



PARTIAL REVIEW OF RPG9 AND THE DRAFT SOUTH EAST PLAN

REVIEW OF SUB-REGIONAL ALLOCATION OF LAND-WON AGGREGATES

**15 May - 8 August 2008
Consultation Document**



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PARTIAL REVIEW OF REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE (RPG9) AND THE DRAFT SOUTH EAST PLAN

REVIEW OF SUB-REGIONAL ALLOCATION OF LAND- WON AGGREGATES

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Executive Summary

1. This consultation is about the amount of aggregates - sand and gravel, and crushed rock - extracted in the South East each year, and how much each Minerals Planning Authority (the county or unitary council) should be planning to provide.
2. The Assembly is amending the policy that divides the amount of aggregates which need to be provided by each Minerals Planning Authority. We want your views on different options for this, that take into account:
 - likely future demand for construction
 - the location of aggregates
 - the need to protect and enhance the environment.
3. A reliable supply of aggregates is essential for supporting the region's and the UK's economy, being used in construction of homes, commercial developments and infrastructure to support communities.
4. The planning system needs to balance these requirements with the environmental and social impacts, both negative and positive, arising from aggregate extraction, processing and transport.
5. Government guidelines set the amount of aggregates that each region needs to provide. For the South East this is currently 13.25 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) of sand and gravel, and 2.2 mtpa of crushed rock between 2001 and 2016. These overall figures are currently under review by Government and are likely to decrease (see section 5.2 of this document).
6. The figures are broken down sub-regionally with an amount allocated to each Minerals Planning Authority area in the current Regional Spatial Strategy (Policy M3 of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan). This is currently based on past rates of production, rather than an appraisal of future needs, likely availability of materials, and environmental and other constraints.
7. The draft South East Plan acknowledges that this should be kept under review, and the independent planning inspectors, who oversaw an Examination in Public of minerals policies in 2004, recommended that a more rounded and forward looking methodology be developed to inform revised sub-regional allocations. South East Plan Policy M3 (Primary Aggregates) is the only policy affected by this recommendation. All other minerals policies remain unchanged.
8. In Spring 2007 the Assembly commissioned consultants to develop a methodology that considered a range of criteria, including the amount of un-sterilised minerals resource available, past sales, potential future demand and environmental constraints.
9. Through applying different weighting to these criteria, six possible options for allocations of aggregates were generated. Of these, three were selected for public consultation following agreement by the Regional Aggregates Working Party (SEERAWP), the Assembly's Regional Planning Committee, and the full Assembly.
10. These are:
 - 'Demand' led, placing the highest weighting on where future construction demand is likely to be
 - 'Environmental', placing the highest weighting on avoiding areas of greatest conservation and landscape importance
 - 'Demand and Resource', placing equal weighting on demand and on the location of aggregate resources.
11. Each option allocates a different amount of aggregates to each Minerals Planning Authority. In some options this means an increase on existing allocations and in others a decrease. The current allocations are presented in the report to enable comparison (see 4.5 of this document).
12. This document explains the new allocations methodology that has been developed. The full report and sustainability appraisal is available on the Assembly's website at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/aggregates

I3. We are seeking your views on five main issues. These questions are repeated in the main part of this document with further details about the options and their implications.

Q1 Does the methodology provide the basis for a more rounded and forward looking approach to sub-regional (by Minerals Planning Authority) allocation of aggregates than the current allocation based on past sales?

Q2 Which, if any, is your preferred option to be used as the basis for future allocations?

Q3 Should there be separate allocations for soft sand, and for sharp sand and gravel, or a single combined allocation for all sand and gravel?

Q4 Would allocations based on 'Demand', 'Environmental' or 'Demand and resource' options be realistic and deliverable in practice - especially in light of the likely reduction in the total amount the region is expected to provide?

Q5 Are any additional changes needed to Policy M3 and supporting text?

I4. Views should be sent to the Regional Assembly, by **5pm on Friday 8 August 2008** at the latest. We would prefer to receive your response via our online response questionnaire at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/aggregates

Alternatively you can email your response to: secretariat@southeast-ra.gov.uk

or post it to:
Aggregates Consultation
South East England Regional Assembly
Berkeley House, Cross Lanes
Guildford GU1 1UN.

Please do not submit duplicate responses (eg online and by post or email).

I5. As a result of this consultation, revised allocations will be applied to an updated Policy M3. Following approval by the Assembly this will be submitted to Government, who will then hold further consultation and, if necessary, an Examination in Public.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Current sub-regional allocations of land-won aggregates, set out in Policy M3 of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan, are based on past sales of aggregates alone. Independent inspectors, at an Examination in Public of minerals policies in 2004, recommended that a more rounded and forward looking allocation should be developed considering other factors.
- 1.2 The Assembly is amending Policy M3 to reflect these issues. As part of this process we are seeking views on a number of alternative options. A preferred option selected following consultation will then be used to amend the current allocations in Policy M3 and the revised policy submitted to Government.
- 1.3 Government will then carry out further consultation on the amended policy and, if necessary, there will be an Examination in Public before the new policy is adopted as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy. Each Minerals Planning Authority (MPA) will then need to plan for the revised aggregates tonnage allocated to them.
- 1.4 The Assembly's role is to consider a range of factors in setting allocations. It is the responsibility of the Minerals Planning Authorities to decide location of sites and to take decisions on individual planning applications. A revised allocation will not necessarily mean that specific proposals to develop new or extend existing quarries will not come forward.

2. Background

- 2.1 Policy M3 of the South East Plan and RPG9 sets out the tonnage of land-won sand, gravel and crushed rock that each Minerals Planning Authority will need to provide to meet the regional target set out in National and Regional Aggregates Guidelines.
- 2.2 The Guidelines set a South East total of 570 million tonnes (mt) between 2001 and 2016. This includes 212 mt of land-won sand and gravel, and 35 mt of crushed rock.

- 2.3 Policy M3 shows this as 13.25 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) of sand and gravel and 2.2 mtpa of crushed rock, allocated by MPA or groups of MPAs (eg unitary councils). The current allocation is based on average past sales from 1995-2001 and as such it is derived from past rates of production rather than an appraisal of future needs, likely availability of materials and environmental constraints.
- 2.4 The inspectors' report on the Examination in Public of the partial review of minerals policies recommended that a more robust, rounded and forward looking methodology be developed to inform a future review of the allocations in Policy M3.
- 2.5 The Assembly consulted on a draft project plan and a sustainability appraisal scoping report for the review of Policy M3 in Spring 2007. Comments received informed a final project plan submitted to the Government Office for the South East. The project plan was prepared in accordance with PPS11 and sets out a timescale for undertaking technical work to underpin the review, preparing draft options and public consultation. The sustainability appraisal scoping report was used by the consultants in undertaking the sustainability appraisal of the options.

3. Developing the New Allocations

Option generation

- 3.1 The Assembly commissioned consultants (LUC) in March 2007 to help develop a revised methodology for the sub-regional allocation of land-won aggregates. A Steering Group including representatives of the Assembly, SEERAWP, industry (representatives of the Quarry Products Association), Minerals Planning Authorities, Natural England, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and CLG advised LUC throughout the project.
- 3.2 The methodology incorporated, and was informed by, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening that was applied to all the options.

The full documentation is available on the Assembly’s website (www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/aggregates).

3.3 The methodology generated a number of options by applying different weighting to criteria. The criteria selected in the methodology were:

1) Construction demand: Existing population distribution and housing provision in the draft South East Plan (see Maps 1 and 2 in annex). Weighting of this criteria – for where future demand is likely to be – encourages supply of materials near where they will be used.

2) Past Sales: Based on average sales over five of the past seven years using the same methodology as in the current allocation (the two years with highest and lowest sales disregarded to avoid distorting the long-term trend).

3) Un-sterilised and unconstrained resource: This is land outside built-up areas and international wildlife designations (Natura 2000 sites), plus a 250 metre buffer around such sites. Sharp sand and gravel, soft sand, and

crushed rock resources were identified separately. The split between sharp sand and gravel and soft sand would be based on average sales over five of the past seven years. The assumption that resources beneath and near Natura 2000 sites are sterilised is a methodological assumption rather than planning policy (see Map 3 in annex).

4) Environmental constraints - as (3) above plus National Designations: The area of resource outside national landscape, nature conservation and heritage designations (see Map 4 in annex).

3.4 Different weightings were applied to the criteria to generate six options summarised below and in Table I (Consultation options in orange):

- Option A: ‘Past Sales’ option
- Option B: ‘Resource’ option
- **Option C: ‘Demand’ option**
- **Option D: ‘Environmental’ option**
- **Option E: ‘Demand and resource’ option**
- Option F: ‘Equal weighting’ option

Table I

Illustration of options (criteria and weightings)

Criterion	Ratio	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E	Option F
		Past sales	Resource	Demand	Environmental	Demand and Resources	Equal Weighting
1. Construction demand	Ia. Housing provision 1	10%	10%	70%	10%	40%	25%
	Ib. Existing population 9						
2. Past Sales		70%	10%	10%	10%	10%	25%
3. Unsterilised resource unconstrained by international nature designations		10%	70%	10%	10%	40%	25%
4. National designations (nature, landscape, heritage)		10%	10%	10%	70%	10%	25%
		Not selected	Not selected	Options selected for consultation			Not selected

4. Consultation Options

4.1 The Assembly's Regional Planning Committee and Plenary meetings agreed to refine the six original options, focusing on three consultation options. They were selected for consultation as they represent a change from the existing sales-based allocation as requested by independent inspectors. In applying clearly different weighting to the various factors, the three consultation options provide a range of allocations on which to seek views and test their implications.

4.2 The three options selected for consultation, and on which we are seeking views are:

- 'Demand' led, placing the highest weighting on where future construction demand is likely to be
- 'Environmental', placing the highest weighting on avoiding areas of greatest conservation and landscape importance
- 'Demand and Resource', placing equal weighting on demand and on the location of minerals resources.

4.3 Applying the different options results in a percentage allocation to each MPA area for:

- Soft sand,
- Sharp sand and gravel, or
- Combined sand (soft and sharp) and gravel
- Crushed rock.

4.4 The allocations generated by the three consultation options are shown in figures 1.1-1.4.

4.5 The current allocation is included in Figures 1.3 and 1.4 to allow comparison with the alternative options. As the current regional Aggregate Guidelines (target) and sub-regional allocation is for combined sand and gravel and for crushed rock, it is not possible to compare the new separate revised allocation options for soft sand and for sharp sand and gravel with the status quo.

4.6 Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show allocations of the different types of sand separately to reflect their distribution and that these are different materials with different uses.

4.7 We want your views on whether such a specific breakdown will be useful and practical to aid planning for the different resources, or whether there should only be allocations for combined sand and gravel with the split determined locally by MPAs.

Q1 Does the methodology provide the basis for a more rounded and forward looking approach to sub-regional (by Minerals Planning Authority) allocation of aggregates than the current allocation based on past sales?

Q2 Which, if any, is your preferred option to be used as the basis for future allocations?

Q3 Should there be separate allocations for soft sand, and for sharp sand and gravel, or a single combined allocation for all sand and gravel?

Figure 1.1

Allocation Options - Soft Sand

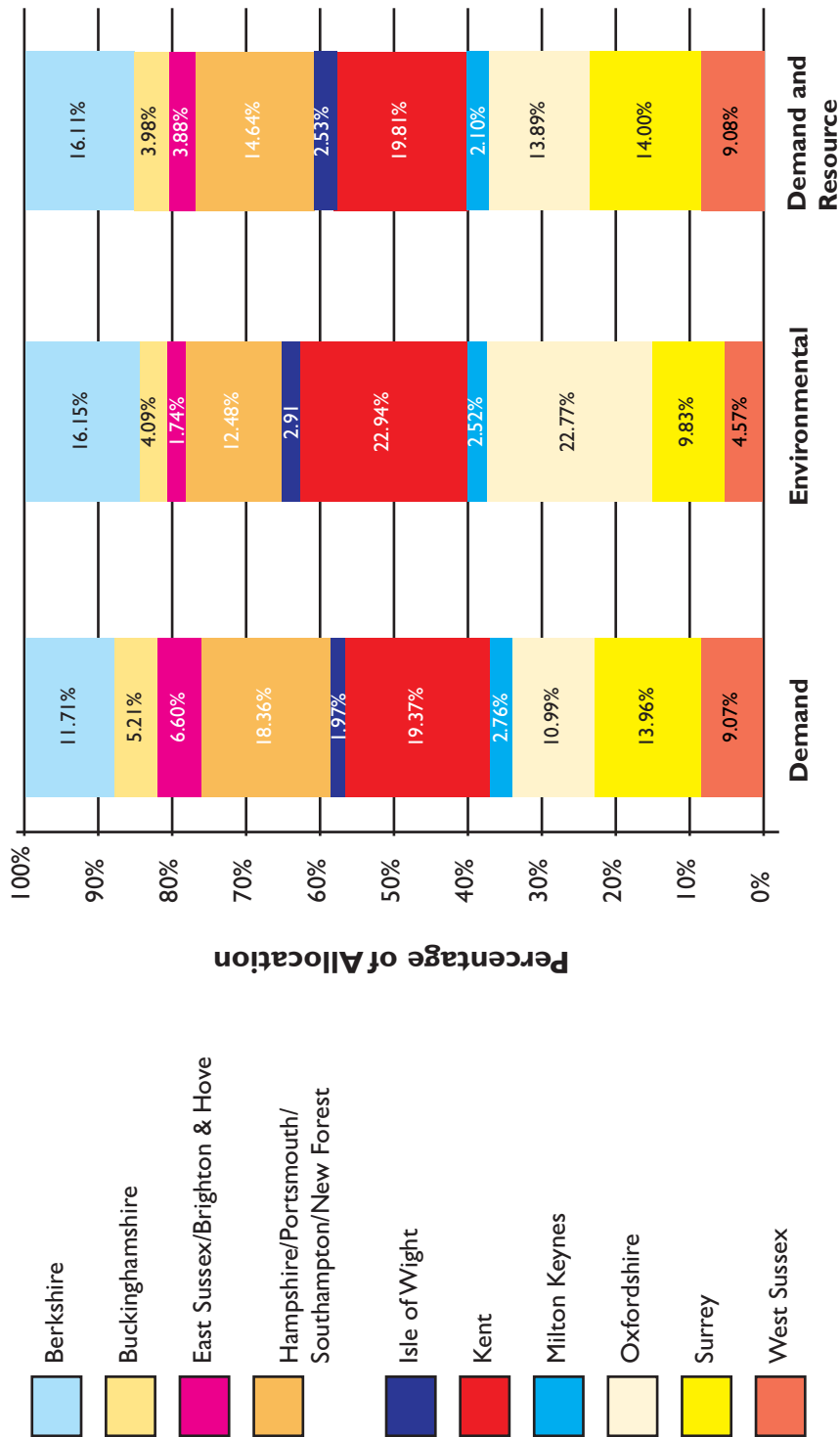
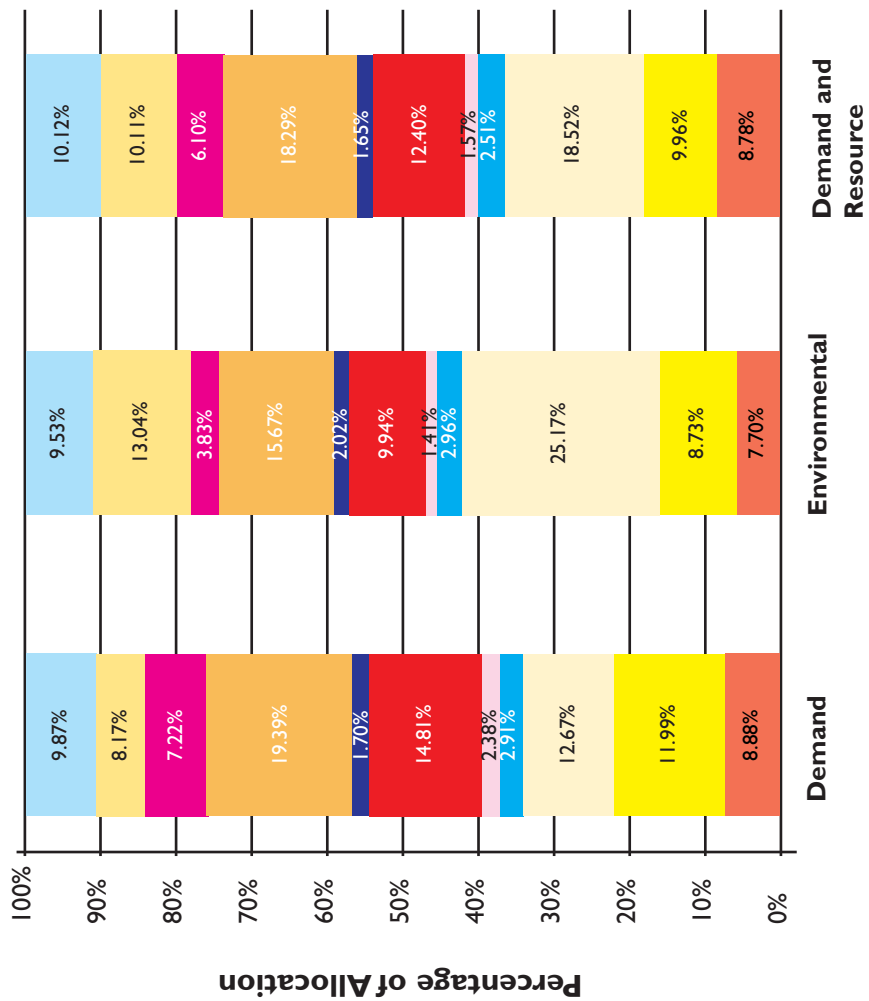


Figure 1.2

Allocation Options - Sharp sand and gravel



- Berkshire
- Buckinghamshire
- East Sussex/Brighton & Hove
- Hampshire/Portsmouth/Southampton/New Forest
- Isle of Wight
- Kent
- Medway
- Milton Keynes
- Oxfordshire
- Surrey
- West Sussex

Figure 1.3

Allocation Options plus current allocation - Combined Sand and Gravel

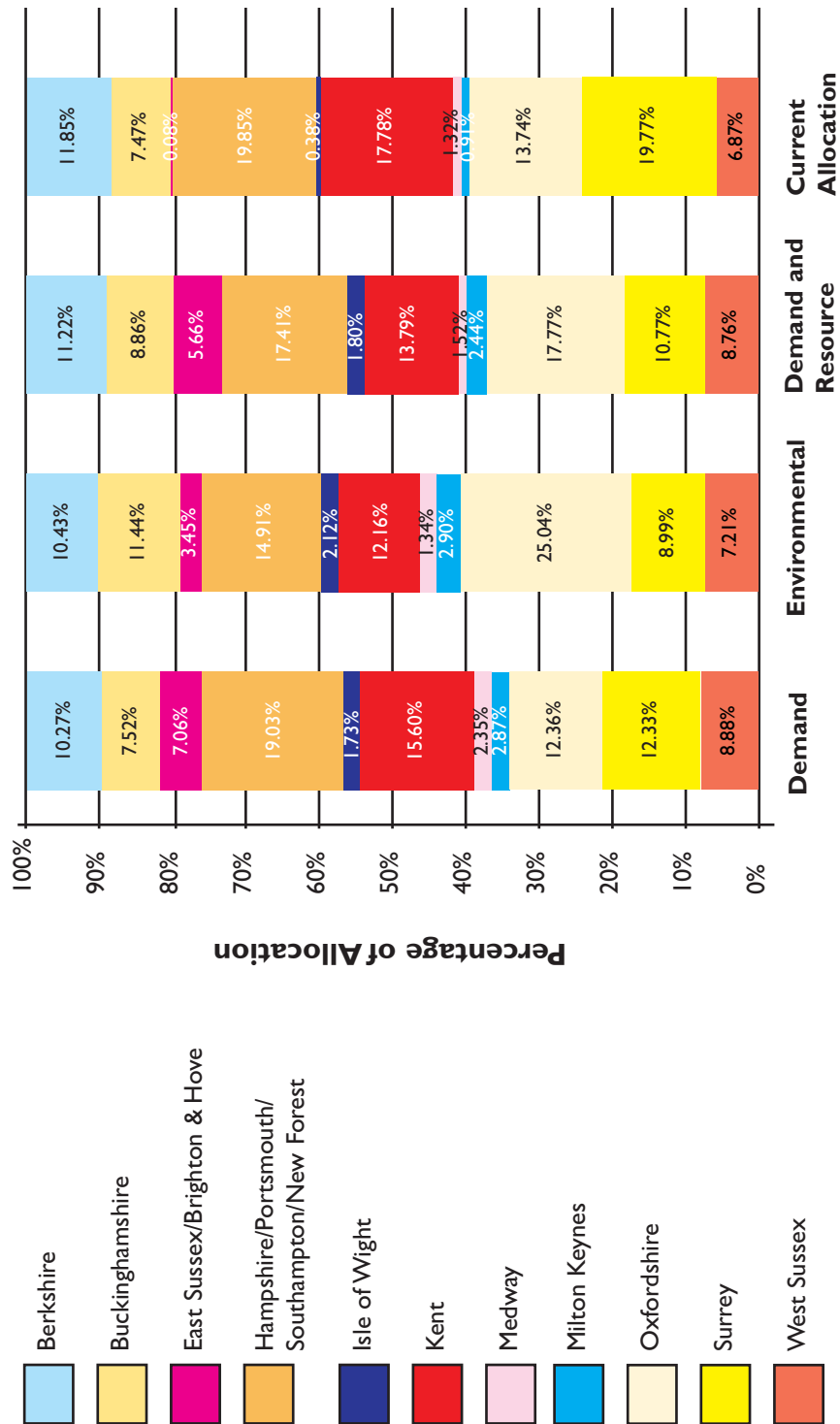
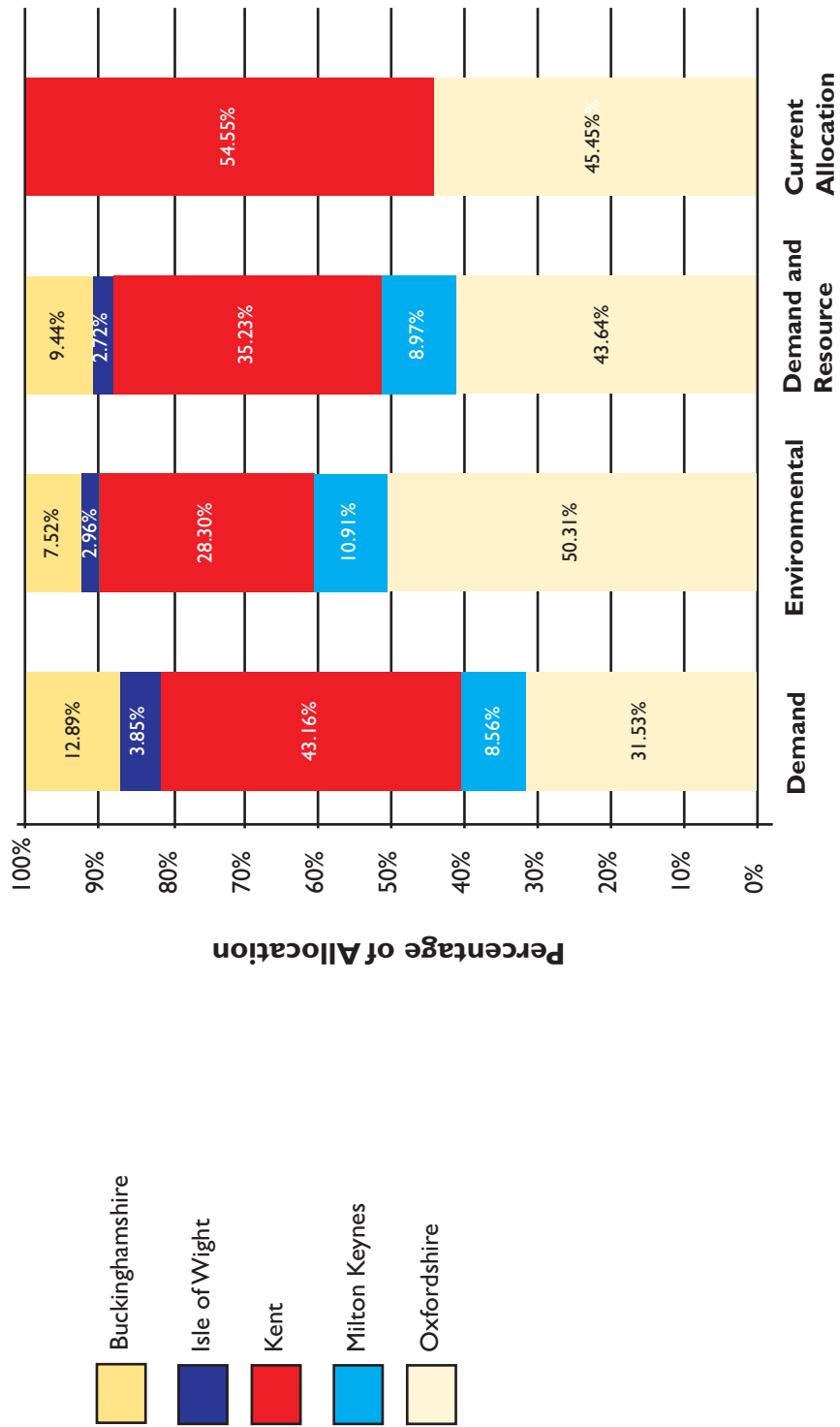


Figure 1.4

Allocation Options plus current allocation - Crushed Rock



5. Amount of Aggregates

5.1 This consultation is about the amount of aggregates that each Minerals Planning Authority needs to provide to meet the regional total. It is not about what that regional total should be.

5.2 However, the Government's regional Aggregate Guidelines that set the targets for each region are currently being reviewed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) with a separate public consultation running until 27 June 2008. Draft Revised National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision In England: 2005-2020 – Consultation (April 2008). See: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/draftaggregatesconsultation

5.3 The CLG consultation proposes that the South East should supply 12.18mtpa of land-won sand and gravel for the period 2005-2020 compared with the current figure of 13.25mtpa (a decrease of 8%), and 1.56mtpa of crushed

rock compared with the current 2.2mtpa (a decrease of 28%).

5.4 Therefore the amount of aggregate the region is expected to provide as a whole is likely to change before the new policy M3 is approved, and it is likely to be lower than the current figure. However, the methodology generating options is independent of this and the resulting allocation can be applied to any tonnage.

5.5 However, it will also be the case that even where an MPA allocation goes down, applications for working of sites may continue to come forward over time – in other words a reduced allocation does not necessarily mean that certain sites will not be developed over time.

Q4 Would allocations based on 'Demand', 'Environmental' or 'Demand and resource' options be realistic and deliverable in practice - especially in light of the likely reduction in the total amount the region is expected to provide?

Figure 2

New Guideline Figures proposed by CLG (April 2008) applied to Options and Current Allocation for Combined Sand and Gravel

	Demand (Option C)	Environmental (Option D)	Demand and Resources (Option E)	
MPA	Combined sand and gravel (mtpa)	Combined sand and gravel (mtpa)	Combined sand and gravel (mtpa)	M3 Current Allocation (mtpa)
Berkshire	1.25	1.27	1.37	1.57
Buckinghamshire	0.92	1.39	1.08	0.99
East Sussex/Brighton and Hove	0.86	0.42	0.69	0.01
Hampshire/Portsmouth/Southampton/ New Forest	2.32	1.82	2.12	2.63
Isle of Wight	0.21	0.26	0.22	0.05
Kent	1.90	1.48	1.68	2.36
Medway	0.29	0.16	0.19	0.17
Milton Keynes	0.35	0.35	0.30	0.12
Oxfordshire	1.51	3.05	2.16	1.82
Surrey	1.50	1.09	1.31	2.62
West Sussex	1.08	0.88	1.07	0.91
Total	12.18*	12.18*	12.18*	13.25

*Figures do not sum due to rounding

Figure 2.1

New Guideline Figures applied to Options C, D, E and Current Allocation for Crushed Rock

	Demand	Environment	Demand and Resources	
MPA	Crushed Rock (mtpa)	Crushed Rock (mtpa)	Crushed Rock (mtpa)	M3 Current allocation (mtpa)
Buckinghamshire	0.20	0.12	0.15	0.00
Isle of Wight	0.06	0.05	0.04	0.00
Kent	0.67	0.44	0.55	1.20
Milton Keynes	0.13	0.17	0.14	0.00
Oxfordshire	0.49	0.78	0.68	1.00
Total	1.56*	1.56	1.56	2.20

*Figure does not sum due to rounding

6. Related changes to policy M3

POLICY M3: PRIMARY AGGREGATES

The supply of construction aggregates in the South East should be met from a significant increase in supplies of secondary and recycled materials, a reduced contribution from primary land-won resources and an increase in imports of marine-dredged aggregates.

Mineral planning authorities should plan to maintain a landbank of at least seven years of planning permissions for land-won sand and gravel which is sufficient, throughout the Mineral Plan period, to deliver 13.25 million tonnes (mt) of sand and gravel per annum across the region, based on the following sub-regional apportionment:

Berkshire unitaries	1.57mtpa
Buckinghamshire	0.99mtpa
East Sussex/Brighton & Hove	0.01mtpa
Hampshire/Southampton/	
Portsmouth	2.63mtpa
Isle of Wight	0.05mtpa
Kent/Medway	2.53mtpa
Milton Keynes	0.12mtpa
Oxfordshire	1.82 mtpa
Surrey	2.62mtpa
West Sussex	0.91mtpa

and 2.2 million tonnes of crushed rock per annum across the region, based on the following sub-regional apportionment:

Kent	1.2mtpa
Oxfordshire	1.0mtpa

- 6.1** This document puts forward options on how to amend the aggregates allocations included in Policy M3 (see annex). We also want your views on whether any further changes are needed to the policy or supporting text to reflect your preferred allocations option.

Q5 Are any additional changes needed to Policy M3 and supporting text?

7. Next steps

- 7.1** Please complete our questionnaire giving your views on the five main topics raised in this document.
- 7.2** Responses should be sent to the Regional Assembly by **5pm on Friday 8 August 2008** at the latest. We would prefer to receive your response via our online response questionnaire at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/aggregates

Alternatively you can email your response to: secretariat@southeast-ra.gov.uk

or post it to:
Aggregates Consultation
South East England Regional Assembly
Berkeley House, Cross Lanes
Guildford GU1 1UN.

Please do not submit duplicate responses (eg online and by post or email).

- 7.3** Following this consultation, and drawing on its results, the Assembly in consultation with SEERAWP, will identify a preferred option for sub-regional allocation of aggregates to be applied in amending Policy M3 of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan.
- 7.4** We hope to gain the full Assembly's approval of the revised policy in November 2008, and to submit this amended policy to the Government in December 2008. There will then be further public consultation, managed by the Government Office for the South East followed, if necessary, by an Examination in Public. It is anticipated that the amended policy and allocation will be adopted in late 2009.

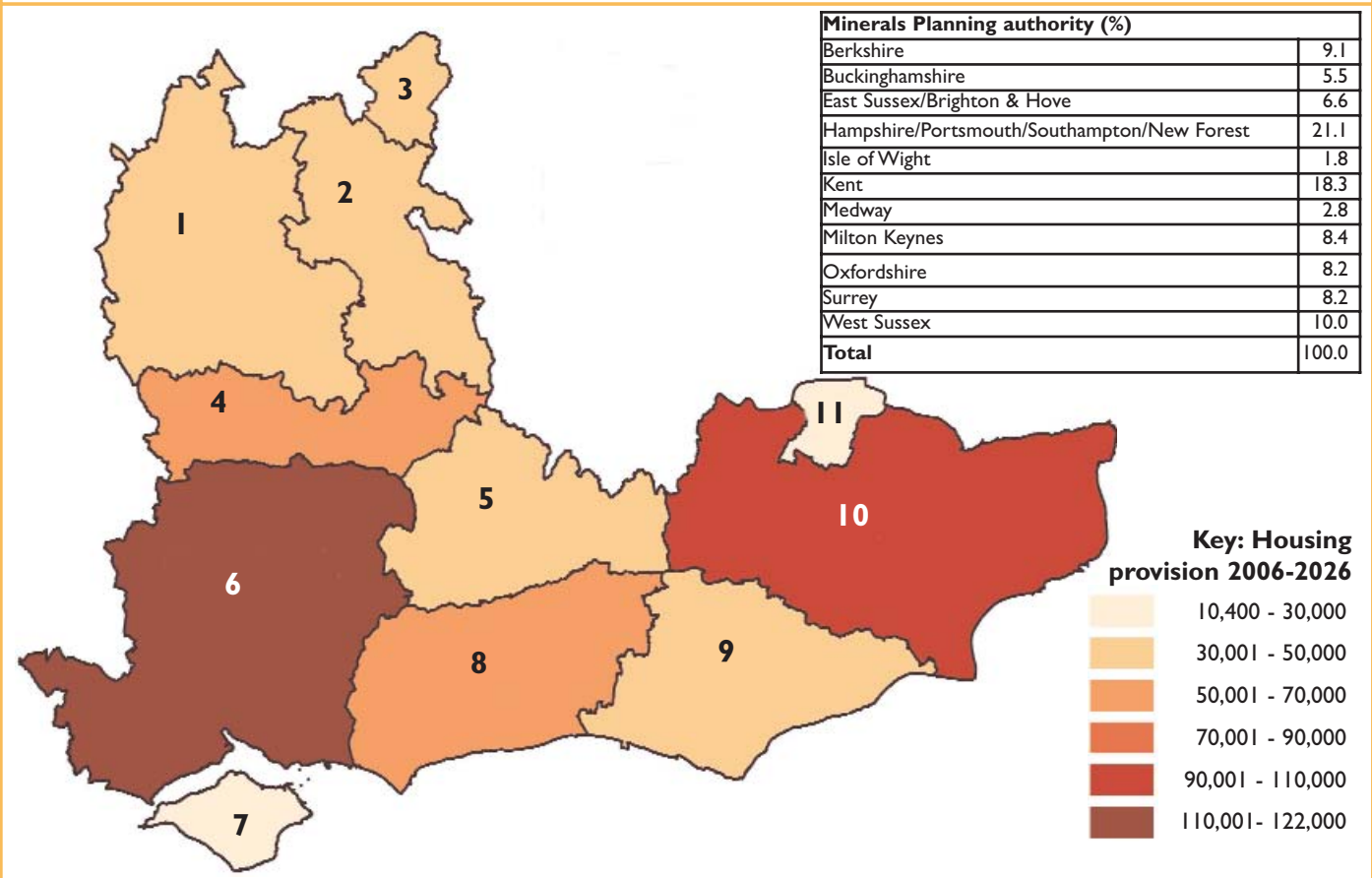
Annex

Key to maps

- 1 Oxfordshire
- 2 Buckinghamshire
- 3 Milton Keynes
- 4 Berkshire
- 5 Surrey
- 6 Hampshire/Portsmouth/Southampton/
New Forest
- 7 Isle of Wight
- 8 West Sussex
- 9 East Sussex/Brighton & Hove
- 10 Kent
- 11 Medway

Map 1

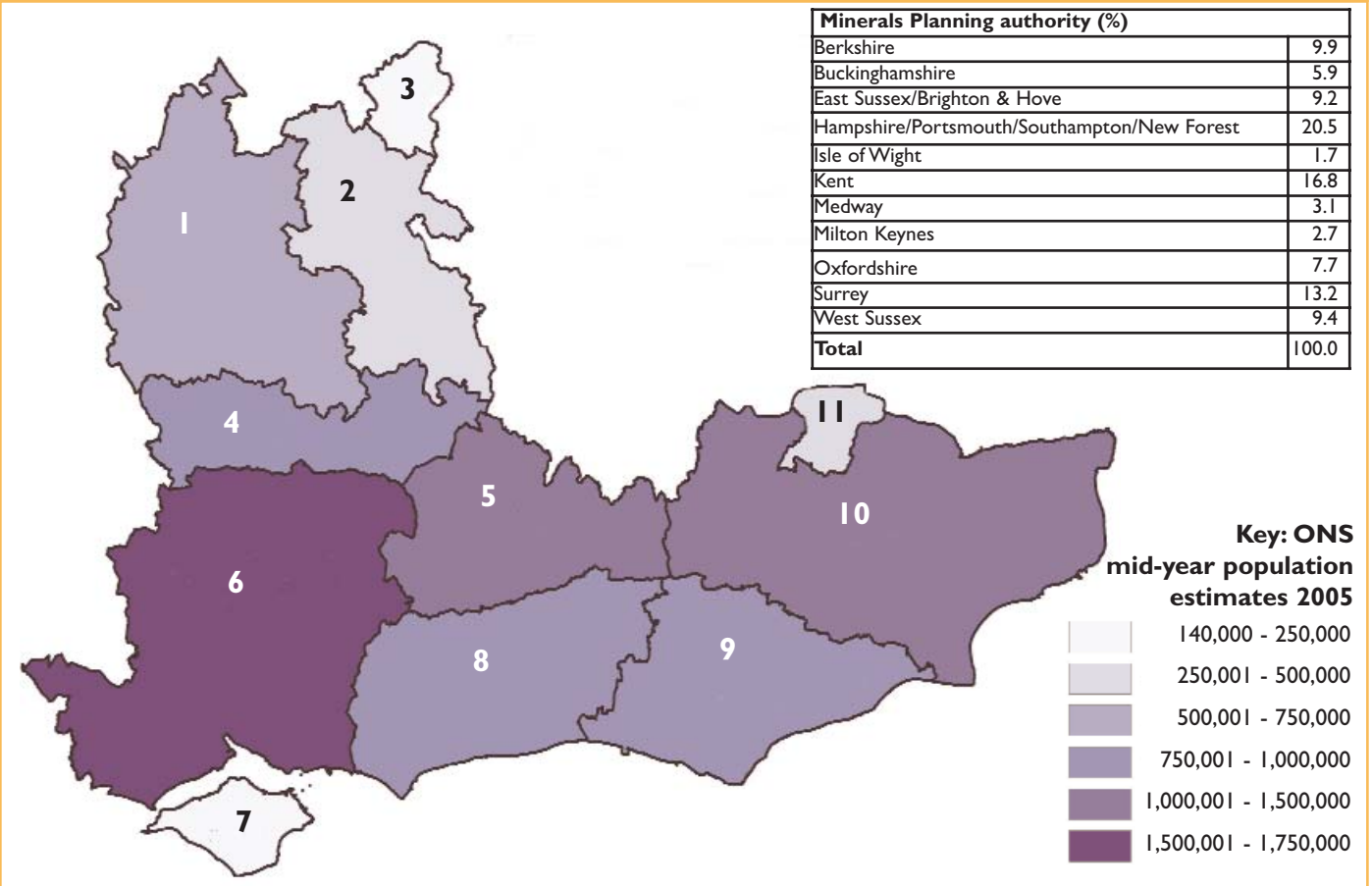
Future Housing Provision (Construction Demand criterion) based on Policy H1 of draft South East Plan



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Map 2

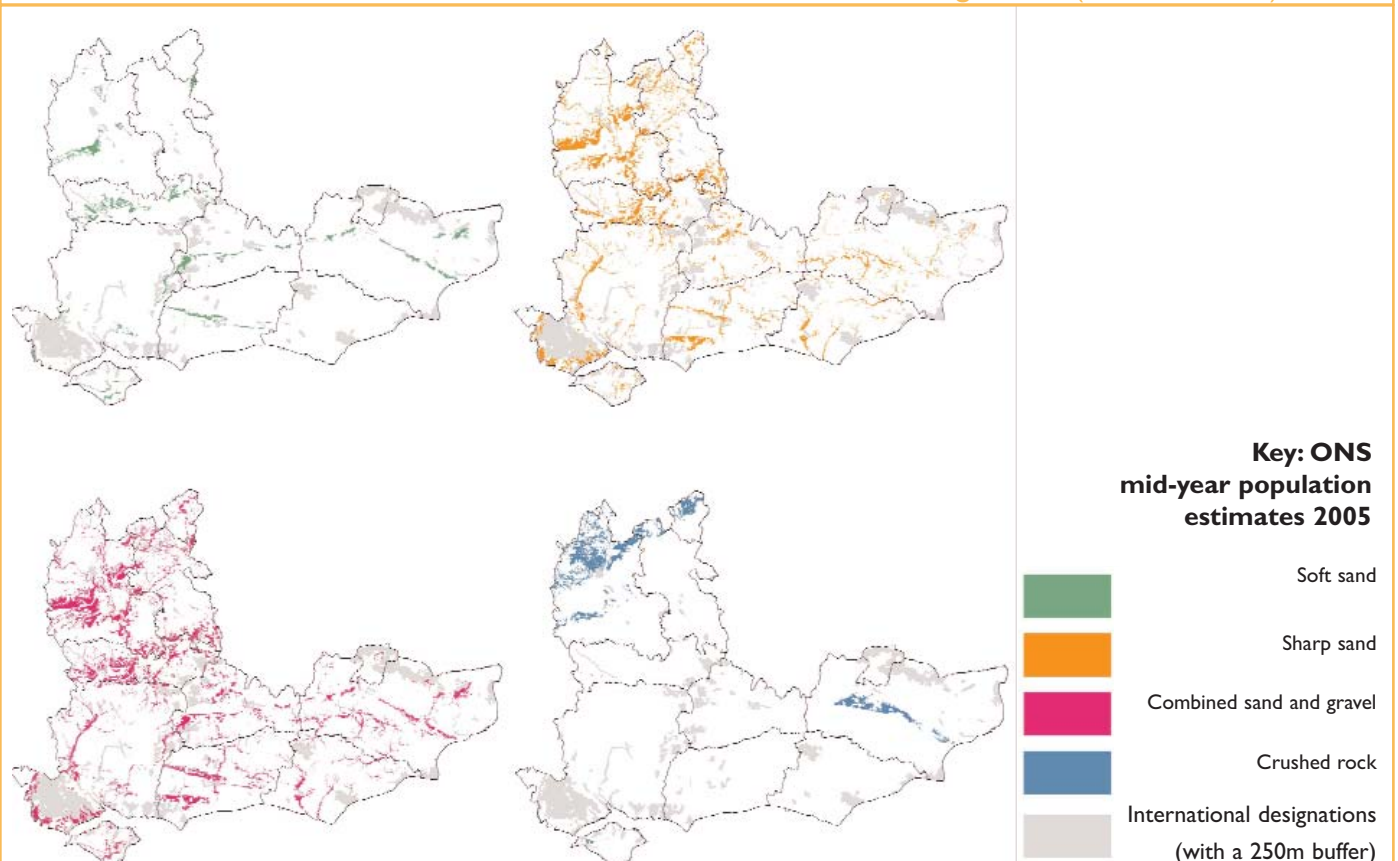
Existing Population (Construction Demand criterion)



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Map 3

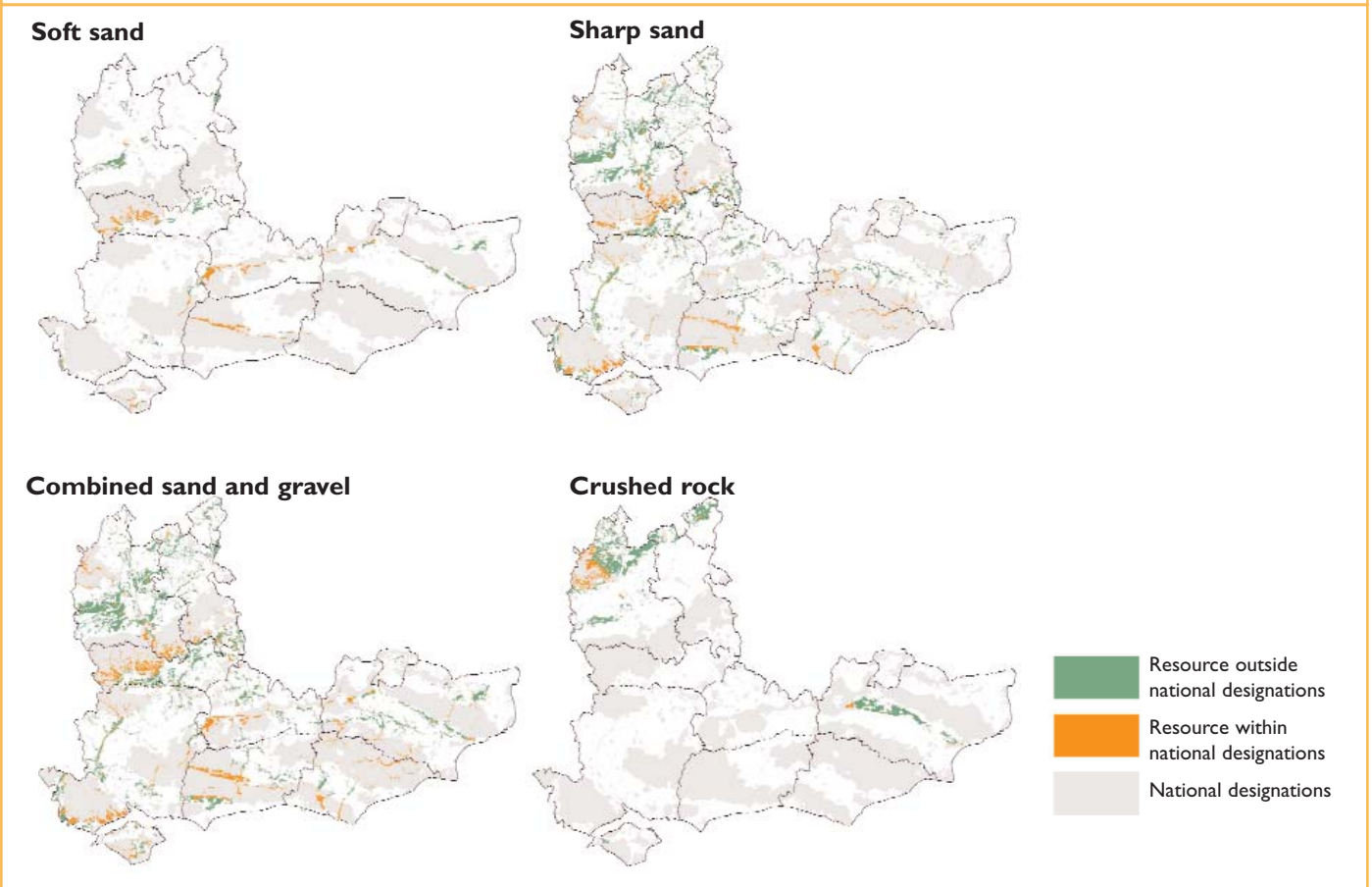
Distribution of unsterilised resource outside of international wildlife designations (+ 250m buffer)



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Map 4

Areas of resource outside of international wildlife designations (+ 250m buffer) and outside of national environmental and heritage designations



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Contextual note

The following information gives an indication of what the area needed for a tonne of material might be, to help with context. This is not an exact calculation given the different quality and depth of resources.

For sand and gravel:

- due to varying mean working thickness of 2 - 4 metres, yield would be some 20,000 and 40,000 cubic metres (m³) per hectare (ha)
- at an average of 30,000 m³ and a ratio of 1.75, 1 ha would yield some 50,000 tonnes.

For soft sand

- due to thickness of beds, 10-20 metres yield would be some 100,000-200,000 m³ per ha
- at an average of some 150,000 m³ and a ratio of 1.6, 1 ha would yield some 250,000 tonnes.

For hard rock

- Due to thickness of beds, 5-10 metres yield would be some 50,000-100,000 m³ per ha
- At an average of 75,000 m³ and a ratio of 2.6, 1 ha would yield some 200,000 tonnes.

So if an MPA is asked to provide for 1mtpa of sharp sand and gravel and soft sand at 75%/25% ratio this might require 15 ha worked for sand and gravel and 1 ha for soft sand.

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