

Comments on Mid and East Antrim Borough Council consultation on Local Development Plan:

GSNI / MINERALS: (Position Paper 12)

The Paper does not sufficiently consider anything other than quarried aggregates and mined halite as part of the mineral review. If this approach is adopted and no consideration given to the potential for metallic minerals, it is possible that the policies adopted will prejudice any future prospecting activity by failing to accommodate the different nature of metallic mineral exploitation.

The council area has extensive tracts currently under licence for precious metal and base metal exploration (LON2 and LON3 licence areas) and halite exploration for both compressed air and natural gas storage. The impact of the omission in the review of non aggregate materials could therefore be significant.

DfE Minerals Branch/GSNI met with the Principal Planners Working Group on 8th April to discuss local planning policy as it relates to future Petroleum and Minerals development in Northern Ireland and the management of Hazards particularly of abandoned mines.

Arising out of this a series of one to one meetings with individual Councils is being taken forward in order to tailor the input/information to the specifics of the individual Council area.

To address the issues raised above, and to help inform the Local Development Plan in relation to mineral development and the management of abandoned mines hazards, Minerals and GSNI are requesting a meeting with Mid and East Antrim Council.

Minerals Development

The term 'minerals' required to refer to more than aggregates.

The paper requires to reference metallic mineral in the document and to consider this potential resource as part of the paper.

Reference to existing area plans

The paper mentions bauxite as being extracted at Clinty Quarry. The mining permission for bauxite at Clinty was terminated pre 2010.

The Ballymena plan makes reference to the economic value of minerals (aggregates) and the requirement to balance environmental impacts of extraction, but makes no reference to metallic minerals.

The Larne area plan makes no reference to metallic minerals.

In relation to the BMAP, reference is made to the DOE call for evidence on permitted development rights for mineral exploration drilling, but no mention is made of metallic minerals.

The Importance of Minerals to the NI Economy

The opening statement attributes quarries as the sole mineral industry.

Statistics attributed to DETI 2015 are wrongly attributed to that year. It is likely the information was supplied in 2015 (if it came from the GSNI) but the date of the figures will be from the last mineral statement of 2010.