednesfield)
- **Coal Measures** – Extensive deposits of shallow coal in Dudley (Coseley, parts of Dudley Town Centre, Brierley Hill and Lye), Sandwell (Wednesbury, Tipton and West Bromwich), western side of Walsall (Brownhills, Bloxwich, Willenhall and Darlaston) and eastern side of Wolverhampton (Wednesfield and Bilston)
- **Clay** – Extensive deposits of Etruria Formation Clay in Dudley (Gornalwood, Kingswinford, Pensnett, Brierley Hill, Bumble Hole, Darby End, Mousesweet, Quarry Bank, Cradley and part of Halesowen), the western side of Sandwell (Tipton, West Bromwich, Oldbury, Old Hill, Cradley Heath and Blackheath) and Walsall (Stubbers Green and Aldridge).

3.4 Minerals are known to have been extracted in the Black Country since the 16th century and possibly even before that. Exploitation of coal, ironstone, fireclay and limestone fuelled the rapid expansion of industry during the 18th and 19th centuries in Black Country and Birmingham. It is unlikely that the BGS mineral resource map shows the full extent of mineral working in the past, as early workings are unlikely to have been documented, as previously unknown and unrecorded voids are still occasionally discovered. We are still living with the legacy of previous mineral working, which has not only shaped the overall pattern of development in the Black Country, such as the canal and rail network, but has also led to localised problems of unstable and contaminated land.

3.5 The Black Country's dolerite and limestone resources are almost certainly now exhausted. Limestone has not been worked for many years, and the last dolerite quarry (Edwin Richards) closed early in 2007. Although extensive areas of sand and gravel, shallow coal deposits (underlain by fireclay) and Etruria Formation brick clay remain within the Black Country, most of these are now sterilised by development. This is likely to be a major constraint to future working, other than where it is feasible to extract the minerals in advance of redevelopment schemes.

3.6 Although there is still potential to extract deposits of coal/ fireclay and sands and gravels within areas of Green Belt on the fringes of the Black Country, these may be subject to other significant constraints, such as:

- **Groundwater Source Protection Zones**, which underlie much of the Black Country's sand and gravel resources in Walsall and Wolverhampton; and
- **Natura 2000 Sites (European Sites)**, of which there are two in the Black Country (Cannock Extension Canal SAC in Brownhills, Walsall, and Fens Pools SAC in Dudley), both of which lie within areas of mineral resources.

3.7 The Environment Agency will object to landfill proposals in Groundwater Source Protection Zone I, and will require a risk assessment for sites in Zones II or III.⁵ This has significant implications for the restoration of former quarries within such areas, since at best the Agency is only likely to permit filling with inert materials. This will inevitably limit the options for restoring sites to safe and acceptable standards within a reasonable timescale. Impacts on European Sites also cannot be ruled out, even on sites that are some distance away. Any development that may affect a Special Area

⁵ See Landfill Directive Regulatory Guidance Note 3 (RGN3) – Groundwater Protection: Locational Aspects of Landfills in Planning Consultation Responses & Permitting Decisions (December 2002), Environment Agency, published on Environment Agency website:
<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/1745440/444663/landfill/1764524/1693182/475339/?version=1&lang=e>

of Conservation (SAC) or Special Area of Protection (SPA) must be subject to an “appropriate assessment” in accordance with the Habitats Directive,⁶ to determine whether or not the proposal will affect the integrity or conservation objectives of the site.

Existing Quarries and Mineral Safeguarding Areas

3.9 The BGS mineral resource map shows the location of active and inactive mineral workings in 1999. However, several of the workings shown as “active” in 1999 have since closed down. There are currently eight active quarries in the Black Country. Two of these produce aggregates (sand), and the others produce brick clay (Etruria Marl).

3.10 The Black Country’s active quarries/ clay pits are listed below.

Aggregates (Sand):

- Aldridge Quarry, Birch Lane, Stonnall, Walsall (Cemex)
- Branton Hill Quarry, Aldridge, Walsall (Bliss Sand & Gravel)

Brick Clay (Etruria Marl):

- Highfields South Quarry, Aldridge, Walsall (Cory)
- Sandown Quarry, Aldridge, Walsall (Wienerberger)
- Dumblederry Farm Quarry, Aldridge, Walsall (Ibstock)
- Oak Farm Clay Pit, Kingswinford, Dudley (Baggeridge)
- Himley Quarry, Kingswinford, Dudley (Cory/ Baggeridge)
- Ketley Quarry, Kingswinford, Dudley (Hinton, Perry & Davenhill/ Ketley Brick/ Baggeridge)

3.11 The Black Country currently has five brick works, three of which are associated with clay pits in Walsall and are operated by major brick producers

⁶ Articles 6 and 7, Directive EC/92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive): <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1374>, see also Regulation 48, The Conservation (Natural Habitats &tc.) Regulations 1994 http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1994/Uksi_19942716_en_1.htm (SI 1994 No. 2716)

(Aldridge Works and Atlas Works by Ibstock and Sandown Works by Wienerberger). Oak Farm, Himley and Ketley Quarries supply the Fir Street Works in South Staffordshire, which is operated by Baggeridge. The other two brick works (Dreadnought Works – operated by Hinton, Perry & Davenhill and Ketley Brick - and Cradley Special Brick) are operated by local companies producing special tiles and bricks in relatively small quantities. Two clay pits (Highfields South and Himley) are now nearing the end of their operational life and Highfields South is no longer producing clay for brick making.

3.12 The adopted Dudley and Walsall UDPs have defined fairly generous mineral safeguarding areas (MSAs) around each of the above quarries. These are shown on the UDP Proposals Maps and are subject to in Dudley UDP Policy M1 and Walsall UDP Strategic Policy Statement paragraph 9.2 and Walsall UDP Policy M1. At present, no other mineral resources in the Black Country are safeguarded against sterilisation by non-mineral development, although in principle, the Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton UDPs all allow for the extraction of minerals in advance of redevelopment to prevent sterilisation.

Primary Minerals – Regional Requirements and Local Supplies

3.13 Permitted reserves of sand and gravel are declining, both nationally and regionally. In England as a whole, reserves have declined from 897 million tonnes in 1993 to 648 million tonnes in 2004.⁷ The decline is considered to be caused by the lack of planning permissions for extraction between 1997 and 2002, and the consequent depletion of reserves through sales.

3.14 Over the same period, there has been a corresponding, but less sharp, decline in reserves in the West Midlands region: in 1993 the regional reserves were estimated to be 202 million tonnes, compared to around 181 million tonnes in 2004. Reserves have also steadily declined within the West

⁷ Section 3.1, Section 3.6 and Figure 16, Primary Aggregate Reserves in England 1990 – 2004 (2006), British Geological Survey – published on UK Minerals website: http://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/free_downloads/home.html

Midlands Metropolitan area from around 3.7 million tonnes in 2001 to around 2.5 million tonnes in 2004. At present, the only authorities that contribute to the sub-regional sand and gravel apportionment – and therefore to the stock of reserves – are Solihull MBC and Walsall Council.

Table 1: Primary Aggregates (Sand) Supplies in the Black Country, March 2007			
Current Annual Requirement for Black Country (tonnes)	Permitted Reserves @ March 2007 (tonnes)	Current Landbank @ March 2007	Estimated Resource in MSAs (not permitted) @ March 2007 (tonnes)
50,000 ⁸	150,000 ⁹	2-3 years ¹⁰	3,000,000 ¹¹

Table 2: Brick Clay Supplies in the Black Country, March 2007			
Current Annual Requirement for Black Country (tonnes)	Permitted Reserves @ March 2007 (tonnes)*	Current Supplies to Brickworks @ March 2007*	Estimated Resource in MSAs (not permitted) @ March 2007 (tonnes)
N/A	8,000,000 ¹²	5-30 years ¹³	N/K

3.15 Early in 2007, Dudley MBC, Sandwell MBC and Walsall Council commissioned Scott Wilson to undertake an up-to-date survey of mineral reserves within active quarries and within the existing MSAs defined in the Dudley and Walsall UDPs. The results of this are set out in **A Survey of Current Mineral Resources in the Black Country – Published Report (March 2007)**, which is available on the Black Country Core Strategy website.

⁸ See Note 6 above

⁹ See Survey of Current Mineral Reserves in the Black Country: Published Report (March 2007), Scott Wilson - published on Black Country Core Strategy website: <http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/>. This shows that supplies to brickworks vary from less than 5 years' worth of production to more than 30 years' worth.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. There is a current application for an extension to Branton Hill Quarry, which covers most of the unexploited area within the MSA, to the south of the existing quarry/ recycling business.

¹² See Note 8 above.

¹³ See Note 8 above.

The current position is summarised in Tables 1 and 2 above. This shows that the Black Country's current sand and gravel landbank falls short of what is required by MPS1 and the RSS and that in some cases, the supply of clay to Black Country brickworks also falls short of what is required by MPS1.

3.16 It is estimated that there are sufficient resources available within the sand and gravel MSAs in Walsall to meet the Black Country's share of the current sub-regional apportionment up to 2026 and beyond.¹⁴ However, it is not certain when or indeed if these resources will actually come forward through acceptable planning applications. As has been noted above (paragraphs 3.6 – 3.7), groundwater source protection zones may be a significant constraint to future extraction of sands and gravels and/ or the restoration of sites to safe and acceptable standards after working has ceased. The recent survey of mineral reserves was unfortunately unable to establish the extent of the remaining brick clay resources within the MSAs, as operators could not be certain about the quality of the clay.

Primary Minerals – Production, Sales and Consumption

Sand and Gravel

3.17 The aggregates industry is currently dominated by a handful of key players, of which only two - CEMEX and Tarmac – are currently represented within the Black Country, although others, such as Lafarge, operate quarries nearby. It is estimated that seven companies currently account for about 85% of aggregate production in England and Wales. Other than these, there are around 100 smaller, local operators, like Bliss Sand & Gravel who operate Branton Hill Quarry in Aldridge, Walsall. Operators are represented by two main trade bodies: the Quarry Products Association and the British Aggregates Association.¹⁵

¹⁴ Based on the assumption that Solihull will continue to provide around 90% of the sub-regional apportionment for the West Midlands Metropolitan area (i.e. 0.506 million tonnes per annum) until 2011, as required by the current RSS. However, the position post-2011 is uncertain and will depend on resources coming forward through new permissions.

¹⁵ See 2.1.4, Planning 4 Minerals: A Guide on Aggregates (2006), Quarry Products Association, British Marine Aggregate Producers' Association, British Geological Survey and Entec Ltd, available on Planning 4 Minerals website: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/planning4minerals/Downloads.htm>

3.18 Information is available on sand and gravel production/ sales in the Black Country during 2005, but unfortunately this cannot be published other than in collated form, for reasons of commercial confidentiality. However, figures are available for the UK as a whole, for the West Midlands region and for the West Midlands Metropolitan area.

3.19 The amount of primary land-won sand and gravel produced annually in the UK fell between 1999 and 2004, from around 80.3 million tonnes to around 78.1 million tonnes.¹⁶ Although sales of sand and gravel within the West Midlands region have declined significantly since the 1970s, between 1997 and 2005, annual sales appear to have levelled off at between 9 and 10 million tonnes. During the same period, the tonnages consumed appear to have been slightly less than the amounts sold, between 8 and 9.5 million tonnes.¹⁷ The latest published information for the West Midlands Metropolitan area is for 2004, when it was estimated that around 0.5 million tonnes of sand and gravel were sold, roughly equivalent to the annual sub-regional supply requirement.¹⁸

Bricks and Clay

3.20 There is no published information on the demand for brick clay or sales of bricks, blocks and tiles within the Black Country. Within the UK as a whole (excluding Northern Ireland), between 1999 and 2004, production of clay and shale has fluctuated between 10.3 and 11.4 million tonnes, and in 2005 was estimated to be around 10 million tonnes.¹⁹ In 2004, the latest year for which regional figures are available, around 2.6 million tonnes of clay and shale were produced in the West Midlands region, of which 2.1 million tonnes was

¹⁶ See page 9, United Kingdom Minerals Yearbook 2005: Statistical Data to 2004 (2006), published on UK Minerals website: http://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/free_downloads/home.html

¹⁷ See Appendix D, Tables D1 and D2, Collation of the Results of the 2005 Aggregate Minerals Survey for England and Wales (May 2007), British Geological Survey, published on DCLG website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1510949>

¹⁸ See West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party (RAWP) Annual Report 2004, published on DCLG website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1502818>

¹⁹ See page 9, United Kingdom Minerals Yearbook 2005: Statistical Data to 2004 (2006), published on UK Minerals website: http://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/free_downloads/home.html. Also see page 32 for production of clay and shale by region.

used to make bricks, pipes and tiles. Future monitoring will show whether this level of production can be sustained.

3.21 Production appears to fluctuate from year to year. Overall, production appears to have declined nationally between 1995 and 2005. Within the UK as a whole (excluding Northern Ireland), 2,601 million clay bricks were produced in 2005, compared to 2,707 million in 2004 and 3,256 million in 1995. In 2004, the latest year for which regional figures are available, 624 million bricks were produced in the West Midlands, more than in any of the other English regions, Scotland or Wales. The decline in brick production is also less sharp in the West Midlands than anywhere else. Production appears to have increased in 2004 compared to previous years, and appeared to moving back towards the 1995 level of 649 million.²⁰

3.22 There has been a considerable amount of consolidation within the brick industry in recent years, and production of bricks, blocks and tiles is now dominated by a handful of major national and international companies, of which three – Baggeridge, Ibstock and Wienerberger – have a presence in the Black Country. The pool of operators is about to shrink even further, as Wienerberger are proposing to take over Baggeridge, following clearance by the Competition Commission in May 2007.

3.23 The Commission's provisional findings report, published in April 2007, includes an Appendix which provides an up-to-date overview of the brick industry, based on information provided by the major operators.²¹ This confirms that there has been a slow decline in the demand for bricks over the last 50 years, which does not seem to relate to the number of houses built. It is not entirely clear why this is the case, but the suggestions offered by the operators are that changes in the types of housing built and the materials

²⁰ Ibid, page 27.

²¹ Provisional Findings Report, Wienerberger Finance Service BV / Baggeridge Brick plc (April 2007), Competition Commission, published on their website: http://www.competition-commission.org.uk/inquiries/ref2006/wienerberger/provisional_findings.htm

used to build new homes (both structural and cladding materials) may be to blame.

3.24 The influence of “the planners” in specifying particular building materials and claddings was considered to be an important factor in the demand – or lack of it – for bricks. Operators also expressed concern about the difficulties of obtaining permission for new quarries.

Secondary and Recycled Aggregates

3.25 There are believed to be six producers of secondary/ recycled aggregates in the Black Country, but it is not known how many mobile crushers are operating within the area in addition to these. The following processing facilities have been identified:

- Glenside Recycling, Smethwick, Sandwell
- Midland Quarry Products, Bescot, Walsall
- Bliss Sand & Gravel, Branton Hill Quarry, Aldridge, Walsall
- AB Skip Hire, Darlaston, Walsall
- Stichacre Ltd, Bilston, Wolverhampton
- Tarmac Recycling Services, Ettingshall, Wolverhampton

3.26 There is currently no information available on the amount of secondary and recycled aggregate produced in the Black Country. However, a recent national survey of alternatives to primary aggregates in England in 2005 by Capita Symonds provides some indication of the quantities produced at the regional and sub-regional level. Two separate reports have been published, one on the production of aggregates from construction, demolition and excavation wastes (recycled aggregates), and the other on the production of aggregates from “other” materials, including quarry and colliery wastes, bottom ash and glass (secondary aggregates).²²

²² Survey of Arisings and Use of Alternatives to Primary Aggregates in England, 2005: Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste and Survey of Arisings and Use of Alternatives to Primary Aggregates in England 2005: Other Materials (February 2007), Capita Symonds Ltd/ WRC Ltd for DCLG, published on DCLG website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1508123> and <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1508126>.

3.27 The report on construction, demolition and excavation wastes estimates that in 2005, there were 96 crushers in the West Midlands region, and that during 2005 they produced 4.45 million tonnes of secondary/ recycled aggregate and 1.90 million tonnes of recycled soil from around 9.84 million tonnes of construction and demolition waste. The same survey estimated that 33 of these crushers were located in Birmingham and the Black Country, and that during 2005 they produced around 1.51 million tonnes of secondary/ recycled aggregates and around 0.81 million tonnes of recycled soil from around 2.88 million tonnes of construction and demolition waste.²³

3.28 The report on other materials estimates that in 2005, 0.61 million tonnes of these materials were used as aggregate in the West Midlands region, out of a total 2.13 million tonnes of materials arising. The materials used were: ceramic waste, colliery spoil, power station/ incinerator bottom ash, pulverised fuel ash and used railway ballast. Of this, only 0.19 million tonnes was used as aggregate in Birmingham and the Black Country, out of a total of 0.36 million tonnes of material arising within the same area.²⁴

3.29 This suggests that recycled construction and demolition waste is currently making a significant contribution towards the supply of aggregates in Birmingham and the Black Country – a conclusion that is also supported by another recent study into the production of recycled and secondary aggregates in the West Midlands Metropolitan area by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP).²⁵ Indeed, the WRAP survey suggests that the recovery and recycling of construction, demolition and excavation wastes for aggregate is already occurring at the optimum rate that is

²³ Tables A10.4 and A11.12, Survey of Arisings and Use of Alternatives to Primary Aggregates in England, 2005: Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste (February 2007), Capita Symonds Ltd/ WRc Ltd for DCLG, published on DCLG website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1508123>. This relates to a survey of operators of crushers, screens and licensed landfill sites in 2005, and follows on from previous surveys carried out in 1999, 2001 and 2003. Although the national estimates in the report are considered to be robust, the regional and sub-regional estimates are considered to be less so, due to the response rates not being high enough. The report therefore warns that the sub-regional figures – including that for Birmingham and the Black Country - should not be relied upon other than as a “reasonable indication” of arisings and recycling of construction and demolition waste.

²⁴ Annex 2, Survey of Arisings and Use of Alternatives to Primary Aggregates in England, 2005: Other Materials (February 2007), Capita Symonds Ltd/ WRc Ltd for DCLG, published on DCLG website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1508126>.

²⁵ The Sustainable Use of Resources for the Production of Aggregates in England (2006), WRAP, published on AggRegain website: http://www.aggregain.org.uk/templates/temp_agg_publication_details.rm?id=2298&publication=3337

economically viable, and that recovery rates are unlikely to improve much in the future, other than in the case of soils.

3.30 However, the contribution made by secondary aggregates in the West Midlands appears to be much less significant. The results of the Capita Symonds survey suggest that as the amount of secondary material arising is relatively small, this is unlikely to make a major contribution towards future aggregates supply.

4. Consultation Responses

4.1 Various people and organisations have commented on minerals and related issues, both through individual responses, at the Launch Event on 6 December 2006, and at a Minerals and Waste Stakeholder Event on 29 March 2007.²⁶ At the latter event stakeholders were invited to comment on an earlier draft of the minerals issues and options.

4.2 Through these events and other meetings/ contacts, we have also discussed the key issues relating to minerals with representatives from the Environment Agency, British Geological Survey, West Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party, Black Country Geodiversity Partnership, quarry operators and adjoining mineral planning authorities. The issues and options in the consultation document reflect the outcome of these discussions.

4.3 The key issues identified by stakeholders are as follows:

- a) Minerals are a key issue – not peripheral;
- b) Minerals and waste need to be considered together to ensure consistent approach towards overlapping issues e.g. resource management, recycling, waste minimisation, restoration/landfill;
- c) Public perception/ negative image of mineral extraction is an important problem and a barrier to bringing forward new reserves - need for better understanding of the importance of minerals to society and the local economy;
- d) Need to adopt a flexible approach towards planning for minerals in the Black Country – cannot predict future needs of building industry with certainty;

²⁶ Event Reports published on Black Country Core Strategy website: <http://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/>

- e) Should safeguard known mineral resources in the Black Country against sterilisation by other development by identifying new MSAs (including “buffer zones”) that cover all known mineral resources where they exist/ identifying locations for future mineral extraction;
- f) Should identify locations within the Black Country where extraction will take place, to maintain regional self-sufficiency and local availability of supplies in the longer-term and reduce dependence on importation of materials/ the need to transport them long distances;
- g) Where suitable opportunities exist, should encourage minerals and other bulky materials to be transported by rail or inland waterways rather than via the local highway network;
- h) Where possible, extensions to existing sites/ permissions and mineral safeguarding areas are preferable to new permissions for mineral extraction in areas that are currently unaffected;
- i) Should allow small-scale extraction of coal and other minerals prior to redevelopment, within areas where reserves are known to be present, to avoid sterilisation;
- j) Should reflect the importance of secondary/ recycled aggregates in meeting future requirements, by making provision for increased production and restricting quantities of inert construction and demolition waste sent to landfill;
- k) Need to consider wider issues relating to use and conservation of mineral resources, such as re-use and recycling of buildings and building materials – suggestion that we include targets for re-used/ recycled materials in new developments;
- l) Need to address implications of new housing/ economic development proposed in the Black Country for minerals, such as likely need/

demand for primary mineral resources as well as alternatives, and maximising recycling of construction and demolition waste;

- m) Need to protect existing secondary and recycled aggregates production facilities from other development where these are well located (e.g. within strategic corridors);
- n) Environmental quality is an important issue for the Black Country - impacts of mineral extraction are long-term, therefore need to minimise adverse effects and maximise benefits (e.g. opportunities for recreation) and secure timely/ appropriate restoration and after-use;
- o) Mineral extraction should respect wildlife corridors and other important environmental assets, and restoration schemes should be designed to be beneficial for biodiversity, geodiversity (e.g. maintaining exposures of important geological features) and the local landscape;
- p) Where mineral resources are within groundwater protection zones or near to surface watercourses (including canals), need to have policies in place that will prevent pollution from mineral extraction and subsequent restoration, and possible damage to the canal network arising from mineral extraction;
- q) The need to restore former mineral workings by landfill may contribute to climate change where the fill includes biodegradable waste – where this is the case, landfill gas should be safely extracted and used to generate energy;
- r) Core Strategy should be followed-up by detailed policies set out in another DPD (but no consensus on whether it should be a joint Black Country Minerals and Waste DPD, or separate plans for each area).

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