



Mineral Products Association

# **Building on our legacy** ... realising our potential

**The MPA Biodiversity Strategy**



The mineral products industry has a proven legacy of high quality restoration and has further significant potential to protect and enhance biodiversity, including common as well as rare and threatened species and habitats.

Continuing good site management, restoration and after-use of minerals sites is expected to contribute significantly to the achievement of biodiversity priorities, particularly for more, bigger, better and joined-up habitats, and MPA members has a unique role to play in this.



### Context

Mineral products are essential to our construction and manufacturing industries, to our economy and to our everyday lives. Of the two billion tonnes of all materials we use every year in the UK, minerals (at 280 million tonnes or 14 per cent) comprise the biggest material flow.

The UK's diverse geology provides us with high-quality materials and supports a wide range of habitats and species. Maintaining a secure and adequate supply of materials, while reducing environmental impact and maximising environmental benefits is central to delivering sustainable development.



### Importance of biodiversity

'Biological diversity' - or biodiversity - is a term we use to describe the variety of life on Earth. It refers to the wide variety of ecosystems and living organisms: animals, plants, their habitats and their genes'.<sup>1</sup> Biodiversity is important in its own right, in providing natural capital from which ecosystem services (eg nutrient recycling, carbon sequestration and flood defence) are derived, adding to our enjoyment and quality of life.

The government's priorities for biodiversity and ecosystem services in England are set out in the Biodiversity 2020 Strategy. This sets out desired outcomes for biodiversity including Outcome 1B of:

*More, bigger and less fragmented areas of wildlife, with no net loss of priority habitat and an increase in the overall extent of priority habitats by at least 20,000 ha.*

Local Nature Partnerships throughout the country should identify how this outcome can be delivered at local level. The management and restoration of minerals sites presents a major opportunity to contribute to this outcome.

<sup>1</sup> Source: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).



### Impact and potential of extraction

The extraction of minerals, particularly by surface methods, inevitably results in changes to the characteristics of the land where it takes place. These are often temporary and careful site management, restoration and after-use has already created a legacy of rich biodiversity, although further potential remains.

Analysis by *Nature After Minerals* indicates that management and restoration of minerals sites could make a substantial contribution to delivery of the national habitat creation objectives including the Biodiversity 2020 Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, particularly:

- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Wood pasture and parkland
- Lowland heathland
- Purple moor grass and rush pastures
- Reedbeds
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Saline lagoons
- Lowland meadows
- Upland hay meadows
- Open mosaic habitat



## Delivery

Improvement of wildlife habitats has long been a priority for the industry's land management and restoration work.

MPA members have been steadily improving standards of restoration and after-use at their sites and the MPA and predecessor organisations have been running an industry restoration awards scheme for over forty years. Even at active sites land management has focused increasingly on maximising nature conservation opportunities.

Restoration and after-use should concentrate on making the best use of sites, taking account of the views of local residents, landowners, special interest groups and decision makers. This can deliver significant benefits to wildlife and people. **Our monitoring indicates that to date that at least 5,000 hectares of priority habitat has been created on members' sites, with at least a further 6,000 hectares committed to in approved restoration plans.**

Site restoration and after-use options are being considered which look beyond what might be simply a good local fit to how to host habitats and species of principal importance for conservation on a national scale.

Landscape-scale approaches to managing the natural environment, that 'think big and join up' and go beyond site-based measures<sup>2</sup>, can deliver multiple social, environmental and economic benefits. Extensive ecological networks and mosaics of habitats will be more diverse, easier to manage and resilient to change. The mineral products industry is a key partner in delivering this bigger-picture approach through managing and restoring its sites, and through contributing to off-site conservation work.

Keeping track of performance and the contribution mineral products industries are making to biodiversity is crucial. We will measure the industry's contribution to biodiversity.

National and local policy makers need to continue to recognise the role that the industry can contribute to biodiversity objectives, for example through the planning system and by securing adequate funding for positive initiatives.

*Nature after Minerals* is a successful initiative designed to help identify and deliver biodiversity opportunities on former minerals sites. It is actively supported by MPA. The project aims to capitalise on the opportunities provided by quarry restoration to make a significant contribution to national biodiversity priorities.

<sup>2</sup> As recommended in the Natural Environment White Paper (DEFRA 2010) and 'Making Space for Nature' - A review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network (September 2010).

# MPA National Nature Park

Restored quarries represent a national resource of important habitats and wild places. A nationwide network - the National Nature Park - already includes over 70 sites that are accessible for public enjoyment. Facilities include nature trails, visitor a and viewing hides.

Please visit [www.mineralproducts.org/nature\\_map.php](http://www.mineralproducts.org/nature_map.php)





MPA members will continue to take a positive approach to nature conservation, leaving behind more and better quality habitats than before through sensitive site selection, management, restoration and aftercare.

### MPA and its members will:

1. **Extend our knowledge** of the wildlife interest and potential on and adjacent to active sites through monitoring, and how best to manage this, and maximise benefits through restoration and after-use.
2. **Share best practice** between our members and partners around the country through regular briefings, events, and a specific working group.
3. **Develop our partnerships** with conservation organisations, decision makers and individuals to ensure that opportunities to improve biodiversity associated with minerals operations are realised.
4. **Celebrate our successes** through members' awards for Biodiversity, collating and publicising achievements.
5. **Understand our contribution** to delivery of local, national and international biodiversity, including the 25 Year Plan for the Environment.
6. **Increase our influence** through contact with policy makers at all levels, including engagement with European initiatives in association with European Trade bodies.
7. **Promote biodiversity education** using industry assets such as restored sites and field study and education centres to encourage visitors and out of classroom learning and to make the most of first-hand experiences of the natural environment.





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The Mineral Products Association is the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, dimension stone, lime, mortar and silica sand industries.

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