

<b>Northern Ireland Minerals Working Group – Draft Terms of Reference.</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018</b>
<b>Planning Committee</b>	

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)</b>	
<b>Strategic Theme</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Leader & Champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will establish key relationships with Government agencies and potential strategic partners in NI and external to it which helps us to deliver our vision for this Council area.</li> </ul>
Protect the environment in which we live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All environments in the area will benefit from pro-active decision making which protects the natural features, characteristics and integrity of the Borough;</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Principal Planning Officer
<b>Cost:</b>	N/A

## **For Decision**

### **1.0 Background**

1.1 Members will be aware that the Council's Planning Department are currently preparing a Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Borough. Members will also be aware of the Minerals background paper presented and agreed at the Planning Committee in July 2016 and the Minerals Workshop held for Members in August 2017.

### **2.0 Detail**

2.1 Planning officers are currently updating the information available on this topic as part of the ongoing LDP preparation. Planning officials have been in discussion with the following stakeholders in relation to the Minerals Topic:

- Department for Infrastructure;
- Geological Survey NI (GSNI);
- Department for the Economy;
- Minerals Industry (quarries etc);
- Adjoining Councils; and
- Regional Aggregate Working Parties in England & Wales (RAWPS).

2.2 A Northern Ireland Minerals Working Groups has been established to enable all 11 NI Councils to work together and in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders, to ensure a local supply of construction aggregates to meet likely future demand over the Local Development Plan period (see DfE letter attached at Appendix 1).

- 2.3 The establishment of this working group is a first step towards achieving this objective and the success of the group will be dependent upon collaborative working and information sharing within the working group, and through building effective working relations with the quarry industry in each of the local council areas.
- 2.4 We can also learn from the experience of the Regional Aggregate Working Parties (RAWPS) in England and Wales who have been undertaking this exercise since the 1970s.
- 2.5 The inaugural NI Minerals Working Group Meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018, at which the draft Terms of Reference were discussed. It was agreed that these would be presented to the respective Councils before the next working group meeting, scheduled for September/October 2018 (see Appendix 2).

### **3.0 Financial Implications**

- 3.1 None

### **3.0 Other Implications**

- 3.1 None

### **4.0 Recommendation**

- 4.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Elected Members note the content of the letter attached at Appendix 1 and agree to a Terms of Reference along the lines of that contained within Appendix 2, and agree to the Head of Planning submitting a response on behalf of Council.

**Appendix 1:** DfE letter to Councils re NI Minerals Working Group.

**Appendix 2:** NI Minerals Working Group Draft Terms of Reference.

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To: Local Council Principal Planners

From: Lorraine Fleming

Date: 24 May 2018

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MINERALS WORKING GROUP AND DATE FOR FIRST MEETING**

Thank you for your comments on the Terms of Reference for the Minerals Working Group. The feedback from Councils has been very encouraging. I am looking forward to working with you on this important work to ensure local supply of construction aggregates to meet likely future demand over the Local Development Plan period.

I have included a revised Terms of Reference, with some minor amendments (shown in red) and would appreciate it if you could now take these through your respective procedures for endorsement.

A number of comments were received in relation to the timescale for this work, with concerns being raised by some Councils that this timescale is going to fall outside of the timetable for publication of the draft Plan Strategies. Some Councils have suggested consideration should be given to what detail can be included at the Plan Strategy stage and what will have to be considered under Plan Policies.

At this stage the proposed timings represent a best guess and will be dependent on the level of engagement across the working group and how fast we can collate the base line data. If we can move through the process more quickly we will want to do that. Our experience from collecting the Annual Quarry Returns has shown that the process can be protracted and requires multiple reminders from the Department and the Quarry Products Association before sufficient data is received. We have proactively been engaging with quarry operators to reinforce the importance of submitting this information, and have welcomed the support Councils have provided in this endeavour. Once we have collated the baseline data this will be fed into the monitoring survey and will be used to compile the first annual report.

Some Councils also suggested that we should use the forum of the minerals working group to initiate discussions on the approach to be taken on minerals to aid and inform plan making teams in the preparation of Local Development Plans. We have included this

in the short-term objectives and we can discuss what key issues we should consider at our first meeting. Establishing a common methodology across Council LDPs, for example on how Mineral Reserve Areas and Areas of Constraint, was also suggested and we would like to discuss this suggestion in more detail at our first meeting.

A further query was raised about the accurate quantification of supply and reserves given the wide error-margin. We recognise this is a complex area which requires accurate and timely information to inform evidence based policies. The establishment of this working group is a first step towards achieving this objective and the success of the group will be dependent upon collaborative working and information sharing within the working group, and through building effective working relations with the quarry industry in each of your local council areas. We can learn from the experience of the Regional Aggregate Working Parties (RAWPS) in England and Wales who have been undertaking this exercise since the 1970s. We are fortunate that Dr Joseph Mankelov Team Leader for Mineral Resources and Policy in the British Geological Survey (BGS), will join us at our first meeting of the working group to provide an insight into the workings of the RAWPS and his involvement in the process.

The first meeting of the Minerals Working Group has been arranged for Thursday 14th June at 1pm in in Cloonavin, Coleraine – my thanks to Sharon Mulhern for hosting. I would be grateful if you could confirm your availability, or propose a deputy, to Yvonne Curran ([Yvonne.Curran@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Yvonne.Curran@economy-ni.gov.uk)) by 4 June. An agenda and relevant papers will follow.

If you have any queries please contact me.

**Lorraine Fleming**  
**Head of Minerals and Petroleum Branch, DfE**

cc Suzanne Bagnall, DfI  
Marie Cowan, GSNI

# TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND MINERALS WORKING GROUP

## Introduction

- As referenced in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland, when preparing the Minerals section in Local Development Plans, Local Councils should bring forward appropriate policies to:
  - 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; and
  - 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.
  - identify areas which should be protected from minerals development because of their intrinsic landscape, amenity, scientific or heritage value (including natural, built and archaeological heritage).
- This is a complex area, requiring accurate and timely information to inform evidence based policies.
- Initial work will focus on agreeing and validating the baseline data held by Central and Local Government.
- Once this initial work has been undertaken engagement with industry and wider stakeholders will be necessary.
- Having considered planning working groups in Wales, Scotland and England for aggregates it is proposed that a Minerals Working Group for NI is established.
- This Working Group will consider:
  - supply and demand for aggregates across each council and NI as a whole.
  - aggregates initially and later moving on to a broader consideration of mineral development issues including potential for high value and industrial minerals: and
  - raising awareness of the Minerals Licensing Regime and Annual Minerals Return and potential economic benefits as well as environmental protections.

## Operational Arrangements

Membership - see development of membership at each stage set out below

Secretariat - GSNI/DfE initially

Timetable - Quarterly initially or as required moving to biannually once process established to a minimum of annually.

Agenda - Wider issues of concern to be added to agenda by councils or Departments as and when required

## **Short Term Objectives – 6-12 months**

### Membership

- At this initial stage membership will be restricted to DfE /DfI and Local Councils.

### Objective 1 – Agreeing Baseline Data and Methodology for Reporting Annually

- To review existing data on production of primary and secondary aggregates held by DfE, DfI and local planning authorities;
- To identify gaps in existing data;
- To engage with industry to gather any missing data;
- To commence work to assess the demand for and supply of aggregates in local council areas and on a regional basis (drawing on evidence in LDPs and Regional Strategies); and
- To agree baseline data for 2017/18 and a proposed methodology for reporting annually.
- **To initiate discussions on the approach to minerals to aid and inform plan making teams in the preparation of the Local Development Plans.**

## **Medium Term Objectives – 12-24 months**

### Membership

- At this stage baseline data will be established and reporting arrangements agreed and tested, so membership will be extended to include Industry (e.g. QPANI), alongside DfE, DfI and Local Councils. External technical expertise may also be required to undertake the data analysis.

### Objective 2 – Collection of Data on Aggregates Supply

- To collect data on production of primary and secondary aggregates;
- To collect data on the distribution of primary and secondary aggregates including imports and exports of aggregates;
- To collect data on primary aggregates reserves at regional and mineral planning authority levels;
- To organise, in conjunction with Local Councils, an Annual Monitoring (AM) survey to monitor (subject to confidentiality) the sales and reserves of primary aggregates in the region, imports to it and exports from it by sea or rail (including marine aggregates and imports via wharves and railhead facilities), road planning's, significant construction projects and non-energy minerals;
- To produce and publish an Annual Monitoring Report containing core information to inform stakeholders in a consistent manner of the findings from the AM survey.

### Objective 3 - Assessment of Aggregates Demand and Supply

- To assess demand in each LDP area and at a regional level by considering LDPs and future development programmes and major proposals to assess the regional demand for aggregates and determine potential areas where there could be a shortfall of supply;
- To assess the reserves of primary aggregates in active and dormant sites and the likelihood of dormant sites being reactivated;
- To assess the use of secondary and recycled aggregates and consider ways to improve data collection and to increase their use to replace primary resources;
- To assess the provision/capacity within each authority area to recycle construction and demolition waste, identifying scope to improve the recycling and reuse of aggregates by examining the extent of landfill disposal (and use on exempt sites) and locations of recycling facilities;
- To assess the waste from construction and demolition projects, including road projects and their reuse and recovery as aggregates.

### Objective 4 - Regional Technical Statement for Aggregates

- To set out the likely short term demand for aggregates in the region;
- To indicate whether, in the short term, current permitted reserves are likely to be adequate;
- To assess current and future imports and exports of aggregates; and
- To advise on the potential for increasing the use of alternative materials to replace primary aggregates.

### Objective 5 – Broader consideration of High Value & Industrial Mineral Development

- To consider the broader prospectivity for high value and industrial minerals – economic benefits and environmental controls;
- To consider the regulatory controls over all areas of mineral exploration and extraction including the planning requirements; and
- To formulate planning options in LDPs in relation to high value and industrial minerals.

## **Long Term Focus and Objectives – 2 year and beyond**

### Membership

- At this stage the work of the Group will be established and a scrutiny and challenge role will be required. Membership will be extended to include wider Industry and Environmental representation. This engagement may be bilateral initially until common ground is established.

## Objective 6 – High Value & Industrial Minerals Development

- To continue to consider the broader prospectivity for high value minerals – economic benefits and environmental controls;
- To consider the regulatory and planning controls over all areas of mineral exploration and extraction; and
- To act as a sounding board for emerging policy on minerals development.
- **At the Plan Review stage re-consider the importance of high value & industrial Minerals policies in light of available information and evidence base.**

## Objective 7 – Ongoing Assessment of Supply & Demand Position for Aggregates

- Revisit Terms of Reference to review the working group's position and how it wishes to take forward the collection, reporting and overall assessment of data on aggregate supply and demand for the next 2 years in each council area and across NI.
- **At the Plan Review stage re-consider the importance of aggregate minerals policies in light of available information and evidence base.**