

## 6 MINERALS CORE STRATEGY

### AGGREGATES

- 6.1** The suggested basis of the Core Strategy is that the plan should seek to provide for the supplies of aggregates that are identified in the Regional Aggregates Working Party's sub- regional apportionment (see paragraphs 3.7 to 3.9). Such provision could be by extending the life of planning permissions, by allowing deeper quarrying, or extensions to quarries, or by permitting new sites. It is also suggested that the Core Strategy should protect mineral resources from sterilisation by other forms of development .
- 6.2** With reference to the figures in paragraph 3.3 and table 3.1, it is considered that there is an adequate number and distribution of quarries supplying crushed rock. These quarries have a more than adequate landbank of reserves with planning permission for continued production for many years. The landbank will last well beyond the plan period. The planning permissions for some quarries will expire before 2018 (see table 3.2,) but this does not have a substantial effect on overall reserves. Considerations about renewing these permissions are likely to include issues such as need, environmental impact, including traffic, their proximity to their markets and maintaining local jobs. The Generic Development Control Policies can provide the context for these considerations.
- 6.3** The sand and gravel quarries are considered to have adequate reserves with planning permission at present. However, provision will need to be made for further sites within the plan period because all of these planning permissions expire before 2015 (see table 3.3). Because of confidentiality constraints on the availability of information about reserves at individual units this discussion paper can not quantify the impacts of the expiry of individual planning permissions. It is considered that more details need to be made public to help policy decisions to be made.
- 6.4** There are also likely to be issues about the distribution and location of these quarries although these are largely determined by geology, some have traffic problems because of the standard of the local road network. Traffic is causing increasing local concern about environmental problems and damage to roads. For example, formal objections have been submitted by Westnewton and Holme St Cuthbert Parish Councils about quarry traffic particularly on the B5301 Silloth - Aspatria road.
- 6.5** Quality sand and gravel resources are relatively limited. Historically the current sand and gravel production areas have satisfied the county's needs with some sand and gravel also going south out of the county.
- 6.6** Heavy traffic from sand and gravel working does impact significantly on the Aldoth and Brampton areas. There is a case for production in these areas to be limited to what is essential for the needs of the county.

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- 6.7** Alternative resources of sand and gravel that could be worked may be limited. The British Geological Survey published, in 2001, its “Minerals Resource Information for Development Plans – Cumbria and the Lake District - Resources and Constraints.” The report and maps delineate and describe where there may be workable sand and gravel deposits. They could be a starting point for more detailed investigation of potential resources.

### QUESTION 13

***Do you consider it is realistic that the pattern of sand and gravel working could be influenced by the investigation and development of alternative sources of supply?***

- 6.8** There is a specific issue about one crushed rock quarry near Millom, which supplies very high skid resistance roadstone. The planning permission for this quarry expires within the plan period. Although there are adequate reserves of general high specification roadstone it may be considered that this quarry should be acknowledged as a national resource for very high specification ones.

## Core Strategy Policies

- 6.9** As a starting point the present development plan policies can be considered as the basis for the Core Strategy. The ones that are relevant in relation to aggregates are set out in Box 6.

### QUESTION 14

***Which of the current development plan policies do you consider are still appropriate to this Core Strategy?***

***Do you consider that any changes or additional policies are needed?***

***Do you consider that the very high skid resistance roadstone at Ghyll Scaur Quarry should be regarded as a national resource for the purposes of this plan?***

## MINERALS CONSULTATION AREAS

- 6.10** In 1981, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, the County Council prepared Mineral Consultation Area maps. These formally notified the district councils of the areas within which the County Council wished to be consulted on development proposals which were likely to affect, or be affected by, the winning and working of minerals, other than coal. The Mineral Consultation Area Maps show the extent of limestone and sand and gravel resources. Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policy 24 relates to these.

**BOX 5****Minerals and Waste Local Plan POLICY 24**

Mineral resources will be safeguarded from sterilisation. The County Council will oppose development proposals within Mineral Consultation Areas which would prevent or prejudice potential future mineral extraction unless it is satisfied that the area affected does not contain a workable mineral deposit; or there is an overriding need for the development and the mineral cannot be extracted in advance

- 6.11** The Minerals Consultation Areas will need to be reviewed as part of the Minerals and Waste Development Framework process.

**BOX 6****Current Development Plan Policies relevant to the Core Strategy for aggregate minerals****Structure Plan policies****Policy R46: Safeguarding mineral resources**

Development will not be permitted which sterilises mineral resources that may need to be worked in the future.

**Policy R47: Mineral extraction outside the Lake District National Park and AONBs**

Land will be made available for mineral extraction outside the Lake District National Park and AONBs to maintain an adequate supply of minerals, including where appropriate land banks of permitted reserves, taking account of the contribution from alternative sources. Permission will not be granted for mineral extraction where there would be a significant adverse effect on the community, the local environment or the road network unless the effect is outweighed by the need for the mineral to be worked and/or the social and economic needs of the County's population. Proposals should incorporate a strategy to minimise the production of mineral waste, ensure the acceptable reclamation and afteruse of land and to encourage the transport of materials by the most sustainable mode of transport.

**Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies****Policy 28**

The County Council will aim to grant planning permissions for sufficient land to enable the production of sand and gravel at an average rate of 1.05 million tonnes per annum and the production of crushed rock aggregate at an average rate of 4.55 million tonnes per annum.

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**Note: On the basis of the latest sub-regional apportionment these production levels would be 0.7 M tonnes of sand and gravel and 4.1 M tonnes of crushed rock.**

### **Policy 29**

The County Council will aim to grant sufficient permissions to maintain throughout, and at the end of the Plan period, a landbank of permitted reserves for at least seven years extraction of sand and gravel and at least fifteen years extraction of crushed rock aggregate unless exceptional circumstances prevail.

**Note : In accordance with National policy it may that there should be a policy relating to the maximum period of landbank that should be maintained.**

### **Policy 31**

Proposals for the extraction of sand and gravel in the North, East and South Cumbria production areas will only be permitted where there is a demonstrable need unless significant benefits would accrue to local communities or the environment

### **Policy 32**

Proposals for the development of new quarries for the extraction of general crushed rock aggregates will not be permitted, unless there is a demonstrable need and significant benefits would accrue to local communities or the environment.

### **Policy 33**

Proposals for quarry extensions to provide general crushed rock aggregates will not be permitted unless there is a demonstrable need or significant benefits would accrue to local communities or the environment.

### **Policy 34**

Proposals for the extraction of High Specification Aggregates will not be permitted unless there is a demonstrable national or regional need or significant benefits would accrue to local communities or the environment.

### **Policy 23**

In assessing the extent to which proposals for minerals and waste development meet the social and economic needs of the County's population and help maintain rural communities, the following will be taken into account:

- i. the number, type and duration of direct and indirect jobs to be generated or maintained and how many will be or are occupied by local people; and
- ii. the opportunities for the development of skills of locally employed people; and
- iii. the level and nature of investment in the local economy from wages and use of local businesses; and

iv. the impact on economic development initiatives and neighbouring businesses, including tourism.

**Policy 27** In assessing proposals for the extraction of minerals which are accompanied by an Environmental Statement or where there are material planning objections or where Local Plan Policies 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36 and 43 apply, the following will be taken into account in determining the need for the mineral to be worked:

- i. national, regional and local need as appropriate; and
- ii. the location, amount, quality and type of existing permitted reserves and the rate at which they are likely to be worked; and
- iii. the availability of less damaging alternative sites or sources of supply.

The particular needs of an individual mineral operator will not be taken into account unless it can be demonstrated that special considerations should apply.

**Policy 24** Mineral resources will be safeguarded from sterilisation. The County Council will oppose development proposals within Mineral Consultation Areas which would prevent or prejudice potential future mineral extraction unless it is satisfied that the area affected does not contain a workable mineral deposit; or there is an overriding need for the development and the mineral cannot be extracted in advance.

**Policy 25** Proposals for the extraction of minerals prior to development which would otherwise sterilise proven mineral deposits will be permitted except where prior extraction would prejudice the development of the land or would not take place within a reasonable timescale.

**Policy 26** Proposals for the importation and processing of waste or low grade materials to produce mineral products will be permitted at active quarries for a temporary period not exceeding the permitted life of the quarry, where this can be accommodated without prejudicing the operation or restoration of the quarry

**Policy 35** Proposals for the extraction of minerals from borrow pits will be permitted provided there are net environmental and economic benefits compared with supplying the minerals from existing quarries.

**Policy 6** Proposals for the extraction of minerals from watercourses or beaches will not be permitted

**Policy 21** There will be a presumption in favour of restoring mineral and waste sites to agricultural, forestry and amenity (including nature conservation) afteruses following temporary developments. Restoration to agriculture will be required where the loss of agricultural land would adversely affect the economic viability of the farm holding.

**Policy 20** The County Council will seek, where appropriate, the provision of public access including new public rights of way within restoration schemes.

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**Policy 22** The County Council will require a scheme of aftercare, for up to five years, for land being restored to amenity, forestry or agricultural afteruses. For proposals where a further period of management is considered to be necessary the County Council will need to be satisfied that this will be provided.

### QUESTION 15

*Do you consider that the plan should seek a larger proportion of aggregates supply to be met from marine dredged sand?*

## ALTERNATIVE AGGREGATES

**6.12** The suggested basis for the Core Strategy is that the plan should seek to provide for around 25% of aggregates supplies to be met by secondary and recycled aggregates in accordance with National and Regional policies.

## INDUSTRIAL LIMESTONES

**6.13** The Minerals and Waste Local Plan policy that is relevant to a Core Strategy Policy for industrial limestone is set out in Box 7 It is suggested that this policy is relevant for the Minerals and Waste Development Framework.

### BOX 7

#### Current MWLP POLICY 36

Proposals for the extraction of high purity limestone will only be permitted where there is a demonstrable national or regional need and it will be used primarily for non aggregate uses or where significant benefits would accrue to local communities or the environment.

## LOCAL BUILDING STONES

**6.14** The relevant policies from the current Structure Plan and Minerals and Waste Local Plan are set out in Box 8. In addition to these a more positive policy approach could be considered for securing supplies of as many local building stones as possible.

### BOX 8

#### Current development plan policies for building stones

#### Joint Structure Plan 2001 – 2016

#### Policy R47

### **Mineral extraction in the Lake District National Park and AONBs**

Proposals for mineral extraction within the Lake District National Park and AONBs will only be permitted in the following circumstances:

1. to provide dimension or building stone, which in the Lake District National Park will be limited to small scale extensions to existing workings or small scale reopening of previously worked quarries, or
2. the small scale re-opening of previously worked slate quarries, or
3. the extension of existing slate quarries where there is no other reasonable alternative source of supply. In all circumstances it must be demonstrated that the scale and nature of the proposed works are such that harm would not be caused to interests of acknowledged importance, or any such harm is outweighed by the need to maintain a supply of local building material, to sustain local diversity of employment or by other local economic considerations. Proposals must include strategies to minimise the production of mineral waste, ensure the acceptable reclamation and after use of land and to encourage the transport of materials by the most sustainable mode of transport.

### **Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policy 48**

Proposals for new building stone quarries which raise significant planning objections may be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the material cannot be adequately supplied from existing sources.

## **GYPSUM AND ANHYDRITE**

- 6.15** The permitted reserves for mining gypsum are expected to last to just beyond the plan period (please see paragraphs 3.33 to 3.37). It is, therefore, suggested that further provision for gypsum mining is not needed at this time. However, because of the lead in times for developing new sources a future review of the plan will need to consider whether provision should be made for these to be developed towards the end of the plan period. In the meantime protection of a possible area for surface working of A bed gypsum is addressed in paragraph 8.8.
- 6.16** With regard to anhydrite the only provision that is considered to be necessary is the protection of the mine entrance and area of workings from sterilisation by other forms of development (please see paragraph 8.9).

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### UNDERGROUND MINING FOR ZINC

- 6.17** Present understanding is that it is unlikely that there will be serious interest in resurrecting this industry. However this core strategy can only leave open the possibility of the industry being reopened. A core strategy issue for this plan could be whether it is possible to identify what would constitute the exceptional circumstances and public need for underground mining of zinc that could outweigh the landscape protection policies of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 6.18** Another factor is that, before embarking on the very expensive exploratory drilling programme that would be needed, any prospective developer is likely to want to know that the whole project has a reasonable chance of being acceptable. It may be impossible to go as far as that in any development plan.

#### QUESTION 16

***Should this plan seek to identify the exceptional circumstances and public need which could be considered to over-ride the presumption against major developments in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?***

***If so would appropriate criteria be the provision of at least 100 jobs for a period of 25 years, limited environmental impacts, measures to minimise road traffic and substantial environmental enhancement measures .***

### BRICKMAKING

- 6.19** The Core Strategy issue is whether provision should be made for the long term supply of Mudstone raw materials from High Greenscoe Quarry for the Askam Brick and Tile Works. Possible extension areas may be likely to involve important areas of woodland, please see Map M5 in Chapter 3.

### COAL

- 6.20** The current Minerals and Waste Local Plan policies that are relevant to a Core Strategy for coal are included in Box 9. It is suggested that no other Core Strategy policies or provision for coal extraction sites need to be made. Any proposals could be considered in the context of the Generic Development Control policies.

#### BOX 9

**Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policies relevant to a Core Strategy for Coal Mining**

**POLICY 37**

Unless there would be significant benefits to local communities and the environment sufficient to outweigh any non-compliance with the following criteria, opencast coal extraction will only be permitted where:

(i) there would be no material adverse impact on local communities, including that arising from the cumulative impact from other permitted and previous opencast coal operations; and

(ii) there would be no material adverse impact on a designated landscape; and

(iii) it would not inhibit the ability of West Cumbria to attract inward investment, economic development and tourism; and

(iv) the working life to the cessation of coaling has been minimised commensurate with the environmental and amenity impacts and the market place, and in any event should not exceed ten years.

### **POLICY 38**

Planning permission will not be granted for opencast coal extraction in the Alston/Nenthead and East Fellside areas.

### **POLICY 39**

Proposals for underground coal mines will be permitted subject to adequate precautions being taken to avoid subsidence damage that would cause significant land use problems.

## **OIL AND GAS**

**6.21** The Minerals and Waste Local Plan policies that are relevant to a Core Strategy for oil and gas are set out in Box 10. It is suggested that these could be appropriate for the Minerals and Waste Development Framework

### **BOX 10**

**Current Minerals and Waste Local Plan policies relevant to a Core Strategy for Oil and Gas exploitation.**

#### **POLICY 40**

Proposals for the appraisal, drilling and testing of oil and gas will be permitted provided the proposals are consistent with an overall scheme for the appraisal of the resource

#### **POLICY 41**

Proposals for the commercial production, processing and transporting of oil or gas will be permitted provided the proposals are consistent with an overall scheme for the optimum development of the resource (and where appropriate any other adjoining oil or gas resources).

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### PEAT

- 6.22** It seems unlikely that there will be a need for further planning permissions to be granted for peat extraction. The current development plan policies are set out below. It is suggested that only Policy 43 is relevant to this plan. With reference to Policy 44, schemes have been approved for all sites.

#### BOX 11

##### **Current Minerals and waste Local Plan policies relevant to a Core Strategy for Peat**

###### **POLICY 43**

Proposals for peat extraction will only be permitted where:

- i. there is a demonstrable national requirement for the peat to be worked; and
- ii. where the site has already been significantly damaged by recent human activity and is of limited or no current nature conservation or archaeological value; and
- iii. the restoration scheme, wherever practicable, gives priority to wetland rehabilitation and to the enhancement of the nature conservation resource.

###### **POLICY 44**

Schemes of working, restoration and afteruse will be sought at existing peat working sites to safeguard areas of important nature conservation interest and to maximise the potential for restoration of the sites to appropriate nature conservation afteruses.