

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK - MINERALS

HEADLINE/COVER STATEMENT

Government has long recognised that minerals are essential to the prosperity and quality of life of the nation, and to achieving sustainable development goals. The role of the planning system is to ensure that society's need for minerals and the benefits that mineral working can bring, are properly weighed in any decision making process against the impacts on our environment of minerals extraction, processing and transport.

INTRODUCTION

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's objectives and national policies for planning in England. This section contains the objectives and policies that relate specifically to minerals but it should be read alongside other relevant parts of the NPPF, which relate more generally to all forms of development.

The objectives and policies in this document must be taken into account by Mineral Planning Authorities in the preparation of their Minerals Plans and are a material consideration in the execution of their statutory duties for development management.

ABOUT MINERALS

Minerals are defined as Minerals are vital to the economy because.....

MINERALS AND SUSTAINABILITY

To be considered sustainable, a minerals source must be workable in a manner which meets need at an acceptable balance of the social, environmental and economic costs and benefits of the winning and working process.

GOVERNMENT OBJECTIVES

The Government's objectives for minerals are:

MO1: to ensure that society, industry and the economy are provided with a steady and adequate supply of the minerals they need from sources that are sustainable.

MO2: to ensure security of supply and where appropriate to do that by setting levels for the minimum resources of specific minerals that should be available and permitted for extraction at any time (Landbanks).

MO3: to enable a presumption in favour of the extraction of minerals from sustainable indigenous resources

MO4: to ensure that regular national and/or local surveys are conducted of mineral production, distribution and consumption and that the results of those surveys are publicly available.

MO5: to ensure that national and/or local forecasts of future need are produced for specific minerals where it considers that such action is necessary in order to secure a steady and adequate supply. All regulators will have regard to any such forecasts, and the requirement for need to be met, in carrying out their duties.

NATIONAL MINERAL PLANNING POLICIES

Policy NMPP1:

In carrying out their planning functions, Mineral Planning Authorities shall:

- make all decisions with a view to achieving the Government objectives for minerals (MO1 to 5) and in accord with the National Planning Policy Framework
- have full regard for mineral planning guidance (including the published advice of Aggregate Working Parties and the National Coordinating Group) and only depart from that guidance where there is a sound and robust evidence base to support that departure.

Policy NMPP2:

NMPP2a: Each Mineral Planning Authority will consider whether or not, through the application of their own planning powers in isolation, they are able to ensure that national minerals policy requirements are met. Where those requirements cannot be met by working on their own, authorities should make joint working arrangements with such other UK authorities as are appropriate. In locations where materials from marine sources may constitute a significant proportion of overall supply, such working arrangements should include the appropriate marine planners and regulators. (Ministerial approval of such arrangements ?)

NMPP2b: In the case of construction aggregates, those arrangements should include the establishment of Aggregate Working Parties (AWPs) whose duty is to provide technical guidance to their constituent planning authorities and, where appropriate, planners and regulators of the marine environment, on the level of provision of mineral resources necessary to secure a steady and adequate supply.

NMPP2c: The work of the AWP's and, in the absence of AWP's, individual Mineral Planning Authorities, will be overseen by a National Coordinating Group (NCG). The NCG will ensure that the technical advice provided by those AWP's has full regard for the need to secure an adequate and steady supply of materials to the construction industry and the Government forecasts of aggregate need in particular.

NMPP2d: The NCG and AWP's will monitor the landbanks of permitted reserves of aggregates with the objective of making adequate provision to allow those landbanks to be maintained above such minimum levels as may be set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Government will publish guidance on establishing joint working arrangements between planning authorities and on the functions of NCG and the AWP's in particular. As with the current RAWP's, the principal membership should be mineral planning authorities and industry representatives. The continuation of existing RAWP arrangements will have benefits in terms of continuity of monitoring data but this should not prevent the establishment of new sub-national groupings where the data issue can be addressed.

Government will publish guidance on the assessment and management of landbanks. In particular that guidance should explain the importance of maintaining permitted reserves above a minimum level (as in 4.1 of the existing MPS1) and the need to have regard to production capacity when considering the adequacy of reserves (to achieve the Mineral Plan provision). The guidance should make it clear that landbanks are an indicator of the adequacy of planning provision, are not to be considered a target or a ceiling and should not be used as an element of development management policy.

Policy NMPP3:

Mineral planning authorities will maintain a database of the mineral resources that occur within their area of control and the rate at which they are extracted. That database will include the results of regular assessment of the reserves held at each operating unit and within areas identified in the Minerals Plan for future extraction.

Government will publish guidance on what should be considered a robust and credible evidence base to support Mineral Plans.

Policy NMPP4:

Each Mineral Planning Authority will produce a Minerals Plan which will contain such local policies and proposals to supplement National Mineral Planning Policy as are necessary to enable objectives MO1 to MO5 to be met. This will include:

- the level of provision made in the Plan for each mineral;
- policies to show how the sustainability of proposals will be assessed by the mineral planning authority, including any that are specific to the categories of sites that may be used to identify areas for future working.

and may include:

- identified areas for future mineral working, including Specific Sites, Preferred Areas and Areas of Search as appropriate;

A plan will not be considered suitable for adoption unless there is evidence that satisfactory collaborative democratic methods have been used to produce it.

Policy NMPP5:

NMPP5a: The mineral planning system will operate on the basis of a presumption in favour of planning permission being granted for mineral development proposals that are shown to be sustainable.

NMPP5b: The presumption in favour of proposals which are shown to be sustainable will apply whether or not the location of such proposals are specifically identified in a Minerals Plan. However, where no such identifications are made, the burden of demonstrating sustainability will, as a consequence, fall principally on the mineral developer.

Government will publish guidance on the factors to be taken into account in setting sustainability criteria.

Policy NMPP6:

NMPP6a: Mineral Planning Authorities shall identify and estimate the extent of all mineral resources within their areas of control and, through the land use planning system, adopt such policies and practices as are necessary to ensure that access to those minerals is not compromised without full consideration of the consequences both locally and nationally.

NMPP6b: The policies and practices mentioned in NMPP6a shall include the designation of Mineral Safeguarding Areas around mineral resources.

Government will publish guidance on the safeguarding of mineral resources.

NMPXX:

Other contenders for National Mineral Planning Policies could be:

- mineral working and designated areas (NPs, AONBs, Green Belt etc)?
- policy preference for extensions to existing workings?

GLOSSARY:

The NPPF will provide clear definitions of terms that are fundamental to the operation of the planning system such as: sustainable minerals development, landbank, provision, safeguarding, NCG, AWP, capacity to supply, real need, real supply etc.. This will include a statement on the relative weight to be given to national mineral planning policy, local mineral planning policy (in Mineral Plans) and guidance.