

The Minerals Planning Conference

Priorities for a New Government





Northumberland
County Council

Local Aggregates Assessments:

A perspective on practice in Northumberland

RTPI/MPA Minerals Conference – 19 June 2024

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Content of presentation

- This presentation will principally look at the preparation of the Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) for Northumberland to provide an example of practice.
- The presentation will cover:
 - Some context on Northumberland
 - Examples of joint working
 - Examples of the approach to understanding demand and supply
 - Some thoughts on AWP submission and consultation

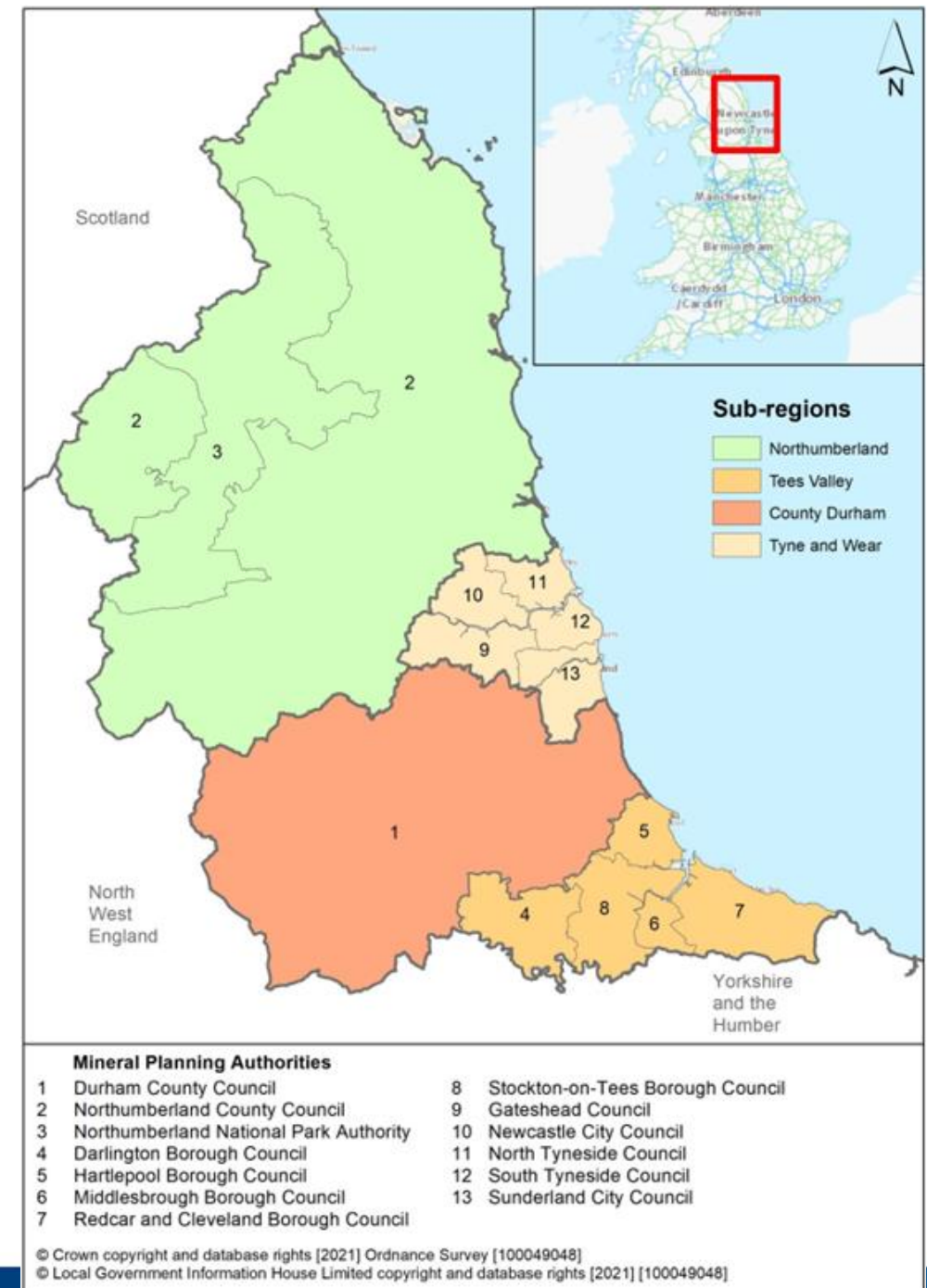
A little bit about Northumberland

- Largely rural.
- The most sparsely populated County in England. Population concentrated in the south-east of the County and in the main market towns
- National Park and 2 AONBs (Northumberland Coast and North Pennines)
- Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site



Context within North East England

- 13 MPAs in 4 sub-regions.
- Main population centres in Tyne and Wear and Teesside.
- Large rural hinterland.
- Traditionally supply within the region is quite self-contained, but there are cross boundary movements.



Aggregates in Northumberland

The most important resources include:

- Hard rock – Dolerite (from the 'Whin Sill' resource) and Carboniferous limestone
- Sand and Gravel – Fluvial and Glacial (particularly in the main river valleys).
- Marine sand and gravel – Landed at the Port of Blyth
- Recycled aggregates – Mainly construction and demolition wastes and asphalt planings
- Secondary aggregates – Ash from a power station



Before LAAs

- National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates provision
- Guidelines then disaggregated to MPA level or sub-regional level through regional plans with the AWP's providing technical advice.
- LAAs introduced through the NPPF in 2012.
Approach reflects the localism agenda – bottom up, rather than top down.

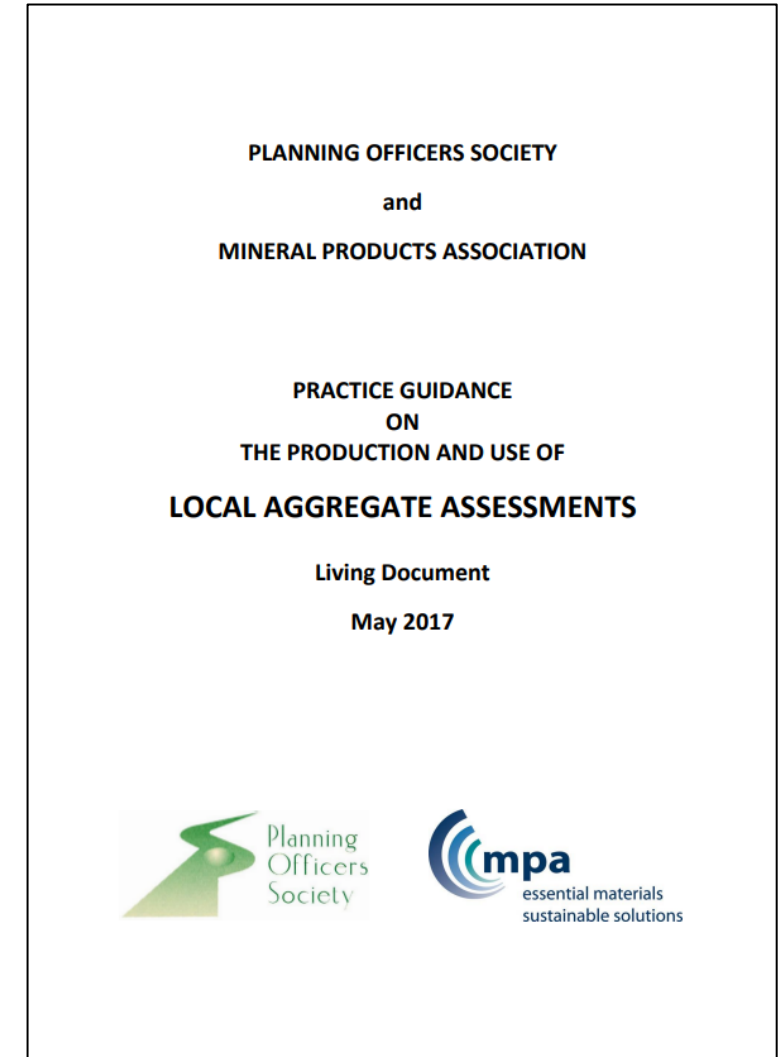
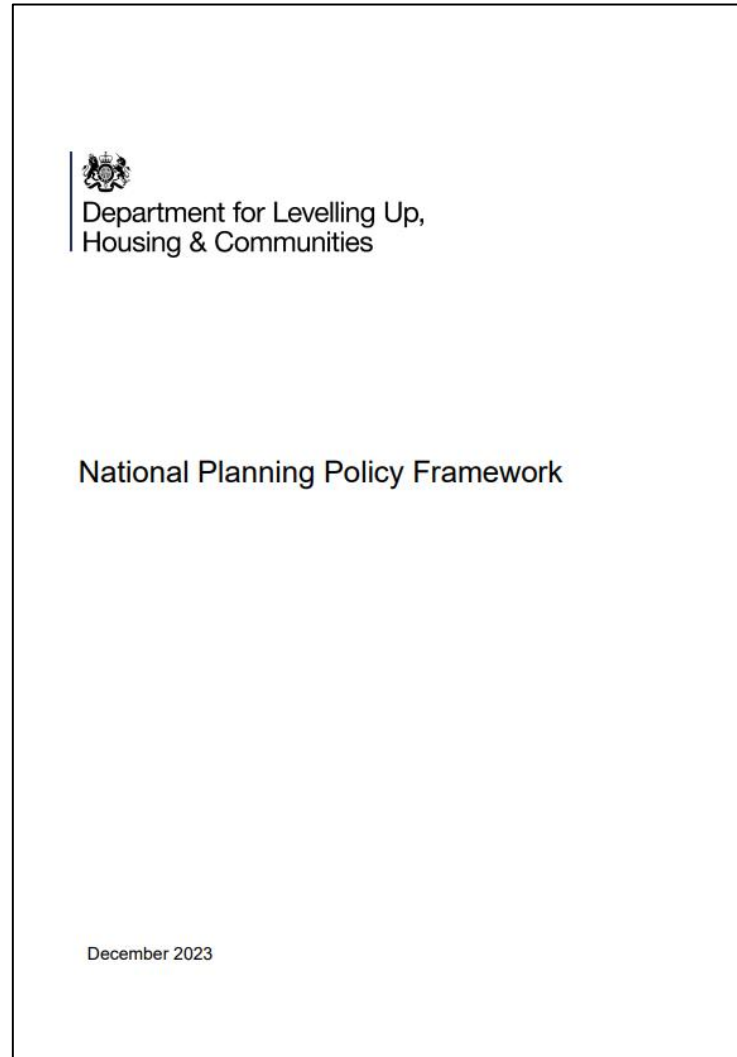


New Regions	Guidelines for land-won production		Assumptions		
	Land-won Sand & Gravel	Land-won Crushed Rock	Marine Sand & Gravel	Alternative Materials	Net Imports to England
South East England	195	25	121	130	31
London	18	0	72	95	12
East of England	236	8	14	117	7
East Midlands	174	500	0	110	0
West Midlands	165	82	0	100	23
South West	85	412	12	142	5
North West	52	154	15	117	55
Yorkshire & the Humber	78	212	5	133	3
North East	24	99	20	50	0
England	1028	1492	259	993	136

What should be in a LAA?

Key documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning Practice Guidance
- Practice Guidance prepared by POS and MPA



What should be in a LAA?

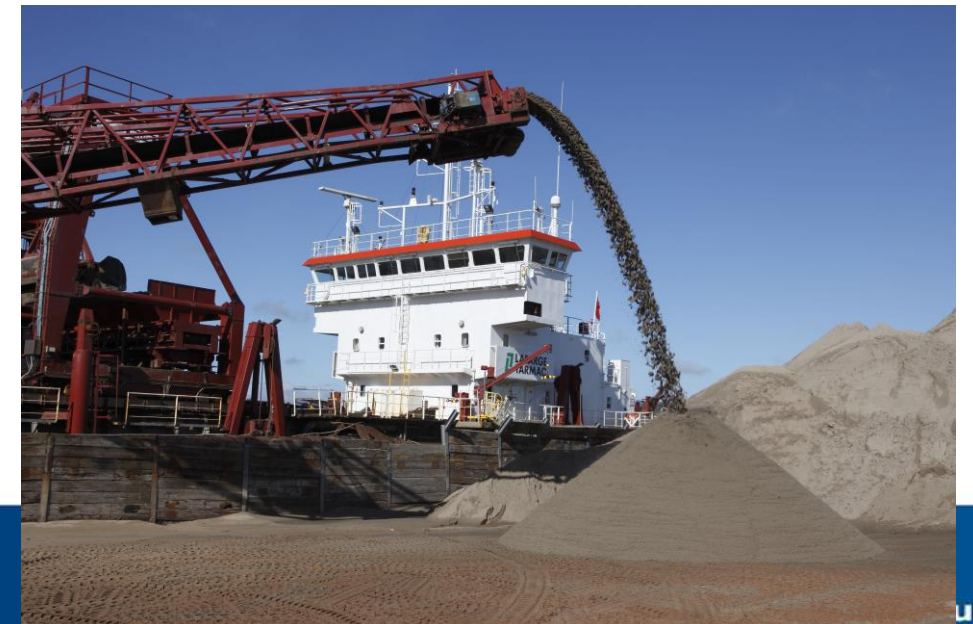
Planning Practice Guidance advises it should include:

- 1) a forecast of the demand for aggregates based on both the rolling average of 10-years sales data and other relevant local information;
- 2) an analysis of all aggregate supply options
- 3) an assessment of the balance between demand and supply, and the opportunities and constraints that might influence the situation.



It should conclude if there is a shortage or a surplus of supply and, if the former, how this is being addressed.

What should be in a LAA?

- LAAs should consider all aggregate supply options, including:
 - Land-won resources
 - Marine aggregates
 - Recycled aggregates
 - Secondary aggregates



Good practice – some basics

- Prepare an LAA 
- Prepare an LAA each year 
- Planning Practice Guidance states each MPA must prepare an LAA, even if there is no extraction in that area.
- Joint working – This is not essential, but it is worth consider working jointly with neighbouring authorities, where appropriate. It is important that this is at the right scale and has a logical geography.

Good practice – Joint working

- Some examples of joint working on LAAs in North East England include:
 - **Northumberland County Council** and **Northumberland National Park** – there is only one active quarry in the National Park and the authorities have a joint landbank figure.
 - The five **Tees Valley** authorities – these have a joint minerals and waste plan.
 - The five **Tyne and Wear** authorities – a mostly urban area with only 2 aggregate quarries.
- Joint working can work well by helping to:
 - Make efficient use of the staff resource available to prepare the LAA.
 - Demonstrate collaboration on cross-boundary issues.
 - Consider some of the supply and demand issues more holistically.

Understanding demand

- NPPF refers to the LAA being based on a **rolling average of 10 years sales data** and **‘other relevant local information’**.
- Other relevant information could include:
 - Planned levels of future house building
 - Other planned construction (including major construction projects) that will place a demand on aggregates.



Demand – Use of sales averages

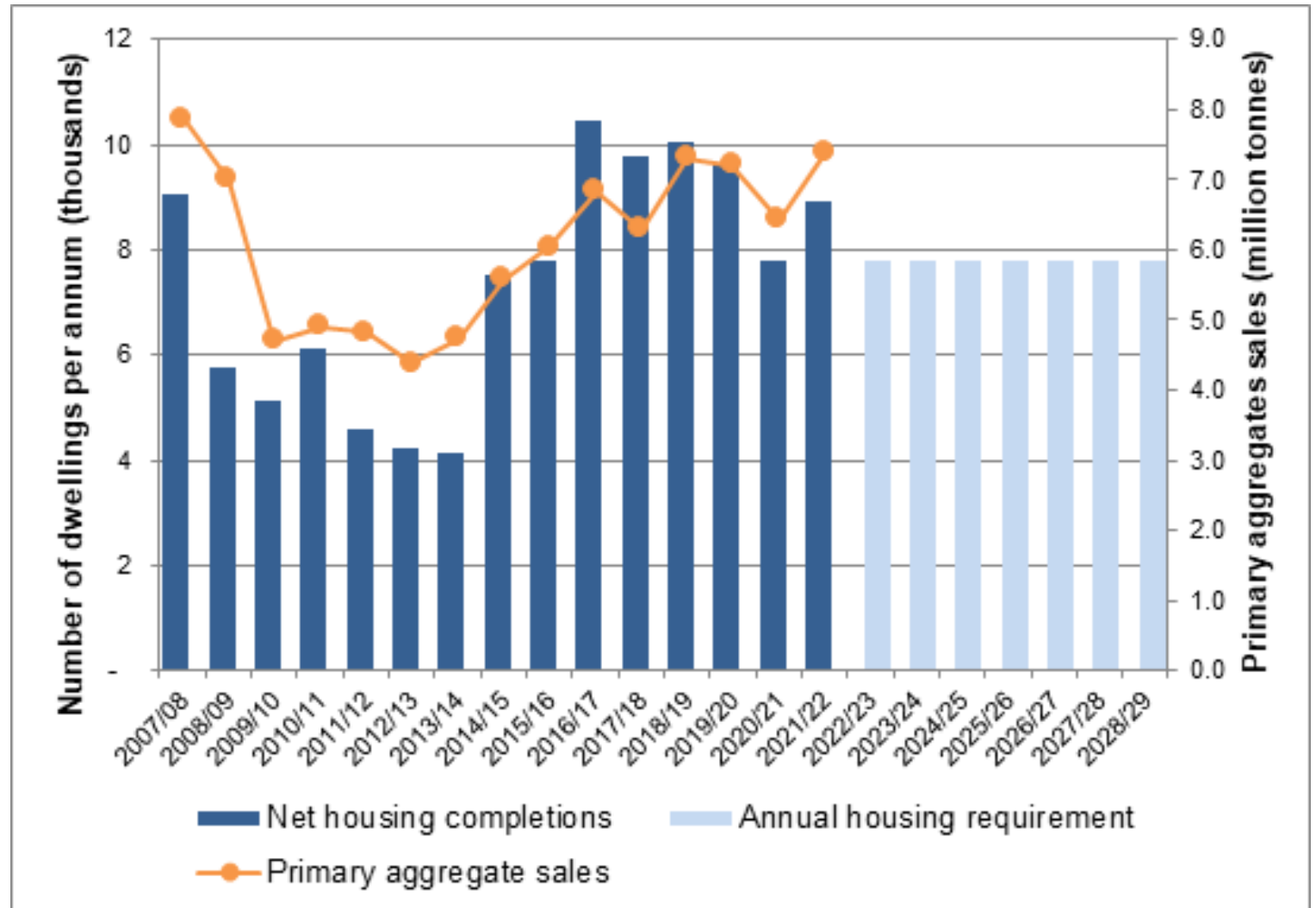
- Using a 10-year sales average to understand demand is line with the NPPF.
- BUT it is essential to also look at ‘other relevant local information’ to fully comply with the NPPF and PPG and to understand if using the 10-year sales average is appropriate.
- Positives of using the sales average – transparent, easy to understand, easy to calculate and easy to update on an annual basis.
- Use of sales average more difficult in areas with fewer operational sites – need to look at site allocations, industry interest in extraction, the resource and any constraints.

Demand – Use of sales averages

- Approach in Northumberland:
 - Calculate the rolling 3-year sales averages to understand if there are any changes in demand that are hidden by the 10-year average.
 - Compare housing delivery and construction in the previous 10 years to levels planned rates in the coming years
 - Look at both the LAA area and other areas where demand for aggregates from the LAA area is likely to come from. For example - In Northumberland we also look at demand from Tyne and Wear and across North East England.
- Questions to ask when using the sales average:
 - Does the calculated 10-year average appropriately represent the likely levels of future demand?
 - Does an adjustment need to be made to account for any increased demand?

Comparing housing delivery with future plans

- The chart shows aggregate sales from the North East since 2007 (the orange line) and housing completions over the same period (the dark blue bars). The light blue bars show future housing requirements set out in Local Plans.



Supply – Understanding the contribution of existing quarries

- Landbanks are a key indicator of supply, but the figures can sometimes hide some things that may impact on supply.
- Some things to consider:
 - Production capacity of sites – is this sufficient to provide annual demand requirement?
 - Planning permission end dates – are these set to expire for sites in the coming years?
 - What reserves are left in each site – will some of the sites that provide some of the production capacity be worked out in the coming years?
 - Local Plan site allocations – when will these come online and start contributing to supply.

Supply – Understanding the contribution of existing quarries

- In Northumberland we use information provided in planning application documentation to make estimates of anticipated output and remaining reserves at each site.
- This is then combined with information on Local Plan site allocation to help understand production capacity over the plan period.

Site	Estimated production capacity	Estimated reserves on 31 December 2023	Planning permission end date	Additional comments
Quarry 1	500,000	40,000,000	21/02/2042	
Quarry 2	150,000	750,000	31/10/2024	Likely to be reserves remaining when permission expires at the end of 2024.
Quarry 3	250,000	1,500,000	31/12/2031	Reserves likely to be worked out by planning permission end date.

Supply – Understanding the contribution of existing quarries

- Northumberland has a large landbank for crushed rock (over 40 years).
- However:
 - Large proportion of the reserve are contained in one site (around 60%)
 - Five quarries have end-dates before the end of the plan period
 - Reserves in some sites projected to exhausted by the end of the plan period.
 - Some sites inactive and it is uncertain whether they can contribute to supply
- Therefore, the analysis indicates we need to think about how supply can be maintained in line with the calculated annual demand requirement.

Balance between supply and demand

- Compare the calculated demand with the permitted reserves and landbank.
- Add analysis on available production capacity.
- Provide a clear conclusion – Is there a shortage or surplus in supply to meet demand?
- If there is a shortage, explain how this is being addressed
 - Are there site allocations in the Local Plan that could address the shortfall?
 - Do existing Local Plan policies provide sufficient flexibility to allow extension to existing sites where appropriate?
 - Is there a need to consider a plan review?

Supply – Recycled Aggregates

- Data often problematic due to poor participation in annual surveys.
- Where possible use survey returns from site operators to understand supply and supplement this with data derived from the Waste Data Interrogator as necessary.
- Be proportionate. Think about how important these materials are to supply in your area versus the other sources of supply.



Good practice – AWP submission and scrutiny

- Helpful for the AWP to consider all LAAs in its area together to understand how together they contribute to both local and wider needs.
- Agree timescales – it should tie in with AWP meetings and business for the year. Liaise with AWP secretary.
- The LAA should be received in advance of the meeting and short presentation given at meeting on the key information in the LAA.
- AWP feedback – Ideally a written record of the AWP advice should be provided. It should, for example, be clear about whether the approach to calculating demand is appropriate and whether all the relevant supply options have been considered.

Good practice – Consultation

- No formal requirements for consultation.
- Consultation could be carried out prior to or at the same time as consideration by the AWP.
- Aim to consult where necessary and try to avoid ‘consultation fatigue’, especially where there are no significant changes in the approach and the conclusions from the previous year.



Some final thoughts...

- LAAs are not perfect! But they can be an effective tool if used positively and in line with national policy and guidance.
- Use of sales averages can feel like there is a tendency to look backwards rather than forwards. Use other information to inform how applicable they are.
- In the future it would help to more clearly understand and quantify material requirements for major construction projects and what this means in terms of demand for aggregates.
- Up-to-date national guidelines would be helpful to understand whether each LAA is making an appropriate contribution to both local and wider needs.

Thank you!

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