

# BAA boss slams quarries' policies on central buying

■ Large companies' purchasing policies probably cost more than is saved, according to trade association.

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Centralised buying is threatening many smaller suppliers to the quarrying industry and is probably costing more money in lost production than is saved from sourcing cheaper parts and services, claimed Robert Durward,

director of the British Aggregates Association (BAA).

When a machine breaks down, those working for big companies may have to get the relevant contact details from the head office, he said. "Even then, suppliers are reluctant to act without an order number as this

can lead to long delays in getting paid."

On the BAA stand at Hillhead, a number of visitors employed by major companies expressed frustration at not being able to obtain goods and services from local suppliers. "All quarry companies have a huge investment

in capital equipment, which requires an efficient parts and service backup," said Durward

However, he argued that centralised buying can prolong the period of inactivity. "What's needed is to give more autonomy to people on the ground." For suppliers to get on the preferred

suppliers list, they have to put in a lot of work and get "screwed to the ground" on price.

"It would appear that some of the bean counters at head office might benefit from spending a little time at the sharp end talking to their own people," he concluded.