



Black Country Authorities

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# BLACK COUNTRY MINERALS STUDY UPDATE

Updated Evidence Base for Minerals to support preparation of emerging Local Plans for each Black Country Authority - Sandwell





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Updated Evidence Base for Minerals to support preparation of emerging Local Plans for each Black Country Authority - Sandwell

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 THE BLACK COUNTRY

- 1.1.1. The Black Country comprises the four local authorities of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and Wolverhampton City Council, and forms part of the West Midlands conurbation. Each of these authorities is a Unitary Authority (UA) and, as such, performs the function of Mineral Planning Authority (MPA). They are collectively known as the Black Country Authorities (BCAs).
- 1.1.2. With a resident population of approximately 1.1 million, it is a densely populated region covering a total of 138 square miles (222km<sup>2</sup>). The Black Country together with Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry in the West Midlands collectively make up one of the most densely populated areas in the UK. Due to the underlying geology, the Black Country has a diverse range of mineral resources, including several national importance. The main minerals present are sand and gravel, brick clays, dolerite, limestone, building sand, coal, and associated fireclay. As minerals are a finite resource and can only be worked where they are found, it is important therefore that a balance is struck between economic growth and the need to provide minerals to support that growth, whilst at the same time safeguarding the mineral resources of the area.
- 1.1.3. Sandwell Borough is a large metropolitan borough covering 33 square miles (86km<sup>2</sup>). In 2021 the population was 341,900, with a population density of 3,994 people per square kilometre.

## 1.2 DISCONTINUED BLACK COUNTRY PLAN

- 1.2.1. The BCAs were preparing a new strategic plan – the Black Country Plan (BCP) – to replace the extant joint Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) which was adopted in 2011 and covers the period to 2026. The plan period for the BCP was set to cover the period to 2039. Consultation on the Issues and Options took place in 2017, and the Draft Black Country Plan (Regulation 18) was published for consultation between August and October 2021. The outcomes from that consultation, along with further evidence gathering, would have informed the next version of the BCP – called the Publication Plan.
- 1.2.2. In October 2022, the Leaders of the four BCAs issued a statement stating that the BCP work programme would end in that the authorities were unable to reach agreement on the approach to planning for future development needs within the framework of the BCP. Instead, the focus going forward will be on individual Local Plans, with the BCAs co-operating with each other and with other key bodies in the preparation of these Local Plans.

## 1.3 BLACK COUNTRY MINERALS STUDY 2020

- 1.3.1. To inform the Draft BCP, the BCAs commissioned Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions UK Limited, now WSP UK Limited (hereafter referred to as WSP), to undertake a minerals planning study for the Black Country to set out the minerals evidence base for the BCP. The study included a minerals needs assessment. The results of this study were published in the Black Country Minerals Study 2020, which was issued alongside the other evidence base documentation to support the Draft BCP.

## 1.4 BLACK COUNTRY MINERALS STUDY UPDATE

- 1.4.1. It is imperative that the minerals evidence base to inform the emerging minerals policies, as appropriate, of the individual Local Plans for each BCA are robust and that wherever possible this evidence is based on the latest (publicly) available data.
- 1.4.2. The minerals needs assessment outlined in the Black Country Minerals Study (2020) used 2017 as the baseline year and was informed by the latest available minerals data at the time the needs assessment was undertaken.
- 1.4.3. A key source for minerals data informing this study was that set out in the Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA). For the Black Country the relevant LAA is that for the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, which includes the Black Country, Birmingham, and Solihull. The latest available LAA remains that produced in 2015 used to inform the 2020 Minerals Study. An updated LAA is being prepared but has yet to be finalised and published.
- 1.4.4. For aggregates, another data source includes the Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR) produced by the West Midlands Aggregates Working Party (AWP). The latest published version is the 2021 AMR<sup>1</sup> which includes 2019 and 2020 data. The 2022 AMR<sup>2</sup> which includes 2021 data was ratified in April 2023, although at the time of writing this document had not yet been published on the GOV.UK website. A copy of this document was provided by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and due regard has been given to this document in this assessment.
- 1.4.5. Minerals data for sand and gravel, brick clays, dolerite, limestone, building stone, coal, fireclay, and ironstone is also detailed in the latest AMRI (Annual Minerals Raised Inquiry) survey results. The latest available AMRI data is that for 2019<sup>3</sup> published in 2021.
- 1.4.6. Due account has also been taken of the Government guidance on recycled aggregates data published in May 2022<sup>4</sup>.
- 1.4.7. More up to date data is now available and as such, the minerals needs assessment should be updated using this data to inform the emerging individual Local Plans for each BCA. At the time of writing, the latest publicly available data – 2021 AMR and 2019 AMRI – only included data for the period 2019-2020. Whilst this data forms the baseline for this Minerals Study Update, where appropriate, reference has also been made to the 2021 data in the 2022 AMR.
- 1.4.8. The purpose of this Black Country Minerals Study Update seeks to:

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<sup>1</sup> West Midlands Aggregates Working Party – Annual Monitoring Report 2021 (July 2022)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1142512/2019\\_2020\\_-\\_WMAWP\\_Report\\_Jul\\_2022\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1142512/2019_2020_-_WMAWP_Report_Jul_2022_.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> West Midlands Aggregates Working Party – Annual Report 2022 [2021 Data] (April 2023)

<sup>3</sup> British Geological Survey – Collation of the results of the 2019 Aggregates Minerals Survey for England and Wales (2021)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1075214/AM2019\\_National\\_Collation-Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1075214/AM2019_National_Collation-Final.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – Recycled Aggregates Data: Guidance on Assessment Levels of Recycled Aggregates (May 2022)





- Update the minerals need assessment and future minerals supply requirements using latest available data and disaggregated to individual LPAs as appropriate (**Chapter 2**); and
- Review draft BCP minerals policies and provide recommendations as to how these can be adopted in the emerging individual Local Plans for each BCA (**Chapter 3**).

1.4.9. A separate report has been produced for each of the BCAs. This report is specific to **Sandwell**.

1.4.10. A glossary of terms can be found in **Appendix A**.

## **2 UPDATED MINERALS NEEDS ASSESSMENT: SANDWELL**

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### **2.1 UPDATED EVIDENCE BASE**

- 2.1.1. This section reviews and sets out the latest evidence base to inform the emerging Local Plan for Sandwell. It should be read in conjunction with Chapter 5 of the 2020 Minerals Study, which has been updated as required using the latest available information from the West Midlands AWP AMRs and Annual Minerals Raised Inquiry (AMRI) returns, as well as information held by the local planning authorities.
- 2.1.2. Minerals can only be worked whether they are found as determined by the underlying geology. Due to the predominantly urban nature of the Black Country, the only BCA with viable mineral resources is Walsall (sand and gravel, brick clay, fireclay). All other mineral resources and permitted mineral reserves within Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton have now been worked and remaining mineral sites are in the process of being restored.

### **2.2 BRICK CLAY**

- 2.2.1. Cradley Brickworks is operated by Forterra Building Products Limited (Cradley Special Brick Co Ltd) and is a specialist brickworks with a productive capacity of 1 million bricks per annum producing a broad range of 'special' shaped bricks. It is solely reliant on imports of clay, predominantly from the East Midlands.

### **2.3 SECONDARY AND RECYCLED AGGREGATES**

#### **SECONDARY AND RECYCLED AGGREGATES PRODUCTION**

- 2.3.1. A significant proportion of the wastes recycled for aggregate use are recycled at demolition / construction sites using mobile processing plant and indeed often reused on-site.
- 2.3.2. The best available data for recycled and secondary aggregates is that provided through the analysis of information contained in the Environment Agency's Waste Data Interrogator (WDI). The WDI has been used to identify the amount of construction, demolition, and excavation waste (CDEW) produced and handled / managed in Sandwell. It is likely to only represent a proportion of the recycled aggregates in circulation (albeit the substantial proportion) and large proportions of CDEW are often processed 'on-site' and without the need for an environmental permit. The most up to date WDI data available at the time of writing is from 2021, although it is acknowledged that data for 2022 was recently published at the start of October 2023. Cross reference should also be made to the 2023 Waste Study Update for Sandwell; this uses 2021 as a baseline year and to ensure consistency, the same baseline year has been used for this 2023 Minerals Study Update for Sandwell.
- 2.3.3. It should be noted that there are data limitations associated with secondary and recycled aggregates. The WDI data is collected from the returns from permitted fixed facilities and records only waste received, and waste exported from the site. Secondary aggregates, where certain quality protocol specifications are met, is considered to be non-waste and is therefore not included within the waste tonnage returns. The WDI data does not account for mobile crushers or recycling and re-use that occurs on individual construction sites. The tonnage of recycled aggregates reported in the WDI is likely to only represent a proportion of the potential recycled aggregates in circulation and

only presents a high-level view of CDEW in Sandwell. These figures are only estimates and should be treated with caution.

- 2.3.4. Using 2021 WDI data and applying the Government guidance on recycled aggregates data published in May 2022<sup>4</sup>, Sandwell produced 12,906 tonnes of CDEW in 2021. As previously stated, this figure excludes other sources of waste which could also be used as secondary and recycled aggregates such as glass. Furthermore, this figure is likely to be a significant under representation of what CDEW was actually produced in Sandwell. This is because the vast majority of CDEW sites are exempt from requiring a waste management license and thus this information is not recorded in the WDI which is reliant on waste permit information.
- 2.3.5. Further CDEW data is available from the West Midlands AWP AMRs (which seeks to capture all sources of CDEW). Using information from the latest AWP AMR, in 2021 Sandwell managed some 458,196 tonnes<sup>5</sup> of CDEW compared to the 12,906 tonnes of secondary and recycled aggregates produced in the same year, as reported using the 2021 WDI data.

### SECONDARY AND RECYCLED AGGREGATES CAPACITY

- 2.3.6. Sandwell has several fixed secondary and recycled aggregates sites which are set out in **Table 2.1**. Together these sites provide up to approximately 330,000tpa of recycled and secondary processing capacity in Sandwell. The 2021 WDI data indicates that in 2021 Sandwell managed 82,496 tonnes of CDEW.

**Table 2-1 - Sites managing recycled/secondary aggregates in Dudley (as at December 2021)**

Site	Operator	Throughput (tonnes per annum)	Comments
Victoria Street, Smethwick	Unknown	unknown	Recycling of waste into aggregate
Bescot Rail Depot Bescot Sidings, Sandy Lane, Wednesbury	Network Rail	150,000 – 175,000	Operational – storage / processing / transfer of aggregate  The site deals with recycled and reprocessed track ballast, which is used on the national rail network.
Wednesbury Asphalt Plant Smith Road, Wednesbury	Midland Quarry Products (MQP) Ltd	Up to 55,000	Operational  Coating plant, producing full range of asphalt products for construction of roads and other

<sup>5</sup> West Midlands AWP AMR 2018 is latest available report showing CDEW data separately for each LPA and does not group the West Midlands Conurbations, which includes Sandwell. In 2018, Sandwell managed 5.6% of the total West Midlands CDEW managed tonnage. This percentage has been used to extrapolate the figure for CDEW managed in Sandwell from the CDEW data in the West Midlands AWP Annual Report 2022 (2021 data).

Site	Operator	Throughput (tonnes per annum)	Comments
			paved areas. MQP website indicates that their asphalt plants use secondary materials. Products are therefore made partly from secondary materials, but no information is provided on annual production or whether any of the secondary aggregates are produced on-site or are sold off-site.
Former Hanson Site (West Bromwich) Grice Street, West Bromwich	Recycled Aggregate Midlands Ltd	25,000 (general recycling) 100,000 (CDEW recycling)	Planning permission for inert waste recycling facility on the site. Operational status now unclear; Google Maps and Street View (2023) showing crushing and screening being carried out on the site.

Source: West Midlands AWP Annual Monitoring Report 2018 (February 2020); West Midlands AWP Monitoring Report 2019-2020 (July 2022); Figure 4 – West Midlands AWP Annual Report 2022 [2021 Data] (April 2023); WDI (2021), Sandwell Authority Monitoring Report 2021-2022 (2022), and officer knowledge.

- 2.3.7. It is evident that Sandwell manages more CDEW than it produces – with approximately 82,500 tonnes CDEW managed in 2021 compared to a total of some 13,000 tonnes CDEW being produced in the same year. Thus, Sandwell is likely a net importer of secondary and recycled aggregates. To maintain this position, it is important that existing secondary and recycled aggregate capacity within Sandwell is retained and safeguarded through the new Local Plan; although it is considered that a lot of this capacity is un-reported in that CDEW is likely to be ‘recycled on-site’ by exempt, mobile processing plants.

## 2.4 OTHER MINERAL INFRASTRUCTURE SITES

- 2.4.1. In addition to the secondary and recycled aggregates sites detailed above, other mineral infrastructure sites in Sandwell include a coating plant, a number of ready-mix concrete plants, a Dry Silo Mortar plant, and an aggregates depot, which are set out in **Table 2.2**. These will also need to be safeguarded in the new Local Plan.

**Table 2-2 – Other Mineral Infrastructure Sites in Sandwell (as at December 2021)**

Site	Operator	Throughput (tonnes per annum)	Comments
<b>Coating Plant</b>			
Wednesbury Asphalt Plant Smith Road, Wednesbury	Midland Quarry Products (MQP) Ltd	n/a	Operational Site includes on-site recycling facility with a Waste Permit for Physical Treatment (A16) and Registered Exemptions for on-site screening, recovery and treatment

Site	Operator	Throughput (tonnes per annum)	Comments
			of waste, cleaning waste, use of waste in construction and secure storage of waste.
<b>Ready-Mix Concrete Plants</b>			
Anytime Concrete Kelvin Way, West Bromwich	Anytime Concrete (UK) Ltd	n/a	Operational
CEMEX Oldbury Concrete Plant Cemex House, Wolverhampton Road, Oldbury	Cemex UK Materials Ltd	n/a	Operational
Breedon Oldbury Concrete Plant Engine Street, Oldbury	Breedon Group	n/a	Operational
Heidelberg Materials Ready Mix Concrete (Oldbury) Roway Lane, Oldbury	Heidelberg Materials	n/a	Operational
Metamix Batmans's Hill Industrial Estate, Purdy Road, Tipton	Metamix Ltd	n/a	Operational
<b>Dry Silo Mortar (DSM) Plants</b>			
Tarmac Birmingham Mortar Plant Engine Street, Oldbury	Tarmac	n/a	Operational
<b>Aggregates Depot</b>			
Bescot LDC Depot Sandy Lane, Wednesbury	Network Rail Infrastructure Limited	n/a	Rail-linked aggregates depot operated by Network Rail, part of a larger site that includes rail sidings and on-site recycling facility.

Source: Officer knowledge

## 2.5 FUTURE MINERALS SUPPLY REQUIREMENTS

- 2.5.1. The projected housing and economic growth for Sandwell will have an impact on mineral consumption, not least to provide the raw materials to support this growth, including the provision of construction aggregates. As well as having to be sourced from primary aggregates, these will also need to be sourced from secondary and recycled aggregates. It is important therefore that sufficient provision is made for appropriate mineral infrastructure sites. As well as 'fixed' mineral infrastructure sites, provision also needs to be made for temporary (mobile) aggregate recycling facilities especially within larger construction sites where demolition is required.
- 2.5.2. As previously outlined in the 2020 Minerals Study, and reiterated in this Update, despite the diverse range of mineral resources in the Black Country, many of these resources are sterilised given the urban nature of the area. It is therefore evident that the Black Country is a net importer of minerals, predominantly from the wider East and West Midlands area. This is particularly true for Sandwell, where it has been established that there are no accessible, economically viable mineral resources remaining. It is important therefore that Sandwell continues to liaise with local planning authorities, both within the Black Country and the wider East and West Midlands, as part of the Duty to Cooperate to plan for a steady and adequate supply of minerals through bodies such as the Aggregate Working Party (AWP) and via updated Local Aggregates Assessments (LAAs).
- 2.5.3. With regards to mineral infrastructure sites, there is a need to safeguard such existing sites to ensure existing capacity is retained. Existing mineral infrastructure sites should be identified on the Local Plan Policies Plan. Given the scope to increased potential future supplies of secondary and recycled aggregates within Sandwell, consideration should be given to applying a positive presumption in favour of secondary and recycled aggregate development proposals.

## 3 PLANNING POLICY REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 3.1 PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

- 3.1.1. In seeking to deliver housing and employment development growth the Sandwell Local Plan will need to set out how to make an appropriate contribution towards local and regional minerals requirements. Through the original Minerals Study and this Update, it has been established that all primary won mineral sites in Sandwell have been worked and are no longer active and being restored and that due to its urban nature, there are unlikely to be any accessible economically viable important mineral resources remaining in Sandwell. Whilst Sandwell will therefore be unable to make any contributions to local and regional minerals requirements from primary won minerals, contributions can be made from secondary and recycled aggregates.
- 3.1.2. This chapter seeks to review the Draft BCP minerals policies and provides recommendations as to how these can be adapted for use in the Sandwell Local Plan.

### 3.2 DRAFT BCP MINERALS POLICIES – REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.2.1. The Draft BCP (Regulation 18) contained 4 minerals policies as follows:
- Policy MIN1 – Mineral Production – Requirements;
  - Policy MIN2 – Minerals Safeguarding;
  - Policy MIN3 – Preferred Areas for New Mineral Development; and
  - Policy MIN4 – Managing the Effects of Mineral Development.
- 3.2.2. Commentary and recommendations on each of the policies above is provided below.
- 3.2.3. Policy MIN1 sets out the provision that needs to be made over the plan period to enable the Black Country to make an appropriate contribution towards identified local and regional requirements. Provision is set out for construction aggregates – primary land won sand and gravel, secondary and recycled aggregates, and the efficient use of mineral resources – and for industrial minerals – brick clay and fireclay. The relevant provisions of this policy for Sandwell relate to secondary and recycled aggregates and efficient use of mineral resources. It is recommended that similar policy provisions relating to secondary and recycled aggregates and efficient use of mineral resources are included in the Sandwell Local Plan.
- 3.2.4. With relevance to Sandwell, Policy MIN2 seeks to safeguard all existing minerals sites, including permitted mineral infrastructure sites, and to protect these from other types of development that could compromise their continued operation. Mineral infrastructure sites include secondary and recycled aggregates facilities. In this regard, as acknowledged in both this Minerals Update and the previous Black Country minerals and waste studies, there is a cross-over with the Waste Study report which deals with construction and demolition waste including secondary and recycled aggregates. It is recommended that a similar safeguarding policy is included in the Sandwell Local Plan.
- 3.2.5. It should be noted that safeguarding policy protection in the Draft BCP for mineral infrastructure sites such as secondary and recycled aggregates facilities was also provided through waste policies Policy W2 (Waste Sites) and Policy W3 (Preferred Areas for New Waste Facilities) as well as through Draft BCP employment policies Policy EMP1 (Providing for Economic Growth and Jobs) and Policy EMP3 (Local Employment Areas). Notably, Policy EMP3 safeguards Local Employment

Areas for a number of uses including scrap metal, timber and construction premises and yards, and waste collection, transfer and recycling uses as set out in Policy W3. It is recommended therefore that the Sandwell Local Plan includes similar policies to W2, W3, EMP1 and EMP3.

- 3.2.6. Policy MIN3 identifies the preferred areas for mineral extraction. It has been established that there are unlikely to be any accessible economically important mineral resources remaining in Sandwell, given its urban nature, it is considered that the provisions of this policy are not relevant to the Sandwell Local Plan.
- 3.2.7. Policy MIN4 sets out the requirements that planning applications for mineral working and minerals infrastructure will be expected to address, applying to both existing and new sites. The policy identifies some general requirements that mineral development proposals will need to satisfy, and then lists several additional criteria against which such proposals will be further assessed. It is recommended a similar policy is included in the Sandwell Local Plan. Given the nature of the Borough this is likely to apply only to the development of new mineral infrastructure sites, rather than extraction proposals.



# Appendix A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning / Definition</b>
AAP	Area Action Plan
AOS	Area of Search
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
AMRI	Annual Mineral Raised Inquiry Survey
AWP	Aggregate Working Party
BCAs	Black Country Authorities (i.e. Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton)
BCCS	Black Country Core Strategy
BCP	Black Country Plan
CD&E	Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste
CLEUD	Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DPD	Development Plan Document
EA	Environment Agency
HS2	High Speed 2 rail link project
LAA	Local Aggregates Assessment
MASS	Managed Aggregates Supply System
MPA	Mineral Planning Authority
MPA	Mineral Products Association
MSA	Mineral Safeguarding Area
mt	million tonnes
NPP	National Planning Policy
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance



<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning / Definition</b>
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PDNP	Peak District National Park
RTAB	Regional Technical Advisory Board
SAD	Sites Allocations Document
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
tpa	tonnes per annum
UA	Unitary Authority
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
WDI	Waste Data Interrogator (Environment Agency published waste data)



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