



“Construction Material Suppliers Endorse NI Business Community Support for Withdrawal Agreement”

The Quarry Products Association NI who represents the majority of construction material suppliers in Northern Ireland, employing over 5000 people, has joined the majority of the Northern Ireland Business Community in welcoming the Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and EU.

Gordon Best, Regional Director QPANI, said “The supply of construction materials is essential to so many sectors within our Northern Ireland economy, particularly housebuilding, farming, transport and of course new infrastructure for indigenous business and inward investors. We have taken the time to read and study the Withdrawal Agreement legal text, the Explainer Documents, the Political Declaration and the Protocol for NI and Ireland. While we have identified some concerns around the VAT Regime, influence of the European Court of Justice and Citizens Rights, which we have and are seeking clarification on, we have come to the unanimous view that this agreement offers the best outcome available to Northern Ireland businesses, our workers, families and the stability of our society”. Mr Best added, “While never cheer leaders of EU Directives and Legislation, some negative and many positive we have worked closely with our Westminster MPs and MEPs over the years to lobby against the worst excesses of bureaucracy and in particular the negative impact of aggregates levy in Northern Ireland, and we recognise and appreciated their support. However, we think for ourselves, we are certainly not puppets for others, we evaluate and risk assess any threats to our industry and economy. Unfortunately on this occasion we have to take issue with the position of those who oppose the Withdrawal Agreement. For us we have to deal with and base our decisions on the economic realities that a No Deal will thrust upon us against the benefits of unfettered access to both UK and EU Markets. To us it is quite clear that, while not perfect, the Withdrawal Agreement is a temporary arrangement to see us through the implementation period up to December 2020 when we should have a comprehensive and favourable trade agreement with the EU. The most important result of the Withdrawal Agreement is that, if agreed by Parliament, it gives a degree of certainty going forward and it removes the threat of a catastrophic No Deal outcome that would be so damaging to our local economy and in particular to major sectors who are customers of our construction material suppliers. In the event of a No Deal the immediate disruption to cross border trade would impact on the construction sector here by the fact that 80% of the cement we use in Northern Ireland comes from the Irish Republic and many of our roads contractors work on local council contracts in the Republic. Our Construction material contracting and materials handling sector are very dependent on EU nationals labour and a No Deal would create great uncertainty for them. Most importantly we, like many others within the Business Community and indeed a number of Political Representatives, recognise that economically we in Northern Ireland will have unfettered

access to both EU and UK markets. This will deliver significant opportunities both for expansion of local businesses and create much needed inward investment”.

ENDS

The Quarry Products Association NI represents approximately 95% of companies involved in the supply of quarry products to the Construction Industry in Northern Ireland. Our Association draws its membership from companies engaged in providing primary aggregates, the processing of recycled and secondary materials, the production of downstream products such as asphalt, lime mortar, ready-mixed concrete, precast concrete and road surfacing contracting. The Quarry Products Sector now employs over 5000 people across Northern Ireland and has a turnover of some £650 million.

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