

## **Chalk and Clay in Hertfordshire** Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

November 2018 (version4)

### **Q1. What is Chalk and Clay?**

**Chalk** is a soft, fine grained white limestone. It originates from a build up of planktonic algae and now occurs as bedrock throughout most of the county. In Hertfordshire the chalk acts as a major aquifer (an underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock) and is an important source of groundwater.

**Clay** is a fine grained soil which results from the decomposing of rocks. Clay has a structure which allows the mineral to be impermeable to water. The thickness and quality of the deposit varies considerably across Hertfordshire.

### **Q2. How are Chalk and Clay extracted and processed?**

Chalk and clay are quarried in different parts of the county. They are extracted from the ground in a similar way to sand and gravel. The top soil is removed before the excavation of mineral through mechanical machinery. The extraction of clay and chalk in Hertfordshire is a much smaller scale operation than sand and gravel.



### **Q3. What are the uses of Chalk and Clay?**

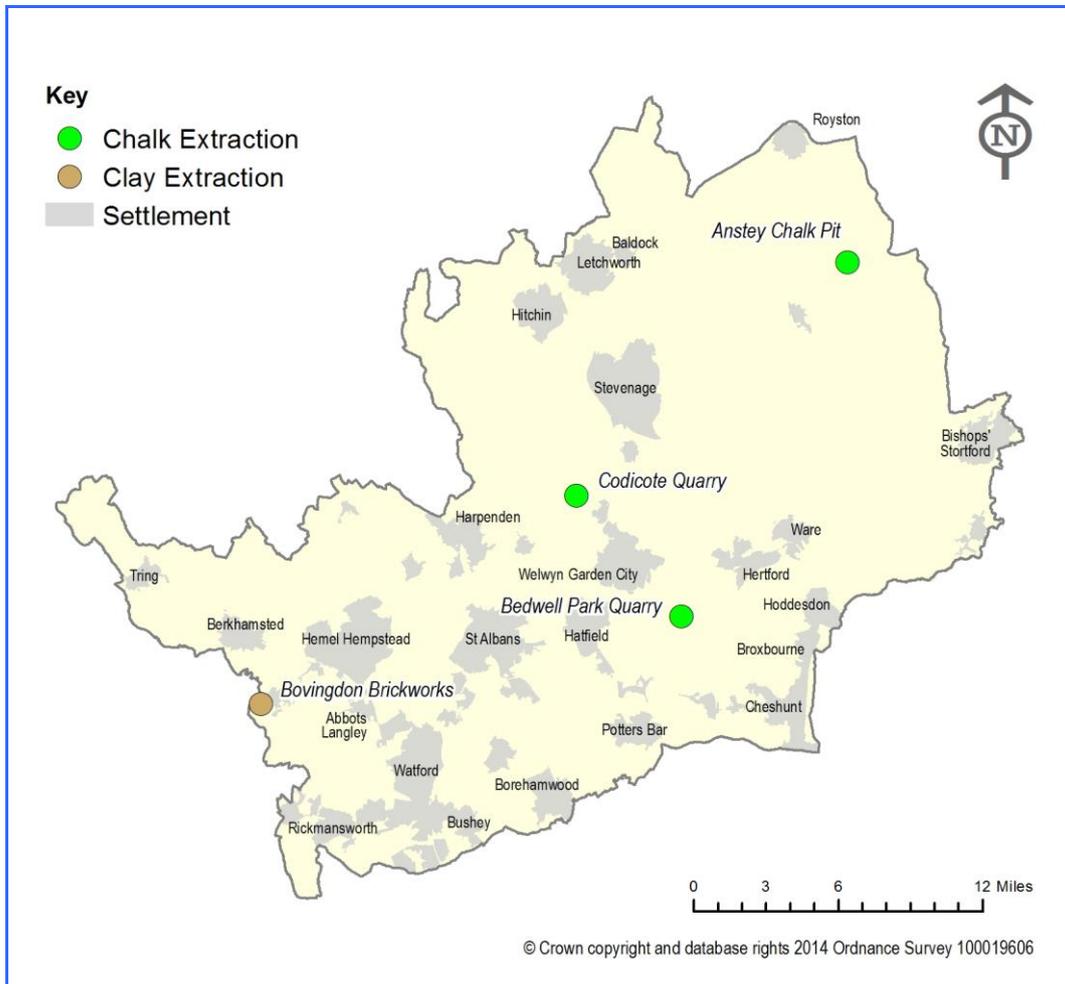
**Chalk** extracted in Hertfordshire was primarily used for agricultural purposes, to make the soil less acidic.

**Clay** has historically been used for brick making in Hertfordshire. The reserve exists in isolated and localised pockets in the north west of the county.

### **Q4. Chalk and Clay in Hertfordshire**

**Clay** extraction ceased in Hertfordshire in 2017 when the last remaining brickworks in Bovington closed. The small works historically produced mechanically made 'soft mud' facing bricks, with about 20% of production in the form of hand-made stock bricks.

**Chalk** is not being extracted in Hertfordshire at the moment but there are three chalk quarries in Hertfordshire. The map below shows the locations of Hertfordshire's existing chalk quarries.



Map of Chalk and Clay sites in Hertfordshire

### **Q5. Current planning policy in Hertfordshire**

Chalk and clay extraction is included within Minerals Policy 6 of the adopted Minerals Local Plan 2002-2016. The existing sites for chalk and clay at the time of adoption are also included within the plan. The existing policy is as follows:

## **MINERALS POLICY 6 – OTHER NON-ENERGY MINERALS**

**Proposals for chalk or clay extraction will only be permitted if:**

**i) it can be demonstrated that need for the mineral cannot be met adequately from existing permitted reserves or other sources; and**

**ii) The need for the mineral in question can clearly be demonstrated to outweigh all adverse effects of the proposed development.**

### **Minerals Local Plan Review**

The County Council is currently reviewing the adopted Minerals Local Plan 2002-2016. As the Minerals Planning Authority for Hertfordshire, the County Council is required to plan for future minerals supply and maintain an up to date document, which reflects the existing opportunities for mineral development within the County.

Whilst the adopted Minerals Local Plan is under review, it will continue to be used to determine minerals applications until the adoption of the updated document has taken place. Each of the policies within the Plan have been 'saved' by a Direction under the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 of the Secretary of State in March 2010 and therefore remain part of the Development Plan for Hertfordshire.

Taking the document forward in the review, National Policy requires the maintenance of a landbank of brick clay to supply a local kiln, however, as the brickworks at Bovingdon has now closed; there is no need to meet this requirement.

Similarly, the requirements for chalk are to identify reserves to support the cement industry, however, there are no cement works in Hertfordshire and as the remaining chalk quarries have historically worked the chalk for agricultural uses; there is no need to meet this requirement.

The Minerals Local Plan will still need to include Policies on brick clay and chalk to cater for the possibility that sites may still come forward. Also, in order to protect clay reserves for future use, the review document identifies the reserves to safeguard them from other non-mineral development sterilising them.

Brickworks in adjacent authorities may also need to be supplied with brick clay from Hertfordshire. For such instances a brick clay policy is proposed in the Minerals Local Plan review document.

If you would like to know more about the production stages of the Minerals Local Plan Review or would like further information about the review process, please follow the useful links below Question 7.

**Q6. Monitoring and enforcement: If planning permission were to be granted for chalk and clay extraction, how would it be monitored?**

Any planning permissions for chalk and clay extraction granted by Hertfordshire County Council will be subject to monitoring. Monitoring helps to ensure that all development is compliant with any planning permissions (and associated conditions or legal agreements) granted. If required, the County Council has powers to take enforcement action to ensure compliance with planning permissions granted by the County Council.

**Q7. Where can I find more information?**

The British Geological Survey (BGS) has information on the geology of Hertfordshire as well as specific documents about chalk and clay resource. <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/>

The Minerals Products Association is the national trade association for the aggregates industry and has information online on agricultural and industrial lime. <http://www.mineralproducts.org/index.php>

For more information regarding the review process of the Minerals Local Plan 2002-2016, follow the link below, which takes you to the Minerals Local Plan Review page on Hertfordshire County Council's Website:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/minerals-and-waste-planning/minerals-planning/minerals-local-plan-review/minerals-local-plan-review.aspx>

Other County Council documents include:

Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (2018)  
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/planning/minerals-and-waste-development-scheme-november-2018.pdf>

The Local Aggregates Assessment (2018)  
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-in-hertfordshire/minerals-planning/hcc-laa-2018-final.pdf>

Authority Monitoring Report (2017/18)  
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/planning/amr-2017-2018-final.pdf>

### **Contact Information**

The Minerals and Waste Planning Policy Team are also available to answer any specific queries you may have, our contact details can be seen below:

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