

Lack of government planning policy will force quarries into court action

Planning applications will be fought out in the courts unless the government commits to solid policies, the British Aggregates Association (BAA) warned this week.

Secretary Peter Huxtable said unless the government comes out with a clear statement on planning, quarry owners and planners will face higher levels of challenges and litigation.

The BAA responded to the government's consultation paper on the Minerals Policy Statement

last week, which aims to provide local authorities with planning guidelines. The BAA condemned the document and said it lacks a "clear unequivocal" policy to meet the construction industry's supply.

Huxtable said: "We are concerned that it is such a low priority for the decision-makers and policy-makers and they seem unable to give us some strong, clear direction. It's political speak - people don't want to use simple language. "The supply of minerals is

essential for the nation's needs. That's what we believe should be the clear policy statement."

He warned that unless the government makes a bold statement on planning, quarry owners will resort to the courts to gain clarity. Huxtable added that the document's proposed "landbank" of available aggregates will not meet the construction industry's needs. He said: "The reserves and resources nationally are dwindling. That has been done at our long-term peril."

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