

# Priorities for the next Government: Decarbonisation, Growth, Delivery



**Mineral products underpin nearly every part of our lives**; from homes, schools and hospitals to roads, railways and ports and even energy, water, steel, glass and agriculture. To deliver the essential materials needed for these priorities, [we estimate that 4 billion tonnes of aggregate will be needed by 2035](#).

The sector faces significant policy challenges on industrial decarbonisation, planning and resource availability, and delivery of major projects. The next Government must address these for the industry to reach our full potential. Most of our priorities do not require significant public expenditure but they would enable our industry to support growth of the entire UK economy.

## 1. Decarbonised and competitive UK industry

Our whole industry is committed to net zero. Achieving that will require businesses to prepare for alternative fuels, on-site equipment and transport and other measures for industrial processes such as making [cement and concrete](#) but this will rely on zero carbon electricity, hydrogen or waste biomass being available in sufficient quantities and new infrastructure such as grid connections being affordable. It also needs Government to ensure a level playing field with international competitors to attract private investment to the UK.

### Recommendations:

- Tackle the high costs charged by Distribution Network Operators for new grid connections and upgrades and ensure enough generation capacity to support all industries to decarbonise
- Deliver a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism on cement by 2026, to level the carbon cost of imports with domestic production
- Deliver carbon capture at pace, both in clusters and at dispersed industrial sites
- Tackle the domestic drivers of the UK having higher industrial energy costs than competitor economies, e.g. abolish the Carbon Price Support
- Prioritise hydrogen for uses that cannot be electrified such as firing lime kilns
- Level the playing field for waste biomass by, for example, ending current measures like the Green Gas Support Scheme, that divert waste streams to electricity or heat production

## 2. A planning system that supports growth

Supply of mineral products cannot be taken for granted; it must be planned, managed, and monitored to ensure demand is met on a secure and sustainable basis. [For every 100 tonnes of sand and gravel extracted and sold over the last decade, permission has been granted for only 62 tonnes of new reserves.](#) This replenishment rate is unsustainable, and decisive action in the next Parliament is needed to streamline the mineral planning system.

[Quarries make amazing sites for biodiversity when restored,](#) but the Biodiversity Net Gain rules coming into force from January 2024 do not provide the right incentives and could even incentivise less ambitious schemes. Our members have already delivered 80 km<sup>2</sup> of priority habitat, with another 110 km<sup>2</sup> planned.

### Recommendations:

- Streamline the planning process for minerals sites and [reduce regulatory duplication between planning and permitting](#)
- Set industry-specific biodiversity net gain rules to get the most out of restored quarries
- Reduce planning and permitting barriers to onsite renewables
- Recognise the essentiality of domestic mineral supply to the wider economy through a National Statement of Need
- Increase capacity of specialist mineral planners in planning authorities or regional hubs

## 3. Better delivery of projects

It can take up to fifteen years from identifying a new mineral resource to starting production, so MPA members need to plan well ahead to invest in people and skills, plant and sites to ensure that essential mineral products are available in the right place and at the right time.

The reliable delivery of national infrastructure would enable the industry to plan with confidence, but all too often projects are delayed, descope or cancelled. Even when projects do proceed, they have often not engaged the material supply chain early enough, leading to inefficient outcomes.

The infrastructure pipeline needs to be much more dependable and transparent with realistic milestones set and stuck to. This will allow the mineral products sector to supply these projects in the most cost-effective and sustainable way which will allow investment in jobs and reduce costs.

### Recommendations:

- Commit to using low carbon concrete and asphalt by default in public infrastructure
- Mandate Resource and Material Supply audits as an early part of planning for all major public projects
- Establish a consistent, trackable and digitised infrastructure pipeline to support planned investment

## More detail and further questions

Scan the QR code to view our Key Documents for Political Stakeholders



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

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