



## **MPANI Response to Minerals Section of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Council draft Plan Strategy**

**September 2019**

### **Background**

MPANI welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Antrim and Newtownabbey 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, 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).

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. 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 Antrim and Newtownabbey**

Antrim and Newtownabbey is a major producer of hard rock, sand and gravel vital for the manufacture of construction materials such as concrete products, roof tiles, cement and road materials.

The minerals sector is important to the people and economy of Antrim and Newtownabbey, having a turnover of around £10,000,000 each year. The Mineral Products Industry directly employs more than 50 people in the area. In terms of the jobs at an average salary of £30,000 per year this equates to £1,500,000 injected directly into the local economy providing income for other local businesses such as shops, restaurants and other retailers. The other companies in the ANC area who supply plant and machinery into the Minerals sector employ over 300 people and have a turnover of more than £70,000,000. Therefore you could say that the wider Minerals Industry and its supply chain are one of the economic powerhouses in the Council area.

Another economic contribution that the Draft Plan Strategy fails to recognise is the significant contribution the minerals sector makes to the Councils Rates Income. MPANI estimates the combined rates income from our Industry in Antrim Newtownabbey is in excess of £70,000.

### **Members of the MPANI operating within the Antrim Newtownabbey Council Area are;**

Boyd's Quarries, FP McCann, Northstone NI Ltd, Breedon (Whitemountain) Ltd, CDE Global (Affiliate), Dennison/JCB (Affiliate), TBF Thompson Ltd (Affiliate).

### **Comments on the draft Plan Policy**

#### **The Draft Plan Strategy Review**

We commend the Council on producing an excellent evidence paper for Minerals. We also commend the Council for the actively engaging with MPANI and the Industry in the Council Area.

Having considered the Draft Plan Strategy in detail MPANI are of the view the dPS meets all of the consistency and soundness tests set out in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

We welcome the Council's acknowledgment of the significant contribution that the minerals industry makes to the Borough and beyond.

MPANI is content with Strategic Policies 9.1, 9.2, 9.3

MPANI is content with DM 43.1, DM43.2, DM 43.3, DM 43.4, DM 43.5

On DM43.6, Site Restoration, we are content with this proposal and would commend the Council for this common sense approach. In other Council Consultations MPANI stated position has been that Financial Bonds should only be used as a last resort when the operator has failed to full-fill the

requirements of the site restoration planning condition. Most responsible operators will design and implement a progressive restoration scheme that will enhance and protect the landscape and biodiversity around their sites.

MPANI welcome DM44.

MPANI would also advise Council that in terms of identifying housing land in the vicinity of Mineral Sites that priority is given to the existing industrial land use and that the proposed boundaries of a minimum of 250 m from the site, or proposed site extension, boundary to the housing should be rigorously adhered too. We appreciate this matter will be dealt with comprehensively in the Mineral Safeguarding section of the Local Plan Policies Paper.

### **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 Antrim Newtownabbey 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.

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