



Strategic sites and BGS data

-  Strategic sites
-  Sand and gravel
-  Gypsum
-  Brickclay

Technical Note on minerals requirements in Leicester

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (September 2023) (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local plans. Para. 20 of the NPPF outlines that strategic policies should make sufficient provision for minerals and energy (including heat).

Chapter 17 of the NPPF focuses on facilitating the sustainable use of minerals. Amongst other provisions, para. 210 specifies that planning policies should:

- a) Provide for the extraction of mineral resources of local and national importance.
- b) So far as practicable, take account of the contribution that substitute or secondary and recycled materials and minerals waste would make to the supply of materials, before considering extraction of primary materials, whilst aiming to source minerals supplies indigenously.
- c) Safeguard mineral resources by defining Mineral Safeguarding Areas and Mineral Consultation Areas; and adopt appropriate policies so that known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance are not sterilised by non-mineral development where this should be avoided.
- d) Set out policies to encourage the prior extraction of minerals, where practical and environmentally feasible, if it is necessary for non-mineral development to take place.
- h) Ensure that worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity, taking account of aviation safety, and that high quality restoration and aftercare of mineral sites takes place.

Paragraph 212 states that local planning authorities should not normally permit other development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas if it might constrain potential future use for mineral working.

Background in Leicester

Leicester has historically had significant mineral workings, with brickworks at Gipsy Lane and various historic sand and gravel pits at Watermead Country Park and around the River Soar at Aylestone. Due to the relative size and location of settlements and the comparable number of open areas, all current mineral workings in Leicestershire are outside the city boundaries and it is unlikely that this is going to change in the future. Consequently, there is no primary aggregate production within the city's administrative boundary. The production of secondary and recycled aggregates in the city is currently unknown.

Minerals data from British Geological Survey indicate that river terrace deposits could contain sand and gravel along the River Soar valley from Aylestone in the south to Birstall in the north. Leicester may also have extensive gypsum deposits in the

southwest of the city and brick clay deposits in the northeast. However, it is considered that due to the extensive size of workings required to extract these minerals, no areas in the city exist where it would be possible now or in the foreseeable future to sustainably extract these minerals.

The undeveloped areas with potential for sand and gravel extraction are extremely constrained, as they fall within the river and canal corridor where the sites are in active leisure or nature conservation use or are protected by green wedge designations.

These protections are set to continue under the draft Local Plan currently under examination. While it is not expected that extraction will happen within the lifetime of the draft Local Plan, through safeguarding, the sites will be available to future generations for mineral extraction should circumstances change.

Adopted Minerals Planning Policy for Leicester

The current adopted minerals plan for Leicester is formed of the 2006 City of Leicester Local (saved policies) pages 37 to 38 and the adopted Leicester Core Strategy pages 97 and 98, which specifically relate to minerals safeguarding. It is the Council's intention that these are to be replaced by the emerging Local Plan. The Council currently has no specific minerals extraction policies beyond safeguarding due to the constrained nature of the city. Regarding secondary aggregate production, this is treated as a waste use and is therefore subject to a different suite of policies.

Current Mineral Requirements

Due to the reasons set out above, the Council imports all forms of primary extracted minerals needed for construction, including aggregates and other building stones such as granite and slate.

Quarries in Leicestershire are the main suppliers of these materials, with construction aggregates coming from the various quarries in the northwest part of Leicestershire such as Breedon Cloud Hill and the quarries at Bardon. Hard stone such as granite is available from local Leicestershire quarries such as Mountsorrel and Croft and there is a large gypsum extraction facility at Barrow Upon Soar.

With regard to secondary aggregate production, Leicester has one large urban quarry at Ulverscroft Road and there are various small facilities operating within the industrial estates of Leicester. The estimated total capacity of these facilities is around 200,000 tonnes per annum.

It is clear from the above that the city has a large need for construction minerals which cannot be met from sources within the city. Therefore, this is a key matter which will need to be addressed in the city's future minerals and waste plan.

On completion of the hearings into the Leicester Local Plan, the Council will commence a replacement minerals and waste local plan which will set out in more detail how the Council is to meet its future minerals requirements. The Council is committed to working closely with Leicestershire County Council due to its reliance on its mineral

reserves and will prepare a joint statement of common ground around this matter as part of the plan production.