



MPANI Response to Minerals Section of the Lisburn Castlereagh Council draft Plan Strategy

January 2020

Background

MPANI welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Lisburn Castlereagh Council Draft Plan Strategy. This response focuses fully on the sections dealing with Minerals Development.

The MPANI is the principal trade association for the quarrying and mineral products industry in Northern Ireland affiliated to the Minerals Products Association (MPA) in the UK. Members of the MPANI produce over 95% of the Northern Ireland's primary aggregates, as well as the major proportion of other construction materials such as asphalt, ready mixed concrete, precast concrete, recycled and secondary aggregates, lime and silica sand.

Modern industrial society is, quite literally, built upon mineral products. Whether it is our physical built environment, our transport links or the wider infrastructure on which we all rely, aggregates are utterly essential to economic growth. If we want to improve the lives of people in Northern Ireland, it is vital that the contribution of our local quarrying and minerals industry is fully understood by those with the power to support it.

Local Industry to meet Local Need

The Mineral Products industry in Northern Ireland directly employs some 5000 people, produces approximately 24 million tons of aggregates per year and has a turnover of around £650 million per year (2% of NI GDP). The Mineral Products Sector is a varied industry, with the majority of NI businesses family owned, alongside a number owned by large multinational companies, it is primarily a rural industry, supporting jobs in areas identified by Government as targeting social need (TSN). The full economic impact of the geoscience industry to the wider NI economy is calculated to be 83,700 jobs, £3.7 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) and £1.8 billion in wages. More information on the economic value of the Geo Science sector to the NI Economy can be viewed at https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/406936/Economic-Impact-of-Geosciences_final-report-12th-April-2019.pdf

As the Council rightly states an adequate and steady supply of mineral products is essential to ensure economic growth in the future. We need them for construction, energy and for manufacturing, with each of us in Northern Ireland using more than 14 tonnes of aggregates per

year, on average. Local industry offers sustainable solutions to the challenges of creating and maintaining our built environment, coping with climate change and providing for a growing population.

Each house that we build will require around 60 tonnes of stone. When you add that to the materials required to construct our roads, paths, water and sewage infrastructure you need to ask yourself "Where within our local area will those materials come from?"

Minerals in Lisburn Castlereagh

Quarrying holds an important place in the district economy. Lisburn and Castlereagh districts mineral and construction products businesses employ around 167 people, contributing £12.5 million in wages per year to the local economy. The Mineral Products companies extract raw product worth £9m, after processing into concrete and asphalt products this is worth around £53.2m to the Lisburn Castlereagh economy. These businesses balance economic expertise with environmental understanding - through a variety of schemes such as biodiversity plans and tree-planting, our members effectively offset their environmental impact and delivery of environmental Net Gain and increase in Natural Capital. In addition the Mineral Products Industry in LCC contributes over £106,000 to the local rates bill.

Members of the MPANI operating within the Lisburn Castlereagh Council area are;

Northstone NI Ltd, McQuillan Companies, MW Johnston, Conexpo, Breedon Roof Tiles, Whitemountain (Breedon), Jordan Concrete

Comments on the draft Plan Policy

MPANI welcome the Councils recognition of the contribution the Mineral Products Industry makes to the region's economy and the jobs it provides. We also welcome the recognition that minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and quality of life plus provide vitally important raw materials for manufacturing, construction, power generation, transportation and infrastructure.

We welcome the Councils consideration of the need to safe guard mineral resources through the identification of "mineral safeguarding areas". We believe Strategic Policy 13 is a balanced approach.

As identified above The Draft Plan Strategy significantly underestimates the value of and the economic contribution that the mineral products industry makes to the LCC economy. We do recognise that is due to annual quarry return collected by the Department of the Economy asks for the gate price of minerals only and not the value of manufactured products such as Asphalt, precast and readymixed concrete. We must also point out that in the LCC area a number of our MPANI Members are also involved in waste and environmental management and as such make another significant contribution in jobs and turnover to the local economy.

We would ask the Council to recognise these new figures as a more accurate assessment of the value of the industry locally in LCC to ensure Consistency, Soundness and Coherence.

Within the operational policies document Minerals Development Section 5, page 51, MPANI would question the use of wording under the Justification and Amplification within MD1 Environmental Protection where it states *"In all areas, decisions on mineral applications will be made with regard to the preservation of good quality agricultural land, tree and vegetation cover only be "*. MPANI would question the use of this wording. What is the definition of "good" agricultural land? Minerals can only be extracted where they occur and will only be exploited if those mineral reserves are of sufficient quantity, quality and value to the local economy. We would also suggest that the comment in section 5, page 51 completely fails to recognise the positive contribution that mineral sites, both operational and appropriately restored can make to local biodiversity and wildlife. We would ask that the reference to "good agricultural land" is removed as it has no standing or definition within planning.

We welcome the approach under MD3 that Areas of Mineral Constraint will be dealt with in the Local Policies Plan.

MPANI also welcome the proposal under MD 9 Restoration Proposals that each application must include satisfactory restoration proposals. However restoration requirements, as part of planning conditions, must be enforced by the Council.

Conclusions

MPANI look forward to building on the working relationship that we have with the Council. We will continue to work with and encourage our Members in the Lisburn Castlereagh Council Area to provide important production and resource information to enable the Council to develop supply and demand scenarios over the Plan period so that we have a truly sustainable minerals sector and one that ensures we supply the products, services and jobs to help sustain the local economy.

It is our opinion that if the changes and recommendations we have proposed above are adopted by Council then the Minerals Policy set out in the Plan Strategy is Consistent, Sound and Coherent. .

Regional Director MPANI