Divisions Affected – All

CABINET

24th January 2023

LOCAL AGGREGATES ASSESSMENT

Report by Corporate Director of Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a) Approve the Local Aggregate Assessment presented in Annex 2.

   b) Authorise the Corporate Director of Environment and Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment to make any revisions and publish the Oxfordshire Local Aggregate Assessment for the calendar year 2021 on the Council website.

Executive Summary

2. Under the National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021 (NPPF), Mineral Planning Authorities should prepare an annual Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA). The NPPF states that the LAA should 'forecast future demand, based on a rolling average of 10 years' sales data and other relevant information, and an assessment of all supply options.'

3. The annual Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) sets the level of mineral provision for the County Council as the Minerals Planning Authority, to ensure an appropriate supply for Sand and Gravel and Crushed Rock. This provision level, known as the Aggregates Provision Rate (APR) is based on an assessment between the supply and demand of aggregates in Oxfordshire and forecast demand.

4. The data is gathered through annual Aggregates Surveys of mineral operators within Oxfordshire.

5. The LAA provides the most up to date information and evidence to inform mineral planning within Oxfordshire. The latest LAA (Annex 2) covers the calendar year 2021.

6. By supporting the recommendation to adopt the latest LAA, the County Council is endorsing the provision levels set out in paragraph 40 of this report for use as evidence for the provision for mineral working in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, and for calculating the Oxfordshire landbank as at the end of 2021.

Summary of Main Findings

7. Table 1 provides a summary of the main findings in relation to sales, reserves and landbank of Primary Won Aggregates as set out in the latest LAA. The arrows indicate an increase or decrease from the previous year's LAA findings. For a full summary of Key Data including average 10-year sales and 3-year sales, please see Annex 1 or for full historic records see the Appendix of the LAA (Annex 2)

	LAA (for calendar year 2021) mt- million tonnes	
Sharp Sand and Gravel Sales	1.157mt	
Sharp Sand and Gravel Reserve	10.586mt	
Sharp Sand and Gravel Landbank[1] (7 years or more)	10.4 years	
Soft Sand Sales	0.264mt	
Soft Sand Reserve	3.824mt	
Soft Sand Landbank (7 years or more)	15.74 years	
Crushed Rock Sales	1.254mt	
Crushed Rock Reserve	6.455mt	
Crushed Rock Landbank (10 years or more)	7.83 years	

Table 1: Summary of mineral findings 2021

8. Detailed assessments of supply and demand were carried out. These assessments also included evidence of sales figures, economic forecasts, infrastructure requirements and population and housing. Also considered were the impacts of Covid, the energy crisis and inflation alongside the details of the mineral imports and exports figures from MHCLG (now DLUHC) in 2019.

9. Following these considerations, it is proposed that the Aggregates Provision Rates are kept the same as last years LAA for Sharp Sand and Gravel and Soft Sand, however it is intended to increase the Crushed Rock Aggregates Provision Rate to the 10-year average of 0.824mtpa, from the previous LAA APR of 0.778mtpa. Therefore, the APR's for this year's LAA are:

- **Sharp Sand and Gravel – 1.015mtpa**

[1] The landbank is calculated through taking the mineral reserve and dividing by the LAA provision rate.

- **Soft Sand – 0.243mtpa**
- **Crushed Rock – 0.824mtpa**
- **Recycled and Secondary Aggregates - 0.926mtpa**

10. The Core Strategy, Policy M2, sets out the amount of minerals to be provided through the Site Allocations Plan. This was based on the LAA2014 Aggregates Provision Rates. Table 2 sets out the remaining mineral requirements to meet the Core Strategy Requirements.

	Core Strategy Requirements identified through LAA
Sharp Sand and Gravel	2.296mt
Soft Sand	0
Crushed Rock	0

Table 2: Core Strategy Mineral Requirements (mt- Million tonnes)

11. As the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, the County Council has a duty under the NPPF to "plan for and maintain a steady and adequate supply of minerals". This is measured through the LAA's and our landbank provision. Our current landbank for Soft Sand and Sharp Sand and Gravel is above the 7-year requirement in the NPPF, however upon completion of the latest LAA, the Crushed Rock landbank remains below the 10 years required. This is the fourth consecutive year it has fall below the required level. A trigger was reached for a policy review of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (2017) in 2019, particularly Policy M2 for Crushed Rock, and this work is currently underway.

12. The latest identified mineral requirements, from the LAA, are set out in Table 3 below.

	Local Aggregate Assessment Requirements
Sharp Sand and Gravel	2.296mt
Soft Sand	0.118mt
Crushed Rock	0.723mt

Table 3: Local Aggregate Assessment Requirements

Local Aggregate Assessment

Sales

Primary won aggregate

13. Annex 1 sets out the sales figures for Sharp Sand and Gravel, Soft Sand and Crushed Rock, alongside the 10-year and 3-year sales averages for each mineral type for 2021.

14. In 2021, all three land won minerals saw an increase in their sales compared with 2020. Also, the 10 and 3-year averages increased for all mineral types. For Sharp Sand and Gravel, they were the highest sales since 2006, for Soft Sand since 2011, and for Crushed Rock since 2003.

Recycled and Secondary Aggregates

15. In 2021 recorded sales in Recycled and Secondary Aggregate were 0.416mt. Survey response was poor therefore this was calculated from operator returns, where received, alongside historic returns and the Environment Agencies Waste Data Interrogator.

Rail Depots

16. In 2021, there were no survey returns from operators on sales from Rail Depots. However, due to increased rail depot capacity, it suggests that sales from these depots have significantly increased.

Supply

Oxfordshire is a mineral rich county which currently has 24 quarries with 12 Sharp Sand and Gravel permissions, 8 Soft Sand permissions and 15 Crushed Rock permissions. Some sites produce a variety of mineral types within them. We are one of the major mineral producers in the Region, even Nationally, and we have more Crushed Rock producing sites than the rest of the South East combined.

Sand and Gravel

17. At the end of 2021, Oxfordshire had twelve Sand and Gravel quarries, one of which has not yet commenced, two currently inactive and one in suspension. One planning permission was granted in 2021 for 225,000 tonnes of Sharp Sand and Gravel at Hatford, and there were three Sharp Sand and Gravel planning applications outstanding.

18. Total permitted reserves of Sharp Sand and Gravel in Oxfordshire at the end of 2021 were 10.586mt.

Soft Sand

19. In Oxfordshire, at the end of 2021, there were eight sites with planning permission for Soft Sand extraction, with one currently inactive. One planning application for 130,000 tonnes of Soft Sand at an extension at Hatford was granted in 2021.

20. Total permitted reserves for Soft Sand in Oxfordshire at the end of 2021 were 3.824mt.

Crushed Rock

21. At the end of 2021, there were fifteen sites with planning permission for Crushed Rock extraction. There were twelve active sites and three closed sites. A planning permission was granted in 2021 for 520,000 tonnes of Crushed Rock at Hatford. There were also two planning applications for Crushed Rock outstanding at the end of 2021.

22. Total permitted reserves for Crushed Rock in Oxfordshire at the end of 2021 were 6.455mt.

Recycled and secondary material sites

23. At the end of 2021, permitted capacity taken from planning decisions, application statements and previous survey findings at the end of 2021 was 1.534 million tonnes.

Rail Depots

24. Oxfordshire has four permitted rail depots, three of which are operational. Due to a number of recent planning decisions, Oxfordshire has increased its rail depot capacity to over 3.5 million tonnes.

Imports and Exports

25. Every county in the UK has to import aggregates because none possess the geology necessary to produce all the types of aggregate required. All sales which reflect supply and demand are tracked in the four (six) yearly national aggregate surveys.

26. The most recent, the 2019 Aggregates Minerals Survey for England and Wales (AM2019), was undertaken by British Geological Survey (BGS) under a contract with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The AM2019 set out aggregate movements at a sub-regional level. This was discussed within the LAA2020 and it highlighted that Oxfordshire is a net exporter of all Land Won Sand and Gravel and Crushed Rock.

Demand

27. The NPPF requires that the level of future provision within the LAA should be based, in part, on the rolling average of 10 years' sales figures. it also requires "other relevant local information" to be taken into account.

28. Therefore, detailed assessments of supply and demand were carried out. These assessments included evidence of sales figures, economic forecasts, infrastructure requirements (such as HS2), and population and housing. Also considered were the impacts of Covid, the energy crisis and inflation alongside the details of the mineral imports and exports figures from MHCLG in 2019.

29. The evidence available suggests that economic forecasts, major infrastructure projects/key development and population growth and housing are all expecting some form of growth over the plan period and that demand would continue for the foreseeable future. The impact of Covid and Brexit, inflation and the energy crisis, along with infrastructure projects will continue to be explored in future LAA's.

Aggregate Provision Rates

30. Following all of these considerations, it is proposed that the Aggregates Provision Rates are kept the same as last year's LAA for Sharp Sand and Gravel, Soft Sand and Recycled and Secondary Aggregate, however it is intended to increase the Crushed Rock Aggregates Provision Rate to the 10-year average of 0.824mtpa, from the previous LAA APR of 0.778mtpa. Therefore, the APRs for this year's LAA are:

- **Sharp Sand and Gravel – 1.015mtpa**
- **Soft Sand – 0.243mtpa**
- **Crushed Rock – 0.824mtpa**
- **Recycled and Secondary Aggregates - 0.926mtpa**

Landbank

31. Using the Aggregates Provision Rate above and the reserves available, the landbanks as at the end of 2021 are:

- **Sharp Sand and Gravel – 10.4 years**
- **Soft Sand – 15.74 years**
- **Crushed Rock – 7.84 years**

Mineral Requirements

Core Strategy

32. The Core Strategy sets out requirements for Sharp Sand and Gravel, Soft Sand and Crushed Rock for the Plan Period based upon the LAA2014 provision rates.

33. Taking into account the sales since 2014 and the minerals available to be worked over the Plan Period, the remaining required minerals to meet the Core Strategy are set out below:

	Core Strategy Requirements (2014-2031) (Mt – Million tonnes)	**Remaining Core Strategy Requirements identified through LAA**

Sharp Sand and Gravel	18.27mt	2.296mt
Soft Sand	3.402mt	0
Crushed Rock	10.512mt	0

Table 4: Core Strategy Requirements

Local Aggregate Assessment

34. The annual Local Aggregate Assessment provides the provision figures to maintain a steady and adequate supply of mineral over the Plan period, known as the Aggregates Provision Rate (APR).

35. Only identifying sites to meet the Core Strategy requirement will not address us falling below our required 10-year landbank for Crushed Rock.

36. This will now be addressed through the preparation of the updated Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

37. To identify how much mineral, we need to meet the latest LAA requirements, we used a number of calculations, all based on the relevant LAA APR's.

Sharp Sand and Gravel	The LAA APR (1.015mtpa) from 2014 onwards to the end of the Plan Period.
Soft Sand	The LAA 2014-2018 (0.189mtpa) up until 2018 and then the LAA2019-21 (0.243mtpa) figure to the end of the Plan Period.
Crushed Rock	The LAA 2014-2018 (0.584mtpa) up until 2018 and then the LAA2019-21 (0.778mtpa) figure for those years and the latest LAA APR (0.824mtpa) from 2022 to the end of the Plan Period.

38. This LAA shows that based on the Aggregate Provision Rate requirements over the Plan period we will need to meet the following:

- **Sand and Gravel – 2.296 million tonnes**
- **Soft Sand - 0.118mt million tonnes**
- **Crushed Rock – 0.723 million tonnes**

Conclusion

39. The purpose of an annual LAA is to review the latest information available, in order to forecast future demand as well as analysing all aggregate supply options and assessing the balance between supply and demand.

40. To ensure that supply continues to meet demand, the Aggregates Provision Rate (APR) included within the LAA are**:**

- **Sand and Gravel – 1.015mtpa**
- **Soft Sand – 0.243mtpa**
- **Crushed Rock – 0.824mtpa**
- **Recycled and Secondary Aggregates- 0.926mtpa**

41. Using these APRs and the Oxfordshire reserves at the end of 2021, the landbanks can be calculated as:

- **Sand and Gravel – 10.4 years**
- **Soft Sand – 15.74 years**
- **Crushed Rock – 7.8 years**

42. To meet the Core Strategy requirements, we will only need to identify Sharp Sand and Gravel sites to meet the following mineral requirements over the Plan Period. There would be no further need to identify any further Soft Sand and Crushed Rock sites.

- **Sand and Gravel- 2.296 million tonnes.**

43. However, to meet our LAA requirements, we will need to be able to meet the following mineral requirements over the Plan Period.

- **Sand and Gravel – 2.296 million tonnes.**
- **Soft Sand – 0.118million tonnes**
- **Crushed Rock – 0.723 million tonnes**

Corporate Policies and Priorities

44. The LAA contributes to the corporate policy on climate change, the vision for thriving communities and thriving economy. It sets out the requirements for the raw materials required for growth following a full review of various factors. By recording and reviewing the supply and demand for minerals, it ensures we plan for future development well related to its need and based on the principles of sustainable development.

Financial Implications

45. The Minerals and Waste Plan is included within the Environment and Place Directorate and is in part being progressed within the existing mainstream budget for the council's minerals and waste policy function. The LAA forms part of this work-stream and it does not raise any additional financial or staff implications.

Comments checked by: Rob Finlayson

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Legal Implications

46. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the NPPF, the council is required to prepare, monitor and, as necessary, review a minerals and waste local plan. An annual LAA, as required by the NPPF, is an essential part of the evidence base for a "sound" minerals and waste local plan

and is also needed to enable the plan to be monitored. Under the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to meet the duty to cooperate in the preparation of local plans and related activities in relation to strategic matters.

Comments checked by: Jennifer Crouch

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Staff Implications

47. The Minerals & Waste Local Plan is included within the work of the Environment and Place Directorate.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

48. None have been specifically identified.

Sustainability Implications

49. The LAA sets out findings and conclusions on aggregates in Oxfordshire as at the end of 2021, based upon significant facts and figures. This is in accordance with the NPPF. It is acknowledged that a higher Aggregates Provision Rate will require more mineral to be delivered over the Plan period compared with the current Core Strategy and previous LAA rates.

50. However, is not for the LAA to set out where these sites will be and consider the sustainability implications for these. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan that will address the mineral requirements will be subject to an Equality and Climate Change Assessment, as well as a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment. In addition, any future Planning applications will also consider sustainability implications.

Risk Management

51. Having an up to date and robust LAA in place is necessary for the effective monitoring of the adopted Core Strategy and the preparation of the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan. It will also be an important factor in the determination of planning applications for mineral working where the size of the landbank is a material consideration.

Consultations

52. The NPPF requires the Council to consult and take into account the advice of the South East England Aggregate Working Party (SEEAWP); the draft Oxfordshire LAA for the year 2021 (Appendix 1) was considered by SEEAWP in October 2022. Comments received at the October meeting were that SEEAWP acknowledged the current special circumstances noted in the report and supported the review of APRs in due course. Following this response, no changes were needed to the LAA to reflect the comments.

53. There is no requirement for wider consultation on LAAs. This is a technical document that will form part of the evidence base of future Plan preparation and as such will be published alongside the Core Strategy Review and Site Allocations Plan.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annex:	Annex 1: Summary of Key Data 2021 Annex 2: Oxfordshire Local Aggregate Assessment
Background papers:	Local Aggregate Assessment 2021 (for minerals 2020) Collation of the results of the 2019 Aggregates Minerals Survey for England and Wales
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