

# Milton Keynes

## Local Aggregates Assessment 2021

(Reporting on 2020 data)

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Aggregate Infrastructure Sales	2019 Sales (Mt) & Comparison to previous year	Average (10-yr) Sales & Trend	Average (3-yr) Sales & Trend	LAA Rate (Mt)	Reserve (Mt)	Landbank (years)	Allocations (years)	Capacity (Mtpa)	Comments
Recycled / Secondary Aggregates		0.002 ↓	0 ↔	0.002				0.08	One facility is permitted for producing recycled aggregate however is not yet operational. Zero capacity for producing secondary aggregates.
Rail Depot Sales (Sand & Gravel)	C ↓	0.03 ↔	0.04 ↑	0.03				0.275	Only one rail depot therefore sales figures are confidential. Survey data not returned so based sales on 3-year average. Likely for crushed rock to have originated from Derbyshire as this has been the origin for the last 8 years. Over the same period, sand and gravel has originated from either Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, or Lincolnshire.
Rail Depot Sales (Crushed Rock)	C ↓	0.17 ↑	0.24 ↔	0.17					

#### General Comments

Supply contribution of sand and gravel sites is limited with insufficient permitted reserves to maintain a 7 year landbank. To address shortfall four sites allocated in MLP, potentially adding 1.95 Mt to the supply. Two of these sites were permitted in 2018 and are now active.



## Executive Summary

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Mineral Planning Authorities (MPAs) to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates by preparing an annual Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA). The LAA is required to:

- forecast the demand for aggregates based on a rolling average of ten years' sales data and other relevant local information,
- analyse all aggregate supply options, and
- assess the balance between demand and supply.

This LAA is the 2021 edition and includes the most recent (2020) aggregate sales and reserves data for Milton Keynes. The ten year period covered by this LAA is 2011 up to 2020. The main facts and figures from the report (by aggregate type) are set out below.

### Sand and gravel

- Milton Keynes has two permitted sand and gravel sites. Estimated reserves as of 31 December 2020 cannot be published for confidentiality reasons but are known to be limited.
- Sales have fluctuated greatly over the last ten years. Most recently, sales between 2019 and 2020 increased by 65%. Actual sales figures cannot be identified for confidentiality reasons.
- In 2014 (the most recent figures available) 0.76 Mt of sand and gravel was sold in the Milton Keynes - Buckinghamshire sub-region, of which 0.41 Mt was exported. 0.43 Mt of sand and gravel was imported, leaving an export/import balance of 0.2 Mt; making the sub-region a minor net importer.
- The Milton Keynes Minerals Local Plan (MLP) sand and gravel provision rate is 0.17 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa). It is based on 3-year average sales (2010 – 2012) and local factors affecting the supply and demand for sand and gravel. Average aggregate sales for the most recent ten year period (2011 - 2020) and 3-year period (2018 - 2020) are 0.13 Mtpa and 0.1 Mtpa respectively.
- The LAA Rate is to be 0.17 Mtpa, the same as in the adopted MLP.
- Currently the supply contribution of sand and gravel sites in the borough is limited. Based on the MLP provision rate (and also the LAA Rate) there are insufficient permitted reserves (as of 31/12/2020) to maintain a 7 year landbank, as required by national policy. To address this four sites for sand and gravel extraction have been allocated in the MLP which, subject to planning permission, have the potential to increase the landbank further.

### Crushed rock (limestone)

- Milton Keynes does not have any significant crushed rock resources. There have been no sales of limestone for aggregate purposes for at least the last ten years and there are currently no permitted sites.
- No annual apportionment/provision rate has previously been identified for limestone and is still not considered appropriate.
- In 2014 (the most recent figures available) imports of crushed rock into the Milton Keynes - Buckinghamshire sub-region totalled 0.49 Mt. As Milton Keynes does not produce crushed rock, it is a net importer.

### Secondary and recycled aggregate

- Milton Keynes currently has one aggregate recycling facility. There is a lack of consistent sales data available for aggregate recycling facilities it is therefore not considered necessary (or is it possible) to determine an annual LAA Rate.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the requirement for Mineral Planning Authorities (MPAs) to prepare an annual Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates. The LAA is required to assess the demand for, and supply of, aggregates in the MPA's area covering:
  - A forecast of the demand for aggregates based on the rolling average of ten years sales data and other relevant local information;
  - An analysis of all aggregate supply options, as indicated by landbanks, mineral plan allocations and capacity data. This analysis should be informed by planning information, the aggregate industry and other bodies such as local enterprise partnerships; and
  - An assessment of the balance between demand and supply and the economic and environmental 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.
- 1.2. This LAA details the current and future situation in the MPA area of Milton Keynes in terms of aggregate supply and demand including sales data, imports and exports and aggregate provision rates to 2032. It considers how local circumstances may impact on future aggregate supply and demand.
- 1.3. The LAA is updated on an annual basis and will enable the Council to monitor trends in aggregate production and assess the effectiveness of MLP policies including Policy 1: Providing for sand and gravel. This LAA is the 2021 edition and includes the most recent (2020) aggregate sales and reserves data for Milton Keynes.
- 1.4. The LAA is submitted to the South East England Aggregates Working Party (SEEAWP), an advisory body made up of MPAs across the region, for consideration and scrutiny. The AWP has a role to monitor the operation of the Managed Aggregate Supply System (MASS) through providing technical advice, particularly on supply provision.

### Data limitations

- 1.5. Milton Keynes is a relatively small MPA with a limited number of quarries. This year because there are only two active quarries in the Borough, it is not possible to publish annual sales or reserve figures for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

## 2. Aggregate supply and demand

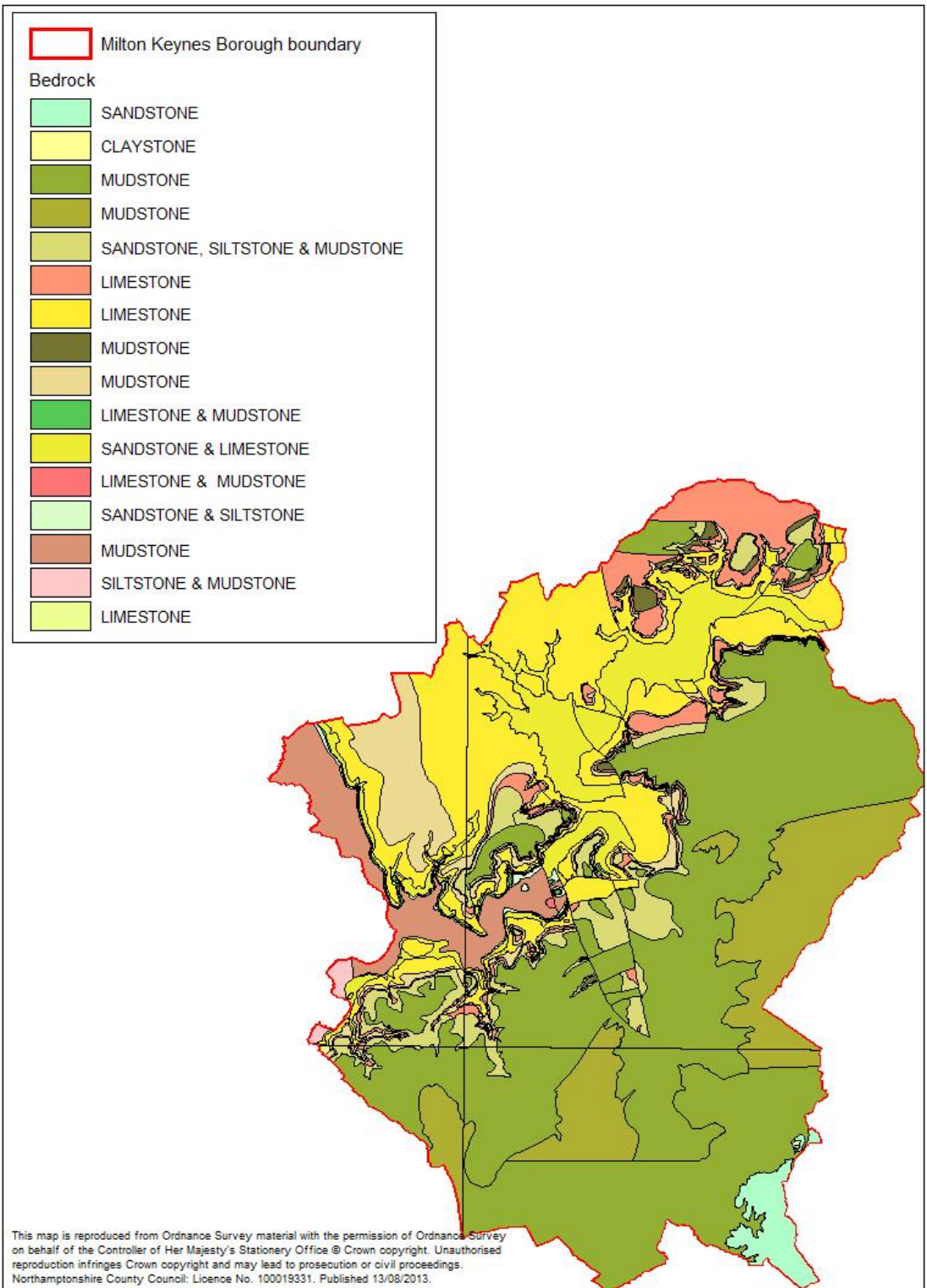
### Geology

- 2.1. The bedrock geology of Milton Keynes is mostly Jurassic mudstone and limestone with Cretaceous sand and sandstone outcrops in the south-east of the borough (Figure 1). Areas of superficial deposits are extensive in the borough and largely obscure this underlying geology (Figure 2, Table 1).
- 2.2. Sand and gravel is the main aggregate mineral resource in Milton Keynes largely found in river terrace deposits of the Great Ouse River and its tributaries. The majority of deposits are concentrated in the valley of the River Ouse to the north of the M1 motorway. Small patches of sand and gravel are also found in glaciofluvial deposits, however it is likely to be too clayey and chalky to be of economic interest. The majority of glaciofluvial deposits have been fully worked or sterilised by urban development. Sand and gravel is also found in deposits referred to as Sand and Gravel of Unknown Age and Origin but has now been either worked or sterilised by urban development. At the end of 2020 sand and gravel extraction took place at only two quarries in Milton Keynes.
- 2.3. Milton Keynes does not have any significant crushed rock resources. Over at least the last ten years there has been no extraction of crushed rock. Currently there is a small operational quarry at Western Underwood (Olney) that extracts limestone for non-aggregate building stone purposes. Apart from this one quarry, there has been no other working of building stone in Milton Keynes for many years. Further resources are known to be in the locality although the total yield is likely to be small.

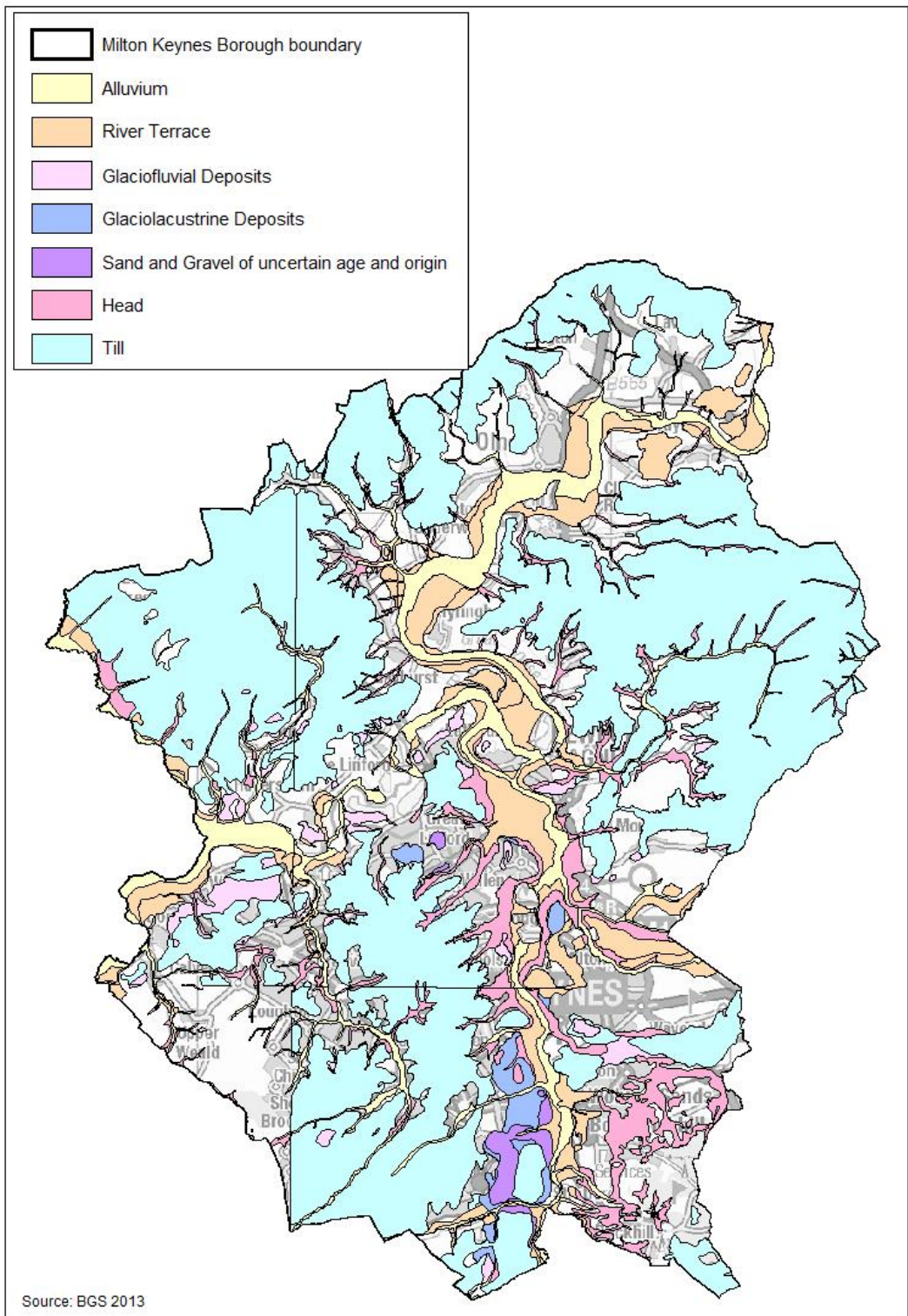
**Table 1: Superficial mineral deposits in Milton Keynes**

Deposit		Description
River deposits	Alluvium	Comprised of clay and silt, alluvium underlies the present day floodplains, generally occupying a wide but shallow channel cut into the underlying river terrace deposits. Concealed river terrace sand and gravel deposits underlay the alluvium and are referred to as 'sub-alluvial gravels'.
	River terrace	River terrace deposits, largely comprised of sand and gravel, are predominantly found in the river valleys associated with the Great Ouse river and its tributaries.
Sand and Gravel of Uncertain Age and Origin		Clayey, sandy gravel designated Sand and Gravel of Uncertain Age and Origin, occurs only in the valley of the River Ouzel.
Glacial deposits	Till	Glacial till (boulder clay), is found on the higher, plateau-like, ground in the borough.
	Glaciofluvial	Glaciofluvial deposits are comprised of clayey sand and gravel, found beneath, within and upon the till.
	Glaciolacustrine	Glaciolacustrine deposits comprise silt, clay with sparse sandy layers and are associated with the till.
Mass movement deposits	Head	Head occurs on the lower valley sides and valley bottoms where it merges with the river terrace deposits. It is typically gravelly, sandy clay.





**Figure 1: Geological bedrock map of Milton Keynes**



**Figure 2: Geological map of the superficial mineral resources of Milton Keynes**

## Sand and gravel

### Current supply

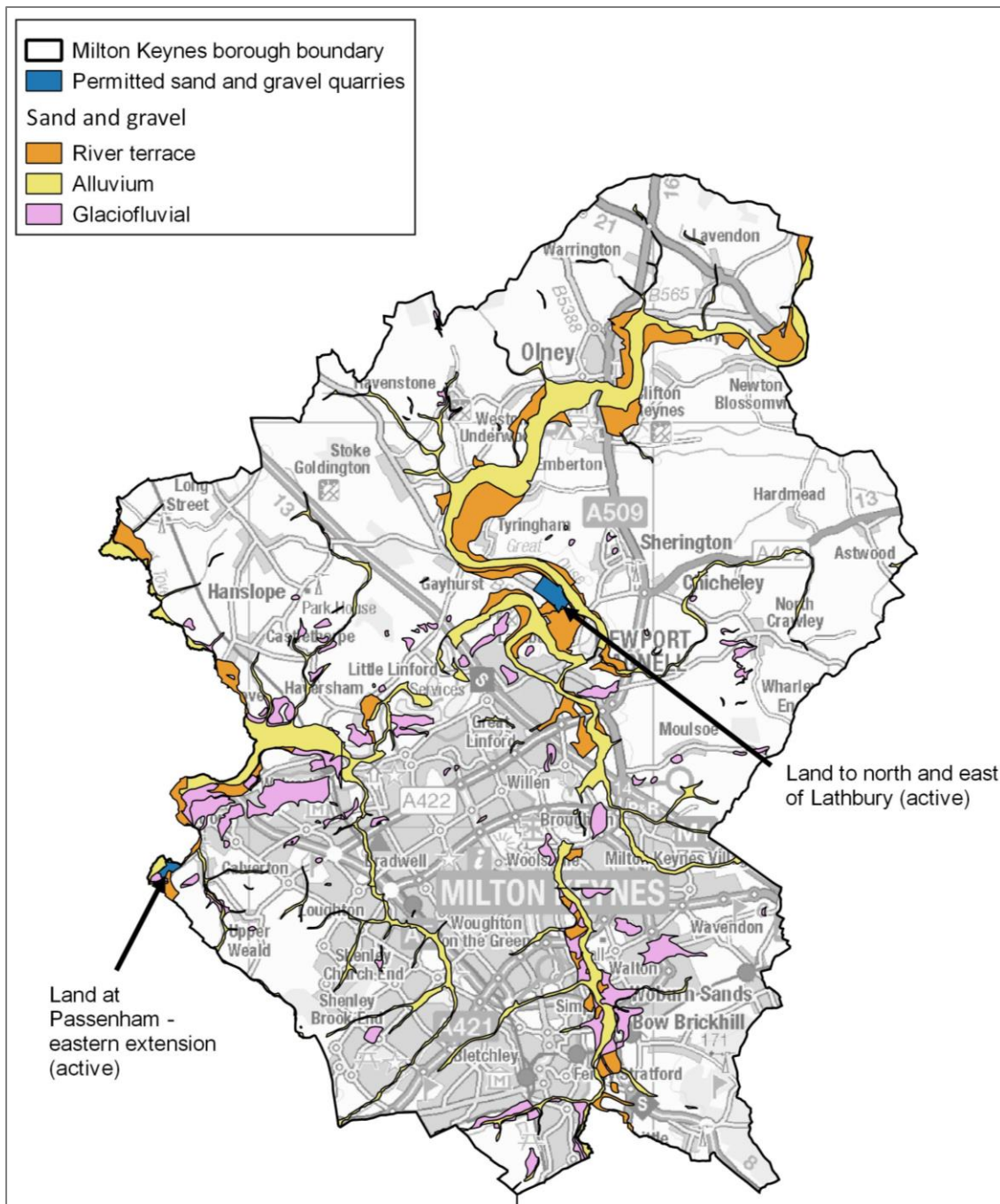
2.4. In Milton Keynes there are two sand and gravel sites with planning permission, and both were active in 2020: Land at Passenham (eastern extension) and Land to north and east of Lathbury<sup>1</sup>. The details of these sites are presented in Table 2. The location of these sites and associated geology are shown in Figure 3.

**Table 2: Permitted sand and gravel sites in Milton Keynes (as of 31/12/2020)**

Site	Operator	Status	Permission end date
Land at Passenham eastern extension (MLP allocation A1 Calverton/ Passenham Extension)	GRS Roadstone	Active quarry. Permission granted in 2018 for a 0.15 million tonnes (Mt) extension to Passenham Quarry.	2025
Land to north and east of Lathbury (MLP allocation A3 Northampton Road, Lathbury)	Smith Aggregates Ltd	Active quarry. Permission granted in 2018 for extraction of 0.61 Mt of sand and gravel.	2030

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<sup>1</sup> Data from 2021 Aggregate Survey returns (reporting on 2020 data). One survey had not been returned by the operator however the operator had stated in 2020 that extraction had commenced on site and so for the purposes of this LAA it is assumed the site (Land to north and east of Lathbury) is active. Sales and reserve data has been estimated for the site, with sales based on the annual extraction rate (as specified in application form). The operator stated that production had slowed in 2020 due to the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the economy and so a 50% reduction to the estimated sales figure has been applied.



**Figure 3: Geology of Milton Keynes with permitted sand and gravel sites**

2.5. Estimated total sand and gravel permitted reserves for Milton Keynes as of 31 December 2020 cannot be published for confidentiality reasons but are known to be relatively limited.

**Milton Keynes sales**

2.6. To protect commercial confidentiality sales figures for 2020 cannot be identified. Sales of sand and gravel have fluctuated over the last ten years. Between 2011 and 2014 sales decreased year on year. Sales increased significantly in 2015, fell in 2016 and increased again in 2017 to the highest levels seen in the last ten years. Between 2017 and 2019 sales fell by 86% and most recently, between 2019 and 2020, sales increased again (by 65%). It is likely that the periods of time when sales declined are

directly attributable to a deficit between rates of extraction and rates of replenishment through new permissions. Between 2011 and 2014 two active quarries of medium scale (Land at Caldecote Farm and Manor Farm) came to their end of life. Between 2011 and 2012 the only other permitted site was Land at Calverton, which was inactive for this period. The growth in sales in 2015 can be attributed to increased production levels at the Land at Calverton site and commencement of extraction at the Land east of Haversham Road quarry, which was granted permission in 2014. There were no sales from the Land at Calverton site in 2016, resulting in an overall decline in sales for this year. The growth in sales in 2017 can be attributed to sales resuming at Calverton and to higher production levels at the other two active sites. Sales fell in 2018 as the active quarry Land at Calverton came to its end of life and production levels reduced at Land south of Caldecote Farm. Two new permissions were granted in 2018; Land at Passenham (eastern extension) and Land to north and east of Lathbury however their permissions remained unimplemented thus leading to the overall reduction in sales. Sales fell significantly in 2019 as the two new permissions remained unimplemented, production remained low at Land south of Caldecote Farm as it came to its end of life, and Land east of Haversham Road quarry was exhausted. In 2020 Land at Passenham (eastern extension) and Land to north and east of Lathbury commenced extraction, leading to an overall growth in sales, although Land south of Caldecote Farm quarry was exhausted and no longer contributed to sales.

### Imports and exports

- 2.7. A national Aggregate Minerals (AM) survey is conducted by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and British Geological Society (BGS) generally every four years. The survey includes analysis of movements (imports and exports) of aggregates for each MPA in England and Wales. Import data for Milton Keynes is combined with Buckinghamshire as one sub-region however sales data is presented separately.
- 2.8. Results of the latest survey in 2014 indicate that movements of sand and gravel into and out of the sub-region are almost self-balancing; with only 0.2 Mt more sand and gravel imported than is exported (Table 3).

**Table 3: Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes sand and gravel imports and exports 2014 (million tonnes)**

Total sales	Imports Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes sub-region	Exports Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes sub-region	Balance
0.76 Mt Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes sub-region (0.08 Milton Keynes)	0.43	0.41	0.2

*Note: As Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes are reported on a sub-regional basis the above figures do not include imports / exports within the sub-region (i.e. between Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes). Source: AM survey 2014 (Table 9b: Sales of primary aggregates by MPA and principal destination sub-region, and Table 10: Imports of primary aggregates by sub-region).*

- 2.9. Sand and gravel produced within the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes sub-region in 2014 totalled 0.76 Mt, of which just under half (0.35 Mt) remained within the sub-region. Exports from the sub-region totalled 0.41 Mt with 0.34 Mt staying within the South East region and the remainder exported to other areas outside of the region.
- 2.10. Specific to Milton Keynes, the majority (97%) of sand and gravel produced in 2014 stayed within the sub-region (Table 4). There were no exports to the South East region (beyond the Buckingham-Milton Keynes sub-region) presumably because Milton Keynes is on the edge of the region, with a large proportion of the borough surrounded by counties in the East of England and East Midlands regions.

**Table 4: Destination of sand and gravel produced in Milton Keynes in 2014**

Destination region	Destination sub-region	Percentage
South East	Buckingham and Milton Keynes	97%
East Midlands	Northamptonshire	2%
East of England	Bedfordshire (Central Bedfordshire, Bedford, Luton)	1%
	Suffolk	

- 2.11. Results from an earlier AM survey, undertaken in 2009, showed that the Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire sub-region was a net exporter of sand and gravel with 0.40 Mt (44%) of the total produced being exported whilst 0.24 Mt was imported, leaving a balance of minus 0.16 Mt. The move out of the economic recession since 2010 may explain the growth in imports in the later survey as sand and gravel production increased nationally.
- 2.12. In the South East, as nationally, the majority of sand and gravel and crushed rock aggregate is transported by road, with significantly less transported by rail and water. Some of the sand and gravel and crushed rock imported into Milton Keynes is by rail and uses the medium sized rail depot at Bletchley. Between 2019 and 2020 sales of sand and gravel from the depot decreased and sales of crushed rock increased. In 2020 it is likely all the crushed rock imported into Milton Keynes via rail originated from Derbyshire and sand and gravel from either Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, or Lincolnshire<sup>2</sup>.

## Limestone

### Current supply

- 2.13. At present, there are no permitted sites for the extraction of limestone for aggregate purposes in Milton Keynes. One site at Weston Underwood Quarry currently extracts limestone for non-aggregate building stone purposes, however it is a small site with limited output.

### Milton Keynes sales

- 2.14. There have been no sales of crushed rock in Milton Keynes in the ten year period between 2011 and 2020. With regards to the production of limestone for non-aggregate building stone purposes, there were no sales between 2007 and 2009 but in more recent years between 2011 and 2020 there have been a very small amount of sales (although figures cannot be identified for confidentiality reasons).

### Imports and exports

- 2.15. The 2014 AM survey shows that in 2014 imports of crushed rock into the Milton Keynes – Buckinghamshire sub-region totalled 0.49 Mt. Milton Keynes does not produce any crushed rock and as such is a net importer. The previous 2009 AM survey showed that imports into the sub-region were 67% lower (0.16 Mt).

### Recycled and secondary aggregates

- 2.16. Recycled aggregates, which include concrete, stone and brick are sourced from reprocessed materials that have previously been used in construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) work. Secondary aggregates are usually by-products of other

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<sup>2</sup> Survey data from the 2021 Aggregate Survey (reporting on 2020 data) had not been returned for Bletchley Rail depot and so sales were estimated based on the 3-year average sales. It is likely for crushed rock to have originated from Derbyshire as this has been the origin for the last 8 years. Over the same period, sand and gravel has originated from either Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire or Lincolnshire.

industrial processes that have not been used in construction. They include both natural and manufactured materials such as china clay, slate, flue ash and slag.

- 2.17. There is an increased importance of, and reliance on, alternative aggregate sources. Production of recycled and secondary aggregates is increasing in England and Wales especially following the introduction of the Landfill Tax, which discourages the disposal of waste to landfill, and the Aggregates Levy which taxes the extraction of primary aggregates. It is estimated that around 30% of total aggregate production and consumption in England is comprised of secondary and recycled aggregates. As the alternative aggregate sector grows, and provided the aggregate produced is of good quality, the reliance on primary aggregates will reduce.
- 2.18. Facilities that produce recycled aggregates within Milton Keynes include: Cotton Valley Waste Transfer Station (permitted April 2016 – not yet operational) for recycling inert CD&E waste with a capacity of 0.08 Mtpa; and a waste transfer and recycling facility located at Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall that segregates hardcore aggregate waste and sends to the aggregate recycling facility at Whitsundoles Compound in Bedfordshire for reprocessing. Milton Keynes does not produce any secondary aggregate.
- 2.19. The data available on secondary and recycled aggregate is variable and not considered completely reliable, particularly at the sub-regional level. National surveys undertaken for CD&E waste provide comparable datasets from 1998, 2003 and 2005. The 2005 dataset shows total arisings of CD&E waste for the South East of 14.2Mt, of which 4.2Mt is attributed to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire (including Milton Keynes) and Oxfordshire. More recently the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) undertook a study to estimate CD&E waste at a National level indicating arisings of 94.5, 76.9 and 77.4Mt for 2008, 2009 and 2010 respectively. The study estimated that 55% was recycled and 11% re-used or recovered on exempt sites (e.g. as clean fill for engineering purposes usually land reclamation, agricultural improvement or infrastructure projects).

### 3. Future aggregate supply

#### Aggregate provision

- 3.1. An annual aggregates provision figure for Milton Keynes is required to ensure an adequate and steady supply of aggregates is maintained to meet anticipated needs of the construction industry and reflect housing provision and growth.

#### Sand and gravel

- 3.2. The NPPF requires each MPA to calculate their own provision rate on the basis of average aggregate sales over a ten year rolling period and other relevant local information.
- 3.3. Table 5 presents the total sand and gravel sales in Milton Keynes during the ten year period (2011 - 2020) and shows the 10-year average sales for the period 2011 - 2020 and 3-year average sales for the period 2018 - 2020. The most recent ten year period of sales would give a sand and gravel figure of 0.13 Mtpa.

**Table 5: Total sand and gravel sales in Milton Keynes 2011 – 2020**

Year	Sand and gravel (Mt)
2011	C
2012	C
2013	C
2014	C
2015	C
2016	C
2017	0.24
2018	C
2019	C
2020	C
Total sales 2011 - 2020	1.3
10-year average 2011 - 2020	0.13
3-year average 2018 - 2020	0.1

*'C' confidential*

- 3.4. Government Planning Practice Guidance for Minerals (DCLG, 2014 - paragraph 64) states that MPAs should also look at the average 3-year sales to identify the general trend of demand and whether it may be appropriate to increase supply. The figure based on average 3-year sales for the period 2017 - 2019, as reported in the previous LAA, was 0.15 Mtpa; which is 14% higher than the figure based on the most recent 3-year period (2018 - 2020). The provision rate for sand and gravel in the adopted MLP<sup>3</sup> is 0.17 Mtpa (based on the 3-year average sales 2010 – 2012) which is around 30% higher than the 0.13 Mtpa figure based on the most recent 10-year average sales and 70% higher than the 0.1 Mtpa figure based on the most recent 3-year average sales.
- 3.5. Table 6 compares the provision of sand and gravel based on different provision rates (including the MLP provision rate) for the remaining 12 years (1 January 2021 – 31 December 2032) of the 20 year plan period (1 January 2013 – 31 December 2032).

<sup>3</sup> The MLP was adopted on 1 July 2017.



**Table 6: Provision of sand and gravel in Milton Keynes to 2032 based on alternative provision rates**

	<b>Adopted MLP provision rate</b>	<b>10-year average sales figure (2011 – 2020)</b>	<b>3-year average sales figure (2018 – 2020)</b>
Annual provision rate (Mtpa)	0.17	0.13	0.1
Total plan requirement (Mt): Annual provision x 12 year remaining plan period (2021 to 2032)	2	1.5	1.2
Permitted reserves (as at 31/12/20) (Mt)	C	C	C
Undersupply (-) over supply (+) (rounded to the nearest Mt)	-1	-1	-1

*'C' confidential*

3.6. Comparison of total plan requirements under each provision rate with permitted reserves as at 31 December 2020, indicates that there are not enough remaining reserves in Milton Keynes to meet a 12 year remaining plan requirement. In looking to address the apparent shortfall in supply, the MLP identifies four sand and gravel allocations. Two of these allocated sites: A1 Calverton/Passenham Extension (known as Land at Passenham (eastern extension)) and A3 Northampton Road, Lathbury (known as Land to north and east of Lathbury) were permitted in 2018. Originally the four allocated sites had the potential to add a further 2.08 Mt to the supply however, in light of the recent permissions this total has reduced by 0.13 Mt to 1.95 Mt (Table 7). The loss of reserve at Calverton/Passenham Extension is a result of a requirement to preserve some of the archaeological features identified onsite in situ and due to a 30m stand-off buffer being applied to the northern boundary, separating the site from the River Great Ouse.

**Table 7: Allocated sites for sand and gravel extraction in the adopted MLP**

<b>Allocations</b>	<b>Approximate reserve (Mt)</b>
A1 Calverton/Passenham Extension	0.15*
A2 Quarry Hall Farm	0.72
A3 Northampton Road, Lathbury	0.62**
A4 Manor Farm and Lavendon Mill	0.46
Total reserves	1.95

\*In light of approved application, reserve reduced from 0.25 Mt to 0.15 Mt.

\*\*In light of approved application, reserve reduced from 0.65 Mt to 0.62 Mt

3.7. In addition to allocated sites, it is possible that unallocated, or 'windfall' sites in Milton Keynes may come forward during the plan period and add to the supply.

### Limestone

3.8. It is not possible (nor is it considered appropriate) to identify a provision rate for crushed rock as there have been no sales of crushed rock for at least the last ten years.

## Secondary and recycled aggregate

- 3.9. It is also not possible to determine a provision rate for secondary and recycled aggregates based on average sales over a ten year period. Sales information is difficult to obtain due a low response rate to AM surveys in Milton Keynes and unfortunately where data has been provided in the past, it is not consistent.

## Landbanks

- 3.10. A landbank is a stock of planning permissions for mineral extraction which are calculated by dividing permitted reserves by the provision figure. National planning policy requires landbanks of at least 7 years for sand and gravel to be maintained. Approximate landbanks for sand and gravel for Milton Keynes as of 31 December 2020 are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Landbanks for sand and gravel in Milton Keynes in 2020**

	MLP provision rate	10-year average sales figure (2011 – 2020)	3-year average sales figure (2018 – 2020)
Annual provision rate (Mtpa)	0.17	0.13	0.1
Permitted reserves (as at 31/12/20) (Mt)	C	C	C
Landbanks (rounded to full years)	4	5	7

*'C' confidential*

- 3.11. The Milton Keynes area has a history of not meeting landbank figures due to a limited number of extraction sites coming forward which often creates a deficit between rates of extraction and rates of replenishment through new permissions. Under the MLP provision rate there are not enough reserves remaining to meet the minimum 7 year landbank requirement. Should the remaining two sand and gravel allocations in the MLP be brought forward and permitted they have the potential to increase the landbank further.
- 3.12. No landbanks have previously been required to be maintained for crushed rock as no apportionment/provision figure was adopted and this continues to be the case.

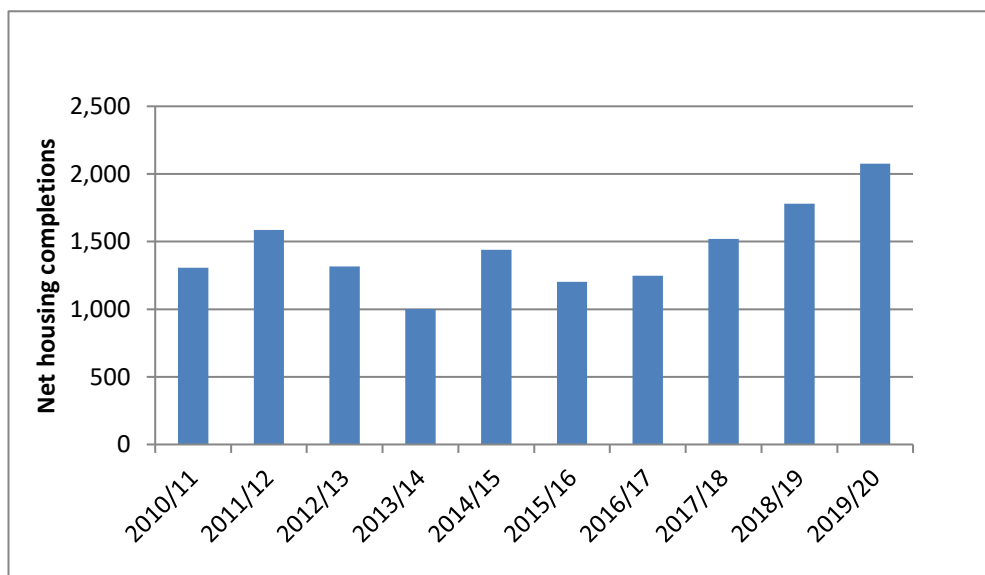
## 4. Consideration of local circumstance

- 4.1. The NPPF requires MPAs to base their future mineral requirements on average sales over a 10-year rolling period, factoring in relevant local information to provision determination where applicable.
- 4.2. Local factors affecting the supply and demand of sand and gravel in Milton Keynes are discussed below. No apportionment has previously been identified for crushed rock in Milton Keynes due to low output; therefore consideration of local information affecting its supply and demand is not included.

### Demand for sand and gravel

#### Construction levels and population growth

- 4.3. Sand and gravel is used in the construction industry for purposes such as the making of concrete and mortar or for roadstone or drainage material. The level of construction, including house building and infrastructure, therefore contributes to the demand for sand and gravel and are key local factors to consider when determining a provision figure for Milton Keynes.
- 4.4. Milton Keynes has historically been, and continues to be, one of the fastest growing areas in the country. Since it was designated a New Town in 1967, the population has grown from 60,000 to over 261,750 (ONS 2015). Its projected growth in population between 2015 and 2026 is over 46,000 people. To support this growing population, Milton Keynes is planned to achieve 20,800 net housing completions over the next 15 years.
- 4.5. The rate of house building in Milton Keynes has fluctuated over the last 20 years. Figure 4 shows the number of housing completions over the last ten years between 2010/11 and 2019/20. Net housing completions were at their lowest in 2013/14 (1,001 completions) and in 2019/20 reached their highest levels in the last ten years (2,076 completions).



**Figure 4: Net housing completions in Milton Keynes 2010/11 – 2019/20**

- 4.6. The Milton Keynes Local Plan (Plan: MK), adopted in March 2019, sets out a requirement for approximately 26,500 dwellings to be built within the plan period 2016 - 2031, equating to around 1,766 dwellings per annum. In 2019/20 total completions were 2,076; 310 dwellings above target. The impact on development in Milton Keynes will be monitored through the council's Authority Monitoring Report.

- 4.7. Nevertheless, a degree of caution should be exercised when considering the correlation between demand for aggregate and level of house building. Between 2008 and 2010 for example sales of sand and gravel increased by 14% but during this same period the total number of house building completions in the borough decreased by 30% and between 2017 and 2019 sales of sand and gravel decreased by 86% but during this same period the total number of housing completions increased by 43%. Conversely, sales of sand and gravel began to fall between 2011 and 2014 when rates of housing building were also relatively low.
- 4.8. One national infrastructure project is planned for Milton Keynes; the development of an East West Rail link between Cambridge, Milton Keynes, and Oxford. Phase 1 of the scheme from Bicester to Oxford is complete and Phase 2, linking Oxford to Milton Keynes, is being developed. This project, along with the development of an Oxford to Cambridge Expressway (via Milton Keynes), is identified in the National Infrastructure Delivery Plan (NIP) 2016 - 2021. However, the Expressway project has now been cancelled. The Government commissioned Highways England (now National Highways) to examine the costs and benefits of a new high-quality road link between Oxford and Milton Keynes, taking account of the views of local authorities and residents, and it was determined the project was not a cost-effective option. Based on Highways England findings, the Government decided that further work cannot be justified on the expressway proposal and has therefore cancelled the project.
- 4.9. The Milton Keynes Local Investment Plan (2015) identifies minimum infrastructure requirements, including transport developments, to enable sustainable growth in Milton Keynes for the plan period 2012 - 2026. This plan, together with the adopted Plan:MK, outlines a number of indicative transport projects for Milton Keynes including the development of the A421 – A4146 link road and dualling of the A421, as well as the East West Rail link referred to above.
- 4.10. The High Speed Two (HS2) rail network connecting London and the West Midlands (Phase One) continuing onto Manchester and Leeds (Phase Two) has been taken through its statutory processes and initial work on its construction has commenced. However, no part of the new railway line will pass through Milton Keynes with the nearest point being 15 miles to the west. It will place demands on aggregates nationally, but it is difficult to identify at this stage the detail of the amount of mineral required.
- 4.11. Housing and other infrastructure proposals, even if they come to fruition as planned, will not result in a significant change from previous years as in and around Milton Keynes there has always been a growth focus. There is no indication therefore that the level of demand for sand and gravel will increase beyond that experienced previously and as such, it is not necessary to factor in any additional growth to a provision rate.

### Supply of sand and gravel

#### Mineral commitments/allocations

- 4.12. The supply contribution from permitted sand and gravel sites in Milton Keynes is limited.
- 4.13. Four sand and gravel sites are allocated in the MLP. If all sites are developed (subject to planning permission in accordance with relevant local plan policies) they will potentially add a total of 1.95 Mt to the existing supply. In 2018, allocations A1 Calverton/Passenham Extension and A3 Northampton Road, Lathbury received planning permission for the extraction of 0.15 Mt and 0.62 Mt of sand and gravel respectively.

#### Commitments for producing secondary and recycled aggregates

- 4.14. The majority of development in Milton Keynes is on greenfield sites and few buildings and structures are demolished therefore a limited amount of recycled material is generated to be used as aggregate. Once the waste transfer station at Cotton Valley Sewage Works is operational, Milton Keynes will have capacity for the processing of up to 0.08 Mt of CD&E waste to produce recycled aggregates. There will however remain a continued reliance on primary aggregate sources to meet demand.

#### Rail depot commitments

- 4.15. Currently there is one aggregate rail depot in Milton Keynes at Station Yard, Bletchley. For a number of years it has been working close to its maximum annual output capacity. The MLP, in particular Policy 13 on Sustainable Transport, recognises that aggregate rail depots are valuable transport infrastructure to help facilitate more sustainable transportation of minerals and encourages this development. Therefore, should greater capacity be required in the future to meet demand, either through an extension to an existing, or new aggregate rail depot, it is supported in principle.

#### Investment opportunities

- 4.16. The nature of the mineral resources in Milton Keynes is such that large scale sites are not likely to come forward in the long term. This means that in the future, sites are likely to be more of the scale of those allocated in the MLP. Such sites are probably more suited to medium sized operators rather than the larger international companies who operate in the UK. At the time of producing the MLP, it was known that medium sized operators were actively looking for opportunities in the Milton Keynes area. Currently however it appears that operator interest in the Borough is limited, particularly for standalone sites. Only two applications for sand and gravel extraction have been submitted since the MLP was adopted: allocation site A1 Calverton/ Passenham Extension, which is an extension to an existing site and allocation A3 Northampton, Lathbury. Both sites are now active. Nevertheless, the Borough is more than capable of delivering at least two to three sites at any one time into the future which would be in line with the MLP provision figure of 0.17 Mtpa.

#### Resources and constraints

- 4.17. The MLP identifies four allocations that are considered to meet requirements to 2031 and which are capable of being delivered. This will far from exhaust the opportunities for further extraction post-2031. There will be further opportunities in the Ouse Valley in areas where environmental and amenity considerations are such that extraction would not be ruled out on these grounds. However, there is the possibility that the Tove Valley could be an alternative long term location subject to the resource being of a scale and quality but balancing the potential higher costs to access these sites, to make extraction worthwhile.

#### Supply and demand balance

- 4.18. Milton Keynes is a longstanding growth area with significant demand for aggregates for house building in particular. However, with a relatively limited supply contribution from permitted sand and gravel sites; resulting in a landbank of just 4 years, the MPA considers it is not currently making the contribution it could make to aggregate supply through the industry taking up the sites allocated in the MLP. The MPA has set an appropriate provision figure, not too low to constrain supply or encourage undue reliance on imports from other areas, and there are no environmental constraints to supply in terms of their being any national or international designations in the Borough.

## 5. Summary

- 5.1. An adequate and steady supply of aggregate is required to meet anticipated needs of the construction industry and support continued economic growth in Milton Keynes.
- 5.2. Government guidance (NPPF) requires MPAs to calculate annual aggregate provision on the basis of rolling 10-year average sales data and other relevant local information. Local information to consider includes:
  - Housing and infrastructure construction levels,
  - Population growth,
  - Current commitments,
  - Investment opportunities, and
  - Available resources and constraints.
- 5.3. The average aggregate sales for sand and gravel for the most recent 10-year rolling period (2011 – 2020) is 0.13 Mtpa, which is 0.04 Mt lower than provision figure in the MLP, adopted in July 2017. The supply contribution of sand and gravel in Milton Keynes is currently limited and based on the MLP provision rate there are insufficient permitted reserves (as of 31/12/2020) to maintain a 7 year landbank. However should the remaining two sand and gravel allocations in the MLP be brought forward (together with any non-allocated sites) there is the potential to increase the landbank further.
- 5.4. Taking into account the sales trends and other factors described earlier, the LAA Rate for sand and gravel to be used in 2020 for determining planning applications and calculating the landbank will continue to be 0.17 Mtpa. It is forecasted that there will be no need to revise this rate in the short term if production continues at quarries Land at Passenham eastern extension and Land to north and east of Lathbury. However if no new sites are permitted it is likely the ten year average sales will continue to decline to around 0.14/0.13 Mtpa in 2022/2023.
- 5.5. During the preparation of this LAA the Covid-19 virus pandemic affected the global economy. According to the Mineral Products Association Sustainable Development Report - Data and Developments 2019/20, construction activity and resulting demand for mineral products were significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic which caused widespread site closures in April and May 2020. Although by summer 2020 construction activity and mineral products markets started to recover and demand for mineral products improved, albeit from a low base, this has resulted in annual sales volumes for all mineral products markets monitored (including aggregates) declining in 2020 compared to 2019. It is likely that due to the pandemic, sales from the two active quarries in Milton Keynes were lower in 2020 than would otherwise have been anticipated.
- 5.6. Previously, an annual apportionment for crushed rock (limestone) for Milton Keynes has not been required to be identified and it is still not considered appropriate. Limestone for use as building stone is however supported in plan policy. Likewise no annual provision target is set for secondary and recycled aggregates, however policies in the MLP support their continued production as alternatives to primary aggregates.