

**30 October 2012****Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF GROUP MANAGER, PLANNING****Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan - Local Aggregates Assessment****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Committee of the approach adopted in the Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) for the Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan. The LAA includes detailed information on the production of aggregate minerals over the last 10 years and sets out recommended apportionment figures for future sand and gravel, Sherwood Sandstone and limestone production.

**Information and Advice**

2. As a Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, Nottinghamshire County Council is required to prepare a Minerals Local Plan against which applications for minerals development can be assessed. As part of the preparation of the new Plan, apportionment figures for aggregate minerals need to be set to ensure that a steady and adequate supply of minerals can be provided over the plan period.
3. The process of determining local apportionments was based on national and regional aggregate demand forecasts published by central Government. The regional demand forecasts were then split, based on advice from the East Midlands Aggregate Working Party before being tested through the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. The local apportionments were then adopted in the Minerals Local Plan. The last draft apportionment figures were published in 2009.
4. Since the draft apportionment figures were published, the planning system has changed considerably. Firstly the Localism Act, 2011 has all but abolished the Regional Spatial Strategy and secondly the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012 has introduced new planning guidance.
5. The NPPF has introduced a requirement for Mineral Planning Authorities (MPA) to produce a Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) which will identify locally derived apportionment figures based on an average of 10 years sales data and other relevant local information.
6. The framework also requires MPAs to continue to participate in an Aggregate Working Party (AWP); for Nottinghamshire this is the East Midlands AWP, and take advice from the group when preparing their LAA.

## **Local approach to apportionment**

7. The NPPF states that as well as using the 10 year average sales figures, MPAs should take account of any local considerations when developing their apportionments. This could for example include significant house or road building, new infrastructure for major projects or issues such as the exploitation of major new resources or resource depletion affecting future output.
8. By far the greatest planning issue for Nottinghamshire is the long term provision of sand and gravel over the plan period. Nottinghamshire is a nationally and regionally important source of high quality mineral, exporting just over half of all extracted. Sherwood Sandstone and limestone is also worked.
9. Draft apportionment figures for all aggregates were agreed in 2009 and it was intended to include these in the revised Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). However the RSS was never progressed and has since been superseded. The figures used to calculate those apportionments were based on a period of economic growth which produced high future apportionment figures.
10. The LAA apportionment figures below are based on the methodology as set out in the NPPF.

### **Sand and gravel production**

11. Since the beginning of the current recession in 2007, sand and gravel production has fallen sharply, both nationally and locally. In Nottinghamshire sand and gravel production fell to 1.59 million tonnes in 2010, its lowest level since records began in 1973. This has resulted in the LAA apportionment figure being much lower than the previous Draft RSS figure. See Table 1
12. Using the LAA figure would mean that the apportionment is much closer to actual production levels and that the sand and gravel shortfall over the plan period would fall from approximately 46 million tonnes (2009 apportionment) to approximately 32 million tonnes (LAA apportionment). This reduction would enable greater opportunity to select the best and most suitable sites to meet demand over the plan period.

### **Sherwood Sandstone**

13. Sherwood Sandstone production is much lower than sand and gravel as it is used in more specialist markets. Production has slowly declined since the mid 1990s and is below the current apportionment. As with sand and gravel, production fell significantly from 2007 due to the recession. Table 1 sets out the apportionment figures for comparison
14. Given the declining output of Sherwood Sandstone, adopting the lower LAA figure would mean that the apportionment figure is much better matched to actual production levels. The shortfall over the plan period would fall from 4.56 million tonnes (2009 apportionment) to 2.36 million tonnes (LAA apportionment).

## Limestone

15. Limestone is only worked from one quarry in Nottinghamshire at Nether Langwith. Production has been very low partly due to the seasonal working of the site and the abundance of limestone in Derbyshire and Leicestershire. The LAA figure is lower than the 2009 figure and would result in there being no shortfall over the plan period.

## Alternative aggregates

16. Alternative aggregates comprise of recycled and secondary materials and include construction and demolition waste, asphalt road planings and Desulphogypsum (DSG) from power stations.
17. Since 1980 there has been a significant national increase in alternative aggregate production rising from 20 million tonnes to 71 million tonnes by 2007. It is estimated that alternative aggregates make up around 25% of total aggregate use – three times higher than the European average.
18. The LAA includes data on national and regional figures although comprehensive local figures are very limited. National guidance promotes the use of alternative aggregates however there are no requirements to set a local apportionment figure.

Table 1 Comparison of annual apportionment and shortfall figures over the plan period for aggregate minerals (million tonnes)

	LAA		Current Minerals Local Plan		Draft 2009	
	Annual Apportionment	Shortfall (surplus) over plan period	Annual Apportionment	Shortfall (surplus) over plan period	Annual Apportionment	Shortfall (surplus) over plan period
Sand and gravel	2.58	32	2.65	34	3.25	46
Sherwood Sandstone	0.46	2.36	0.7	7.16	0.57	4.56
Limestone	0.08	(1.75)	0.26	1.85	0.10	(1.35)

## Other local factors

19. To ensure that the figures contained in the LAA adequately reflect local circumstances, the following issues were also considered.

### Future house building and Population forecasts.

20. Over the plan period, a slow and steady increase in population and house building is expected to take place. Both of these will require a continued supply of aggregates but it is

anticipated that demand can be met within the LAA apportionment forecast level. Therefore no additional mineral will be needed.

Major Transport projects -A453 upgrade and Nottingham Express Transport (NET) Phase Two

21. The A453 improvement scheme is likely to increase the demand for aggregate minerals over the short to medium term; however the local impact of this it is likely to be limited given the location of the project. Aggregate mineral, particularly crushed rock will predominantly come from Derbyshire and Leicestershire as they are major producers. Sand and gravel could also come from these counties as reserves are closer than many of those in Nottinghamshire.
22. NET Phase Two will increase demand for aggregate minerals over the short term, however the construction phase is expected to be completed by the end of 2014 which is likely to fall at the start of the new plan period.

Targeted consultation

23. In order to ensure that the approach adopted in the LAA is the most appropriate, targeted consultation will be undertaken with the East Midlands Aggregate Working Party, other Mineral Planning Authorities and the minerals industry before the apportionment figures are included in the Minerals Local Plan - Preferred Approach consultation document.

Conclusion

24. Based on the local evidence available and the methodology set out in the NPPF, the Local Aggregates Assessment sets out a robust approach to the development of apportionment figures to be taken forward into the new Minerals Local Plan. This will provide adequate levels of aggregate minerals to meet demand over the plan period.

### **Other options considered**

25. None, the NPPF requires Mineral Planning Authorities to produce a Local Aggregates Assessment.

### **Reason for recommendation**

26. The production of the Minerals Local Plan is a statutory function of the County Council, the Plan should reflect the priorities of the County Council and fulfil national planning policy.

### **Recommendation**

1. The Committee approve the approach set out in the Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan Local Aggregates Assessment.
2. The Committee give approval for targeted consultation with the Aggregates Working Party, other MPAs and the minerals industry.

**Sally Gill**  
**Group Manager Planning**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**  
**Steven Osborne-James, Senior Planning Officer, 0115 9772109**

### **Constitutional Comments (CEH 04.10.12)**

The recommendations set out in the report to be decided fall within the remit of the Environment and Sustainability Committee.

### **Financial Comments (DJK 04.10.12)**

The contents of this report are duly noted; there are no financial implications arising.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan –Local Aggregates Assessment

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

Whole County