

## West Lothian Local Development Plan 2 Evidence Report

<b>Issue</b>	<b>27. Minerals</b>
<b>Information required by the Act and NPF4 regarding the issue addressed in this section</b>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>section 15(5)(a) ‘the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district’</li> </ul> <p>National Planning Policy 4 (adopted 13 February 2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Policy 33 Minerals</b> - LDPs should support a landbank of construction aggregates of at least 10-years at all times in the relevant market areas, whilst promoting sustainable resource management, safeguarding important workable mineral resources, which are of economic or conservation value, and take steps to ensure these are not sterilised by other types of development.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to Evidence</b>	<p>British Geological Survey, <a href="#">BGS Map of the mineral resources of the Lothians</a>  West Lothian Council, <a href="#">Supplementary Guidance (SG) Minerals (Including Restoration Bonds)</a>  <a href="#">West Lothian Planning Portal</a>  Scottish Government, <a href="#">Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland 2019</a></p>

### Summary of Evidence

#### Purpose, scope and structure of this schedule

This schedule focuses on minerals. This schedule and its evidence are set out in the following sections:

1. West Lothian Geological Information
2. Aggregate Minerals in West Lothian
3. 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland
4. Energy Minerals in West Lothian
5. West Lothian Planning Policy Guidance – WL-LDP

#### Part 1 - West Lothian Geological Information

- 1.1 A map detailing the mineral resources of the Lothians, including West Lothian, is provided as **British Geological Survey, BGS Map of the mineral resources of the Lothians**. This presents geological information and details the locations of mineral reserves. Minerals can only be worked where they naturally occur. Extraction is further limited by accessibility and physical characteristics of reserves, as well as their marketability and industry appeal. Environmental protection and community well-being must also be considered.

- 1.2 The available mineral resources in West Lothian are mainly limited to coal, silica sandstone, and secondary aggregate in the form of discarded oil shale.

## **Part 2 - Aggregate Minerals in West Lothian**

- 2.1 There are currently no active mining or quarrying operations underway in West Lothian. However, aggregate recovery is performed on waste materials derived from various sources, including construction, demolition, excavation, gully waste, road sweepings and shale heaps at several recycling facilities. Recycled aggregates are not considered part of the landbank but can reduce pressure on primary aggregate reserves and contribute to overall supply.
- 2.2 The West Lothian Local Development Plan does not identify search areas for construction minerals such as hard rock, sand and gravel. However, any new extraction should generally be directed towards areas within or adjacent to existing operational sites. Since there are currently no operational extraction sites in West Lothian, it may be useful to identify new search areas for construction minerals.
- 2.3 West Lothian Council does not hold BGS data on aggregate mineral resources in GIS form. Adding this information into the council's GIS map base would be useful if areas of search are to be identified.
- 2.4 West Lothian Council's SG on Minerals states that operators of aggregates sites are required to submit annual statements detailing production levels and remaining reserves, in order to monitor aggregate supply and demand and ensure compliance with the required 10-year landbank. Further follow-up on this could be made during the plan preparation stage to enable better assessment of the landbank in West Lothian.
- 2.5 SG Minerals also states that the silica sandstone quarry at Levenseat, south of Fauldhouse, is safeguarded as a nationally important mineral resource. Therefore, any proposed extension of the quarry will be supported, provided it meets environmental, transportation and amenity considerations.

## **Part 3 - 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland**

- 3.1 West Lothian is part of the East Central Scotland region for the purposes of the Scottish Government, [Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland 2019](#). It was released in 2023 and is the most recent collation of data on the supply and demand of minerals in Scotland. While this evidence was collected at a regional level, it is intended to be utilised in accordance with the relevant guidance. The figures on 'Maximum supply from active sites at 2019 sales levels' (aggregate survey, Table 15a/15b) indicate the available supply in years (see Table 1 below). Although several years will have passed between the 2019 survey and the adoption of WL-LDP2, the data suggests that there are sufficient reserves to meet the 10-year aggregate landbank requirement of NPF4. Further study may be useful to better understand practical supply in the region.
- 3.2 Table 1 – East Central Scotland Region Sales, Reserves and Years Supply Equivalent of Sand and Gravel and Crushed Rock in tonnes.

	Sales	Estimated consented reserves	Maximum supply at 2019 sales levels in years	Estimated consented reserves in active sites at end 2019	Maximum supply from active sites at 2019 sales levels in years
<b>Sand and gravel</b>	739,000	31,585,000	43	24,534,000	33
<b>Crushed rock</b>	2,142,000	60,890,000	28	51,218,000	24

- 3.3 53% of sand and gravel sales and 84% of crushed rock sales are retained in the region (aggregate survey, Table 11a/11b). 19% of sand and gravel consumption and 14% of crushed rock consumption is imported from outside of the region.

#### **Part 4 - Energy Minerals in West Lothian**

- 4.1 LDP 1 provided a guiding framework for assessing development proposals of opencast coal extraction and designated broad areas of search, outwith which there is a default stance against extraction (see Figure 1 below). These search areas can be seen on Map 1 of WL-LDP and are broadly identified as:
- a. west and southwest of Blackridge;
  - b. north of Armadale;
  - c. between Armadale and Whitburn;
  - d. between Whitburn and Fauldhouse;
  - e. between Blackburn and Stoneyburn; and
  - f. south and south-east of Breich
- 4.2 NPF4 Policy 33(a) and (b) set out policy on coal and unconventional oil and gas in Scotland. The development of coal will not be supported other than in exceptional circumstances which align with national policy goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The development of unconventional oil and gas is prohibited. This includes coal bed methane, shale oil or shale gas, using techniques such as hydraulic fracturing and dewatering for coal bed methane.
- 4.3 There is therefore limited potential for future coal extraction in West Lothian. In the context of NPF4 Policy 33(a) and (b), not carrying forward the opencast coal search areas from WL-LDP into WL-LDP2 could be considered. WL-LDP opencast coal search area allocations North of Armadale (b) and between Whitburn and Fauldhouse (d) are no longer appropriate and would require review. This has no serious implications for the plan preparation stage if the search areas are not carried forward.

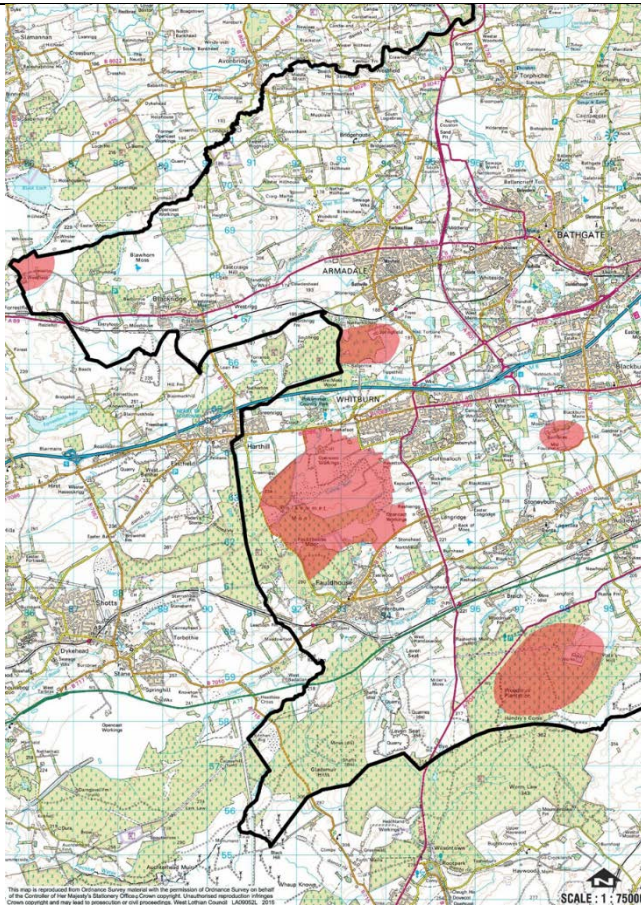


Figure 1 – Information on the location of opencast coal search areas.

## Part 5 - West Lothian Planning Policy Guidance – LDP1

5.1 To support the implementation of LDP1 policies, supplementary guidance on minerals was developed to guide developers and planning officers. This guidance outlines best practices for the extraction and restoration of mineral sites, which includes ensuring sustainable land use, balancing economic needs with cultural and environmental care, and the need for restoration bonds.

### Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

*This will summarise the steps taken by the planning authority to seek the views of all relevant stakeholders. This will also summarise the views expressed, and explain how they have been taken account of in the Evidence Report. (hyperlinks to records of engagement may be added where appropriate)*

### Statements of Agreement / Dispute

*This will include statements from stakeholders highlighting their agreement or the areas they dispute.*

### Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

*This will cover what the evidence means for the plan, e.g. the spatial strategy, the Delivery Programme or plan preparation.*

- The proposed plan must identify and safeguard the locations of workable mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value. NPF4 Policy 33 (c) states that LDPs must protect workable mineral resources from sterilisation. On this basis, the safeguarded status of the silica sandstone at Levenseat should be carried forward from WL-LDP into WL-LDP2.