
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT: ANALYSIS OF GRITSTONE/SANDSTONE PERMITTED RESERVES

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF TONG QUARRY LTD, TONG FARM, TONG LANE, BACUP, LANCASHIRE OL13 9XA

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ANALYSIS OF GRITSTONE/SANDSTONE PERMITTED RESERVES

UNDEARTAKEN FOR TONG QUARRY LTD AUGUST 2014

1 The Lancashire County Council Annual Monitoring Report 2012-13 (January 2014) presents information on annual production rates and permitted reserves as of 2012. The 2012 landbank figure is given as 39 years (71.4 million tonnes. This figure has been derived using Core Strategy assumptions built up over a period of years adding in newly permitted reserves and removing each year's annual production. The information is used to re-enforce the Core Strategy Policy CS1 which states "No additional land will be made available for the extraction of gritstone for aggregate use before 2021 unless it is of a special quality not available elsewhere".

2 Policy M1 of the JLMWLP also makes it clear that development will not be supported for any new extraction of sand and gravel, limestone, gritstone or brickshale. The basis of these policies is that there is sufficient permitted reserve of gritstone such that no new reserves are required.

3 The basic statistics on permitted reserves are based on data set out in the Strategic Minerals Issues paper dated November 2007. Table 7 of that issues paper lists the sandstone/gritstone permitted reserve sites as of 2006.

4 The Quarries named in that list includes the following, of which the starred quarries were specifically named in the Tong Quarry report for the 9 July 2014 Regulatory Committee

- Deerplay Quarry* Burnley
- Whinney Hill Quarry* Hyndburn
- Rakehead Quarry* Hyndburn
- Mitchell's House Hyndburn
- Fletcher Bank Quarry* Rossendale
- Hutch Bank Quarry* Rossendale
- Jamestone Quarry* Rossendale
- Middle Hill Quarry* Rossendale
- Scout Moor Quarry* Rossendale
- Whitworth Quarry* Rossendale
- Twist Hill & Delf Burnley
- Brinscall Chorley
- Ellel Crag Lancaster
- Catlow Pendle
- Waddington Fell Ribble Valley
5 However, most of the quarries on this list are either closed or have limited reserves. What follows is a commentary on each quarry comparing the current situation with that set out in the November 2007 Strategic Minerals Issues paper.

Closed or limited reserve quarries

6 The following quarries will be closed by now:

- Twist Hill & Delf: 1.2 ha area, Dressed flag, walling and garden stone. Mineral extraction to cease by 30/11/09
- Whittle Hill: 6.5 ha area, mineral extraction ceased, flooded and landfilled.
- Catlow: 1.17 ha area, riven paving and wallstone ceased 31/12/2007
- Hardrock: 2.6 ha area, mineral extraction ceased in 2007, now landfill
- Round O: 20 ha area, mineral extraction ceased in 2006.
- Deerplay: Closed landfill with no mineral reserve
- Rakehead: Closed with reserve of approximately 10,000 tonnes. and due to site difficulties, are not commercially viable.

7 The following Quarries have a limited life or do not produce aggregate

- Mitchell's House: 1 ha area, 6,000 tonne reserve for roofing slates only
- Ellel Crag: 14 ha area, mineral extraction to cease 30/06/13. To be landfilled
- Leeming: 4 ha area, Dressed stone only
- Middle Hill: To be quarried for wind farm; no commercially available mineral

8 The following additional Quarries were not named in the 9 July Committee Report:

- Brinscall: 14.5 ha area, Armstrong Aggregates Ltd ownership. Recently subject to scoping request for 1.5ha extension to provide 300,000 tonnes of block and 1 million tonnes of aggregate from
overburden/waste. Scoping opinion issued May 2014. A planning application will follow.

**Waddington Fell**

Aggregate Industries ownership. Primarily a building stone quarry, it also produces washed sand aggregate and some crushed rock aggregate. Reserves approximately 0.3 million tonnes and planning application for an extension is in preparation.

This leaves seven of the quarries named in the 9 July report. These are:

**Whinney Hill Quarry**

Whinney Hill Quarry is currently closed having run out of sandstone reserves within the existing planning permission. New reserves will be released following approval in April 2014 subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement. The Agreement has not yet been signed and so the planning permission has not been issued. Until this happens, this quarry has no reserves and will remain closed.

The 2012-13 Monitoring Report noted that a new planning permission was granted in December 2012 giving 590,000 tonnes to be worked over three years. In fact, this reserve has been exhausted by June 2014, in less than 2 years.

**Fletcher Bank Quarry**

The 2007 Issues paper noted that the mineral permission is due to cease in December 2036. This Quarry is still operating with PP O’ Conner Ltd under licence from Marshalls. PP O’Connor estimates that there are 5 years reserves remaining.

**Hutch Bank Quarry**

The Quarry ceased production in 1997 and has reopened by recovering mineral from existing stockpiles. Only a small part of the quarry remains to be worked. The quarry produces dimension stone as well as aggregate.

A ROMP is in preparation which will deepen the working area. The quarry is currently operated by W Maher & Sons Ltd.

**Jamestone Quarry**

Operational quarry noted as operated by Aggregate Industries in 2007. Has been acquired by W Maher & Sons Ltd and currently operational. It is understood that the permitted reserve is small.
The stone reserves lie under a significant depth of overburden and so long term viability is questionable.

**Scout Moor Quarry**

Operated by Marshalls, the 2007 Issues paper noted that the minerals extracted were coal and shale. However the primary mineral worked is dimension stone. Any aggregate produced is from crushed dimension stone waste and overburden.

**Whitworth Quarry**

The stone at this quarry can be divided into three elements. The top Sandrock produces a poor quality aggregate which has to be mixed with the underlying stone to make a saleable product. The Sandrock is hard to dig but when crushed has a low strength and is part of an average 7m depth of overburden above the Gritstone (Haslingdon Flag Rock). The top part of the Gritstone produces a reasonable quality aggregate but is layered with shale bands and is only around 2 to 3m in thickness. The lower Gritstone is worked for dimension stone (10 to 15%) and the rest can be crushed for aggregate.

At the present time, Fairhurst Stone have the Quarry under lease from Aggregate Industries and Park Royal Ltd take the rock above the block stone as aggregate.

The Quarry was previously worked by PP O'Connor before Park Royal, but O'Connor left the Quarry as it found the rock uneconomic to work for aggregate. It is likely that Park Royal too will leave the Quarry too once it can restart operations in Whinney Hill. If no aggregate is taken from the Quarry, all of the rock above the dimension stone is likely to be regarded as overburden and backfilled as part of the Quarry restoration. It may also become uneconomic to work the quarry for the dimension stone.

It is worth noting that the access for this Quarry passes through Tong End and Tong Lane, both of which are unsuitable for HGV traffic. The route for a new access road is safeguarded in the Local Plan and has been carried through from the Minerals and Waste Local Plan of 2006. As the planning permission subsists until 2042, there would appear to be no means for the planning authority to require that the new access is constructed.

This Quarry was stated to have 52 million tonnes of gritstone reserve in the supporting statement for a 2011 ROMP. The ROMP documentation noted that production has varied considerably and declined to 20,000 tonnes in 2010. The recent history of aggregate production indicates that this is a difficult quarry to work and its viability as an aggregate source must be questioned.
CONCLUSION

23 Of the Lancashire Gritstone Quarries, the only quarries with any significant reserves available for crushed rock aggregate are Brinscall, Scout Moor and Whitworth. Hutch Bank Quarry can be added to the list if the ROMP succeeds as can Whinney Hill Quarry if the new planning permission is issued.

24 Brinscall Quarry is located between Blackburn and Chorley, and as such does not serve the same market as that served by Tong Quarry. It was not included in the list of other quarries set out in the 9 July Committee Report. The need for an extension implies that reserves in this quarry are not large.

25 The majority of the reserve lies at Whitworth Quarry, which accounts for somewhere around 52 million tonnes of the 71.4 million tonnes (39 years life) given in the Annual Monitoring Report for 2012-13, or nearly 75%. Without Whitworth reserves, the total reserve figure would be around 19 million tonnes (10 years life), but it is likely that the reserves at the other quarries are more limited than suggested in the 2012-2013 report.

26 Tong Quarry has operated throughout the recent recession, unlike several of the other quarries, and has consistently produced crushed rock aggregate. It clearly serves a market need and there are no issues with either quality or financial viability. Its closure would leave only Scout Moor and Whitworth Quarries with long term reserves to serve the local market.

27 Whitworth Quarry has significant issues with both quality and financial viability for aggregate production. It also has a poor access with significant environmental impacts on residential areas. Transfer of production to Whitworth Quarry as the other quarries close will significantly increase the use of what is clearly an unsuitable access route and cause increased environmental impacts for local residents.

28 The majority of the Gritstone quarries produce masonry stone as well as aggregate, but in all cases, aggregate forms much the larger element of output. A majority of the quarries are also engaged in either reviews or seeking planning permission for extensions. This suggests that there may well be a shortage of permitted reserves at all quarries with the exception of Scout Moor and Whitworth.

29 Tong Quarry has significant reserves of fireclay which lie beneath the sandstone horizons, a valuable material used in brick manufacture. Sales of fireclay in recent years have been poor due to the recession in the construction industry, however a severe shortage of bricks is now being experienced as the construction industry
reovers. New enquiries are now being received by the Quarry operator and with the lack of fireclay production from opencast coal mines, fireclay resources are likely to be in short supply. The fireclay resource at Tong Quarry is therefore of some significance, at least of equal importance to the masonry stone resources at other gritstone quarries.

30 Paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework specifically notes that provision should be made for at least 10 years supply of crushed rock whilst ensuring that the capacity of operations to supply a wide range of materials is not compromised. Longer periods may be appropriate to take account of the need to supply a range of types of aggregates, locations of permitted reserves relative to markets, and productive capacity of permitted sites. The Paragraph also notes that planning authorities should ensure that large land banks bound up in very few sites do not stifle competition.

31 The Tong Quarry access is routed through a residential area, but the roads are of adequate width and are acceptable to the Highway Authority. An implication of the closure of Tong Quarry would be a significant increase in the use of the Whitworth Quarry access, which is sufficiently poor to warrant a reserved alternative route in the Local Plan.

32 Other than the impact of quarry traffic in Bacup, the environmental impacts of Tong Quarry are very limited. It is not unusual for quarry traffic to have significant impacts, but those experienced at Tong Quarry are likely to be much lower than at Whitworth Quarry. Production at Whitworth would have to increase over time if the policy of not granting permission for new gritstone reserves was to be maintained.

33 The 9 July Committee report recommended that planning permission for the Tong Quarry extension should be refused on the grounds of lack of need and on unacceptable impacts caused by traffic movements through Bacup. This short study has raised questions about the assumed level of gritstone permitted reserves. It also needs to be considered that the Whitworth Quarry access generates a higher level of impacts on residential areas than does Tong Quarry.

34 Release of new reserves at Tong Quarry are therefore justified on the basis that the level of permitted reserves is significantly overstated and that the number of production sites has been significantly reduced. The latter has reduced competition which would be further adversely affected by the closure of Tong Quarry.