

STATEMENT BY SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

September 2014




MATTER 4: RECYCLED AND SECONDARY AGGREGATES

Background Documents referred to within Statement

- Somerset Local Aggregate Assessment 2014 (Doc Ref SD23b)
- Somerset Minerals Plan (Doc Ref SD1)
- Somerset Waste Core Strategy (Doc Ref RL2)
- Representations Received (Doc Ref SD7)

Document Control Sheet

	<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
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For the forthcoming Hearing, the Inspector has requested that Somerset County Council briefly summarise their position on each discussion topic. The following is a brief summary of Somerset County Council's response to Matter 4: Recycled and Secondary Aggregates, examining the **Issue: Whether sufficient opportunities are provided for the supply of recycled and secondary aggregates.**

1. What has the demand for recycled aggregates been over the last 3 years?

SCC Response

- 1.1. Identifying the demand for recycled aggregates is not a straight-forward task, noting that it is difficult to monitor and is market-led.
- 1.2. According to the **Somerset Local Aggregate Assessment 2014 (Somerset LAA 2014) (Doc Ref SD23b)** recycled aggregate sales from sites with fixed plant in Somerset were:
 - 34,059 tonnes in 2011;
 - 60,934 tonnes in 2012; and
 - 105,770 tonnes in 2013.
- 1.3. As stated in the Somerset LAA 2014, the recent increase is likely to be explained by a combination of factors, in particular a more complete picture of recycled aggregate production (following more survey returns from industry and greater clarity about what constitutes recycled or secondary aggregate). This has resulted from sustained efforts of Somerset County Council and engagement from the minerals and waste industry.
- 1.4. The above sales figures are considered to be the best estimate of demand for recycled aggregates over the last 3 years.

- 1.5. It is noted that mobile crushers can be used to generate recycled aggregate on demolition/construction sites (without the use of fixed plant). Thus the generation of recycled aggregate, and the subsequent use of material, is likely to be more than the data returns from fixed plant would suggest.

2. What has the demand for secondary aggregates been over the last 3 years?

SCC Response

- 2.1. Taking a broad overview, Somerset does not have a high demand for secondary aggregates, not least because of a lack of available sources of secondary aggregates i.e. the types of industry that generate material such as colliery spoil or china clay waste.
- 2.2. According to the Somerset LAA 2014 (23b) secondary aggregate sales in Somerset were:
- 27,955 tonnes in 2011;
- 27,995 tonnes in 2012; and
- 2943 tonnes in 2013.
- 2.3. As stated in the Somerset LAA 2014, it is likely that the apparent fall in secondary aggregate sales are largely due to issues in data handling i.e. a lack of consistency in where the line is drawn between primary and secondary aggregates.
- 2.4. Somerset County Council has been working over recent years to sharpen its definition of secondary aggregates and give greater guidance to industry when submitting survey returns.
- 2.5. As a result of the latest feedback from the South West Aggregates Working Party (SW AWP), and in discussion with the SW AWP on 19 May 2014, the County Council revised the draft Somerset LAA 2014 to give a more explicit and tightly defined approach to secondary aggregates. The Somerset LAA 2014 now includes the statement that "*even if the product is secondary to the main / premium output of the site, most, if not all, such by-products should be considered as primary aggregates*". This approach will inform further dialogue with operators when undertaking the next AWP survey and LAA update.

3. Does the Plan provide sufficient opportunities for the recycling of aggregate materials?

SCC Response

- 3.1. Yes. Whilst it is acknowledged that the demand for recycled aggregates is market led and specific sites may come forward for producing recycled aggregates where they would be considered to be most profitable, the **Somerset Minerals Plan (Doc Ref SD1)** includes a strategic policy on the provision of recycled and secondary aggregates (SMP1), including support for the supply of recycled and secondary aggregates including (but not limited to) high quality recycled aggregates.

- 3.2. The Minerals Plan also includes a policy that in effect restricts the disposal of solid mineral wastes (DM11) thereby encouraging the production of recycled aggregates.
- 3.3. Focusing on waste planning, it is important to recognise the role of the **Somerset Waste Core Strategy (Doc Ref RL2)** as part of the Development Plan that encourages opportunities for the recycling of aggregate materials. The waste hierarchy is embedded in the structure of the Waste Core Strategy, and policy WCS2 on recycling and reuse includes policy wording on the recycling and reuse of inert waste.

4. Is there enough encouragement to use recycled aggregates as a substitute for primary aggregates?

SCC Response

- 4.1. Yes, the Somerset Minerals Plan provides enough encouragement to use recycled aggregates, reflected in:
 - the vision of the Plan: making best use of the county's mineral resources;
 - Objective A: which refers to the production of recycled and secondary aggregates; and
 - the inclusion of policy SMP1: a priority at the outset of the Plan to promote the production of recycled and secondary aggregates.
- 4.2. Policy SMP1 makes specific reference to high quality recycled aggregates, thus helping to highlight that recycled aggregate can vary in quality, and this can influence the use of the stone generated – whereby stone is not automatically used as standard fill material.
- 4.3. Noting the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is embedded in the NPPF and in the Plan's policy SD1, it is hard to imagine what more can be done to encourage the use of recycled aggregates as a substitute for primary aggregates, noting also this is primarily a matter for the market to determine. Specific sites may come forward for producing recycled aggregates where they would be considered to be most profitable.
- 4.4. As stated by operators in their responses to the pre-submission consultation – see the **Representations Received (Doc Ref SD7)** – there is a limit to the degree that recycled aggregates can act as substitute for primary aggregates. As stated by R43 and R44: *“Whilst the sustainable use of recycled and secondary aggregates is welcomed and makes a valued contribution to overall aggregates demand it must be recognised that recycled or secondary aggregates cannot replace primary aggregates in certain applications”*.
- 4.5. R106 adds further detail in stating *“This policy [SMP1] is supported; however it must be recognised that recycled aggregates are primarily the result of construction work and are in no way linked to primary aggregate production. Somerset does not experience the level of built development that other areas experience and recycling is a factor of development not the availability of natural resources. This is particularly the case in Somerset as such as large*

proportion of the primary aggregate produced in the County serves London and parts of the south of England which do not possess resources of stone. Large amounts of aggregate from Somerset are used elsewhere and should be recycled elsewhere during development work in those areas.”

- 4.6. Taking a broader perspective, there is also encouragement provided nationally by the Aggregate Levy which helps to encourage greater use of recycled material (<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/aggregates-levy/index.htm>) as well as the landfill tax – a driver to reuse demolition waste rather than landfill it (<https://www.gov.uk/green-taxes-and-reliefs/landfill-tax>).

5. Does the Plan provide sufficient opportunities for the production of secondary aggregates?

SCC Response

- 5.1. Yes, the Plan provides enough sufficient opportunities for the production of secondary aggregates, noting the inclusion of policy SMP1 as stated above.
- 5.2. It is worth noting that in a two tier authority area such as Somerset, many of the types of industrial development that produce secondary aggregate (such as steel slag) would be not be determined by the County Council. Furthermore, the types of mineral extraction that do occur in Somerset do not tend to produce secondary aggregates (also see the County Council’s response to question 8 below). Thus the County Council is constrained by what it can do to encourage secondary aggregate production beyond the inclusion of a policy such as SMP1.

6. Is there enough encouragement to use secondary aggregates as a substitute for primary aggregates?

SCC Response

- 6.1. Yes, the Plan provides enough encouragement to use secondary aggregates as a substitute for primary aggregates, via the support given for the production of recycled and secondary aggregates in policy SMP1 – noting also an embedded emphasis from Somerset County Council on the collection of data on recycled and secondary aggregate production via the SW AWP survey and production of the annual Somerset LAA.
- 6.2. As stated by operators in their responses to the pre-submission consultation – see **Representations Received (Doc Ref SD7)** – there is a limit to the degree that secondary aggregates can act as substitute for primary aggregates. As stated by R43 and R44: *“Whilst the sustainable use of recycled and secondary aggregates is welcomed and makes a valued contribution to overall aggregates demand it must be recognised that recycled or secondary aggregates cannot replace primary aggregates in certain applications”*.

7. Should there be an annual target (either by quantity or % of total demand) for the production of recycled aggregates?

SCC Response

- 7.1. An annual target for the production of recycled aggregates would be difficult to plan for and difficult to monitor.
- 7.2. Several of the fixed plant that generate recycled aggregates do not have a tonnage limit on their permitted output. Impacts are constrained via other operational parameters – for example, linked with the hours or days of operation per calendar year.
- 7.3. Furthermore, the widespread scope for mobile crushing means that a significant amount of recycled aggregate is generated on-site without relevant data being captured. The collation of good data on construction, demolition and excavation waste (CDW waste) is notoriously difficult.
- 7.4. It is noted that monitoring indicator 1 in the Somerset Minerals Plan (SD1) seeks to monitor the total of recycled and secondary aggregate generated in Somerset, according to the data available, and this is considered the most appropriate and realistic way to monitor what is happening.

8. Should there be an annual target (either by quantity or % of total demand) for the production of secondary aggregates?

SCC Response

- 8.1. An annual target for the production of secondary aggregates is not considered appropriate, bearing in mind that the types of mineral extraction that do occur in Somerset do not tend to produce secondary aggregates. For example, Somerset does not have an active coal mining industry that would produce colliery spoil or mining operations that produce china clay waste.
- 8.2. Historically, quarries in Somerset have reported secondary aggregates sales. But closer scrutiny over recent years has revealed that most if not all of this material may be considered “secondary” to their premium product but nonetheless primary aggregates.
- 8.3. Thus the County Council is constrained by what it can do to encourage secondary aggregate production beyond the inclusion of a policy such as SMP1.
- 8.4. An annual target for the production of secondary aggregates would therefore be difficult to deliver.
- 8.5. More realistic is a commitment, such as that made in the Somerset LAA 2014 (SD23b) to ensure the secondary aggregate data collected by the County Council are as robust as possible.

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