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Resources

What is the difference between resources and reserves?

Resources

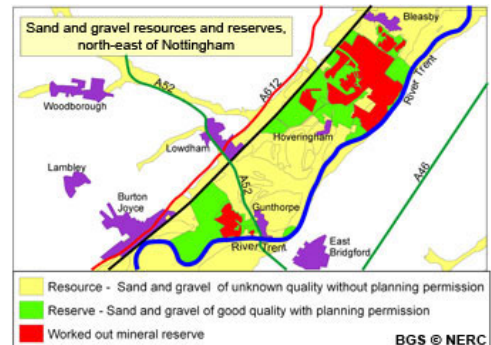
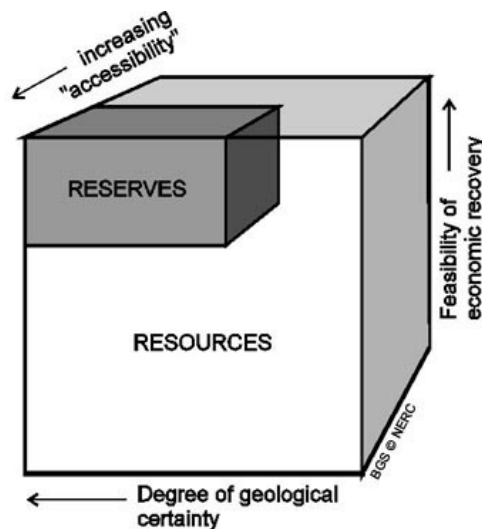
There are a number of factors that determine where primary (or natural) aggregates can be worked. In Britain these are fundamentally determined by two critical factors;

- the availability of aggregate resources, and
- access to the resource.

Resource availability

Mineral resources are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or, bodies of rock that are, or may become, of potential economic interest due to their inherent properties.

There frequently is confusion in the understanding of the terms **resources** and **reserves**, and they are sometimes used interchangeably. It is important to clearly define these terms and ensure their correct usage.



Trent valley sand and gravel resources and reserves north-east of Nottingham (click image to enlarge view).

Mineral resources are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or, in the case of aggregates, bodies of rock that are, or may become, of potential economic interest due to their inherent properties (for example the high crushing strength of a rock or its suitability for use as an aggregate). The mineral will also be present in sufficient quantity to make it of intrinsic economic interest. Aggregate resources have, therefore, not only physical but also economic aspects. The status of aggregate resources in economic terms may change with time as product specifications change, as markets decline or expand, as transport links improve, and as extraction and processing technology improve. Resources that might previously have remained unworked, because of their poor quality or they were beneath excessive overburden thickness, are increasingly being considered as potential sources of supply.

Access to the resource

The presence of an otherwise economically viable aggregate resource is not in itself sufficient to ensure that mineral extraction will take place. This is because, in common with most other forms of developments in the UK, minerals extraction and related activities such as processing facilities, require **planning permission** before any development can take place. Without a planning consent no mineral working can legally take place and consequently the inherent economic value of a mineral resource cannot be released and resulting wealth created. The continuity of the supply of aggregates crucially depends, therefore, on adequate planning permissions being granted.

[... more](#)