

Background Paper

Minerals



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Minerals are naturally occurring substances which have economic value and so are removed from the earth by underground mining or surface quarrying. The most significant mineral resources that can be found in Scotland are coal, used for electricity generation and heating as well as construction aggregates. Peat is also an important mineral extracted in Scotland, it is principally used in agriculture. The availability of these minerals resources is a key factor which contributes to Scotland's sustainable economic growth.
- 1.2 The extraction of minerals is a key issue for land use planning in terms of securing sources of future supply and locating the sources of these heavy materials in relatively close proximity to areas where they are needed. Furthermore, planning must ensure that any potential impacts which are associated with mineral workings are managed so as not to have a detrimental effect on the amenity enjoyed by communities or impact on the environment, natural and built heritage or other local industries.

2.0 Background

Minerals in Scotland

- 2.1 Scotland produced approximately 30 million tonnes of aggregates in the 2010, including approximately 50% of the UK total production of igneous rock. Although aggregates make up over 70% of all minerals extracted, Scotland also produced over 6 million tonnes of Coal and 548,000m³ of Peat; approximately 30% and 50% of UK production respectively. Coal accounts for 15% of Scottish minerals by weight, however it accounts for 50% of the total value of minerals produced in Scotland.
- 2.2 The Central Belt contains a significant amount of Scotland mineral resources; including a third of the UK's igneous rock aggregate quarries along with the UK's most productive coalfield and significant deposits of sand gravel and clay. There are currently six local authorities in Scotland where coal mining is undertaken, these are Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire, Fife, Midlothian, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire. Five out of these six are within the Central Belt.

Minerals in the Economy

- 2.3 In 2009, 3,500 people were directly employed in the extraction of minerals in Scotland, a high proportion of these within rural areas. This generated a total output amounting to £714 million or 0.4% of Scotland's total output for that year. The availability of minerals is of key importance for downstream industries, such as construction and to a lesser extent manufacturing. These industries employed 132,000 and 195,000 people respectively in 2009. The construction industry generated a total output of £14,079 million or 8% to the national output.

Availability of Minerals

2.4 There are three important factors which must be considered with regards to minerals supply:

- the existence of an economically viable resource;
- the distance of the source from the end user; and
- any legal or policy constraints which may make the minerals resource inaccessible.

2.5 In order for a mineral resource to be economically viable, it must be of a size and quality that can justify it being worked from the ground. A significant part of this decision will also come down to the proximity of the resource to market. A significant proportion of the cost of aggregates, is brought about due to transport costs. This generally results in aggregates being used within 50km of the supply. Having a local supply can reduce environmental impacts on other places and can reduce the carbon footprint associated with haulage.

2.6 Coal Authority statistics from 2010 indicated that there were over 14 million tonnes of coal remaining in operational sites across Scotland. In addition to these reserves, spread across the six local authorities detailed above, there is an additional 17 million tonnes of reserves across these six authority areas plus Falkirk, Scottish Borders and West Lothian, which have planning permission for extraction but are not yet operational.

3.0 National Planning Context

National Planning Framework 2

3.1 The National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2) states that there must continue to be minerals available to the construction industry in order to meet Scotland's infrastructure investment plans. Reference is made to identifying local supply within the Central Belt where demand is likely to remain high.

3.2 NPF2 also makes it clear that coal based power generation is expected to continue to make a contribution to Scotland's energy mix. NPF2 also indicates that there are large extractable reserves in south and central Scotland, with coal won by opencast methods across the central lowlands from Ayrshire to Fife and further permissions granted for workings in Dumfries and Galloway.

Scottish Planning Policy

3.3 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), sets out a number of policies which serve to secure the supply of minerals which are essential to support sustainable economic growth. SPP sets out these policies with regards to Minerals in the broader sense and specifically relating to surface coal mining.

3.4 Planning authorities are required by the SPP to consider minerals in the preparation of Local Development Plans and identify broad areas of search for mineral workings in conjunction with operators and neighbouring planning authorities. These areas, or where appropriate specific sites, should be safeguarded and criteria set for any new development proposals which may be brought forward. For coal extraction there is a general presumption against extraction outwith

areas of search identified in the development plan. Where there is no developer interest, search areas should be removed from the plan, bearing in mind long term requirements, the need to avoid sterilisation of resources and the views of the industry.

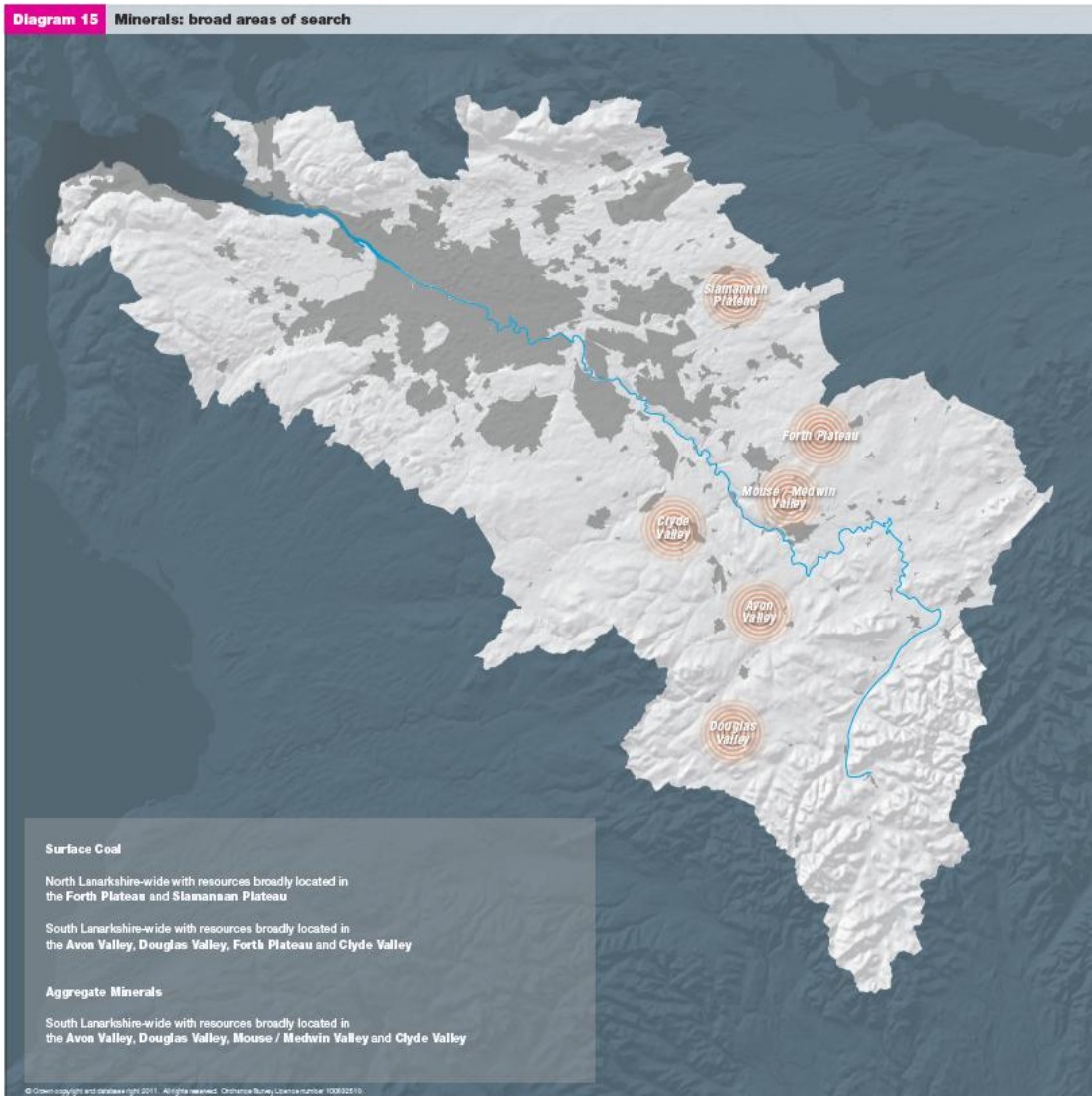
- 3.5 There is a further requirement for a 10 year supply of construction aggregates to be available at all times within all market areas. Where a market area crosses local authority boundaries, authorities should work together to meet these requirements, particularly in the city regions.

4. Strategic Context

Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan

- 4.1 The proposed plan of The Strategic Development Plan, adopts the concept of “Local Supply” for minerals planning in Spatial Framework 2: Environmental Action. The focus is placed on minimising long distance imports of natural resources so as to support sustainable economic growth.
- 4.2 With regards to surface coal, the Strategic Development Plan acknowledges the continued role that coal-fired power stations will have in Scotland’s energy mix. In order to minimise imports of coal for this purpose, indigenous supply is required. At present there are a number of operational sites within the city region which have consents due to lapse by 2018. There is a requirement to establish and maintain a continued supply for the duration of the plan period to 2035.
- 4.3 With regards to aggregate minerals, there are currently enough operational reserves to meet demand for the plan period to 2035. After 2021 these reserves are anticipated to become constrained. Additional locations will therefore be required in order to reduce distances from source to market, wherever possible.
- 4.4 Proposed Plan Diagram 15 sets out the broad areas of search for both surface coal and aggregate Minerals. These areas provide the basis for local planning authorities to address the issue through their local development plans.
- 4.5 The GCVSDP Background Report 10 sets out the rationale behind the strategy on minerals set out in the SDP. The report is based on confidential data received from the private mineral working operators within the city region. The data has been generalised so as to protect information which may be commercially sensitive.

Diagram 15 Minerals: broad areas of search



GCVSDP Proposed Plan Diagram 15 Minerals: Broad Areas of Search, GCVSDP Background Report 10: Minerals Search Areas

- 4.6 In terms of supply, Background Report 10, establishes that new operations will be required in order maintain a supply of sand and gravel aggregates after 2021 and after 2019 for coal.
- 4.7 There is anticipated to be a continued demand for both of these types of minerals, based on planned developments within the city region anticipated to be brought forward within the plan period; this includes a number of national developments identified in NPF2.
- 4.8 The SDP principle of 'local supply' must be framed within an established basic geography. That is the requirement that future demand for aggregates or coal can only be met in locations where they are found in sufficient scale and quality to meet the needs of the economy. The SDP 'Search Areas' reflect this geography.

5. Renfrewshire Minerals

Overview

- 5.1 There has been a long history of minerals extraction in Renfrewshire, with 346 known sites where mineral workings have been carried out, dating back 300 years in Paisley. There is now a low level of interest in developing new operations, due to these sites being exhausted or no longer economically viable. Often, the remaining coal deposits have been sterilised by recent development taking place. This is particularly the case in Johnstone and Linwood. There are now only two operational mineral workings within Renfrewshire, these are located at Highcraigs in Johnstone and Reilly Quarry at Bishopton, both of which are quarries working igneous rocks used for crushed rock aggregates.

Renfrewshire Local Plan 2006

- 5.2 Within the current local plan, Policy M1, sets out to ensure that any proposals for mineral extraction are justified in terms of strategic demand and supply as set out in the Structure Plan. Any developments, able to justified in these terms would be required by policy M2 to meet criteria to ensure that the protection of the environment and the amenity of the population would be given proper consideration.

6. Renfrewshire Local Development Plan

Monitoring Statement

- 6.1 In monitoring the use of policies in the current local plan, both policies M1 and M2 have not been used since the adoption of the Local Plan in 2006. The monitoring statement calls into question the continued relevance of having such policies within the Local Development Plan (LDP). It states that if there is no need identified at a strategic level then policy M1 would no longer be required. Policy M2 is suggested to be set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance as part of a general assessment for all new developments.

Considerations for the Proposed Plan

- 6.2 The continuing need for both coal and aggregate minerals in Scotland, particularly within the Central Belt, is well established. At present, there are however considerable sources currently operational and going forward in the life of the new Renfrewshire LDP, 2014-2019, which means that the need for additional operations in Renfrewshire is not established.
- 6.3 Although Renfrewshire has a legacy of mineral working, the minerals policies M1 and M2 have not been used since the adoption of the Renfrewshire Local Plan in 2006. This is an indicator of lack of developer interest supported by the likelihood that historical mineral workings have been exhausted or are no longer economically viable. This gives no justification for an area of search to be established in the forthcoming LDP.
- 6.4 Although there is currently not sufficient demand to justify minerals operations within Renfrewshire, new development proposals will require to give consideration to prior extraction of

mineral resources where appropriate. This would prevent further sterilisation of resources which would be otherwise inaccessible.

- 6.5 In accordance with Scottish Planning Policy, Renfrewshire Council has worked with neighbouring authorities and private mineral operators in order to identify broad areas of search at a strategic level so that a 'local supply' can be ensured for a minimum of 10 years extraction. These areas of search are based on the geography of locations where there are minerals of a sufficient quantity and quality to be economically worked. None of these search areas are within Renfrewshire. With particular reference to surface coal mining, SPP paragraph 240 states that there will be a presumption against extraction outwith areas of search identified within the development plan. The Renfrewshire LDP cannot support any proposal for surface coal mining within Renfrewshire as to do so would run contrary to the Strategic Development Plan and Scottish Planning policy.

References

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