

## **Minerals Development**

**Purpose:** To provide the Council with an overview of matters relating to minerals and implications for the emerging Mid and East Antrim Local Development Plan (LDP)

**Content:** The paper provides:

- (i) the regional policy context for mineral development;
- (ii) the existing Area Plan context for mineral development;
- (iii) an overview of the economic importance of minerals to the NI economy;
- (iv) an overview of mineral resources, production and economic importance of mineral development in Mid and East Antrim
- (v) how mineral development could be addressed in the Plan.

**Recommendation:** That the Council notes the findings and the suggested overall approach to mineral development in the Local Development Plan.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1** This paper is one in a series of papers that will inform Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in the preparation of the new local development plan. Its purpose is to inform Council of the regional planning context for mineral development, the importance of minerals to the economy and how mineral development could be addressed in the Plan.
- 1.2** Minerals are an important natural resource and economic asset because of their importance in providing the raw materials for many forms of development, for example, in the construction of roads, buildings and other infrastructure. The secondary processing of many of these materials, for example the manufacture of concrete products, dimension stone and peat based fertiliser serves to reinforce and add value to this sector of the economy. The exploitation and processing of minerals is also of economic importance in providing jobs and employment particularly in rural areas.
- 1.3** While minerals development offers significant economic benefits, it can also present a number of challenges relating to environmental impact and the amenity and well-being of people living in proximity to quarrying and processing operations. Such impacts can arise through the generation of noise, dust and heavy traffic. Because of the nature and scale of some operations, there is also potential for degradation of the landscape and impact on the integrity of sites designated for their nature conservation, biodiversity or historic/ archaeological importance. Avoidance of adverse impact is not possible in all circumstances because of the fact that minerals must be extracted at the location where they are found, albeit that there may be opportunities for processing operations to take place at alternative suitable locations.
- 1.4** The planning system has a key role in facilitating a sustainable approach to minerals development. Such an approach must recognise the need to secure a continuous and ongoing supply of construction materials to meet society's needs while protecting important environmental assets and safeguarding the amenity and well-being of those living close to mineral extraction sites.

## 2.0 Regional Policy Context

- 2.1 The Regional Policy Context relevant to minerals development is provided by the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035, various regional planning policy statements, including 'A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland' (PSRNI) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). The RDS does not provide specific policy aims and objectives for minerals but recognises the importance of the rural area, in offering opportunities for quarrying, rural industries and enterprise at appropriate locations.

### Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland

- 2.2 Current planning policies for minerals are set out in 'A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland' published in 1993. While PSRNI recognises the importance of minerals as a natural resource and the contribution that their exploitation makes to the economy, it also seeks to address, through the planning system, particular difficulties that can be presented. In addition the Strategy promotes sustainability in the exploitation of mineral resources. In this regard it recommends that the rate of consumption of finite minerals should be reduced by encouraging the use of renewable and recycled alternatives where ever this is practical and economically viable. It further recommends that the minerals industry should aim for the best use of the total aggregate resources by minimising wastage and avoiding the use of higher quality materials where lower grade materials would suffice.
- 2.3 While advancing a general presumption in favour of development, the strategy states that in considering an application for extraction, account will be taken of the value of the mineral to the economy, the environmental implications and the degree to which adverse effects can be mitigated in relation to the character of the local area.
- 2.4 PSRNI requires that the development of mineral workings have regard to the following policies:-
- **Policy MIN 1: Environmental Protection** - to assess the need for the mineral resource against the need to protect and conserve the environment.
  - **Policy MIN 2: Visual Implications** - to have regard to the visual implications of mineral extraction.
  - **Policy MIN 3: Areas of Constraint** - to identify areas of constraint on mineral development.
  - **Policy MIN 4: Valuable Minerals** - applications to exploit minerals, limited in occurrence or with some uncommon or valuable property, will be considered on their merits.
  - **Policy MIN 5: Mineral Reserves** - surface development, which would prejudice future exploitation of valuable mineral reserves, will not be permitted.
  - **Policy MIN 6: Safety and Amenity** – to have particular regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants of developments in close proximity to mineral workings

- **Policy MIN 7: Traffic** - to take account of the safety and convenience of road users and the amenity of persons living on roads close to the site of proposed operations.
- **Policy MIN 8: Restoration** - to require mineral workings to be restored at the earliest opportunity.

### **Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)**

- 2.5** In facilitating a sustainable approach to minerals development, the SPPS recognises not only the essential contribution that the minerals industry makes to the economy but also the importance of respecting the limits of our natural resources and ensuring a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment.
- 2.6** Thus the regional strategic objectives for minerals development are to:
- facilitate sustainable minerals development (including peat extraction from boglands) through balancing the need for specific minerals development proposals against the need to safeguard the environment;
  - minimise the impacts of minerals development on local communities, landscape quality, built and natural heritage, and the water environment; and
  - secure the sustainable and safe restoration, including the appropriate re-use of mineral sites, at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.7** In seeking to meet these objectives, the SPPS states that Local Development Plans (LDPS) should:
- ensure that sufficient local supplies of construction aggregates can be made available for use within the local, and where appropriate, the regional market area and beyond, to meet likely future development needs over the plan period;
  - safeguard mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value, and seek to ensure that workable mineral resources are not sterilised by other surface development which would prejudice future exploitation; and
  - identify areas which should be protected from minerals development<sup>1</sup> because of their intrinsic landscape, amenity, scientific or heritage value (including natural, built and archaeological heritage). There should be a general presumption against minerals development in such areas. However, where a designated area such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers expansive tracts of land, the LDP should carefully consider the scope for some minerals development that avoids key sites and that would not unduly compromise the integrity of the area as a whole or threaten to undermine the rationale for the designation.
- 2.8** The SPPS also suggests that LDPs should, where appropriate, identify areas suitable for minerals development within the plan area. Such areas will normally include areas of mineral reserves where exploitation is likely to have the least environmental and amenity impacts, as well as offering good accessibility to the strategic transport network. .

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<sup>1</sup> Normally referred to in Development Plans as 'Areas of Constraint on Mineral Development'

- 2.9** The SPPS states that there should be a presumption against unconventional hydrocarbon extraction otherwise known as ‘fracking’ until the Department of the Environment (DOE) is satisfied that there is sufficient and robust evidence on all environmental impacts.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 2 – Natural Heritage

- 2.10** The range of policies set out in PPS2 fall to be considered when assessing applications for minerals development falling within areas designated for their natural heritage, biodiversity or landscape importance. Policy NH5 is of particular relevance in regard to proposals for peat extraction, since active peatland in itself is treated as a recognised habitat and feature of natural heritage importance.

### **3.0 Existing Area Plans**

#### Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001

- 3.1** Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001 acknowledges that extraction activities in the Borough fall into 3 categories – (a) Quarrying of aggregates, (b) open cast working of bauxite, and (c) peat cutting. Crushed rock aggregates represent the bulk of material extracted in the area. Aggregate extraction is concentrated within the Moorfields/Glenwherry area and around Ballylig near Broughshane.
- 3.2** The Plan notes that small quantities of Bauxite are extracted under a mining permission at Clinty Quarry and that deposits workable deposits of these type of non-aggregate minerals are more likely to have a limited occurrence and higher economic value than aggregates.
- 3.3** The Plan notes that the extraction of peat only occurs on a limited scale and is largely confined to the fringes of the Plan area. Deposits of upland peat occur near Glarryford, Cargan and Glenwherry. Lowland peat occurs to the north and south of Portglenone adjacent to the River Bann. Workable deposits tend to be intermittent, small in area and cut privately for use as fuel.
- 3.4** The Plan recognises that quarrying activities can cause significant environmental problems, therefore the policy approach is to balance the economic benefits of the proposals with the need to minimise environmental disturbance. While accepting that the location of quarry sites is influenced by geology and proximity to markets, the Plan advises that prominent locations and proximity to residential development ideally should be avoided. Conversely land uses which are incompatible with quarry operations are discouraged in proximity to approved quarry areas, as uses such as housing might prejudice necessary quarry operations and also expose residents to operations likely to cause adverse impact on amenity and health/well-being.

#### Larne Area Plan 2010

- 3.5** The Larne Area Plan notes that minerals extraction in the Borough mostly consists of basalt quarried for road stone and building aggregates at Ballyrickard and Crosshill and Ulster white limestone, commonly referred to as chalk, quarried at Glenarm and Kilwaughter.
- 3.6** The Plan also notes that rock salt is known to underlie coastal areas from Larne town southward into the Carrickfergus area where it has been mined around Kilroot throughout this century.
- 3.7** The Plan also notes that there are extensive tracts of upland peat bog across the south Antrim Plateau but extraction for domestic fuel is limited in extent compared to other areas of upland peat in Northern Ireland. Machine cutting is not common in the area and is absent from the Garron Plateau.
- 3.8** Policy MN1 designates an Area of Mineral Constraint (ACMD) within the Plan area comprising of one large area and two smaller areas, all within the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB. These areas are identified as being the most scenically valuable parts of the AONB within the Plan area and include coastal fringes, the glens, the

Garron Plateau and areas of woodland and bogland. The ACMD also includes tracts of land falling within broader areas designated for their natural heritage importance (including SPA, SAC and ASSI designations). The ACMD also includes an Area of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI) designated by the Larne area Plan at Knockdhu (Policy MAN EN 1). The limestone quarry at Munie Road, Glenarm is the only working quarry within the ACMD.

- 3.9** Policy MN2 states that where hydrocarbon exploration identifies commercially viable reserves of oil or gas, applications for sink wells may be considered to look at the long term suitability of the site for production purposes. However, the provision of the recently published SPPS, in relation to hydrocarbon exploitation, will take precedence over this plan policy.
- 3.10** Policy MN3 states that proposals for commercial peat extraction from sites which have been declared Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI's) will not normally be approved.
- 3.11** In locations outside ASSI's, the Plan states that planning permission for the extraction of peat will only be granted where there is little of recognised nature conservation value and where the amenity of the site, particularly within the Antrim Coast and Glens A.O.N.B. will not be compromised by the operations. The Plan notes that where peat extraction is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, the planning authority may require the submission of an Environmental Statement along with the planning application.

#### Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (Carrickfergus)

- 3.12** The Plan notes that salt mining has been taking place in the Carrickfergus area since 1851, leaving abandoned mine shafts at several locations within the Borough. Mining extraction today is confined to rock salt at Kilroot where there are considerable reserves. Until 1958 salt mining was not carried out to present day safety levels. This resulted in subsidence in certain locations, particularly where solution mining took place. (See map in Appendix 2) . Current mining activities at Kilroot use modern engineering standards as solution mining is no longer permitted.
- 3.13** The Plan also notes that the geology of the Borough is such that accumulations of natural gas may occur. Permitted Development rights for mineral exploration have remained constant for over 20 years. They were designed to deal with on shore gas and oil exploration using conventional techniques. However new techniques have subsequently emerged that have changed the nature of the exploration industry. In addition the recent emergence of unconventional hydrocarbon extraction techniques has come to the fore and has been the subject of significant controversy because of the uncertain environmental impacts. As a result of these developments, DOE has recently announced that it will be undertaking a review of permitted development rights for mineral exploration, and has invited stakeholders to submit views in response to a 'call for evidence' The main purpose of the review is to examine whether the existing provisions on permitted development rights for mineral exploration provide a suitable balance between supporting operational business activity and environmental protection

- 3.14** An Area of Salt Reserve is designated to the east of Carrickfergus and to the north of Kilroot (Appendix 2 refers). Within this designated area, the Plan states that planning permission, subject to specified exceptions, will not be granted for surface development that would prejudice the exploitation of the proven salt reserves.
- 3.15** In addition, the Plan states that in regard to any future proposals for further extraction of salt at this location, careful consideration will be given to the potential impacts on the stability of the surface lands directly above and surrounding the site. The Plan also seeks to ensure that surface development does not prejudice the exploitation of the proven reserves, which are considered to be of particular value to the Northern Ireland economy.
- 3.16** There are no ACMD's designated in the BMAP – Carrickfergus Area. There are however areas identified as being at risk of subsidence where previous mining works have been carried out. (Appendix 2)



## 4.0 The Importance of Minerals to the NI Economy

**4.1** The turnover of the NI quarry industry is approximately £400 million, 1.75% of Northern Ireland's GDP. In a typical year, Northern Ireland's quarry network supports<sup>2</sup>:

- The building of 12,000 new homes;
- £160 million on school and university improvements
- A £120 million hospital building programme;
- Upgrading and maintenance of the road and rail network;
- Improvements to water services;
- The upgrading of airports;
- Supplies special sands and aggregates for domestic gardens.

**4.2** In addition, nearly 14 tonnes of aggregates are needed annually per head of population in Northern Ireland. A typical family indirectly demands three lorry loads of aggregates each year; a new house requires some 50 tonnes of aggregates and the quarry products industry employs around 5,600 people in NI. Large construction projects such as the upgrading of the Regional Strategic Transport Network and regeneration of Belfast Harbour, generate significant demand for aggregates.

**4.3** The main source of information regarding minerals comes from Geological Survey Northern Ireland (GSNI) and DETI. Much of this information tends to be at the regional level and not broken down to district level for reasons of commercial confidence. Statistical information produced by DETI on mineral production is only available up to 2010. The figures indicate that total mineral production in Northern Ireland decreased from their 2007 level of 29.5 million tonnes to 16.2 million in 2010. Basalt and igneous rock (excluding granite) constituted the major volume of extracts, with 5.4 million tonnes produced in 2010. Approximately 2.2 million tonnes of sand and gravel were produced and 3.7 million tonnes of limestone were produced in the same year. The lower levels of productivity since 2007 most probably relates to the economic recession and subsequent cessation of the building boom period. The decline is particularly evident in the production of sand and gravel, both important components of the construction industry, with a fall in production from 8.1m ton in 2007 to 2.2m ton in 2010.

**4.4** A total of 1780 persons were employed within mines and quarries in Northern Ireland in March 2015 (DETI). The predominant employment base was made up by basalt and igneous rock (excluding granite) extraction. As with other industries affected by the recession, employment levels have declined since 2007 when 1995 persons were employed in the sector.

**Table 1**

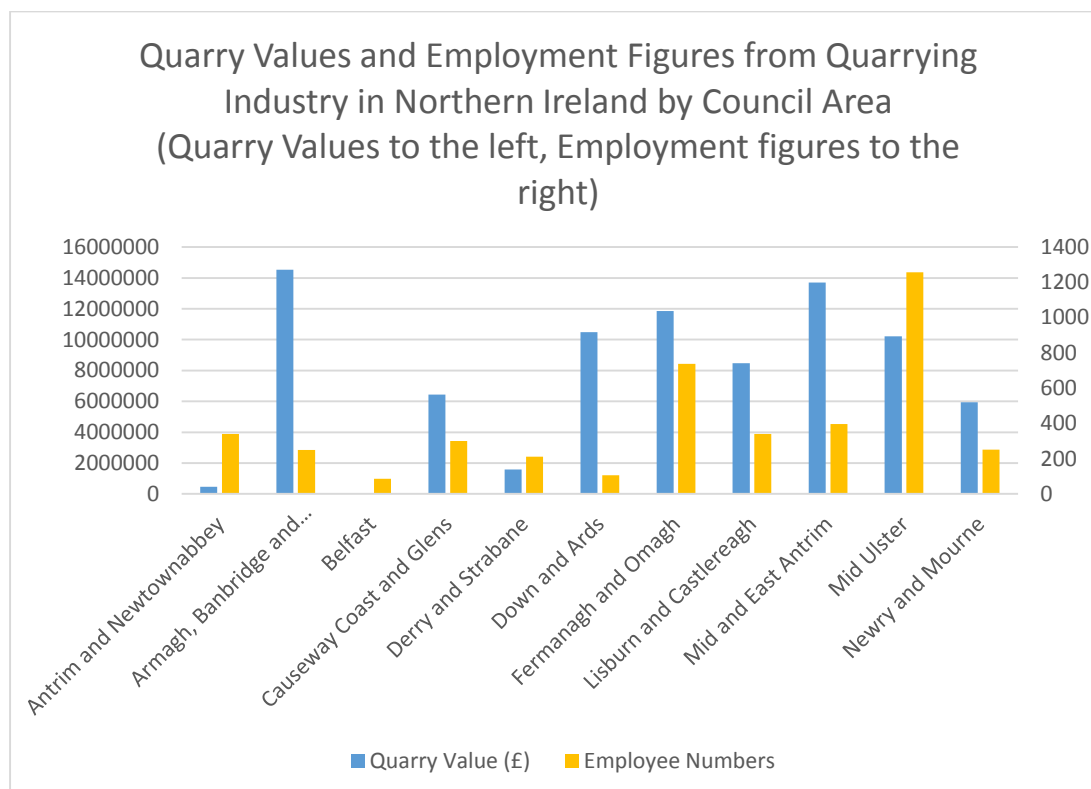
	<b>Full Time</b>	<b>Part Time</b>	<b>Total</b>
Males	1490	60	1550
Females	170	60	230
Totals	1660	120	1780

<sup>2</sup> Quarry Products Association (NI) Ltd (QPANI) 2014

## 5.0 Minerals in Mid and East Antrim

### Economic Role

- 5.1** Information obtained from QPANI suggests that there are 10 quarrying companies and 10 quarry sites operating in the Mid and East Antrim producing approximately 3.2 million tonnes of aggregates each year. This equates to an annual value of approximately £13.7 million, and creates employment for 396 people in the quarry industry. Relative to other Council areas this places Mid and East Antrim second in importance in terms of monetary value and third in terms of employment.



Source DETI March 2015 Employment Survey

- 5.2** The presence of regionally important salt and basalt resources within the Borough is a key economic strength. Aside from direct employment in quarrying, associated jobs have been created by concrete production such as Robinsons Quarry Masters, Moore Concrete Products and Herbison Concrete Products in the Ballymena area and Austin Concrete, Woodburn Concrete and Elite Concrete in the Carrickfergus Area. Such employment has strengthened the manufacturing base in Mid and East Antrim, where this sector now accounts for 20% of all jobs in the Borough. This compares to a regional average of less than 11% employed in manufacturing

### Availability of Minerals in Mid and East Antrim

- 5.3** Existing information in relation to mineral reserves available within Mid and East Antrim is contained within the general estimates produced by the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI) for County Antrim as a whole. Information on

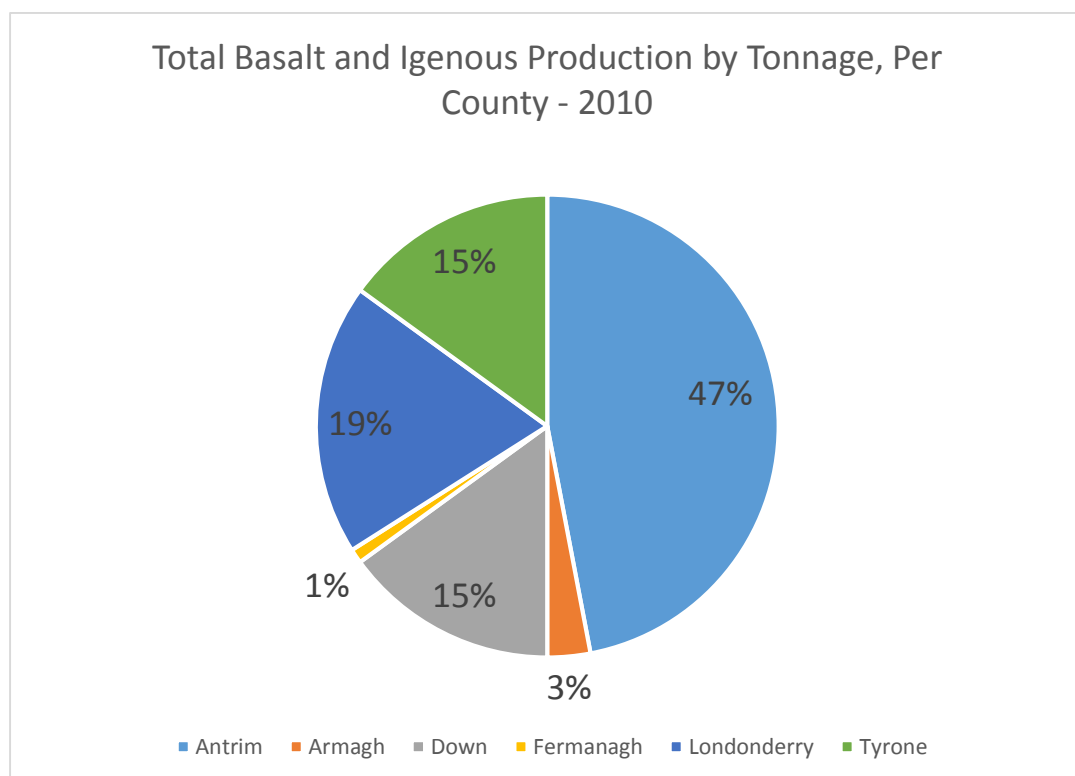
the availability of minerals at county level is derived from the Mineral Resource Map (MRP) produced by GSNI (Appendix 1 shows that portion of the Map covering MEA). The MRP is intended to assist the strategic decision making in respect of mineral extraction and to protect important mineral resources against sterilisation from surface development. It should also be noted that the data depicted on the map relates only to inferred extent and location of a particular mineral resource. Inferred resources are those defined from geological information and assumed, but not verified geological continuity. Thus the inferred boundaries are approximate and only indicate the areas within which potentially working workable minerals may occur. It should also be noted that there is no exact information on the amount of permitted mineral reserves ie that associated with existing permissions that are currently being worked.

#### Total Mineral Production

- 5.4** Information regarding the relative output of various counties in relation to various types of mineral are taken from the DETI Mineral Statement 2010. Again, figures are approximate and may not reflect the total accuracy of the current position. Subject to these caveats, County Antrim (of which Mid and East Antrim forms a part) produces approximately 25% of all minerals in Northern Ireland, which makes it the largest producer overall relative to the other 5 counties.

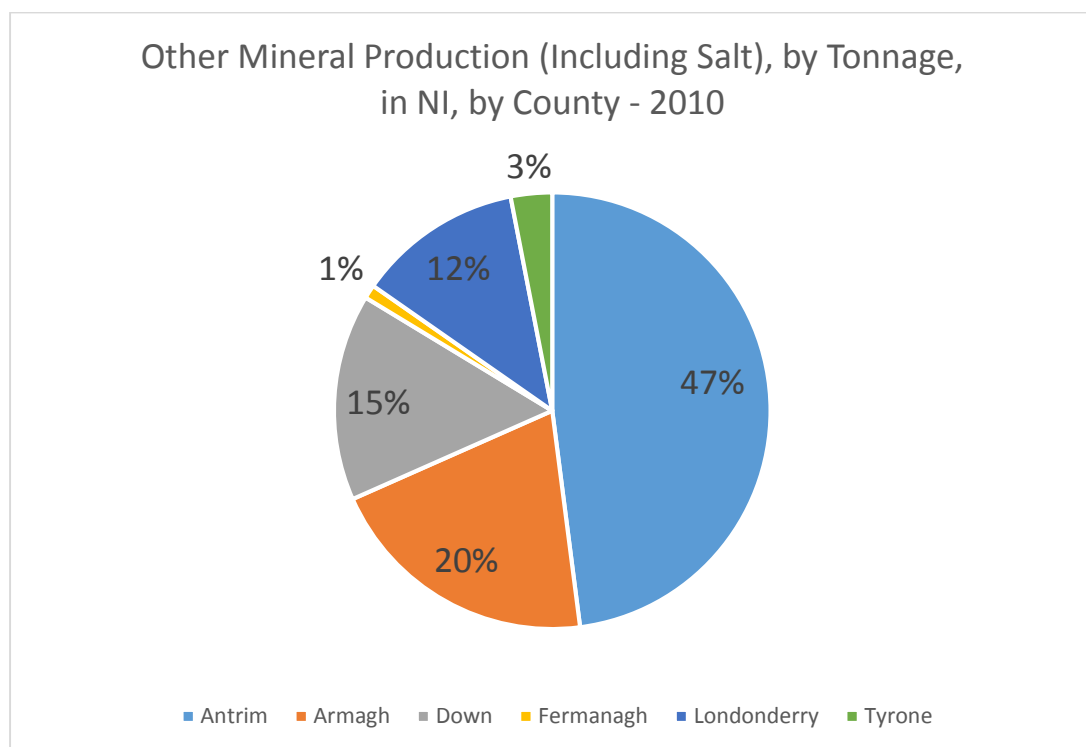
#### Basalt and Igneous Rock Production

- 5.5** County Antrim produces almost half (47%) of all the basalt and igneous rock in Northern Ireland, which makes it the largest producer. The location and nature of all such quarries in Mid and East Antrim are shown in Appendices 2 and 3.



### Other Mineral Production

- 5.7** County Antrim is the third largest producer of sand and gravel. While limestone production ranks a fourth out of five counties, where it is quarried, the value stemming from limestone production in County Antrim is significantly greater than in some other areas where more tonnage is extracted. The Borough is also home to Ireland's only salt mine near Carrickfergus, providing a regional supply of rock salt for spreading on roads in winter weather. In regard to 'Other Minerals', County Antrim produces a combined tonnage well over double its nearest competitor at almost 1 million tonnes per annum. This represents a value of almost £10m, which is 6 times more than second place County Armagh at £1.6m. It is accepted that the inclusion of rock salt in this category is likely to skew the results.



- 5.8** Appendix 4 lists the names of the quarries in Mid and East Antrim Borough as supplied by DETI in 2010. Pit names and operators may vary as a number of pits are mined by the larger operators.

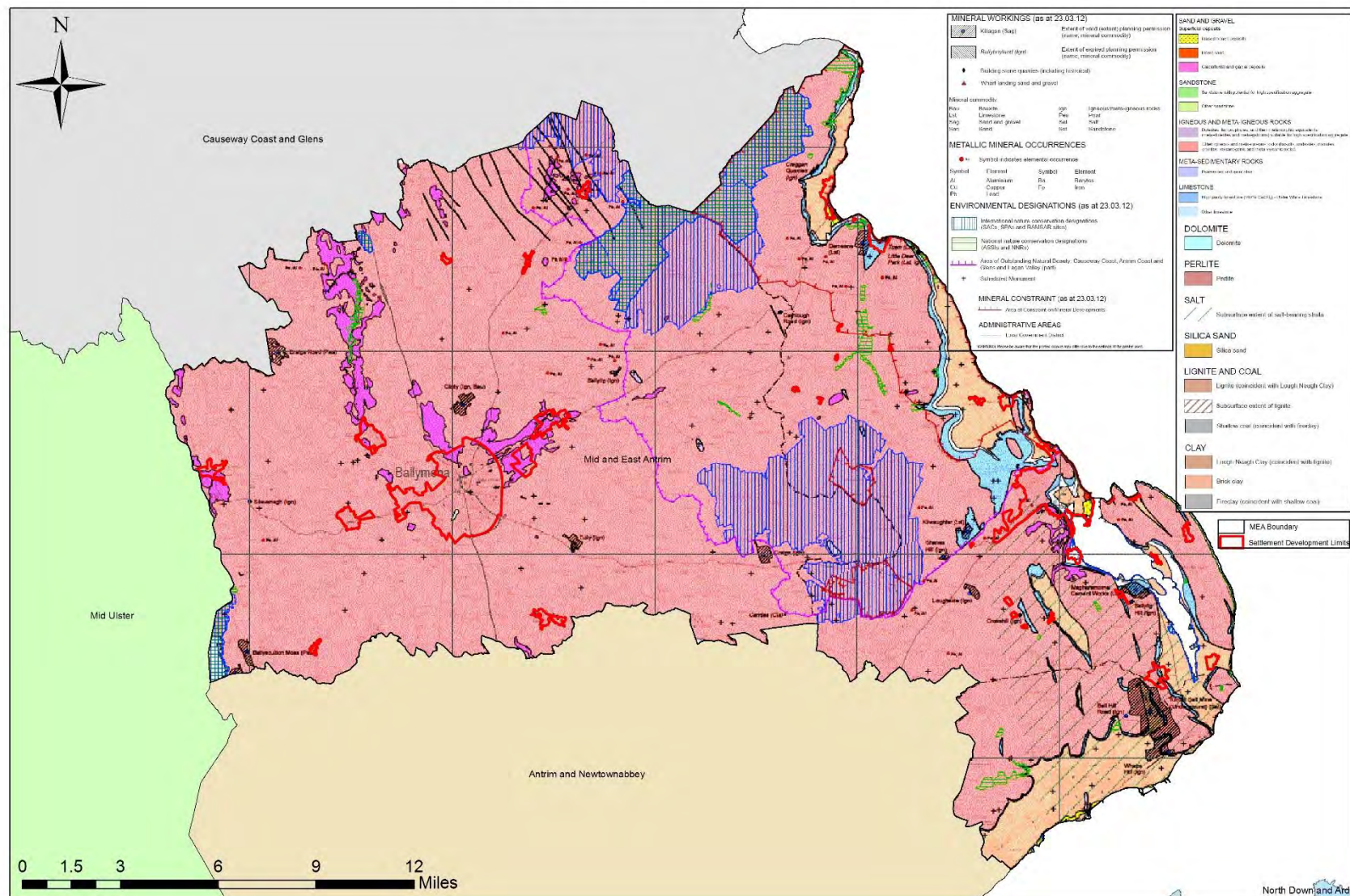
## **6.0 Conclusion – The Local Development Plan Approach to Minerals Development**

- 6.1** Mineral extraction is an indigenous industry within Mid and East Antrim Borough and makes an important contribution to the local economy. Although it is not possible to quantify the precise amount of minerals required over the Plan period up to 2030, there will be a need to ensure that supplies of raw materials are provided in pace with any economic growth that occurs. Thus, the LDP will need to accommodate any potential expansion of existing quarries as well as meeting any demonstrable need for new workings. It is therefore important that the Plan achieves a balance between minerals and associated economic development on the one hand, and safeguarding the most valuable and vulnerable areas of the environment from the detrimental effects of mineral extraction, on the other.
- 6.2** The LDP will also be required to safeguard mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value and seek to ensure that workable mineral resources are not sterilised by other surface development. Geological Survey NI will provide advice in this regard along with discussions with the quarry industry in order to help inform the formulation of mineral policies tailored to the Plan area. Given the distribution of existing quarries largely outside the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and nature conservation designations such as SPAs, SACs and ASSIs, and the general extent of potential resources as indicated in the Minerals Map, it would seem that there is no need to permit mineral developments in these sensitive areas, save in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.3** In line with the policy approach in the SPPS, the Plan's overall approach to minerals development should be to balance the demands of the mining and extractive industry with the need to protect and conserve the environment. In light of this, and taking account of the available information presented in this Position Paper, it is suggested that the Plan Strategy in regard to Minerals Development should broadly embrace the following elements:
- Protect the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB from minerals development except where proposed operations are short term (less than 15 years) and the environmental/amenity impacts are not significant;
  - Protect important environmental assets from minerals development including Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), Areas of Scientific Interest (ASI), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar sites, Nature Reserves and Sites of Local Nature Conservation Interest (SLNCI);
  - Identify areas suitable for minerals development within the Plan area, as necessary;
  - Minimise the adverse impact of mineral workings on neighbouring communities and sensitive land uses, the historic environment, biodiversity and the water environment;
  - Identify and safeguard mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value (in consultation with GSNI);
  - Encourage and support recycling initiatives and proposals at existing aggregate sites;

- Ensure that the restoration of redundant mineral workings enhances and complements the natural and historic environment and contributes to strengthening biodiversity.

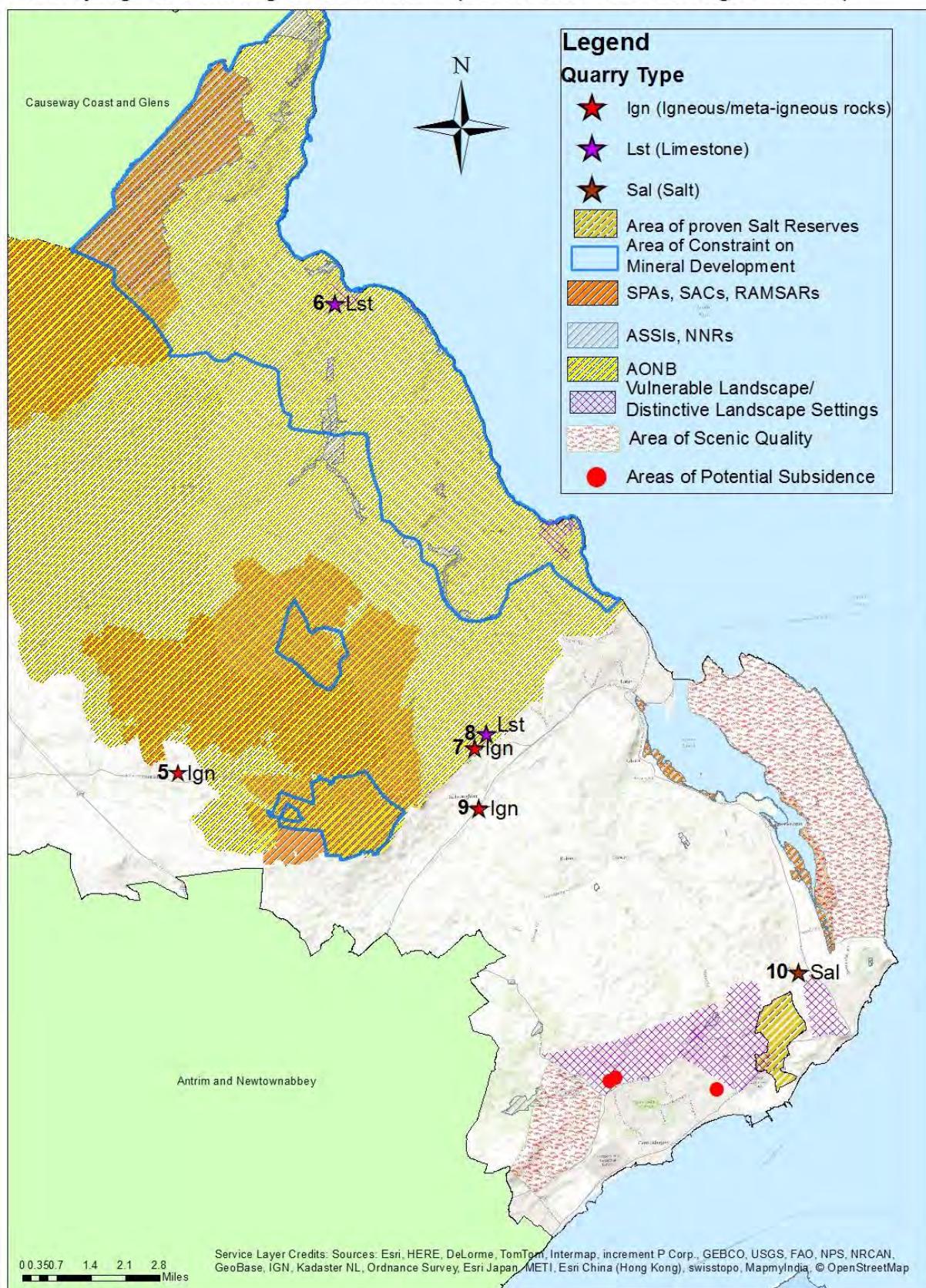
## Appendix 1 (Minerals resource map)

## Mid and East Antrim Mineral Resource Map





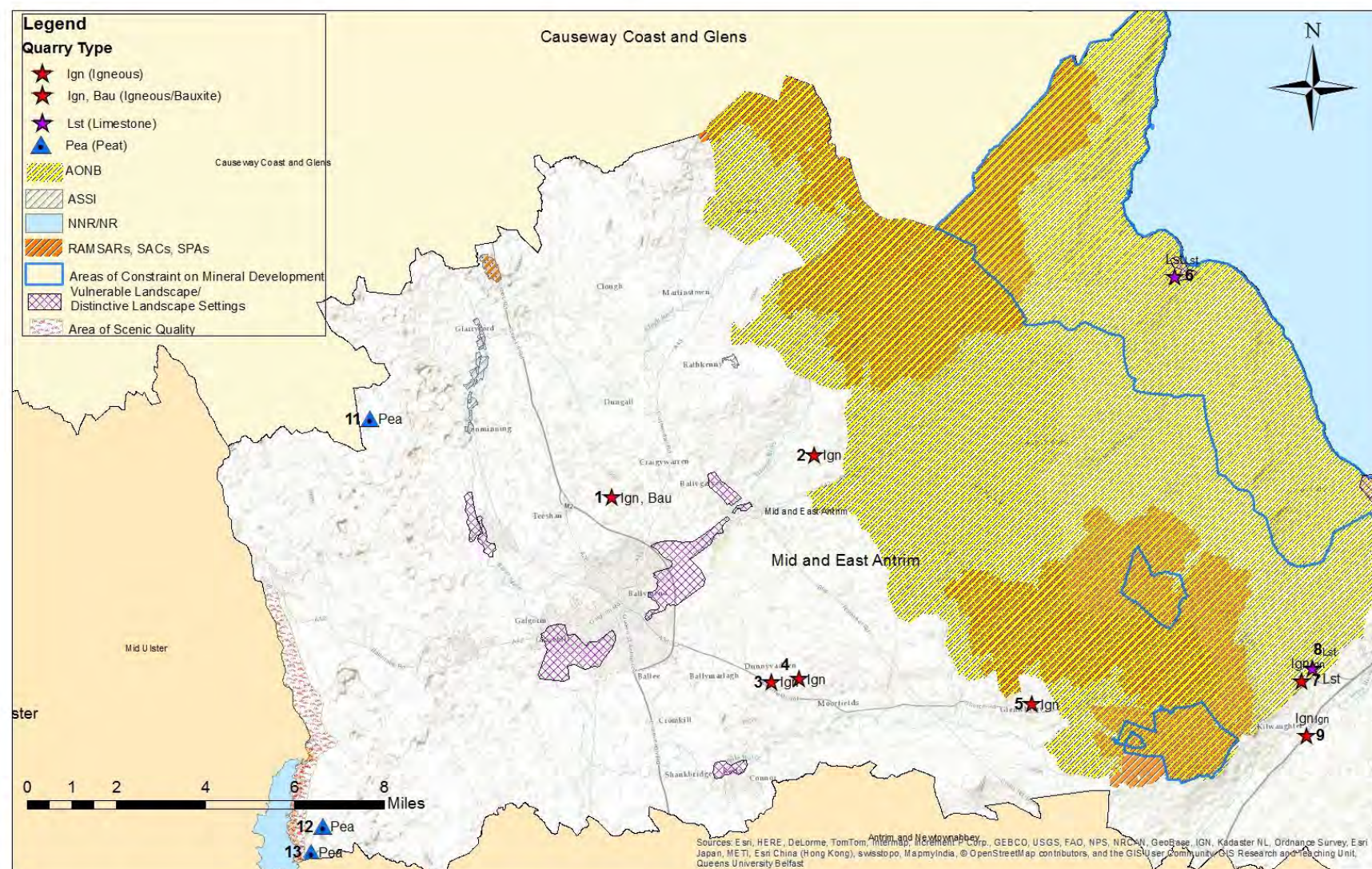
## Quarrying/Salt Mining Sites in MEA (Larne and Carrickfergus Areas)





## Appendix 3 Quarrying and Peat Extraction in MEA

### Quarrying and Peat Extraction Sites in MEA (Ballymena Area)



Appendix 4 Quarry and Moss Table for MEA

Map Ref	Quarry Name/Mineral Type	Operator/ Site Address	Head Office	Comments
1	Clinty Quarry/ Igneous and Bauxite	James Stevenson 215 Doury Road Ballymena BT43 6SS	As site address	Active
2	Ballylig Quarry/ Igneous	R McCullough & Son, 30 Ballylig Road, Broughshane BT43 7HH	107 Moorfields Road Ballymena BT42 3HJ	Active
3	Tully 2 / Igneous	Boville McMullan Ltd 116 Moorfields Road, Ballymena BT42 3HJ	As site address	Active
4	Tully 1 / Igneous	Northstone NI Ltd 50 Craigdoo Road, Ballymena	As site Address	Active.
5	Craigs Quarry / Igneous	Robinsons Quarry Masters Ltd 32 Glenhead Road, Ballymena BT42 4RE	As site address	Active. Concrete Block Plant also
6	OMYA UK Ltd / Limestone	OMYA UK Ltd 17 Munie Road, Glenarm BT44 0BG	As site address	Active
7	Shanes Hill Quarry?? / Igneous	Henry Boyd Shanes Hill Road, Kilwaughter	?	Occasionally Active
8	Kilwaughter Chemical Company Ltd. / Limestone	JCK McDowell 9 Starbog Road, Kilwaughter Larne	As site address	Active
9	Loughside Quarry (Ballyrickard) /Igneous	FP McCann 146 Belfast Road, Larne	FP McCann 3 Drumard Road, Knockloughrim,	Active

			Castledawson, Magherafelt, BT45 8QA	
10	Kilroot Salt Mine	Irish Salt Mining and Exploration Co. Ltd Fort Road, Kilroot, Carrickfergus, BT38 9BT		Active
	<b>PEAT MOSSES</b>			
11	Craigs Moss (Peat)	Craigs Road SE of Rasharkin (Straddles MEA and CC&G councils)	Bulrush Horticulture Newferry Road, Bellaghy, Magherafelt, BT45 8ND	Active
12	Ballyscullion Moss / Peat	at junction with Loughbeg Road and Ballyscullion Road east of Loughbeg)	McNultys ??	??
13	Loughbeg Moss / peat	Loughbeg Road Toomebridge (just south of moss No 12)	McNulty's??	??

## Appendix 5 Legislative background to Minerals Development in Northern Ireland

### **Planning (Interim Development) Act (Northern Ireland) 1944**

The 1944 Planning (Interim Development) Act (Northern Ireland) gave development large degree of exemption from the regulations imposed under Planning Legislation on other development. Where land was comprised in a mineral undertaking it was permitted development.

### **The Mineral Development Act 1969**

After World War II these exemptions were addressed and new legislation formed in the UK, however new legislation was not introduced in Northern Ireland until The Mineral Development Act of 1969. This simplified exploration for non-aggregate minerals by vesting rights in one authority, the Department of Economic Development (DED). The DED now known as The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) administers all oil and gas reserves and licenses oil and gas exploration and extraction. However, before extraction commences, planning permission must be obtained from the Department of the Environment (DOE).

This Act also gave DETI responsibility for most other minerals. There are three main exceptions:

- gold and silver, which belong to the Crown
- minerals which were being worked when the 1969 Act became law
- "Common" substances, including aggregates, sand and gravel.

Under Article 18(1) of the Quarries (Northern Ireland) Order 1983, DETI were also given the responsibility to gather information on all quarries in order to collate an Annual Minerals Statement.

### **Mining Waste Directive**

Directive 2006/21/EC on the management of waste from the extractive industries, the Mining Waste Directive (MWD) was adopted on 15 March 2006. It introduces measures to prevent or minimise adverse effects on the environment and risks to health from the management of waste from the extractive industries. It applies to waste resulting from the extraction, treatment and storage of mineral resources and the working of quarries.

The MWD recognises that the vast majority of mining operations do not present similar risks and sets out a proportionate and risk-based approach to dealing with extractive waste. This is particularly relevant to Northern Ireland where most extractive waste is inert and therefore benefits from lighter controls. In addition, current good practice in the industry already addresses many of the WMDs requirements and in conjunction with existing regulatory requirements, will limit the effect of any new obligations placed upon operators.

The MWD is transposed to Northern Ireland through the provisions of the Planning (Management of Waste from Extractive Industries) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. Under its provisions, a waste management plan for the minimisation, treatment, recovery and disposal of extractive waste must be submitted to the Council for approval.

Up until 31 March 2015, planning applications for minerals development were processed on a Northern Ireland wide basis by a small team of specialists in DOE Planning HQ. From 1 April 2015 the responsibility for the processing, managing and controlling of mineral applications was transferred to the new Councils.

### **Review of Old Mineral Permissions (ROMPS)**

In line with the rest of the UK and the republic of Ireland, The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 enables Councils to start a process of an initial review of all mineral permission granted in Northern Ireland thereby ensuring that their conditions meet modern expectations and current environmental standards. Approximately 370 mineral permissions were granted between the 1960's and the early 1990's, with Mid and East Antrim having only 12 of these which equates to just over 3% of all the mineral permissions which are to be subjected to ROMPS\*

<b>FORMER LGD</b>	<b>NUMBER OF OLD PERMISSIONS</b>	<b>% OF NORTHERN IRELAND AS A WHOLE</b>
BALLYMENA	5	1%
CARRICKFERGUS	2	1%
LARNE	5	1%

### **Mineral Licensing**

Mineral Prospecting licences are issued by DETI under Section 11 of the Mineral Development Act (Northern Ireland) 1969. Companies prospect for base metals and precious metals under concurrent licences for the Department and the Crown Estates Commissioners.

At 31 March 2010 there were total of 42 mineral prospecting licences held by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (as noted in the Minerals Annual Statement 2009-2010) over the whole of Northern Ireland. Of these licences, 6 were located wholly or partly within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council area. It should be noted that a number of these licences were re-applications for licences which were in place prior to 2009 and also re-applications for licences which ran the full 6 year term within the 2009-2010 time frame.