



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Cittie & Strábane
Deistrick Council



Local
Development
Plan 2030

Planning Department
Planning Our
District's Future

4th April 2017 Stakeholder Event – Minerals Briefing

Minerals Background:

Minerals include all substances in or under the land, which are ordinarily worked for removal by underground or surface working. Raw materials obtained from mineral extraction are vital to many aspects of construction including, roads, bridges, buildings, etc. and therefore has an **important role in the growth and economy of the District** and region generally. However, the **extraction of minerals can have a significant impact on the landscape** and surrounding locality, depending on the size, scale and method used. Extraction may also have an impact on nature conservation sites and structures and remains of historic and archaeological importance.

Legislative and Regional Policy Context

- **Planning (Interim Development) Act (Northern Ireland) 1944**
- **Mineral Development Act 1969**
- **Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**
- **Planning Regulations 2015**
- **Mining Waste Directive**

Mineral Licensing

Mineral Prospecting licenses are issued by DfE, (formerly DETI) under Section 11 of the Mineral Development Act (Northern Ireland) 1969. Companies prospect for base metals and precious metals under concurrent Licenses for the Department and the Crown Estates Commissioners. The DfE administer all oil and gas reserves and it licenses oil and gas exploration and extraction. However, before extraction commences, planning permission must be obtained. In line with GB and the ROI, The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 enables councils to start a process of an initial review of all mineral permissions granted in Northern Ireland thereby ensuring that their conditions meet modern expectations and current environmental standards (ROMPS).

Regional Policies on Minerals

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS): The RDS does not provide specific policy for minerals, though one of the eight aims of the RDS is to 'Support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential'.

A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI) (1993): The PSRNI recognises that Minerals are an important natural resource and their exploitation makes an essential contribution to the nation's prosperity and quality of life. In the absence of a subsequent PPS on Minerals, the PSNRI still contains the operational planning policies on minerals development (Min 1- Min 8).

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) was published in September 2015. The SPPS is the single most important document in guiding the requirements/content of the LDP and sets out the strategic policy that must be taken into account in the preparation of the LDP in terms of ensuring sufficient local supplies are available, safeguards mineral resources of economic or conservation value and identify areas which should be protected from minerals development.

Planning Policy Statement: PPS 2 Planning and Nature Conservation: Policy NH5: Habitats, Species or Features of Natural Heritage Importance is relevant to minerals, and in particular peat extraction.

Planning Policy Statement: PPS 6 Archaeology & Built Heritage: is relevant in relation to archaeology and artefacts that could be affected by minerals.

Call for Evidence - Permitted Development Rights for Mineral Exploration

The former Department of the Environment launched a 'Call for Evidence' to help inform the future approach to Permitted Development (PD) Rights for Mineral Exploration in March 2016 regarding the above. Council were satisfied with the DoE's stance on this matter and therefore a response indicating 'no changes to PD rights' was returned. DfI then issued a consultation exercise on this matter between Dec 2016 and Feb 2017.

Derry Area Plan (DAP) 2011

Proposal MN 1 Areas of Constraint on Mineral Development:

Policy MN 1 Restoration of Despoiled Land

Strabane Area Plan (SAP) 2001

Limited reference to the mostly sand and gravel working in the area.

Role of Minerals for the Economy

Mineral Products Association (MPA) and the Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland (QPANI), stress the importance of indigenous mineral production and its contribution to the economy by providing:

- employment (directly and indirectly);
- markets for other goods and services, which stimulate activity elsewhere in the economy; and
- basic raw materials for other industries, e.g. construction.

Latest QPANI figures indicate there are 17 quarrying companies and 22 quarry sites operating in the District producing approximately 295,796 tonnes with an estimated value of £828,096

District Geology

The geology of the Derry and Strabane area is rich in minerals ranging from peat, basalt, igneous rock, sandstone, psammites and quartzites, as well as sand and gravel. The counties of Tyrone and Derry are the main producers of sand and gravel in Northern Ireland. These two counties produce around 78% of the country's sand and gravel extracts (Tyrone – 55%, Derry – 23%). County Tyrone is the second largest producer of limestone in Northern Ireland accounting for 20% of total output, County Derry only produces around 1%. There are extensive resources of peat in Counties Derry and Tyrone with some significant sites designated as Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI's). Prospecting for gold is likely to be a potential future development activity within our District. The Dalradian basement rocks of the Sperrin Mountains have been the main focus of exploration but recent work has identified additional prospective areas in adjoining Districts.

Implications for Mineral Development in the LDP

The LDP will need to policy for minerals in line with SPPS. It will recognise that while there are certainly economic benefits to mineral extraction and production, this industry also provides a number of challenges, including impact on the environment, visual implications and impact on the amenity of local residents. These will have to be sustainably considered.

Key District Mineral Issues:

- the economic significance of our mineral reserves;
- restoration of old workings;
- relationship between mineral workings and our designated / protected sites

Questions – See Questions to consider on Overhead Slide

Prompts for Table Discussion:

- In Planning terms, what are the most pertinent issues affecting your area of interest?;
- How could these be sustainably improved in the forthcoming LDP?;
- Do you consider the current planning policies in the PSRNI are adequate – if not how do you suggest we could improve them?;
- How can the LDP be flexible so that minerals industry be flexible and react when required, such as an upturn in house building, without having a negative impact on the environment?
- Where should our Mineral Reserves Areas be?
- Where should our Areas of Mineral Constraint be?
- Where should the above be in relation to the AONB, Archaeology areas or Tourism routes?