

CHAPTER 2 : WORKABLE MINERAL DEPOSITS

INTRODUCTION

2.1 This chapter seeks to define the broad range of minerals found in the County and to indicate the location of those minerals. A description of the underlying geology of the County is contained in Appendix 1 to this document and the Proposals Map illustrates the location of known mineral deposits in the County. Figure 1 identifies the area in the west of the County where information on sand and gravel deposits is absent.

AGGREGATES

Hard Rock

There are five potential sources of rock in the County:-

- a) Silurian Limestone present in the Abberley/Suckley/Malvern/Ledbury range of Hills, the Woolhope Dome, Shucknall Hill and the north-west of the County in the Aymestrey/Presteigne areas.
- b) Oolitic Limestone present in a small area in the extreme south-east of the County and on Bredon Hill.
- c) Carboniferous Limestone which is present on the flanks of the Forest of Dean Coalfield, south-west of Ross-on-Wye.
- d) Igneous and Metamorphic Rocks which occur in the Malvern Hills.
- e) Cambrian Quartzite which forms the central axis of the Lickey Hills.

Other sources of rock in the County such as Old Red Sandstone and much of the Jurassic Limestone do not have the necessary properties of composition, strength, durability and porosity to be considered as sources of aggregate at present.

Sand and Gravel

Sand and gravel occurs in three forms within this County:-

a) Solid Deposits

These are mainly found in the north-east of the County in the Kidderminster Formation (formerly termed the Bunter Pebble Beds) which yield coarse sand and gravel with a high gravel content capable of producing high grade concreting aggregate. Elsewhere in the formation, where the pebbly horizons are absent, building or soft sands are present. The Wildmoor Formation (formerly the Upper Mottled Sandstone Formation of the Bunter) contains important sources of moulding sand used in the foundry industry.

b) River Terrace Deposits

These are most widespread in the Severn, Avon and Salwarpe Valleys to the east of the Malverns and to a lesser extent in the Wye and Lugg Valleys to the west. Fan gravels washed down from Bredon Hill and the surrounding hills occur south of Bredon Hill and have been partly re-deposited in river terraces.

c) Glacial Deposits

Extensive drift deposits occur to the north and west of Hereford with scattered remnants around Leominster. Other glacial deposits are found to the west of the

Malvern Hills around Mathon. To the east of the Malvern Hills glacial deposits are found in association with boulder clay in the north-east of the County and to the north-west of Evesham around the Lenches.

OTHER MINERALS

Coal

Deposits of coal are found in two areas of the County. One is an extensive deposit forming an extension to the Highley Beds and extends from Abberley/Clows Top and through into the Wyre Forest. The second is the Howle Hill area near Ross-on-Wye. This is an outlying feature related to the Forest of Dean coalfield. In the past both these areas have been worked for coal and in 1989 an application was refused to deep mine coal at Clows Top.

The major interest in coal extraction is in the north-east of the County and is for open cast working. No further interest has been expressed in working the Howle Hill area. The extent of the deposits is illustrated on the Proposals Map.

Salt

The main salt deposits are all located in the Bromsgrove/Droitwich area and extraction ceased many years ago. The salt deposits have now been largely worked out, but the effects of working them are still observable in the form of subsidence in and around Droitwich. There are no plans to resume extraction or to drill further wells in the area.

Clay

Clay is extensively distributed in the County and has been widely worked in the past. Evidence of this is shown by the number of old brick and tile works lying derelict or converted to other uses in the east of the County. Only one brick manufacturer remains in production and is based at Hartlebury. The brick industry is dominated by a number of large producers tending to work on a large scale utilising heavily capitalised processes generally close to the sources of clay. Given the dispersed nature of suitable clay deposits and their limited size, further clay extraction in this County is likely to be limited.

Moulding Sand

These sands are found within the boulder clay in the north-east of the County. The sand is in part used for constructional fill and this element is included within the aggregate figures and part is used for industrial purposes.

2.9 Oil

A number of preliminary geological surveys have been carried out in those sectors of the County which have been released for prospecting by the Government. There are no current oil exploration licences. To date there is no evidence to suggest the presence of oil in the County. In the event of significant oil deposits being discovered, a review of the relevant aspects of the Plan will be undertaken to take account of the changed circumstances.

EXISTING MINERAL WORKINGS AND SURVEY INFORMATION

2.10 Figure 1 illustrates the location of present mineral planning permissions.

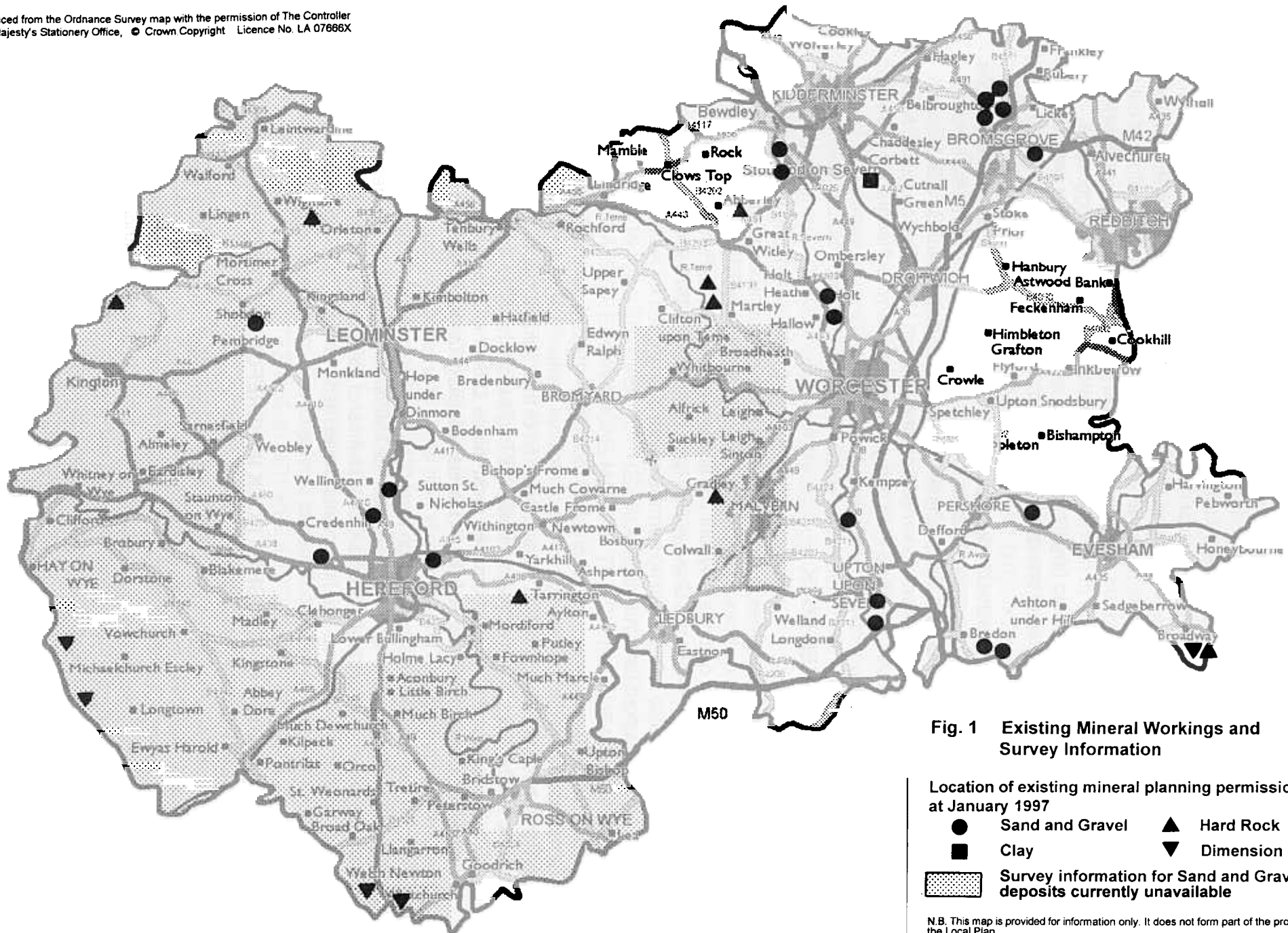


Fig. 1 Existing Mineral Workings and Survey Information

Location of existing mineral planning permissions as at January 1997

- Sand and Gravel
- ▲ Hard Rock
- Clay
- ▼ Dimension Stone
- ▨ Survey information for Sand and Gravel deposits currently unavailable

N.B. This map is provided for information only. It does not form part of the proposals of the Local Plan. The information shown is also subject to change during the life of this Local Plan.