



Quarry Products Association NI
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PPS 14 Team
Department for Regional Development
Regional Planning & Transportation Division
Room 3-01 Clarence Court
10 – 18 Adelaide Street
Belfast
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**Ref: Draft Planning Policy Statement 14 –
Sustainable Development in the Countryside**

Dear Sirs

The Quarry Products Association NI (QPANI) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the PPS 14. Founded in Northern Ireland in 1998 the Association now represents 95% of aggregate production in the Province. Our membership includes major, medium and smaller sized companies. The Association represents companies engaged in the supply of primary aggregates; the processing of recycled and secondary materials; the production of down stream processed products such as asphalt, lime, mortar, ready-mixed concrete, precast concrete and road surfacing contracting.

With reference to the above proposed legislation our Association gives the PPS 14 a guarded welcome. In our view PPS 14 is an admission of failure by Planning Service of its past policy of allowing almost unrestricted development in the countryside that resulted in Northern Ireland having three times as many houses in the countryside as England, Scotland and Wales put together.

As a large indigenous rurally based industry producing key essential materials for Northern Ireland we welcome all development only where it is planned, controlled and sustainable and does not jeopardise the future of any industry and its employees livelihoods. The quarry products industry employs over 5,500 people in Northern Ireland mostly in areas designated by Government as “Targeting Social Need”. The industry provides long term and sustainable employment in rural communities.

Quarries and sand pits not only provide essential materials for the Northern Ireland construction industry but also provide much needed habitats for wildlife and plantlife

that enhances the biodiversity of the countryside. Quarries and sandpits are home to many species including peregrine falcon, sand martins, ravens, kestrels and many others.

The Quarry Products Association NI has long been lobbying for the implementation of a Minerals Planning Policy Statement in Northern Ireland. This policy will set out a process of identifying and protecting aggregates and mineral reserves for responsible and sustainable future use. Uncontrolled development in the countryside clearly results in a high risk of reserves of quality aggregates being sterilised and prevented from future use. We very much welcome the statement that planning permission will be granted for minerals development in accordance with the MIN policies of PSRNI and renewable energy projects in accordance with PSU 12.

The QPANI would recommend, in the interests of balance, that an increase in the release of alternative building land within and around existing towns and villages and a substantial reduction in the restrictions on permitted development should be made.

QPANI have no objection to the designation of areas that require special protection such as areas of outstanding natural beauty and countryside policy areas where development should be restricted. However, quality mineral reserves can only be extracted where nature has placed them and the designation of an area should not preclude extraction of those minerals to the highest environmental practices.

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Best
Regional Director QPANI