



BRITISH AGGREGATES ASSOCIATION – PRESS RELEASE
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS BECOMING A BIGGER PROBLEM – Member survey shows increase in delays and mushrooming costs!

The British Aggregates Association (BAA) has published the results of its latest member survey on the impact of pre-application archaeological investigations. This was a snapshot survey across 12 members throughout the UK.

- The annual cost and the annual estimate of the delays for these determinations ahead of getting planning permissions have risen sharply so far this decade.
- Despite reassurances from ODPM on guidance, and the re-issuing of the CBI code of practice, neither would appear to being adhered to by the authorities.
- 10 of the 12 responses reported costs and time delays. Of these 10, two had nothing to report for 2001-2003. However they reported problems for the first time in 2004 ahead of permissions planned for submission in 2005.
- The responses came from all regions of England and Scotland with the majority from the southern counties.

The following are the consolidated responses to the questionnaire:

	2001	2002	2003	2004
TOTAL COST to your business of undertaking pre-planning archaeological determinations	£36,900	£98,300	£167,400	£217,700
TIME (months) delay the discussions/determinations added ahead of commencing extraction	0	28	35	53
TONNES , Mineral resource sterilised due to imposed conditions or company voluntary withdrawal of part of application	20,000	0	1,100,000	20,000

BAA were first concerned at the delays being experienced by their SME members in late 2003 by the imposition of **over-the-top** pre-application archaeological investigations and wrote to Planning Minister Keith Hill requesting a review of the application of this guidance by individual mineral planning authorities. A specific request was that any archaeological digs be carried-out subsequent to any successful approval of the mineral application but prior to commencement of operations - which would go a long way to resolve the problems. Whilst the response we received from ODPM was most supportive and reiterated PPG16 (Planning Policy Guidance) – this would appear not to having had much impact on the authorities.

During 2004 the CBI re-issued their excellent and still highly relevant Code of Practice, and BAA have engaged in an ongoing dialogue on the issue with both English Heritage and with ALGO (Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers).

For further information please contact:

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Notes to editors:

1. The British Aggregates Association is the representative trade body for independent quarry operators www.british-aggregates.co.uk
2. The Association represents some 70 members across the UK producing around 10% of national output from over 100 individual sites
3. The Association was formed to campaign for the interests of SME quarry operators, to protect the independent quarry sector from the increasing dominance of the major operators, and to oppose the ill-conceived Aggregates Levy.
4. The Association participates fully with all EU and UK consultations on environmental, economic, and health and safety legislation; and is an active member of the *Confederation of British Industry* (CBI) Minerals Committee, and the *Construction Products Association* (CPA). It operates its own mutual restoration fund for quarry restoration.