

11 June 2019

RECYCLED BEDDING – CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

New free guidance has been produced by the BPF Pipes Group, providing clear information on responsibly recycled aggregates for sustainable construction projects, including drains and sewers in small to medium-sized development sites.

The BPF Pipes Group was pleased to respond to requests from NHBC and developers to support the house building industry in offering sustainable solutions to managing the risk of using aggregates from waste. The new guidance recommends that recycled aggregates are always sourced from producers who are able to demonstrate that their products comply with both BS EN 13242 and the WRAP/Environment Agency Quality Protocol for the production of aggregates from inert waste.

By selecting processed recycled aggregates, developers can further promote the circular construction economy, without compromising the performance of below ground pipes.

Below ground flexible drain and sewer pipes are typically installed with a granular bed and surround material. Granular material is often referred to as ‘aggregate’ in the wider construction industry. When installed following industry best practice, it can provide long-term continuous structural support along the entire pipe length without causing any damage to the pipe. Coarse aggregate should always be selected in a size or grade appropriate for the pipe diameter being laid.

Julia Trew of the BPF Pipes Group helped compile the guidance: “We have tried to clarify two key considerations when selecting recycled aggregates: the environmental suitability of the material when used below ground, and its engineering suitability in providing continuous structural support to a pipe. The UK highways and water industries have different requirements, and our guidance helps explain it all, along with a useful check list.

There is also a technical annex on using BS EN 13642 to help developers select the correct aggregates.”

The Mineral Products Association estimates that, of a total of 120 million tonnes of demolition and excavation waste typically produced annually by UK construction activities, 51 million tonnes of non-hazardous waste is recycled as aggregate, a figure that is steadily rising. Recycled and secondary materials accounted for 29 per cent of total aggregate supply in the UK in 2016. So, recycled aggregates conforming to European aggregate standards and national specifications make a key contribution to total aggregates demand and use.

As Julia Trew concluded: “Our new guidance contains real, sustainable and practical solutions for house builders and smaller developers. Using correctly sourced recycled aggregates will help reduce pressure on our natural resources and also reduce landfill waste.”

The guidance is available at <https://www.bfpipesgroup.com/support-downloads/guidance-notes/> and it is complementary to the BPF Pipes Group’s existing guidance on designing drains and sewers for brownfield sites.