

May 8th, 2026

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Thursday, 14th May 2026 at 7:00 pm** in **2 Church Street, Newtownards.**

Agenda

Agenda

📄 *Agenda PC 14.05.2026.pdf*

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1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Planning Application**
- 3.1 **LA06/2022/0310/F - Ballystockart Quarry, 63 Ballystockart Road and Agricultural Lands to the NW of the Quarry to include 61 Ballystockart Road, Comber BT23 5QY**

Proposed north westerly lateral extension of Ballystockart Quarry, with associated deepening of the existing northern operational area, to include a phased operational plan, screening bunds with advanced tree planting and holistic restoration.

Environmental Statement Received.

📄 *Item 3.1 - Case Officer Report.pdf*

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ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

8 May 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Planning Committee of Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards, on **Thursday 14 May 2026** commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council


A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Planning Application (Report attached)

3.1	LA06/2022/0310/F	<p>Proposed north westerly lateral extension of Ballystockart Quarry, with associated deepening of the existing northern operational area, to include a phased operational plan, screening bunds with advanced tree planting and holistic restoration.</p> <p>Environmental Statement Received</p> <p>Ballystockart Quarry, 63 Ballystockart Road and agricultural lands to the NW of the quarry to include 61 Ballystockart Road, Comber BT23 5QY</p>
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MEMBERSHIP OF PLANNING COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)

Councillor Cathcart	Councillor McCollum
Alderman Graham	Alderman McDowell
Councillor Harbinson	Alderman McIlveen
Councillor Hennessy	Councillor McKee
Councillor Kendall	Councillor Morgan
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Smart
Councillor McAlpine	Alderman Smith
Councillor McClean (Chair)	Councillor Wray (Vice Chair)

Development Management Case Officer Report		 Ards and North Down Borough Council	
Reference:	LA06/2022/0310/F	DEA: Comber	
Proposal:	Proposed north westerly lateral extension of Ballystockart Quarry, with associated deepening of the existing northern operational area, to include a phased operational plan, screening bunds with advanced tree planting and holistic restoration.		
Location:	Ballystockart Quarry, 63 Ballystockart Road, Comber and agricultural lands to the NW of the quarry to include 61 Ballystockart Road, Comber.		
Applicant:	Whitemountain Quarries		
Date valid:	28.03.2022	EIA Development	Yes
Date last advertised:	17/01/2026	Date last neighbour notified:	13/01/2026
Letters of Support: 7		Letters of Objection: 236	Non-committal: 1
Consultations – synopsis of responses:			
Health and Safety Executive NI	No objection subject to condition		
ANDBC Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions		
LCCC Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions		
NIEA Water Management Unit	No objection subject to condition		
NIEA Drinking Water Inspectorate	No objection		
NIEA Regulation Unit	No objection subject to condition		
NIEA Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate	No objection		
NIEA Natural Environment Division	No objection subject to conditions		
NIEA Inland Fisheries	No objection		
DFI Rivers	No objection		
DFI Roads	No objection		
Shared Environmental Service	No objection subject to condition		
Geological Survey NI	No objection		
HED: Historic Monuments Unit	No objection subject to conditions		
HED: Historic Buildings Unit	No objection		
NI Water	No objection		
Public Health Agency	No objection		
NI Electricity	No objection		

Summary of main issues considered:

- Need and economic benefits
- Impact on natural heritage and designated sites
- Impact on the historic environment
- Impact on visual amenity and landscape character
- Flood risk and drainage
- Impact on safety and amenity
- Road safety and traffic impacts
- Restoration

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

Report Agreed by Authorised Officer

Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Planning Portal [Northern Ireland Public Register \(planningsystemni.gov.uk\)](http://planningsystemni.gov.uk)

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1. Description of Site and Surrounding Area

The application site comprises an existing greywacke mineral quarry and a proposed lateral extension area to the northwest. The extension area includes a dwelling, an associated group of agricultural buildings and surrounding fields. Electricity pylons, owned and operated by Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE), traverse the northern portion of the site.

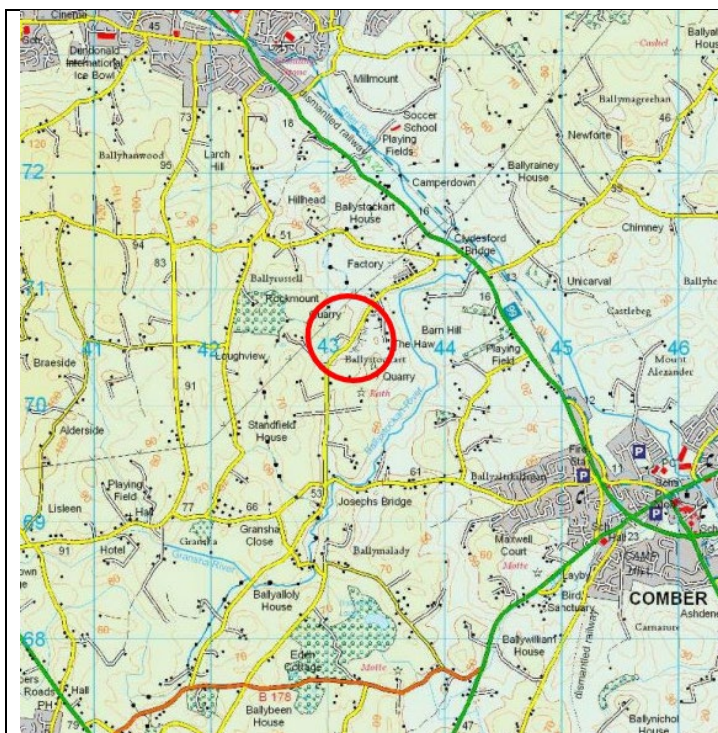


Existing quarry and proposed extension lands (Section 1.1 of 2023 ES)

As can be seen above, quarry operations currently span both sides of Ballystockart Road. The active extraction area (“the northern quarry”) is located to the north and west of the road, whilst the historical quarry void lies to the south (“the southern quarry”). Ancillary facilities, including a site office, parking, a surface mounted weighbridge, a concrete batching plant, fixed crushing and screening plant, and an aggregate recycling/washing plant are located adjacent to the southern quarry void.

Vehicular access to the existing quarry is obtained via an established site entrance on Ballystockart Road, situated to the north of the historical southern quarry void. A tunnel beneath Ballystockart Road facilitates the transfer of materials from the northern extraction site to the processing facilities at the southern quarry.

The total area of the application site is approximately 51.4 hectares, with the proposed lateral extension area comprising approximately 9 hectares. The proposed lateral extension area rises steeply from approximately 50m AOD, adjacent to the Ballystockart Road, to approximately 74m AOD in the vicinity of the existing group of buildings.



Map illustrating the site access in relation to the A22 (Comber Road)

Ballystockart Quarry is located around 3km northwest of the centre of Comber, 10km southeast of Belfast Harbour, and approximately 0.9km southwest of the A22 arterial route - Comber to Belfast. The existing northern quarry lies approximately 430m southwest of the small settlement of Ballystockart. All distances are linear measurements from the site.

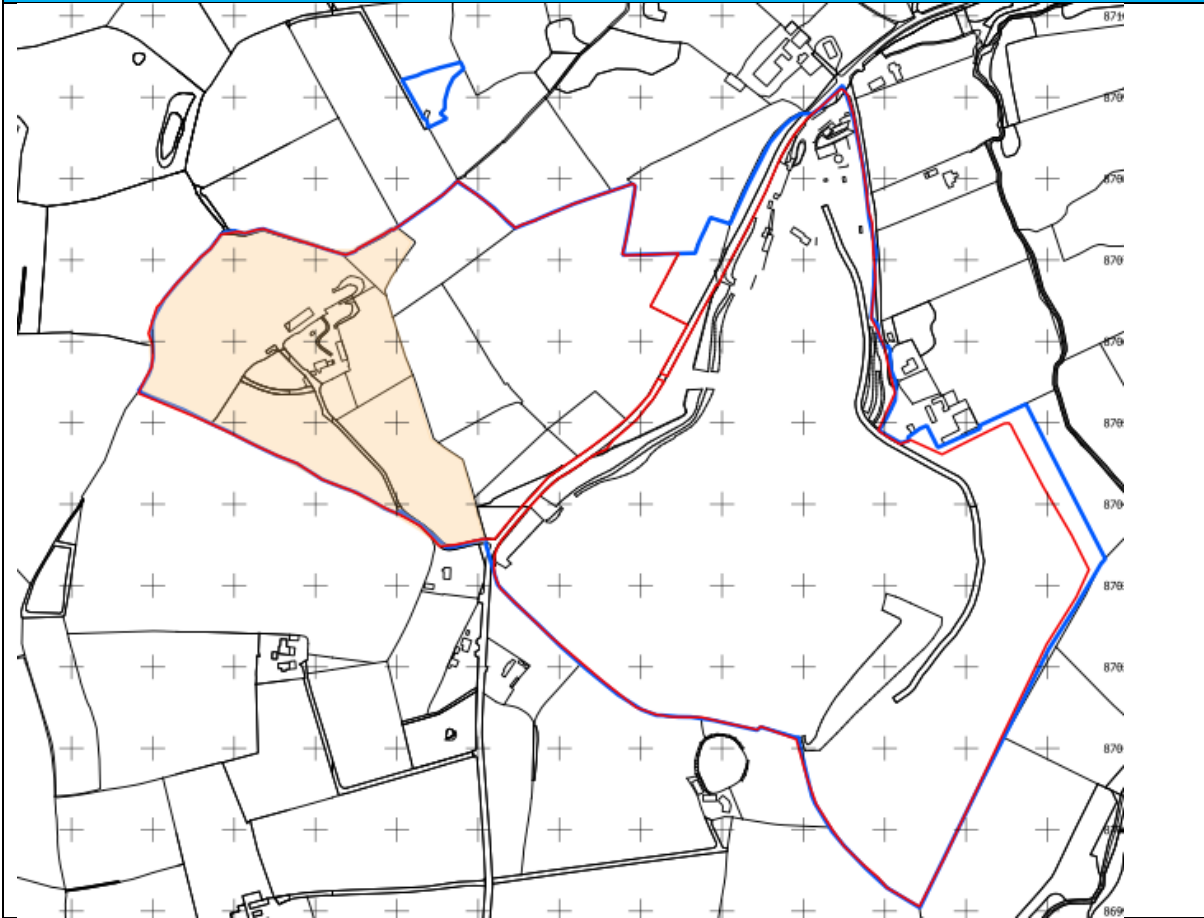
The application site is not located within any designated ecological or landscape area. However, the Ballystockart River Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA1), as designated in the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015, is located to the northeast of the site adjacent to Ballystockart settlement. Additionally, the Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 2.5km to the northeast of the existing northern quarry at its closest point.

The site falls within Landscape Character Area 95 (LCA 95) – Ballygowan Drumlins, as identified in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (NILCA) 2000. The Ballygowan Drumlins area is underlain by ancient Silurian rocks which have been covered by glacial deposits. This area is characterised by rolling drumlin topography, scattered rural dwellings and agricultural development.

A large healthcare factory (TG Eakin), situated near the site, is partially located within Ballystockart settlement. However, a significant extension of the factory (approved July 2023 under application reference LA06/2023/1513/F) extends beyond the settlement boundary into the open countryside.

The Minerals Resource Map for Northern Ireland, produced by the Geological Survey for Northern Ireland (GSNI) in 2012, indicates the presence of sandstone within the site with potential for high specification aggregate extraction.

2. Site Location Plan



3. Relevant Planning History

There is a long history of mineral extraction and processing at Ballystockart Quarry. The earliest planning permission on record dates back to 1974 and relates to a quarry extension.

Mineral extraction and processing operations at the existing quarry are not subject to a single overarching planning permission. The planning history for extraction, in what is now referred to as the southern quarry, is listed below.

X/2006/1078/F	Southeastern quarry extension	Permission Granted 31 August 2007
X/2002/1409/F	Extension of existing operational quarry	Permission Granted 26 January 2004
X/1996/0695	Extension to existing hard rock quarry	Permission Granted 19 January 1998
X/1992/0536	Extraction of rock below existing quarry floor and within existing boundaries	Permission Granted 04 October 1995
X/1986/0627	Quarry extension	Permission Granted 04 July 1989
X/1978/0253	Extension to quarry and 3 replacement sheds	Permission Granted 01 March 1979

X/1974/0078	Extension to quarry	Permission Granted 08 May 1974
<p>The northern quarry and road underpass were granted planning permission in September 2010. This permission provides for the progressive restoration of that site.</p>		
X/2007/1408/F	Extension to Ballystockart Quarry incorporating extraction operation, road underpass, landscaping, native planting and progressive site restoration	Permission Granted 21 September 2010
<p>The site also has a long planning history of ancillary minerals development, including processing plant/machinery.</p>		
LA06/2019/0227/F	Erection and operation of replacement ready mix concrete plant	Permission Granted 09 September 2020
X/2015/0062/F	Retention of reprofiled, topsoiled and grass areas including bunding and screening banks, located along the southeastern boundary of the quarry, following works requested by NI Water to allow safe access for future maintenance of the North Down and Ards trunk water main and retention of an associated buffer zone	Permission Granted 14 June 2018
X/2009/0025/F	Retention of two silt lagoons on a screening bank located to the southeastern boundary of the quarry	Permission Granted 15 May 2009
X/2007/1307/F	Installation and operation of mobile crushing and screening plant	Permission Granted 22 October 2008
X/2006/0307/F	Installation and operation of quarry materials washing plant	Permission Granted 02 November 2006
X/2003/0771/F	Relocation of overburden	Permission Granted 06 April 2005
X/2002/1000/F	Temporary storage of overburden	Permission Granted 15 January 2003
X/1981/0069	Alterations to crushing plant	Permission Granted 29 September 1981
X/1980/0445	Concrete batching plant	Permission Granted 4 August 1980
<p>The applications below relate to other relevant development within and adjacent to the application site.</p>		

SPD/2024/0017/DET26	110KV Overhead line diversion	Determined 21 February 2024
X/2000/0701/F	Two 110 KV single circuit overhead lines between Crossnacreevy and Milecross	Permission Granted 09 May 2002

4. Planning Policy Framework

The relevant planning policy framework for this application is as follows:

- Ards & Down Area Plan 2015
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (Edition 2)
- A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 2: Natural Heritage
- Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking
- Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage
- Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning and Flood Risk
- Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside

5. Supplementary Planning Guidance

Development Control Advice Note 15 – Vehicular Access Standards

6. Consultations

Consultation was carried with the following statutory and non-statutory consultees and a synopsis of responses is provided below.

Consultee	Response
Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI)	No objection subject to condition to ensure provision of a minimum separation distance of 100m between occupied third-party residential dwellings and each blasting charge
ANDBC Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions to protect amenity
LCCC Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions to protect amenity
NIEA Water Management Unit	No objection in relation to the surface water environment subject to conditions
NIEA Drinking Water Inspectorate	No objection - only one private water supply was identified, and it is a secondary source with mains supply also available at the property
NIEA Regulation Unit	No objection in relation to the impacts of the proposal on the groundwater environment subject to condition
NIEA Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate	No objection. Advised that a Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) permit variation must be obtained prior to the expansion of the operation.

NIEA Natural Environment Division	No objection in relation to impact on designated sites and other natural heritage issues subject to conditions
NIEA Inland Fisheries	No objection
DFI Rivers	No objection
DFI Roads	No objection in terms of access or roads safety
Shared Environmental Service (SES)	No objection subject to condition
Geological Survey NI	No objection
HED Historic Monuments Unit	No objection subject to condition requiring archaeological mitigation
HED Historic Buildings Unit	No objection in relation to the impact on historic buildings
NI Water	No objection
Public Health Agency	No objection provided - Reference to PPC Regime
Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE)	No objection. NIE confirmed it would be responsible for the design, consenting and delivery of any (dual-circuit 110kV) diversion, which would be progressed as a separate planning application.

7. Description of Proposal

The application seeks full planning permission for a lateral and vertical extension of the existing northern operational area of Ballystockart Quarry to facilitate the continued extraction of Greywacke hard rock mineral.

It is proposed that mineral extraction will occur at a rate of 500,000 tonnes per annum in a phased manner over an estimated 23-year period. The Geological Assessment included in Section 5.6 of the 2023 Environmental Statement (ES) Addendum estimates that the proposed extension would result in approximately 4,245,000m³ (11,503,000 tonnes) of mineral being removed and transported to the existing processing plant via the road underpass before being transferred off-site.

Phase 1 will involve the removal of overburden from the initial working area in the lateral extension lands. The material will be used to construct bunds to mitigate visual impacts of future extraction activities. Surplus overburden will be placed in the southern void. The screening bunds will range in height from approximately 2.5m to 6.5m and will be planted with native woodland species.

Once the screening and landform preparation are complete, Phase 1 will continue with mineral extraction progressing in an anticlockwise direction.

Phase 2 will involve the full lateral development of the proposed extension to its maximum operational footprint over an estimated 11-year period.

Phase 3 will entail the deepening of the quarry floor to a maximum depth of 37mAOD which is also anticipated to take approximately 11 years.

As part of the proposed progressive restoration scheme, overburden and mineral waste will be permanently stored in the historic void during the three extraction phases.

Phase 4 will involve the final restoration of the quarry once all permitted reserves have been extracted. The restoration concept includes creating waterbodies, planting native woodland, and removing all plant and processing facilities. Waterbodies will form naturally once dewatering pumps are switched off, allowing groundwater to rise and fill the voids.

The ES confirms that only a limited amount of permitted reserves remain in the southern void, and these will be extracted before the site's final restoration.

The operational hours proposed for the development are:

- 7:00am to 7.00pm Monday to Friday,
- 7:00 to 1:00pm Saturday
- Sunday (*essential maintenance of mobile plant only*)

The ES also clarifies that existing ancillary processing plant and machinery are subject to separate planning permissions and that the current application does not seek any modifications to the existing processing facilities.

8. Consideration and Assessment

Pre-Application Community Consultation

In accordance with Section 27 the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the Applicant undertook a Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC) process. A PACC Report, submitted with the application, outlined details of the public event and online consultation held to engage members of the public at pre-application stage.

A public consultation event was held on 30 November 2021 at the Strangford Arms Hotel in Newtownards. The event was advertised in a local newspaper and supported by a targeted leaflet drop to properties within the vicinity of the proposed development site. Formal notification was also issued to elected members from the Comber DEA, Ards and North Down Borough Council, and to elected representatives in the neighbouring Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area.

The PACC report refers to the Applicant's consideration of key concerns raised by members of the public during that process, particularly those relating to potential environmental impacts of the proposed development. It refers to the amendment of the landscape and visual mitigation strategy to include the introduction of additional landform and landscape screening, in response to one specific concern raised at PACC stage regarding potential visual impacts.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The proposal is classified as EIA development.

Therefore, an Environmental Statement (ES) and its associated addenda have been submitted in accordance with the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 2017 (the 'EIA Regs').

The aim of Environmental Impact Assessment is to protect the environment by ensuring that the Council, as local planning authority, when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes this into account in the decision-making process. The Regulations set out a procedure for identifying those projects which should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, and for assessing, consulting and coming to a decision on those projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects.

Regulation 24(1) of the EIA Regs states that when determining an EIA application, the Council shall—

- (a) examine the environmental information;
- (b) reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the proposed development on the environment, taking into account the examination referred to in sub-paragraph (a) and, where appropriate, its own supplementary examination;
- (c) integrate that reasoned conclusion into the decision as to whether planning permission or subsequent consent is to be granted; and
- (d) if planning permission is to be granted, consider whether it is appropriate to attach conditions or impose monitoring measures.

Accordingly, key elements of the EIA, further environmental information and any comments made by the consultee bodies are considered in this report to allow a reasoned conclusion to be reached.

For clarity, the Environmental Information was submitted and is termed throughout this report as:

- Original Environmental Statement submitted March 2022 – now obsolete;
- Replacement ES received December 2023 ('the 2023 ES Addendum');
- Further Environmental Information 2024;
- Further Environmental Information 2025 ('the 2025 ES Addendum'); and
- Further Environmental Information ('the 2026 ES Addendum').

Environmental Baseline

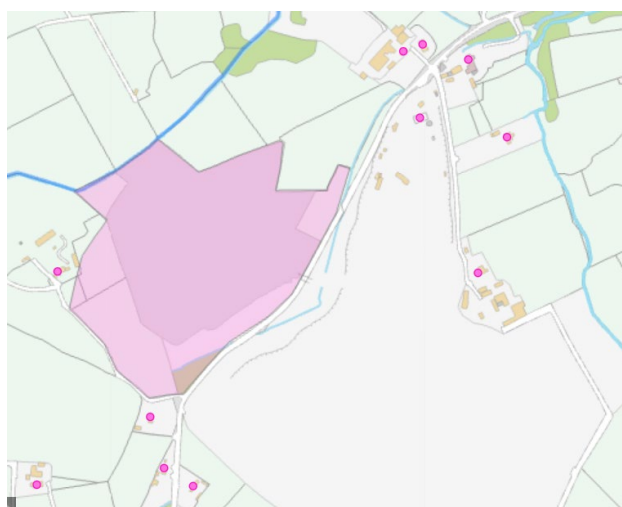
The 2023 ES Addendum evaluates the likely significant effects of the proposed development against the following two baseline scenarios:

- a. the existing state of the environment, and
- b. the likely evolution of the environment if the quarry extension does not proceed (i.e. "do nothing" or future baseline).

In terms of the existing baseline, Section 2.4 of the 2023 ES Addendum explains that Ballystockart Quarry is a long-established feature of the local environment (circa 50 years), with extraction on-going in the northern quarry under planning permission X/2007/1408/F and limited permitted resources remaining within the southern quarry.

In addition to the various extraction planning permissions, the 2023 ES Addendum states that there are several separate planning units for mineral processing plants and that these are considered an integral part of the existing baseline scenario.

Section 2.4 of the 2023 ES Addendum outlines the future baseline conditions (if no quarry extension is granted planning permission), with additional clarification provided in the 2025 ES Addendum. Planning permission (X/2007/1408/F) for the active extraction area at the northern quarry includes a condition which requires extraction to cease by 20 September 2030. As shown below, the boundary of this permission encompasses only the lands to the north of the Ballystockart Road (purple polygon). Following cessation of extraction, the site must then be restored in accordance with the conditions of the planning permission. The ES proposes that this restored site is used to represent the future baseline scenario in the absence of any future planning permissions. The ES states that extraction activities would then revert to the remaining resources in the southern quarry and that the other permitted activities such as concrete production and dust rock fines washing processing will continue.



Site Location Plan for approval X/2007/1408/F

Northern Ireland Electricity Infrastructure

The northern portion of the application site is traversed by electricity pylons owned and operated by Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE).

Section 2.6 of the 2023 ES Addendum refers to two basic options available to NIE:

1. Retention of the infrastructure in situ and sterilisation of the mineral resource; or
2. Relocation of the pylons to avoid mineral sterilisation, including the potential for temporary structures to facilitate the same.

The relocation of pylons does not form part of the development proposed in the current application. Any diversion of the NIE pylons would be subject to a separate planning application, which may be submitted at a later stage.

The map below shows the location of the existing pylons, along with an alternative diversion route for temporary and permanent towers (Existing line route in orange, temporary line route in white, and permanent line route in blue).



Alternatives under consideration by NIE, extract from 2023 ES Addendum, Section 2.6.2

The existing NIE infrastructure comprises four pylons, which extend in a straight line over a distance of approximately 825m. It is anticipated that the diversion would involve the erection of five permanent towers over a distance of nearly 1km.

The 2023 ES Addendum assesses the environmental impacts associated with the potential diversion of the electricity pylons, in addition to the impacts from the development proposed in this application. This assessment was subject to consultation with statutory consultees and other environmental bodies. The environmental information pertaining to the potential diversion of the pylons has been considered as part of the overall evaluation of the proposed development.

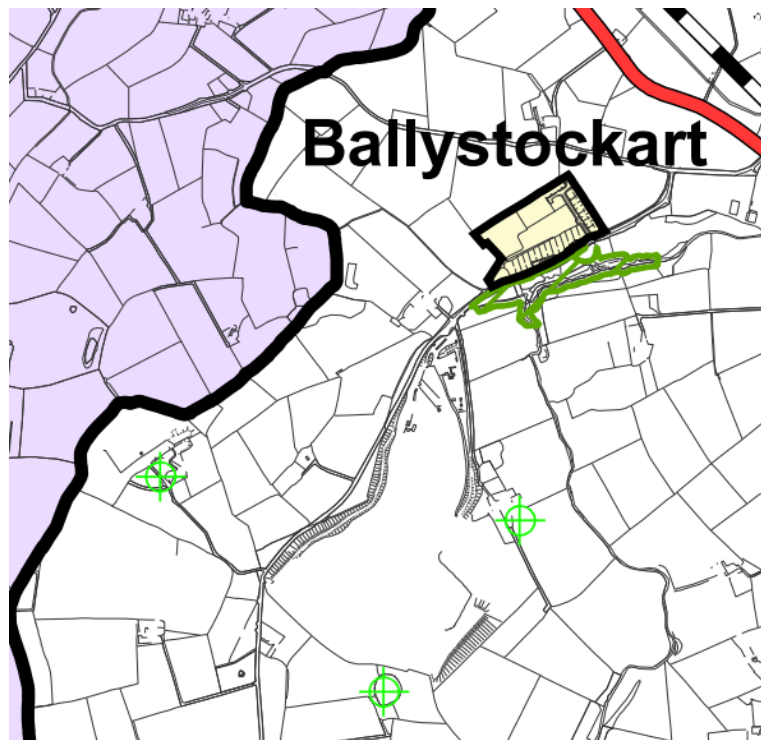
The Development Plan and Minerals Planning Policy Context

The Ards and Down Area Plan 2015

As required under Section 6(4) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (the 2011 Act), the determination of proposals must be in accordance with the prevailing local development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 45(2) of the 2011 Act goes on to state that “where an application is made for planning permission, the Council or, as the case may be, the Department, in dealing with the

application, must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations”.

The site is located within the countryside as per the Ards and Down Area Plan (ADAP) 2015.



Development Plan extract – Countryside Map No. 2/001a

⊕ Archaeological Site & Monument (Unscheduled)
 Local Landscape Policy Area

The ADAP Countryside Map No. 2/001a indicates that an unscheduled archaeological monument is contained within the lateral extension lands. The potential impact of the proposal on the historic environment will be considered in a subsequent section of this report.

The small settlement of Ballystockart is located close to and northeast of the application site.

Ballystockart River Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) is located to the northeast of the application site. Its features comprise the river corridor with associated ponds, wetland and mature trees which provide visual amenity and local nature conservation interest. In accordance with Policy CON 2 of the ADAP, planning permission will not be granted for development proposals which would be liable to adversely affect the environmental quality, integrity or character of a LLPA. The potential impact of the development on this designated area will be taken into account as part of the detailed assessment of the application and under the relevant topic headings set out below.

ADAP states that the minerals policies within A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (APSRNI) apply throughout the Plan area.

Policy COU 8 explains that Areas of Constraint on Mineral Developments have been identified in the ADAP in order to safeguard the most valuable and vulnerable areas of the environment from the detrimental effects of extraction and include areas designated for their nature conservation importance and/or scientific value in the Plan area. The application site, which includes both the existing quarry and lateral extension area, is not located within any such designated area.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (Edition 2)

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement Edition 2 (SPPS 2) sets out strategic policy for a wide range of planning matters.

A Local Development Plan Strategy for the Ards and North Down Borough Council Area has not yet been adopted.

The relevant policy provisions within Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) below are therefore retained, alongside the minerals planning policies contained within A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (APSRNI), and remain applicable to the proposed development, and will be taken into account within the assessment of this application:

PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside;

PPS 2: Natural Heritage;

PPS 3: Access, Movement and Parking;

PPS 6: Planning Archaeology and the Built Heritage;

PPS 15: Planning and Flood Risk therefore retained;

Any conflict between the SPPS 2 and any retained policy must be resolved in favour of the SPPS 2.

In accordance with the SPPS 2, the guiding principle for planning authorities in determining planning applications is that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

The SPPS 2 recognises that minerals, including valuable minerals, are an important natural resource and their responsible exploitation is supported by Government. It states that the minerals industry makes an essential contribution to the economy and to our quality of life, providing primary minerals for construction, such as sand, gravel and crushed rock, and other uses, and is also a valued provider of jobs and employment, particularly in rural areas.

The SPPS 2 acknowledges that while it is important that we respect the limits of our natural resources and ensure a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of our environment, sustainable development does not prevent us from using and capitalising on such resources. An enduring successful economy will effectively use natural resources and contributes towards the protection of the environment.

Paragraph 6.150 states that:

While minerals development delivers significant economic benefits, there are also a number of challenges arising from this form of development which fall to be addressed through the planning system. The effects of specific proposals can have significant adverse impacts on the environment and on the amenity and well-being of people living in proximity to operational sites. This presents a challenge because minerals can only be extracted from sites where they occur, and there may be limited opportunities for consideration of alternative sites. A further challenge is related to the restoration of sites upon completion of work associated with the extraction and processing of materials.

Paragraph 6.152 identifies the regional strategic objectives for minerals development to:

- facilitate sustainable minerals development through balancing the need for specific minerals development proposals against the need to safeguard the environment;
- minimise the impacts of minerals development on local communities, landscape quality, built and natural heritage, and the water environment; and
- secure the sustainable and safe restoration, including the appropriate re-use of mineral sites, at the earliest opportunity.

Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside

Policy CTY1 lists a range of developments which in principle are considered to be acceptable in the countryside and contribute to the aims of sustainable development. This includes minerals development in accordance with the minerals policies of A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland.

The policy states ‘other types of development will only be permitted where there are overriding reasons why that development is essential and could not be located in a settlement, or it is otherwise allocated for development in a development plan.’

Policy CTY1 requires all proposals for development in the countryside to be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings and to meet other planning and environmental considerations including those for drainage, access and road safety.

A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland

Consistent with the SPPS 2, A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (APSRNI) recognises the importance of mineral extraction to the economy. APSRNI states that minerals are an important natural resource, and their exploitation makes an essential contribution to the nation’s prosperity and quality of life. The mineral extraction industry provides employment, often in rural areas, and produces a wide range of products for a variety of purposes in construction, agriculture and industry.

APSRNI notes that Northern Ireland's primary minerals are sand and gravel and crushed rock used mainly as aggregate in construction. It states that for the foreseeable future supplies of primary minerals are likely to come from traditional sources and that transport costs will continue to require workings to be in relatively close proximity to markets.

It is recognised that minerals can only be extracted where they are found. Furthermore, it states that whilst they are essential, their working can have a significant effect on the landscape and on people's living conditions.

APSRNI further states that while there will be a general presumption in favour of minerals development, in considering a particular application, account will be taken of:

- the value of the mineral to the economy,
- the environmental implications of the proposal, and
- the degree to which adverse effects can be mitigated in relation to the character of the local area.

APSRNI contains the following planning policies for mineral development.

Policy MIN 1: Environmental Protection - To assess the need for the mineral resource against the need to protect and conserve the environment

This policy recognises that the mineral industry should seek to ensure the physical preservation of important nature conservation, historic buildings and ancient monuments along with their settings.

The policy amplification states that the decision maker will balance the case for a particular mineral working proposal against the need to protect and conserve the environment, taking account of all relevant environmental, economic and other considerations. In all areas, decisions on mineral applications will be made with regard to the preservation of good quality agricultural land, tree and vegetation cover, wildlife habitats, natural features of interest in the landscape and sites of archaeological and historic interest.

The policy states that '*extensions to existing mineral workings which minimise environmental disturbance in the countryside will normally be preferred to new workings on green field sites.*'

Policy MIN 2: Visual Implications - To have regard to the visual implications of minerals extraction.

Policy MIN 3: Areas of Constraint - To identify Areas of Constraint on Mineral Developments.

Policy MIN 4: Valuable Minerals - Applications to exploit minerals, limited in occurrence and with some uncommon or valuable property, will be considered on their own merits.

Policy MIN 5: Mineral Reserves - Surface development which would prejudice future exploitation of valuable mineral reserves will not be permitted.

Policy MIN 6: Safety and Amenity - To have particular regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants of developments in close proximity to mineral workings.

Policy MIN 7: Traffic - To take account of the safety and convenience of road users and the amenity of persons living on roads close to the site of proposed operations.

Policy MIN 8: Restoration - To require mineral workings to be restored at the earliest opportunity.

Characteristics of the Mineral Resource

Section 2.5.2 of the 2023 ES Addendum outlines the specific characteristics of the mineral resource produced at Ballystockart Quarry and its role in the high specification export market. It states that *'unlike any other quarry in Northern Ireland, all the materials from the site that are sold to export markets are sold as a +68PSV product. Collectively known as a "high specification aggregate" (HSA).'*

This product is associated with superior skid resistance and is used for the construction of durable, skid resistant road surfaces.

The 2023 ES Addendum highlights the scarcity of this particular resource citing the Capita Symonds report 'The Sustainable Use of High Specification Aggregates for Skid-Resistant Road Surfacing in England' (November 2004). The report identified Ballystockart Quarry as the only site in Northern Ireland producing +68PSV HSA and one of just a dozen sites producing this resource in the UK. The ES notes that a mineral resource with these unique properties, in a location that lends itself to shipping, is a rare commodity.

The 2023 ES Addendum also explains that the skid resistance properties of this HSA are officially recognised by County Councils across England. For example, Derbyshire County Council's technical specification (updated 26 November 2018) lists Ballystockart Quarry as an approved source of +68PSV aggregate for asphalt surfacing materials.

The 2023 ES Addendum includes a table from a research report prepared by BDS Marketing in 2020 listing quarries in Great Britain producing minerals with a PSV of 65 or higher. The table identifies only nine quarries producing +68PSV aggregate.

Alternatives

Schedule 4 of the EIA Regs requires that an Environmental Statement (ES) includes a description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the Applicant, which are

relevant to the proposed development and its specification characteristics, and an indication for the main reasons for selecting the chosen option including a comparison of the environmental effects.

Chapter 2 of the 2023 ES Addendum advises that, due to the specific characteristics of the mineral resource at Ballystockart Quarry and the limited number of alternative suppliers capable of meeting the same high-specification requirements, the Applicant's consideration of alternatives has focused primarily on design alternatives.

The 2023 ES Addendum sets out the Applicant's main reasons for the proposal, including the confirmed availability of the target mineral (as demonstrated by a geological site investigation), mineral volume, the site's proximity to Belfast Port and the presence of an existing underground tunnel which eliminates the need for direct access between the northern quarry and the public highway.

With regard to alternative design options, the 2023 ES Addendum notes that the presence of housing and a High Pressure Watermain (bisecting the company's landholding south of the Ballystockart Road) represents a significant constraint to any lateral extension of the southern quarry void. The 2023 ES Addendum further explains that the original design of the northern quarry extension was refined to incorporate a 100-metre blast exclusion zone from occupied third party properties and to include enhanced landscape mitigation measures.

Need and Economic Importance

Section 3.7.1 of the 2023 ES Addendum explains that existing permitted reserves are depleted within the currently active northern quarry and that additional resources are required to secure the long-term future of this quarry.

The importance of the quarry to the local and regional economy is referred to in the 2023 ES Addendum. Additional information was provided, following a request by the Council's Planning Service, more recently in 2025.

The 2023 ES Addendum reports that the quarry's annual turnover is £7.5M, generated from drystone, washed materials, and ready-mixed concrete sales. Updated figures detailing the company's gross revenue and economic contribution for the past two accounting years were provided to the Council in confidence in August 2025 along with year-to-date figures and projections for the full 2025 financial year.

The Applicant's Agent confirmed that these figures were extracted from the company's accounting software and represent the total cost to the customer. This includes the value of the stone, road haulage, Belfast Port duties, stevedoring charges, shipping costs, VAT and aggregate tax collected. The information indicates that the economic revenue of Ballystockart Quarry has risen in recent years.

The following breakdown of annual primary face extraction by product type and market destination has also been provided.

Description	2023 Tonnes	Sales %	2024 Tonnes	Sales %	2025 YTD Tonnes	Sales %
Ballystockart Primary Face Extraction	321931		343662		151030	
Ballystockart Quarry total stone sales	230748		234036		100881	
Single Size Aggregates sales for Export	72080	31%	86647	37%	43550	43%
Sales to Local Market (comprising)	158668	69%	147389	63%	57331	57%
Single Size Aggregates.	25177	11%	36487	16%		
Washed Dust	15389	7%	19475	8%		
Crusher Runs and Bulk fills	118102	51%	91427	39%		

Annual primary face extraction by product type and market destination (August 2025)

The above table illustrates that approximately 69% of all sales from Ballystockart Quarry in 2023, and 63% in 2024, were made to the local market. However, of the single sized aggregate produced, the majority (approximately 70-75%), are sold to the export market.

The 2025 financial submission notes that there are 27 full time equivalent jobs sustained by Ballystockart Quarry operations. This includes 13 full time equivalent employees and 14 dedicated hauliers. The 2025 submission states that the total annual employment costs amount to £1,264,284.

Description	Number
Number of Whitemountain Full time Equivalent Employees connected to Ballystockart	13
Dedicated Concrete Truck Drivers (Owner Drivers)	3
Dedicated Dry Stone Truck Drivers (Owner Drivers & External Hauliers)	7
Dedicated Maintenance personnel for Fixed & Mobile Plant	2
Cement Delivery Driver (Goods inwards to Concrete Plant)	1
Sand Delivery Driver (Goods inwards to Concrete Plant)	1
Total number of full time equivalent jobs sustained by Ballystockart Operations	27

Full time equivalent jobs (August 2025)

Full time Equivalent Employees connected to Ballystockart (13)	£760,284
Dedicated Haulier employment costs (14)	£504,000
Total	£1,264,284

Employment costs (August 2025)

The economic impacts of the proposal, or a refusal to grant planning permission for it, are material considerations that must be weighed in the planning balance. Planning policy recognises that the minerals industry makes an essential contribution to the

economy through provision of materials for construction and as a valuable provider of employment.

It is axiomatic that minerals can only be extracted from where they are found, a feature recognised by planning policy. It has been demonstrated that Ballystockart Quarry is an established supplier of high specification +68PSV aggregate which serves established export markets. The ES states that there is no readily available alternative supplier of this specification of aggregate within Northern Ireland and that only a limited number of suppliers of this resource exist within Great Britain.

The cessation of extraction at Ballystockart Quarry would inevitably result in a significant number of direct and indirect job losses, together with a loss of income to the economy and the public purse.

The proposed development would secure the long-term future of operations at Ballystockart Quarry. As such it would maintain employment at the quarry and the continuity of mineral extraction and supply to serve established markets resulting in economic benefits at both a local and wider strategic level.

It is recognised that a quarry also has the potential to support local supply chains, creating additional economic benefits through demand for contractors, suppliers, and related services.

I consider that the proposal would make a meaningful contribution to the economy and the need for the proposal has been demonstrated. These factors weigh in favour of the proposal but must be carefully balanced against the potential environmental impacts which will be considered in detail in the subsequent sections of this report.

Impacts on the Natural Heritage

Designated Sites

Planning Policy Statement 2 (PPS2): Natural Heritage sets out planning policies for the conservation, protection and enhancement of our natural heritage.

Policy NH 1: European and Ramsar Sites states that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (such as a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or a listed or proposed Ramsar Site.

The policy states that where a development proposal is likely to have a significant effect (either alone or in combination), or reasonable scientific doubt remains, the planning authority shall make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. Appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions may be imposed.

In terms of national designations, Policy NH 3 states planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that is not likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity, including the value of the site to the habitat network, or special interest of Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI).

The application site is hydrologically linked to the following national, European, and international designated sites (approximately 6.8km downstream):

- Strangford Lough SPA and Strangford Lough SAC, designated under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended);
- Strangford Lough Ramsar under the 1971 Ramsar Convention;
- Strangford Lough Part 1 ASSI, Strangford Lough Part 3 ASSI, designated under the Environment Order (Northern Ireland) 2002.

Chapter 8 of the 2023 ES states that the existing quarry is connected to designated sites via a drainage ditch along Ballystockart Road under a Discharge Consent issued by NIEA Water Management Unit. A copy of the Discharge Consent is included in the ES appendices.

Discharge Consents are regulated under the Water (NI) Order 1999 by DAERA's NIEA, which is responsible for compliance and enforcement. The Discharge Consent outlines various conditions attached to the consent. In particular, the consent requires that the effluent must not contain suspended solids in excess of 50mg/l; and that there shall be no visible oil or grease. It includes a plan showing a sampling point at the northwest corner of the historical quarry void to ensure compliance with conditions can be effectively monitored.

The 2023 ES Addendum further states that the creation of screening bunds along the western, southern and south-eastern boundary of the site will prevent any run-off into drainage ditches as a result of the proposed operations.

NIEA Natural Environment Division (NED) has been consulted on the application and raised no objections in terms of impact on designated sites, subject to conditions to secure pollution prevention mitigation measures.

The Shared Environmental Service (SES) has carried out a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) on behalf of the Council, which concludes that the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

In reaching this conclusion, SES assessed the manner in which the project is to be carried out including any mitigation. In line with the findings of the HRA, it is recommended that the following mitigation is secured by appropriately worded conditions attached to any approval to prevent adverse effects on features of the Strangford Lough SAC/SPA/Ramsar, which is hydrologically connected to the site.

- A suitable buffer between the locations of all refuelling, storage of oil/fuel, concrete mixing and washing areas, storage of machinery/material/spoil, etc., and the redline boundary of the site;

- A suitable silt fence along the edge of the proposed screening bunds;
- Review of all existing NIEA WMU consents prior to the commencement of development

It is recommended, if the development is approved, that the Council, in its role as the competent authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) and in accordance with its duty under Regulation 43, adopts the HRA report and conclusions prepared by Shared Environmental Service.

I am also satisfied that the proposal will result in no harm to the ecological features of the Ballystockart River Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) subject to the implementation of mitigation to protect the water environment.

Other Natural Heritage Interests

Chapter 8 of the 2023 ES Addendum, was prepared by Woodrow Ecologists and provides an evaluation of the ecological impacts of the proposed development.

Appendix 8 of the 2023 ES Addendum includes an Ecological Impact Assessment for the proposed development. It confirms that ecological surveys were originally carried out in 2021, including an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, bird surveys and bat roost surveys.

Appendix 2 provides an Addendum to the Ecological Impact Assessment. It states that further field surveys were undertaken at the site on 10 November 2022 (Badger Survey) and 23 March and 17 May 2023 (wider Phase 1 surveys, including habitats mammals and birds). The ecologist's report confirms that these more recent field surveys supplemented the original surveys and also expanded the area of interest to include all areas potentially affected by the diversionary routes for the NIE 110kV lines.

The 2023 ES Addendum states that sensitive ecological receptors at this site include nesting birds, foraging bat species and foraging badgers.

In accordance with Policy NH 2 of PPS 2, planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that is not likely to harm a protected species.

The 2023 ES Addendum confirms that no bat roosts were identified, though some trees within the site comprised of potentially suitable roost features.

The ecological information confirms evidence of foraging badgers within the application site. The 2023 ES Addendum proposes a range of mitigation measures for badgers, including the closure of an outlier sett.

According to the 2023 ES Addendum, any short-term negative impacts on foraging badgers and bats, due to the loss of suitable habitat within the extension area, will be offset by compensatory native species woodland planting.

NIEA: Natural Environment Division (NED) has been consulted and has confirmed that it is content that the proposed closure of the outlier sett is unlikely to cause a significant impact to the local badger population. NED advises that any approval of the application should be subject to the submission, agreement and implementation of a Protected/Priority Species Management Plan.

Having considered the environmental information, including the comments from NED, I am satisfied that the proposed development is not likely to harm a species protected by law and therefore complies with Policy NH 2.

Policy NH 5 of PPS 2 states that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal which is not likely to result in the unacceptable adverse impact, or damage to known habitats, species or features of natural heritage importance, including priority habitats/species. It states that a development proposal likely to result in an unacceptable impact may only be permitted where the benefits of the proposed development outweigh the value of the habitat, species or feature. In such cases, appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures will be required.

The consultation response from NED (dated 7 November 2025) raised no objection in relation to the potential impact on priority bird species subject to conditions to secure mitigation for tree sparrow nesting sites.

Given the nature of the development, there will inevitably be a loss of existing habitat, including trees, hedgerows and vegetation.

The 2023 ES Addendum describes the overall impact as positive in the longer term as the entire application site will be restored to a mix of species-rich grassland, woodland with scrub/gorse and two large lakes. These habitats will provide foraging and nesting habitat for birds, bats, mammals and aquatic species.

In accordance with planning policy requirements, the loss of habitat must be weighed against the benefits of the proposed development.

It is evident that minerals development brings inherent economic benefits. The SPPS 2 notes, *'Minerals, including valuable minerals, are an important natural resource and their responsible exploitation is supported by Government. The minerals industry makes an essential contribution to the economy and to our quality of life, providing primary minerals for construction, such as sand, gravel and crushed rock, and other uses, and is also a valued provider of jobs and employment, particularly in rural areas.'*

As highlighted earlier in this report, the 2023 ES Addendum has shown that the proposal will make a meaningful contribution to the economy and I have accepted, for the reasons given, that there is a need for the proposed development.

NIEA: NED has raised no objection to the proposed development in relation to the impact on priority species/habitats and other natural heritage interests. Moreover, NED raised no objection in relation to the proposed Phase 1 compensatory planting or the restoration concept, which incorporates native grasslands and woodlands.

NED notes that the proposed planting of a total of 2,535m of hedgerows within the restored site would provide adequate mitigation for the loss of 1,375m of hedges as a result of the proposed development (representing an 84% increase).

NED recommends that approval of the application is conditional on submission of a Final Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan within the six-month period prior to the cessation of operations or exhaustion of permitted reserves.

Having considered the Environmental Information, including the consultation response from NED, I am satisfied that the overall ecological impacts of the proposed development would not be significant. I am also satisfied that the economic benefits of the proposed development outweigh the loss of existing habitat and that the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy NH 5. It is recommended that any approval of the application be subject to planning conditions to secure the implementation of the proposed compensatory Phase 1 planting and restoration of the site post-extraction.

Historic Environment

APSRNI: Policy MIN 1 requires the need for the mineral resource to be weighed against the need to protect and conserve key features of the environment including historic buildings and ancient monuments along with their settings.

Archaeological Impact

Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6) Policy BH 2 states that development proposals which would adversely affect archaeological sites or monuments of local importance or their setting will only be permitted where the importance of the proposed development or other material considerations is considered to outweigh the value of the remains in question.

Policy BH 4 allows for the granting of planning permission for development which will affect sites known to contain archaeological remains subject to conditions to ensure that appropriate measures are taken for the identification and mitigation of the archaeological impacts of the development.

The 2023 ES Addendum includes an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) prepared by a professional archaeologist. An archaeological rath monument has been recorded in the site within the Sites and Monuments Record under reference DOW 010:017.

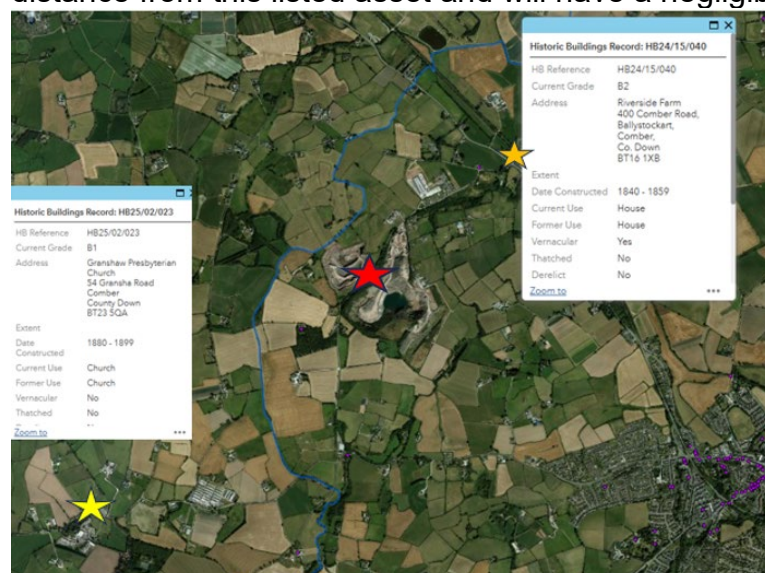
The AIA notes that this site has been greatly disturbed by the construction of the existing modern farm complex which surrounds it, leaving little upstanding or below surface remains. The AIA concludes that the recorded archaeological site is of low significance because it has been greatly altered, is not a distinctive feature in the landscape and has no known local heritage value or interest.




Historic Environment Division: Historic Monuments Unit (HMU) has reviewed the AIA and confirmed it agrees with its conclusion that the economic benefits of the proposal outweigh the significance of the surviving archaeological remains and, as such, provides no objection to the proposal subject to conditions to secure the agreement and implementation of a developer funded programme of archaeological works as per the requirements of Policy BH 4 of PPS 6.

Having considered the Environmental Information including consultation response from HMU, it is considered that the proposed development complies with Policies BH 2 and BH 4 of PPS6.

Impact on Listed Buildings

Historic Environment Division: Historic Buildings Unit (HBU) considered the impact of the proposed development on the closest listed buildings protected under Section 80 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (HB24/15/040 Riverside Farm) and (HB25/02/023 Granshaw Presbyterian Church) and has advised that that the buildings are sufficiently screened by topography to prevent any impact to their setting. HBU states that while the quarry is within the extensive setting of HB24/11/031 Scrabo Tower, it is a sufficient distance from this listed asset and will have a negligible impact upon its setting.



-  Riverside Farm B2 Listed Building
-  Granshaw Presbyterian Church B1 Listed Building
-  Ballystockart Quarry

Landscape and Visual Impacts

The site occupies the eastern side of Castlereagh Hills and is situated in a drumlin landscape interspersed with hedgerows, farm buildings and single dwellings.

It falls within Landscape Character Area 95 (LCA 95) Ballygowan Drumlins in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (NILCA). Key characteristics of this LCA include a smooth, rolling drumlin landform.

The site is not located within any designated landscape area. However, Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately

2.5km to the northeast of the site and Ballystockart River Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) is approximately 350m northeast of the boundary of the existing northern quarry and approximately 625 from the proposed lateral extension lands (at its closest points).

Policy MIN 2 of APSRNI recognises that visual intrusion is often the most significant impact associated with minerals workings. It requires that careful consideration is given to the visual implications of minerals extraction. The policy further states that, where permission is granted, landscape quality should be protected by attaching conditions to avoid or mitigate any adverse visual and landscape impacts.

Chapter 9 of the 2023 ES Addendum contains a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared by Mullin Design Associates, Chartered Landscape Architects.

A Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence (ZTVI) has been modelled to illustrate where the proposed development could theoretically be visible within the surrounding landscape. The ZTVI is calculated using topographical data only, providing worst case scenario of potential visibility as it does not account for screening by vegetation, built structures or localised topographical variation.

The ZTVI suggests that while there is potential visibility in all directions, the majority of visibility would occur towards the north and northeast (particularly on higher lands). It indicates possible visibility from Scrabo Hill within the Strangford and Lecale AONB and that potential visibility across the wider AONB is negligible.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) advises that detailed field work informed the selection of key viewpoints in the wider area and that surveys were carried out during the autumn and winter seasons (2021) when foliage is at its lightest to consider the 'worst-case scenario'.

Following a review of the LVIA and on-site inspections of the quarry and surrounding area, I am satisfied that key critical viewpoints have been appropriately identified and include both short-range and longer-range views of the site.

The landscape and visual impacts of the development have been evaluated across the establishment, extraction and restoration phases.

The LVIA proposes the following mitigation measures:

- Retention of the existing site boundary planting.
- Introduction of hedgerows to the west and south.
- Screening bunds and woodland planting to the west and south.
- An anticlockwise extraction sequence to allow Phase 1 woodland planting time to mature.

Ballyrussell Road is a narrow rural road which provides access to a small number of residential properties. The road is approximately 437m east of the site, at its closest point. Views of the proposed site can be achieved from sections of Ballyrussell Road to the west and southwest of the proposed lateral extension area (residential views and local road users' views).

The LVIA includes a series of photomontages of the proposed site from viewpoints along Ballyrussell Road (Viewpoints 2-4). The photomontages show landscape mitigation with the proposed woodland planting at various stages of maturity. I consider that the proposed Phase 1 screening will offer significant visual mitigation for key visual receptors (including residential) along Ballyrussell Road during extraction operations and following final restoration of the site.

From the northern section of Ballyrussell Road, views will generally be restricted through a combination of dense intervening woodland planting, hedgerows and topography.

Viewpoint 5 is located on an elevated section of Hillhead Road to the north of the site. Whilst a view of the existing operational quarry can be achieved from this location, mature vegetation heavily filters views of the proposed extension lands.

Along Glen Road, the existing operations are largely screened by the intervening undulating landscape. While a partial view of the existing southern quarry can be achieved from an elevated section of Glen Road, to the southeast of the site (viewpoint 6), the ES notes that any views of the proposed development would be restricted by existing and proposed landscaping.

A transient long-range view of existing workings can be achieved from an elevated location along Ballyrainey Road (Viewpoint 7 - approximately 2.5km from the proposed lateral extension lands). From this location, it is considered that the proposed development would be largely obscured by existing mature vegetation.

Viewpoint 8 comprises a distant view from Scrabo Hill and Tower (approximately 5km). Whilst panoramic views across the landscape can be achieved from this elevated landmark, the quarry would form a small element of the broader landscape. Moreover, the ES notes that existing vegetation would help restrict views of the proposed development.

Viewpoint 9 comprises a close-range view from Ballystockart Road. Existing mature trees offer significant screening of the existing quarry along most of Ballystockart Road. A brief view of the northern quarry can be achieved adjacent to Nos. 61 and 63 Ballystockart Road; however, a proposed landscaped bund in the south-west corner of the lateral extension lands will help restrict views of the existing and proposed development from this viewpoint.

The LVIA concludes that construction of the proposed earth bunds will result in a short-term significant visual impact from viewpoints along Ballyrussell Road. However, once the screening berms and planting have been established, these features will offer significant visual mitigation during the operational phase of the proposed development.

Ballystockart River Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) is physically and visually separated from the application site by undulating landscape and mature trees, resulting in minimal intervisibility. Therefore, in accordance with Policy CON 2 of ADAP, the proposed development is not liable to affect the environmental quality, integrity or character of this LLPA.

The site is not located within the Strangford and Lecale AONB. Given the separation distance (approximately 2.5 km at its closest point) and intervening topographical screening, it is considered that the development will not harm the special character of the AONB.

I have considered the cumulative visual and landscape impact of the proposed extension with the existing operational quarry. Overall, following a detailed review of the submitted environmental information and having undertaken a number of site inspections to assess potential visual effects from key receptors within the wider area, it is my professional planning judgement that views of the extended quarry would, in general, remain well contained within the surrounding landscape setting.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the screening bunds will inevitably alter the natural landscape, it is considered that the proposed woodland planting, once established, will successfully integrate this new landform.

I consider that landscape mitigation will assist integration and will prevent any unacceptable landscape and visual impacts during extraction and post restoration. It is my professional planning opinion that the proposed development complies with the requirements of the SPPS 2 and Policy MIN 2 of APSRNI.

I am satisfied the site is visually distinct from other similar developments within the wider area and the proposal will not give rise to any adverse cumulative landscape and visual impacts.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Policy MIN 6 of APSRNI relates to safety and amenity. The policy states that the potential for conflict will be reduced by requiring a degree of separation to be kept between mineral workings and other developments, particularly where mineral operations involve blasting. It advises that permission will not normally be granted for mineral workings and other developments to be in close proximity where potential sources of nuisance are judged to be incompatible with acceptable standards of amenity.

Where permission is granted for a mineral working in close proximity to other developments, conditions designed to mitigate disturbance will, where appropriate, be attached to the permission.

Paragraph 4.11 of the SPPS 2 outlines the wide range of environment and amenity considerations, including noise and air quality, which should be taken into account by planning authorities when managing development.

Additional strategic guidance on noise and air quality as material considerations in the planning process is set out at Annex A of the SPPS 2.

The Planning Practice Guidance 'Assessing Environmental Impacts from Mineral Extraction – Noise Emissions' (March 2014) states that planning authorities should aim to establish a noise limit, through a planning condition, at noise sensitive

properties that does not exceed the background noise level (LA90, 1hr) by more than 10dB (A) during normal working hours (0700-1900). Where it will be difficult not to exceed the background noise level by more than 10dB(A), without imposing unreasonable burdens on the mineral operator, the limit set should be as near that level as practicable. In any event, the total noise limit from the operations should not exceed 55dB LAeq, 1hr (free field). The guidance also states that a temporary higher noise level of up to 70dB LAeq 1hr (free field) for up to eight weeks in a year should be considered to facilitate essential site preparation and restoration work where it is clear that this will bring long-term environmental benefits to the site or its environs.

The closest third-party dwellings are located along Ballystockart Road to the south of the proposed lateral extension lands. The dwelling known as No.63 Ballystockart Road is located approximately 29 metres from the redline boundary of the application site. No.65 Ballystockart Road is located approximately 115 metres from the site boundary. As shown on the submitted drawings, these dwellings would be separated from the proposed extraction area by a proposed intervening screening bund and woodland planting.

Chapter 7 of the 2023 ES Addendum confirms that a detailed noise impact assessment has been undertaken by AONA Environmental Consultancy Ltd in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance: Assessing Environmental Impacts from Mineral Extraction - Noise Emissions (March 2014) ("the 2014 Guidance").

Representative background noise levels at the nearest residential properties to the proposed extraction area have been derived from weeklong baseline noise surveys at the following two noise monitoring locations:

NML1 - Southwest of the application site in close proximity to the nearest noise sensitive locations along Ballystockart Road. The ES identifies this as representative of the existing baseline where the background noise level is influenced by existing and long-established quarrying activity.

NML2 - Northwest of the application site in proximity to properties along Ballyrussell Road. The ES states that the existing quarrying activities were noted to be insignificant and inaudible at this location. For this reason, the findings were considered to represent the future baseline scenario.

The 2023 ES confirms that predicted noise levels are based on actual measured noise levels adjacent to plant and machinery used at the Ballystockart Quarry site.

It was concluded that when the measured baseline noise levels and the predicted noise levels from the excavation and transport of mineral to the existing processing area are compared, there is no exceedance of the relevant noise limits outlined in the 2014 Guidance.

The Noise Assessment contained in the 2023 ES has been considered by both the Ards and North Down (AND) Borough Council Environmental Health Department and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) Environmental Health Department; neither has raised an objection.

Chapter 10 of the 2023 ES was prepared by AONA Environmental Consulting Ltd and includes a Dust Impact Assessment which considers the potential dust impact of the proposed development at sensitive receptors adjacent to the quarry. It acknowledges the potential health effects and disamenity dust nuisance associated with dust emissions. It states the significance of impacts due to dust emissions from the operations is dependent upon the magnitude of the emissions, the prevailing meteorological conditions for that location, and the proximity of sensitive receptors.

NIEA's Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate (IPRI) has responsibility for control of pollution and pollution risk from a range of prescribed industrial activities under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (NI) 2013 ('the 2013 Regulations').

The existing processing plant operations on the site are controlled by Part B IPPC Authorisation which specifies dust control measures such as water sprays to control dust emissions, enclosures for crushers and transfer points, regular inspections and good maintenance of the entrances to the site.

A baseline dust survey was carried out between 4th August and 2nd September 2021 at various locations close to the boundary of the site. Meteorological data was recorded on site has been analysed and factored into the assessment.

The 2023 ES states that dust deposition monitoring results of the existing quarrying activities indicate very low dust deposition levels along the existing site boundary. The 2023 ES therefore predicts that the future quarrying at existing extraction rates using existing dust mitigation practices will continue to comply with the relevant dust deposition limits.

Best practice dust mitigation measures are listed in Section 10.6 of the 2023 ES Addendum. Both AND Borough Council's Environmental Health Department and LCCC's Environmental Health Department reviewed the 2023 ES Addendum and have provided no objection to the proposed development, subject to a planning condition to ensure subsequent approval and implementation of a Dust Mitigation Plan incorporating all the mitigation measures outlined in the Addendum.

IPRI has confirmed that the existing Ballystockart Quarry is subject to regulation by the Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (NI) 2013 (PPC Permit Number P0113/08B). This is a separate statutory regime outside the remit of Planning.

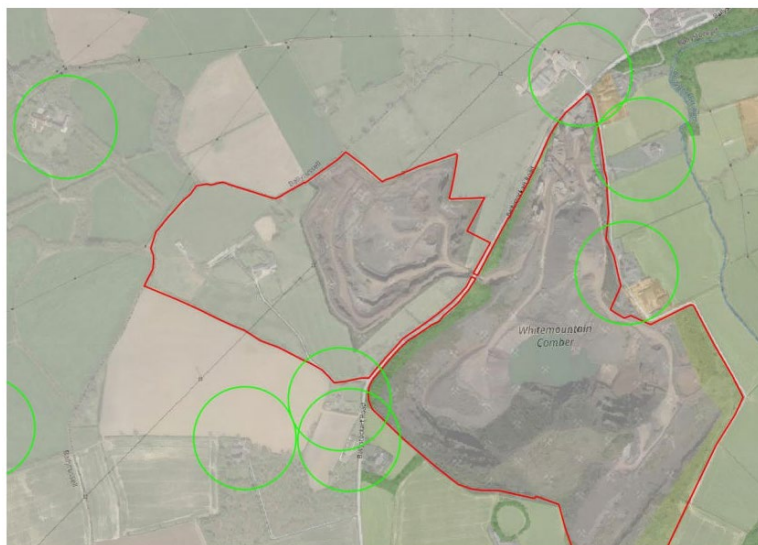
IPRI acknowledged that extending the existing quarry could lead to periodic loss of amenity for nearby residents due to noise and dust. It advised that approval for a variation to the existing PPC permit must be obtained before any operations take place outside the current permitted boundary.

The consultation response from the Public Health Agency advised that continuous monitoring should be maintained throughout the operational phase to ensure dust exposure, including particulate matter, to residents is effectively controlled. It further advised that licencing and limits will be designed to minimise and mitigate and protect against nuisance and also protect health. The Public Health Agency confirmed that

licensing will ensure that environmental emissions will be controlled with the appropriate mitigation measures and Best Available Techniques (BAT). The Public Health Agency also confirmed it would make a more detailed health assessment as part of any application to vary the PPC permit.

The Vibrations and Blasting Guidelines (NI) (2017) include a set framework of planning conditions to ensure a high standard of amenity for those living in the vicinity of a quarry. The guidelines recommend a minimum separation distance of 100m between blasting operations and occupied third party dwellings, a ground vibration limit of 10mm/s and an over air pressure limit of 128db.

See Figure 2.5 from 2023 ES Addendum illustrating 100m blast radius to occupied residential properties.



100m blast radius to occupied residential properties (represented by green circles). Section 2.4 of the 2023 ES.

In accordance with the advice of expert consultees including the Health and Safety Executive for NI, Ards and North Down Borough Council's Environmental Health Department and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's Environmental Health Department, it is recommended that any approval of the planning application should be subject to mitigation being secured in relation to blasting and to ensure that appropriate monitoring takes place.

It is considered that these controls will safeguard the amenity of neighbouring residents and mitigate the risk of any damage to neighbouring properties.

Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development

Policy MIN 3 of APSRNI requires areas of constraint on minerals development to be identified. Such areas are often formally designated or possess intrinsic landscape, amenity, scientific or heritage value and should be protected from minerals development.

Within an area of constraint on minerals development there is a presumption against the granting of planning permission for extraction and/or processing of minerals. As

explained earlier in the report, the proposed site is not located within any designated area of constraint on minerals development and as such this policy test is not applied.

Valuable Minerals

Policy MIN 4 allows some latitude for exploring minerals of limited occurrence with some uncommon or valuable property. Oil, gas and lignite are cited as examples of valuable minerals. The policy states that applications to exploit such minerals will be considered on their own merits and there will be no presumption against their exploitation in any area.

Aggregate is not normally considered to be a valuable mineral and no exception to prevailing regional policy has been applied on the basis of Policy MIN 4.

Hydrological and Hydrogeological Impacts

The 2023 ES Addendum includes a Hydrological and Hydrogeological Assessment undertaken by BCL Consultant Hydrologists Ltd. This assessment evaluated the potential impacts of the proposed development on the water environment and outlined mitigation measures to manage groundwater and surface water effectively.

MCL Consulting was commissioned, on behalf of objectors, to undertake a technical review of the Hydrogeological and Hydrological Assessment (HHA) included in the original 2022 ES. In response, BCL provided an updated assessment within the 2023 ES Addendum (2023 BCL Report) to address the matters raised by MCL Consulting.

Borehole

MCL Consulting's review considered the potential effects of the proposed extension on a secondary water source borehole located at No.20 Ballyrussell Road. This borehole primarily supplies water for semi-automated irrigation of the property's large garden.

MCL Consulting stated that the proposed development would reduce the ground water catchment area of the borehole, potentially lowering water levels and yield. It recommended assessing the current status of nearby boreholes, including calculations of drawdown and radius of influence, taking account of the cumulative effects of both existing and proposed operations.

The 2023 ES Addendum (consistent with the original ES) recommends monthly monitoring of groundwater at the borehole, subject to the owner's consent. On behalf of the Applicant, BCL Consulting formally requested access for this purpose to obtain *regular* monitoring and/or measurement samples.

Appendix 6 of the 2023 Hydrogeological and Hydrological Assessment included in the Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy, contains an email exchange between the Applicant's consultant hydrogeologist and Daniel Forde (MBA Planning), acting on behalf of the occupant of No.20 Ballyrussell Road. In this correspondence, Mr Forde confirmed that his client '*has agreed to provide access just the once to monitor the current borehole*'. In the correspondence, the Applicant's consultant hydrogeologist

advised that a single visit would be insufficient, as *regular* monitoring is necessary to capture seasonal variations in water levels and to assess the potential impacts of the development.

If the garden watering borehole is not made available for regular monitoring, the 2023 ES Addendum proposes monitoring via an existing borehole between the quarry and No.20 Ballyrussell Road, which could act as a 'guard well'. It states that data from this monitoring borehole indicates no current drawdown at the location.

With the proposed lateral extension of quarry, the 2023 ES Addendum estimates that the cumulative radius of influence from dewatering will not exceed 625 metres from the working face of the quarry. Given the location of the borehole within the outer limit of this area, the Addendum states that its water level is at risk of being lowered. The worst-case cumulative drawdown of the borehole has been calculated to be approximately 4m. The operational depth of the borehole has been estimated at 40m. On this basis, the Addendum concludes that the yield should remain sufficient for watering the garden.

Should monitoring detect a yield shortfall, the ES Addendum 2023 outlines various contingency measures. In the eventuality that a shortfall in yield is confirmed post-monitoring, it is proposed to pump at a lower rate but for longer hours; and provide a larger storage tank. If this measure does not address the shortfall in yield, the Addendum confirms that an alternative means of supply will be provided by the Quarry Operator. It is also noted that the property is on mains water supply.

Ground Water Flow Patterns

MCL Consulting raised concerns over possible changes to ground water flow patterns during operational and post-operational phases, including potential spring reactivation (spring reactivation refers to the process by which a spring becomes active again after a period of inactivity).

In response, the 2023 ES Addendum incorporates an indicative ground water level contour plan. It concludes that the risk of spring reactivation remains unchanged from current conditions if quarry pumps are switched off and references the consideration of this matter in the ES that accompanied the previously approved 2007 quarry extension application.

Water Management

The 2023 ES Addendum confirms that existing water management practices will continue during the proposed extension. This is summarised below.

In the northern quarry void, surface and ground water will be directed to existing dewatering sumps for attenuation and settlement. A pump will control levels, with water piped into the water management system at the southern quarry void. The location and dimensions of the sump will depend on the configuration of specific quarry workings at any given time.

The historic void is dewatered using a pair of submersible pumps which decant water into a storage tank. The water is then used on-site for mineral washing, the concrete batching plant, dust suppression and the wheel-wash.

The 2023 ES Addendum states that water pumped into the storage tank is metered and surplus water is discharged into a drainage ditch along Ballystockart Road under an existing NIEA Discharge Consent.

The Addendum notes that due to the increase in the catchment area as a result of the proposed extension, the sump size will be reviewed to ensure capacity for rainfall runoff during extreme storm events and that the lowest sinking in the void would accommodate any such events.

Dewatering Abstraction and Discharge Rates

MCL Consulting also questioned the dewatering abstraction rate set out within the original ES (2022 BCL Report).

According to the 2023 ES Addendum, flow meters on pumps directing water into the storage tank measure on-site usage at approximately 235 m³/day. The Addendum confirms that there would be no change to on-site water consumption.

Furthermore, the 2023 ES Addendum provides calculations for existing and projected pumped/discharged water volumes as a result of the proposed development.

Risk of Pollution

MCL Consulting stated that the development could pollute watercourses which are hydrologically linked to the internationally designated sites associated with Strangford Lough, arguing that details on re-fuelling, bunded tanks and vehicle maintenance have not been provided.

In response, the 2023 ES Addendum cites a Fluid Handling Protocol (Appendix 9, ES) as mitigation, covering fuel storage, refuelling, and maintenance practices to safeguard groundwater quality. These mitigation measures can be secured through a planning condition requiring approval and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

Consideration of the Issues by Consultees

The Planning Service sought feedback from NIEA and the Shared Environmental Service (SES). The responses are summarised below.

NIEA Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) acknowledged the borehole at No.20 Ballyrussell Road and noted that mains supply is also available at the property. DWI supports proposed monthly monitoring, subject to owner agreement.

NIEA Water Management Unit (WMU) reviewed the impacts on surface water and is content with the proposal subject to recommended planning conditions, and the developer adhering to Standing Advice and obtaining any relevant statutory permissions.

WMU referred to the NIEA Discharge Consent for the existing operational quarry (Consent No.12219/83) but advised that this consent may need to be reviewed if any aspect of it is altered as a result of this development i.e. the movement of soakaway / settlement system / discharge point to accommodate the new development or in the event there is an increase in the volume discharged.

WMU further stated that failure to obtain NIEA discharge consent under the terms of the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 for any discharge, including site drainage liable to contamination arising from a stockpile or any of the operations at the site, will be liable to enforcement action under the Water Order.

In accordance with the Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (as amended) it is a mandatory requirement that upon the abstraction and/or diversion and/or impoundment of water from the natural river channel/lake, coastal or groundwater sources, an abstraction/impoundment licence should be obtained unless the operations specified are Permitted Controlled Activities. In a consultation response dated 15 September 2025, WMU noted that abstraction licence AIL/2007/0150 previously issued for this site has been withdrawn as it was no longer being used.

The consultation response from NIEA Land and Groundwater Team confirmed that sufficient information has been provided to assess the impacts of the proposed development on the groundwater environment. Land and Groundwater Team offered no objection to the application subject to a negative planning condition requiring the approval and implementation of a groundwater monitoring plan. This plan must detail monitoring locations, frequency and parameters (including groundwater level).

NIEA Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate has raised no objection to the application.

The Shared Environmental Service (SES) recommended mitigation conditions to address any potential pollution risk including silt fencing, refuelling buffers and the review/agreement of all existing NIEA WMU consents. These matters can be secured through appropriately worded planning conditions. SES further stated that the issues raised in MCL Consulting Report in relation to groundwater would have a negligible impact on the conservation objectives of Strangford Lough which is hydrologically linked to the application site.

Drainage and Flood Risk

Policy FLD 1 of Planning Policy Statement 15 (PPS 15) operates a presumption against development in the floodplain. DFI Rivers confirmed there are no designated watercourses within this site and that the development does not lie within the 1 in 100 year fluvial or 1 in 200 year coastal flood plain (as per the Flood Maps NI).

An undesignated watercourse lies north of the site. Policy FLD 2 requires the retention of a future maintenance strip. DFI Rivers has reviewed a plan showing the proposed working strip and has confirmed that it has no objection in relation to this matter. Any approval of this application should be conditional on retention of this strip.

MCL Consulting's review suggested the ES lacked a properly constituted Drainage Assessment as per Policy FLD 3, as well as a proper consideration of cumulative impact. It further states that the 2022 ES made no reference to a DFI Rivers Schedule 6 Consent.

The Planning Service requested that DFI Rivers review the comments made by MCL Consulting and the subsequent Drainage Assessment (contained within the Hydrological and Hydrogeological Assessment) prepared by BCL Consultants in 2023. DFI Rivers' consultation response confirmed its review of the information, stating that, while not being responsible for the preparation of the Drainage Assessment, it accepts its logic and has no reason to disagree with its conclusions.

In its consultation response, DFI Rivers did not request submission of a Schedule 6 Consent but has advised the Applicant that this Consent may be required for any discharge of storm water resulting from the proposed development. This consenting regime lies outside the Planning process.

Geological Impacts

Chapter 5 of the 2023 ES Addendum includes a Geological Assessment prepared by a Geotechnical Engineer. It refers to geological bedrock maps published by the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI) which indicate that the site contains Silurian age greywacke deposits overlain by alluvium and glacial till.

The Geological Assessment outlines that site investigations involved the drilling of four boreholes in the lateral extension lands to determine overburden thickness and rock quality. It states that the findings demonstrate the presence of greywacke in the lateral extension lands.

The Geological Assessment states that the volume of material for each phase of the proposed extraction operations was calculated using LSS software. In total, the calculations demonstrate that approximately 4,245,000m³ of mineral with a tonnage of 11,503,000 will be removed and processed at the fixed processing plant to the north of the historic quarry void.

Area	Mineral Volume (m ³)	Mineral Tonnage (T)*	Extractive Waste Volume Fill (m ³)
Removal of Overburden	189,000	359,000	0
Removal of Mineral	192,000	520,000	0
Construction of Western Bund	0	0	3,000
Construction of Southern Bund	0	0	8,000
Construction of South-Eastern Bund	0	0	2,000
Construction of Tip	0	0	294,000

***2.71 t/m³ (Greywacke) / 1.9 t/m³ (Overburden) conversion factor applied**

Figure 8. Phase 1 extraction volume and tonnage. 2023 ES Addendum

Area	Mineral Volume (m ³)	Mineral Tonnage (T)*	Extractive Waste Volume Fill (m ³)
Removal of Overburden	470,000	893,000	0
Removal of Mineral	2,089,000	5,661,000	0
Construction of Tip	0	0	1,133,000

***2.71 t/m³ (Greywacke) / 1.9 t/m³ (Overburden) conversion factor applied**

Figure 9. Phase 2 extraction volume and tonnage. 2023 ES Addendum

Area	Mineral Volume (m ³)	Mineral Tonnage (T)*	Extractive Waste Volume Fill (m ³)
Removal of Mineral	1,964,000	5,323,000	0
Construction of Tip	0	0	654,000

***2.71 t/m³ (Greywacke) / 1.9 t/m³ (Overburden) conversion factor applied**

Figure 10. Phase 3 extraction volume and tonnage. 2023 ES Addendum

The Geological Assessment concludes that: ‘...the scale of the proposed development will result in the site continuing to have a limited impact at local level on the geological environment. Impacts of the proposed quarrying and associated activities will have an insignificant impact on the Ordovician greywacke deposits of Co. Down as a whole, when considered against either the existing baseline or the likely evolution of the same in the context of the future baseline.’

The Department for the Economy’s Geological Survey NI (GSNI) is a statutory consultee for all mineral planning applications. In its consultation response, GSNI confirmed it agrees with the conclusion of the Geological Assessment that the proposed extraction volume would have an insignificant impact on the target lithology.

Quarry Design

Health and safety at quarries is addressed through the Quarries Regulations (NI) 2006 and Quarries (Explosives) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 and is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI). These regulations apply to all quarries and are intended to protect the health and safety of people working at the quarry (both employed and self-employed) and others that may be affected by quarry (e.g. those living, passing or working nearby, or visiting the quarry).

Chapter 5 of the 2023 ES Addendum outlines the design parameters for the proposed development to ensure long term stability. This includes the proposed slope angle for the screening bunds (1v:3h or 18 degrees) and retention of final greywacke faces at 80 degrees (or to a natural discontinuation). In addition, it states that material placed in the old quarry void will form a level platform.

HSENI confirmed that it reviewed the application, including the proposed plans, phasing and final cross sections for the northwestern lateral extension and associated deepening of the existing northern operational area. It has no objection to the proposed development.

HSENI also acknowledged the presence of overhead powerlines and associated equipment within the application site. It referred to options outlined in the ES Addendum, including the potential realignment of the powerline, and confirmed it has no objection in relation to this matter. HSENI referred the Applicant to HSE Guidance Note GS6 'Avoidance of Danger from Overhead Powerlines' which sets out relevant safety measures.

HSENI further advised that the Quarries Regulations (NI) 2006 require the operator to take necessary measures to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the quarry and its plant are designed, constructed, equipped, commissioned, operated and maintained in such a way that persons at work can perform the work assigned to them without endangering their own health and safety or the health and safety of others. HSENI clarified this will include all matters relating to the safe retention, future maintenance and safe access to overhead powerlines and associated infrastructure.

HSENI recommends that any approval of the application be subject to a condition requiring a minimum separation distance of 100 metres between third-party residential dwellings and the location of each blasting charge. It is proposed to secure this within the planning legal agreement (see Section 10).

Waste Management

The application has been accompanied by a Waste Management Plan for Inert Waste in accordance with The Planning (Management of Waste from Extractive Industries) Regulations (NI) 2015.

The Waste Management Plan confirms that the site will produce inert waste and that waste, comprising waste derived from the extraction and processing of gritstone, not capable of being recycled using the onsite washing plant, will be fully utilised within the proposed site development, landform screening and predominantly within the restoration of the historical quarry void.

Traffic and Road Safety

The existing quarry is accessed via an established quarry entrance at Ballystockart Road to the north of the historic southern quarry void. A previously approved underground tunnel is used to transport materials from the northern quarry to the southern quarry for processing. An existing wheel wash facility is located between the weighbridge and the main Ballystockart Road access to minimise material spread onto the public road.

Ballystockart Road is not a protected route. The A22 (Comber Road) transport corridor to Belfast is located approximately 0.9 km to the northeast of the site. The 2023 ES Addendum states that the largest percentage of quarry deliveries turn right out of the access onto Ballystockart Road, before turning right again onto Hillhead Road, then joining the A22 to travel north towards Belfast.

Policy MIN 7 of APSRNI requires consideration of the traffic impacts of proposed minerals operations including the safety and convenience of road users and the amenity of persons living on roads close to the site of proposed operations. Where traffic from such a development would prejudice the safety and convenience of road users, planning permission will normally be refused unless the roads can be satisfactorily improved.

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3): Access, Movement and Parking provides further policy in relation to vehicular access, traffic and roads safety. Policy AMP 2 therein states that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal involving direct access, or the intensification of the use of an existing access, onto a public road where:

- a) such access will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic; and
- b) the proposal does not conflict with Policy AMP 3 Access to Protected Routes.

Under the heading 'Justification and Amplification', the policy goes on to state that:

'Development Control Advice Note 15 'Vehicular Access Standards ' sets out the current standards for sightlines, radii, gradient etc. that will be applied to both new access and intensified use of an existing vehicular access onto existing public roads...It is recognised that it may not always be practicable to comply fully with the appropriate visibility standards. Such standards, like all material considerations, need to be assessed in light of the particular circumstances of the individual case. Exceptionally a relaxation in standards may be acceptable in order to secure other important planning objectives. Visibility standards, however, will not be reduced to such a level that danger is likely to be caused.'

Development Control Advice Note 15 (DCAN 15) defines intensification of an existing access as a 5% or greater increase in traffic flow.

The 2023 ES Addendum confirms that no increase in traffic volume is sought, only the continuation of supply to ancillary processing plants. No additional plant and machinery is proposed.

The 2007 ES submitted in support of the previously approved quarry extension, stated that the quarry extracts approximately 600,000 tonnes per annum. The 2007 ES also includes a traffic survey showing 139 daily Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) movements.

The 2023 ES Addendum states that the proposal will release approximately 500,000 tonnes of mineral per annum with no anticipated increase in historic HGV movements.

The 2023 ES Addendum includes an assessment of the transport implications of the proposed development, taking into account the likely evolution of the baseline that would occur, should the development not proceed. Given traffic activity at the site would be minimal following completion of the previously approved site restoration scheme, the assessment is centred on a zero baseline.

In order to establish the zero-baseline position, traffic surveys were undertaken between Tuesday 12th and Monday 18th September 2023 at the following locations.

- Ballystockart Road between the site access and the development to the east on the north side of the carriageway;
- Ballystockart Road between the development on the north side of the carriageway and the Ballystockart Road / Hillhead Road junction;
- Hillhead Road between the Ballystockart Road and A22 junction; and
- A22 north of its junction with Hillhead Road.

It was established that the AM peak hour at all locations occurred between 08:00 – 09:00, whilst the PM peak hour occurred between 17:00 – 18:00.

Weighbridge data allowed the number of vehicle movements associated with the quarry to be deducted from the recorded traffic flows, in order to establish the 'zero baseline' that would arise should the quarry close.

It was determined that during the AM peak hour there were between 4 loads (8 movements) and 8 loads (16 movements) per day during the AM peak hour and only 1 load / 2 movements during the PM peak hour, which occurred on 2 days.

During the survey period it was found that the HGV movements varied between 49 loads (98 movements) and 70 loads (140 movements) per day, which included Monday to Friday. This resulted in an average of 112 daily HGV movements over the week of the survey. Vehicle trips associated with staff employed on site were also factored into the assessment.

The survey results, summarised in Appendix 11.2 of the 2023 ES Addendum, illustrate the proportional increases over the 'zero baseline' with the addition of quarry traffic.

The 2023 ES Addendum asserts that despite a high percentage increase in large vehicle traffic, the absolute flows remain low. Average weekday flows over the 18-hour period were between 91 and 109 vehicle movements with the development in place corresponding to averages of between 5 and 6 movements per hour, and up to a single movement every 10 minutes.

The 2023 ES Addendum has been prepared with reference to the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) guidance on the Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement 2023. This guidance covers assessment of environmental effects (including fear and intimidation, severance, driver delay, non-motorised user delay and amenity, and road safety).

Fear and intimidation impacts were scored based on the 2023 IEMA guidance and found to be negligible for both the existing and zero baseline due to relatively low overall traffic volumes.

The 2023 IEMA guidance states that in the context of traffic and movement the term 'severance' relates to the perceived division that can occur within a community when it becomes separated by major transport infrastructure.

Paragraph 3.16 of the IEMA Guidance confirms changes in traffic flow of 30%, 60% and 90% have been regarded as having slight, moderate and substantial impacts on severance.

Appendix 2 of the 2023 ES Addendum shows that the highest percentage traffic increase above the zero baseline at any of the survey sites was 12.3% which is well below the lowest threshold figure for impact on severance. The 2023 ES Addendum concludes that the impact on severance is negligible given the low baseline traffic flows.

The 2023 IEMA Guidance states that pedestrian delay (incorporating delay to all non-motorised users) and severance impacts are closely related effects and can be grouped together. The 2023 ES Addendum referred to the conclusions of the severance impacts and concludes that the impact on pedestrian delay is also negligible.

Paragraph 3.20 of the IEMA Guidance advises that driver delays are only likely to be significant when the traffic on the network surrounding the development is already at, or close to, the capacity of the system.

The traffic surveys demonstrated that peak periods were between 08:00 – 09:00 and 17:00 – 18:00. The highest traffic flows occurred at the A22 with an average of 1049 vehicle movements during the AM peak hour and 1028 movements during the PM peak hour over the 5-day survey period. The survey data showed that HGV accounted for 2.3% of movements during the AM peak hour and 1% during the PM peak hour.

The 2023 ES Addendum indicates that for rural single carriageways the typical combined capacity for both directions of travel equates to 1800 vehicle movements with a maximum of 3200 movements, of which between 2% and 30% could be heavy vehicles. On this basis, the ES concludes that the cumulative traffic flows remain well within their operational capacity and that impact on driver delay is negligible.

The 2023 IEMA Guidance states that pedestrian amenity relates to the relative pleasantness of a journey and is considered to be affected by traffic flow, traffic composition and pavement width/separation from traffic. It states that the definition includes pedestrian fear and intimidation.

As already outlined, the 2023 ES Addendum assessment of the fear and intimidation impacts of the proposed development concluded that the impact of the proposed development is negligible due to low traffic flows. The 2023 ES Addendum points to additional factors such as the limited lengths of pedestrian footway to the east of the site and to the short distance of 0.9km between the site access and the primary road network (A22) and concludes that the impact of the proposed development on non-motorised user amenity is negligible.

The 2023 ES Addendum confirmed it has taken into account PSNI records spanning a 7-year period. It states that during this period, no personal injury accidents were recorded at the quarry access. One slight injury collision was recorded between the quarry access and the A22 (at the junction between Ballystockart Road and Kathleen Drive) in 2019 and one serious collision on the A22 (Comber Road), immediately to the south of its junction with Hillhead Road in the same year. Given the low frequency of incidents, the 2023 ES Addendum concludes that the road network is of a suitable standard to safely accommodate the cumulative activity with the quarry operations in place.

Overall, the 2023 ES Addendum concludes that the proposal does not seek to increase the volume of traffic flow associated with the established minerals development at the quarry and there will be no intensification of the existing baseline. It also concludes that the transport and highway impacts of the proposed development would be negligible, taking into account the zero baseline.

DFI Roads was asked to consider the traffic and road safety impacts of the proposed development based on both the existing baseline and the future zero baseline. DFI Roads confirmed it reviewed objections to the application and the environmental information contained within the ES and that it has no objection to the proposed development.

DFI Roads has highlighted that the existing access is substandard but has not requested any amendments to same. This position was queried with DFI Roads which confirmed its review of the environmental information and re-stated its lack of objection.

DFI Roads recommends that any approval of the application be subject to a condition to require that the existing access to No.61 Ballystockart Road be permanently closed.

Having considered the environmental information contained within the 2023 ES Addendum and the consultation response from DFI Roads, the statutory road consultee, I am satisfied that proposed development will not prejudice the safety or convenience road users. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal meets the policy requirements set out in the SPPS 2, Policy MIN 7 of APSRNI and Policy AMP 2 of PPS3.

Restoration

Policy MIN 8 of APSRNI requires mineral workings to be restored at the earliest opportunity.

This policy recognises that the restoration of mineral workings is an important part of the quarrying life cycle. It states that restoration is necessary to make mineral workings fit for beneficial use and environmentally acceptable following extraction. The policy states, '*applications for the extraction of minerals must include satisfactory restoration proposals.*'

The submitted application outlines a programme of progressive restoration for the quarry site. This includes the advanced Phase 1 screening proposals. Throughout the extraction phases, it is proposed that overburden and out of specification material will be permanently placed within the historic southern quarry void.

Once extraction ceases, all plant and structures will be removed, and dewatering infrastructure will be disconnected to allow the two voids to flood. Water levels will be managed via an outlet in the southern lake which will discharge into the existing water management system subject to any necessary approvals under separate regulatory regimes.

Following cessation of operations, it is proposed to plant a mix of woodland, species-rich grassland, and scrub thorn mix to restore the site and stimulate natural regeneration of the remaining benches.

NIEA: NED has raised no objection in relation to the proposed restoration concept.

The proposed restoration concept has the potential to provide substantial foraging and nesting habitat for a wide variety of species including, birds, bats, mammals and aquatic species. It is considered that the proposal complies with Paragraph 6.167 of the SPPS 2 and Policy MIN 8 subject to conditions to secure implementation of the beneficial restoration of the quarry and subsequent habitat management and monitoring.

The GHG Assessment concludes that the proposed development would not result in an increase in sectoral emissions when considered against realistic alternatives as alternative sources would result in similar or higher emissions.

The GHG Assessment refers to embedded mitigation to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions across the wider business as set out in the company's Sustainability Strategy. The document sets out the company's targets for reduction in GHG emission, as well as reporting requirements. It is noted that Breedon Group's sustainability reporting has been independently verified by Bureau Veritas UK Ltd providing confidence in the reported environmental data. Further mitigation to reduce GHG emissions throughout the lifetime of the quarry in line with national initiatives has been proposed. It is recommended that this mitigation is secured through a s76 Planning Agreement.

Overall, the GHG Assessment classifies the impact as 'minor adverse'. It concludes that the development is compliant with the strategic direction of the draft Climate Action Plan 2023-2027 and does not impede Northern Ireland's ability to meet statutory climate targets.

None of the consultees have raised any objection to the application in relation to potential climate change impacts.

It is acknowledged that the proposed development will give rise to GHG emissions and therefore has the potential to contribute to climate change. However, there remains an established and ongoing need for mineral resources, and in the absence of continued extraction at this site, it is reasonable to assume that demand would be met from alternative quarries, potentially resulting in comparable or greater GHG emissions. The site also benefits from existing infrastructure including established plant and access arrangements. Furthermore, the proposal includes a comprehensive restoration for the entire quarry upon cessation of extraction with landscaping proposals expected to deliver carbon sequestration benefits.

On balance, it is considered that the benefits of the proposed development (including its economic contribution, efficient use of existing infrastructure and long-term restoration proposals) outweigh the potential harm associated with GHG emissions.

Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE)

In its consultation response, NIE advised that, should planning permission be granted for the proposed quarry extension, NIE would assume responsibility for the design, consenting, and delivery of any required (dual-circuit 110kV) diversion. This would be subject to a separate planning application.

Section 2.6 of the 2023 ES Addendum assesses the likely significant impacts associated with diverting the electricity lines around the application site (including the introduction of temporary towers and access routes).

The 2023 ES Addendum explains that the diversion aims to minimise the lateral extent of pylons. It is anticipated that a six-month period would be required to install temporary towers, complete the diversion, and reinstate the site.

An Ecological Impact Assessment, prepared by a chartered ecologist, and presented in Appendix 2.1 of the 2023 ES Addendum evaluates potential effects on designated sites and habitats. Surveys undertaken between 2022 and 2023 supplemented previous assessments and extended the study area to include land potentially impacted by the diversion route. The 2023 ES Addendum concludes that, subject to mitigation measures, significant ecological impacts are unlikely. No concerns were raised by NIEA or the Shared Environmental Service in relation to this assessment.

Appendix 2.2 of the 2023 ES Addendum includes an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA), prepared by a qualified archaeologist. It acknowledges the possibility of unidentified remains and recommends a programme of archaeological investigation prior to and during ground works. HED Historic Monuments Unit raised no concerns regarding the powerline realignment subject to recommended mitigation.

HED Historic Buildings Unit expressed no concerns in relation to the setting of listed buildings. It stated that due to the separation distance, these works would have negligible impact upon the setting of HB24/11/031 Scrabo Tower.

Appendix 2.3 of the 2023 ES Addendum contains the aforementioned Drainage Impact Assessment by Consulting Hydrologists Limited, examining the implications of pylon relocation. The report concludes that surface water can be effectively managed via a roadside swale and that the proposed works are not expected to increase flood risk. At the request of the Planning Service, DFI Rivers reviewed the assessment and raised no concern.

The 2023 ES Addendum notes that construction activities may result in short term construction noise and dust impacts. The 2023 ES Addendum sets out the proximity of the nearest residential properties to the proposed new pylons and predicted noise levels associated with rock breaking to enable ground works and construction of foundations. The 2023 ES Addendum states that given separation distances, it is unlikely that there would be any perceptible vibration levels and there is no potential for building damage. Environmental Health has considered the 2023 ES Addendum and has raised no concerns in relation to this assessment.

Appendix 2.4 of the 2023 ES Addendum includes a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), by a chartered landscape architect. It assesses potential cumulative effects on landscape character and visual amenity due to the proposed pylon realignment and focuses on key visual receptors within 2km of the site, along with two additional viewpoints requested by the Planning Department – Viewpoint 9 Ballystockart Road and Viewpoint 10 Hillhead Road. Photomontages were prepared to illustrate existing views and to help inform an assessment of the impacts of the proposed quarry extension, together with the potential diversion works and landscape mitigation following both 5-8 years' growth and 20 years' growth.

The LVIA concludes that electricity pylons and associated infrastructure are already characteristic elements of the landscape, and the overall predicted magnitude of

change to the landscape generated by the proposed quarry extension and NIE pylon realignment would be low. From specific viewpoints, (notably viewpoint 5 along Hillhead Road and viewpoint 6 along Glen Road) it is predicted that visual impact would increase from 'minor' to 'moderate' during the establishment phase. Detailed site visits by the Planning Service have been conducted in furtherance of this assessment and the LVIA has been considered and the findings accepted.

In conclusion, having considered the environmental information, I am satisfied that the environmental impacts of the proposed development, when considered cumulatively with the potential diversion of the pylons, would not likely be significant. Any future application to relocate the pylons would be subject to a detailed assessment and statutory consultation. Furthermore, any potential approval may also include conditions to ensure implementation of any appropriate mitigation measures that may be deemed necessary.

9. Consideration of Representations

Seven letters of support for the application have been received from members of the public. Supporters state that the minerals resource is needed to facilitate construction, and the proposal would secure the retention of jobs. It was also asserted that the proposed extension would have less environmental impact than opening another quarry in a different location.

In total, approximately 230 letters of objection have been received. Any material planning considerations raised within letters of objection will be considered under the broad topic headings listed below and within the main body of this report.

Environmental Baseline

A letter from MBA Planning Consultants on behalf of objectors to the application asserts that the environmental baseline should relate to the end of extraction date associated with the 2007 planning permission for the quarry extension.

This matter has been addressed by the 2023 ES Addendum, which considers the likely significant effects of the development against both the existing state of the environment, *and* its likely evolution if the quarry extension does not proceed (i.e. do nothing/future baseline).

Road Safety and Traffic

Matters raised by objectors include the potential increase in vehicle movements as a result of the proposed development, the capacity of the road network to accommodate Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV), and the risk of accidents to road users including children and other pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

The impact of the proposal on access and roads safety has been considered in detail within the main body of this report. The access and road network currently

accommodate the traffic generated by the established Ballystockart Quarry business. The 2023 ES Addendum states that no increase in operational output is proposed through the current application.

The 2023 ES Addendum includes an assessment of the environmental effects of the proposed development in the context of the 2023 guidance, Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement, published by IEMA. This document provides guidance on the assessment on impacts on the highway network, including changes to traffic flows, delays and congestion, and assesses impacts on receptors such as road users, pedestrians and cyclists. The 2023 ES Addendum concludes that within the context of a zero baseline scenario, the continuation of the established activities arising as a result of the proposed extension would result in negligible highway and transportation impacts.

The 2023 ES Addendum states that the low number of traffic incidents in the vicinity of the existing quarry and the different locations of the recorded accidents indicates that the road network is of a suitable standard to safely accommodate the cumulative activity with the quarry operations in place.

DFI Roads is the statutory roads authority responsible for public roads within NI. DFI Roads has reviewed the 2023 ES Addendum and any roads-related objections and has provided no objection to the proposed development in terms of the potential impact on public roads and roads safety.

An objector expressed concern that the assessment of transportation impacts within the original ES (2022) failed to make reference to the staff and customer vehicles. Having reviewed the 2023 ES Addendum, I am satisfied that these vehicular movements have been taken into consideration in the updated assessment.

The potential for damage to road surface and transfer of debris and grit from the quarry to the public road network was also raised. The maintenance of the public road network is a matter for DFI Roads. Measures are in place at the established quarry to minimise any potential for spread of debris to the public road network including a wheel wash facility at the access to Ballystockart Road. It is recommended that any approval of the proposed development should be subject to the implementation of a Dust Mitigation Plan which will contain measures to prevent the spread of material to the public road network.

An objection received on 26 March 2026 seeks clarification regarding the traffic assessment presented in Chapter 11 of the 2023 ES Addendum, specifically in relation to the timing of the traffic surveys and whether the data accurately reflects current traffic conditions on the Ballystockart Road.

The 2023 ES Addendum explains that, to establish the zero baseline position, traffic surveys were undertaken over a seven-day period from Tuesday 12 and Monday 18 September 2023. Automated Traffic Counters (ATCs) were installed at locations between the site entrance and the A22 (Comber Road) to record directional traffic flows continuously over a 24-hour period. In addition, weighbridge records from the quarry were obtained to facilitate the deduction of HGV movements from the

recorded traffic flows. The approach allowed the establishment of a zero-baseline scenario, representing traffic conditions should the quarry cease operations.

The survey data indicates that HGV movements associated with the quarry ranged between 98 movements and 140 movements per day (Monday-Friday). The higher figure reflects data previously reported in the 2007 ES associated with the previously approved application (X/2007/1408/F).

The objection also raises concern that the traffic assessment does not reflect peak operational conditions. However, the 2023 ES Addendum states that these traffic flows are an over-estimate of actual impact, as quarry activity during the survey period was above average when compared with activity levels during the previous year. Furthermore, the survey adopts the assumption that all of the traffic travels to and from the A22, whereas some of the movements could travel southwest of the access for staff and deliveries to local markets.

As stated in the main body of this report, the 2023 ES Addendum confirms that the proposal does not seek any increase in traffic volumes and that the application relates only to the continuation of mineral supply to existing ancillary processing facilities, with no additional plant or machinery proposed. As an additional safeguard, it is recommended that were permission to be granted, the removal of permitted development rights for mineral processing plant within the site is secured within the planning legal agreement, and a planning condition to restrict the quantity of mineral transported from the site to a maximum of 500,000 tonnes within any rolling 12-month period.

DFI Roads has confirmed that it has reviewed the concerns raised in the objection in relation to the traffic assessment contained in the 2023 ES Addendum and the capacity of the local road network to accommodate HGV movements associated with the quarry. DFI Roads is satisfied that the issues raised have been adequately addressed within the Environmental Statement and its supporting technical appendices. DFI Roads has further advised that the 2023 Environment Statement and appendices represent a robust assessment of the proposal carried out by a Civil Engineering Consultancy. While the potential for alternative HGV haul routes is referenced within the objection, DFI Roads notes that haul routes cannot always be strictly adhered to due to the potential for local deliveries.

The majority of HGV traffic associated with the proposal is expected to utilise the established and most direct strategic road network connecting the quarry to the nearest settlements and to Belfast Port, with only a portion of local deliveries likely to use alternative local roads. Given the operational nature of the development, it is accepted that some use of the local road network may be required to serve local markets. Furthermore, no objection has been raised by DFI Roads in respect of the proposed traffic impacts or routing arrangements.

Impact on Amenity

Objections highlight concerns about potential impacts on residential amenity resulting from proposed development. Attention has also been drawn to the site's

proximity to a childcare facility. The impact of the proposal on amenity has already been considered in detail in this report.

The application seeks a lateral extension (southwestern direction) and deepening of the northern quarry void. The childcare facility is located north of the existing processing area on the opposite side of Ballystockart Road to the extension area. The existing quarry is subject to regulation by NIEA's Industrial Pollution & Radiochemical Inspectorate (IPRI) under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (NI) 2013 (PPC Permit Number P0113/08B). In its consultation response IPRI referred to increased potential for periodic loss of amenity and advised that the quarry may need to apply for a variation to the existing permit.

The environmental information submitted with the application includes an assessment of the potential effects on the closest sensitive receptors to the proposed extension area. Notwithstanding, the Planning Service highlighted the concerns raised in the objections in relation to the existing childcare facility to the Environmental Health Department (EHD). In response, EHD did not raise any further objection to the proposed development and confirmed it accepted the methodology used and findings of the ES in relation to noise, vibration and dust.

Objectors expressed concern that the recommended minimum separation distance of 100m between blasting operations and occupied properties, as set out in the Vibrations and Blasting Guidelines (NI) 2017, is insufficient. They reference alternative guidelines from other jurisdictions that recommend greater distances. No further evidence was provided in relation to this matter.

In any case, consideration must be given to prevailing guidance applicable within Northern Ireland. The Blasting Controls Working Group (BCWG) was established in May 1994 to assess appropriate conditions for quarry blasting and to uphold high standards of amenity for those living near quarry sites. The BCWG included representatives from the then Department of the Environment (DOE) Planning Service, Health and Safety Executive NI, Environmental Health Officers, quarry operators and explosives experts. In its report (September 1995), the BCWG recommended a ground vibration limit of 10mm/s, an air over pressure limit of 128db and a minimum separation distance of 100 metres (to occupied third party dwellings).

In 2017, the aforementioned guidance was reviewed to ensure a consistent and robust approach to blasting in Northern Ireland. The updated review reaffirmed that BCWG guidance remains appropriate, save for references to superseded documents. Whilst the 2017 report recognised that planning conditions should be based upon the individual merits of each case, a set of standard planning conditions was included to assist planning authorities.

One objection raised concern that a 100-metre separation distance may not sufficiently protect garden amenity areas. However, it is important to highlight that the ground vibration and air over pressure caused by blasting are both of very short duration. To further mitigate any impact, it is recommended that any approval should

be subject to the following mitigation (secured through an associated planning legal agreement):

- A limitation on blasting frequency to a maximum of twice per calendar month.
- A restriction on blasting hours to between 10:00 and 16:30, Monday to Friday.
- A limitation on the level of ground vibration and air over pressure at the closest dwellings outside the ownership or control of the operator.
- On-going monitoring of ground vibration and air over pressure during future blasting operations.

Due to the controlled nature and limited frequency of blasting, it is considered that an acceptable level of amenity for sensitive receptors near the quarry can be maintained. Furthermore, in line with standard procedures, the use of an advanced warning system can help prevent those closest to the site from being startled by any unexpected blasting activity.

Blasting mitigation will also serve to reduce any risk of cosmetic or structural damage to buildings.

The duration of proposed operational hours was also raised as a concern. Council's Environmental Health Department (EHD) has confirmed that it is content with the proposed operational hours which align to established guidance (*The Planning Practice Guidance 'Assessing Environmental Impacts from Mineral Extraction – Noise Emissions' (March 2014)*).

Impact on Human Health

Concerns have been raised regarding the potential health impacts associated with dust emissions from quarry activities.

Council's EHD provided comment in relation to objector concerns pertaining to dust impacts, specifically Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS). It stated that the Dust Impact Assessment (DIA) contained within the 2023 ES Addendum, has been carried out in accordance with the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) guidance document 'Guidance on the Assessment of Mineral Dust Impacts for Planning' 2016 version 1.1. EHD advised that Respirable Crystalline Silica has been appropriately considered and assessed under the PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions. In reference to the DIA it further stated that, based on the Report, the Proposed Mitigation Measures in Section 10.6 of the ES will negate any adverse impacts on human health, both for workers on site and wider exposure of nearby residential receptors, by meeting Northern Ireland Air Quality Standards Regulations (2010) as amended.

Public Health Agency (PHA) was asked by Planning Service to consider concerns in relation to dust, particularly silica dust. PHA advised that, throughout the operation

of the quarry, continuous monitoring should be maintained to ensure dust exposure including particulate matter to residents is effectively controlled. It stated that licencing and limits will be designed to minimise and mitigate and therefore protect against nuisance and also protect health. As such PHA expects, should the extension of the site become functional, licencing will ensure that environmental emissions will be controlled with the appropriate mitigation measures and Best Available Techniques (BAT). Public Health Agency has stated it will undertake a fuller health assessment under the auspices of any PPC variation application, which is subject to a separate regulatory regime outside of the Planning process.

Additionally, concern was raised regarding the potential for general adverse effects on mental health. It is considered that this broadly falls to be determined in reference to the assessment on impact on amenity, discussed and considered generally throughout the report.

Human Rights

It has been claimed that any extension to the quarry's operational life could infringe upon human rights. Again, it is considered that this broadly falls to be determined within the concept of impact on amenity. The planning system recognises the impact, or potential impact, of development on amenity, and by extension, on human rights. The policies and procedures by which applications are assessed by the Council in discharging its functions under the Planning Act (NI) 2011 are designed to assist in the reaching of balanced decisions where any impact on amenity is proportionate. I am satisfied that the potential effects of the proposal on individuals have been taken into account in the assessment of this planning application and has been afforded the appropriate weight.

Impact on Designated Sites and Natural Heritage Interests

The potential impact on designated sites and natural heritage interests has already been considered in the main body of this report.

It has been suggested that an environmental survey should have been undertaken to inform decision making. The planning application has, however, been subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in accordance with The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 2017. This process assesses the likely environmental effects of the project. Expert environmental consultants were commissioned by the Applicant, and consultations were carried out with statutory consultees and other relevant environmental bodies.

Objectors have raised concerns regarding potential impacts on protected species, their habitats, and nesting sites. These includes bats, badgers, birds, Irish hares and bees. The 2023 ES Addendum provides a detailed assessment of ecological issues, supported by a wide range of field surveys undertaken by Woodrow Ecologists. These surveys included an extended Phase 1 habitat survey, mammal walk over survey, bird survey and bat roost surveys. The results are documented in the 2023 ES Addendum and its appendices.

The 2023 ES Addendum confirms the presence of foraging badgers within the site. Although no bat roosts were identified, the ecologist noted that some trees within in the site comprise potentially suitable roosting features. The ES Addendum (Appendices 3.1.5.3) also recorded no evidence of other terrestrial mammals such as Irish hare or hedgehog during site visits conducted by ecologists.

In relation to bats, one objection referred to the absence of bat boxes on plans. A planning condition (condition 8 of the most recent planning permission to extend the quarry (X/2007/1408/F) referred to the installation of two bat boxes on trees on the northern and western boundaries of the site. A plan showing the location of existing bat boxes has since been submitted.

To mitigate habitat loss, substantial compensatory planting has been proposed as part of the mitigation strategy. The diverse native species planting mix will provide alternative foraging and nesting opportunities and will also help support bees and other pollinators. The 2023 ES Addendum further proposes the retention of an existing tree sparrow nesting site located within an ash tree on the southern perimeter of the extension area.

NIEA Natural Environment Division (NED), the statutory nature conservation body, has reviewed the 2023 ES Addendum, the Phase 1 planting plan and the post-operational restoration concept. NED has raised no objections to the development, subject to recommended planning conditions to secure ecological mitigation and protect species and habitats.

Location of re-fuelling facilities and vehicle maintenance facilities

All existing processing facilities associated with the quarry are located at the opposite side of Ballystockart Road to the proposed extended extraction area. No additional processing or vehicle maintenance facilities or changes to existing facilities are proposed as part of the current application. It is recommended that any approval of the application be subject to a condition requiring the implementation of pollution prevention measures contained within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) during all stages of the proposed works.

Furthermore, in accordance with the recommendations of the Shared Environmental Service, any approval should be subject to a condition requiring a suitable buffer of at least 10 metres between the locations of all refuelling, storage of oil/fuel, concrete mixing and washing areas, and storage of machinery and the redline boundary of the site.

Impact of Extraction on Proposed Woodland Planting

Concerns have also been raised regarding the potential impact on dust emissions on the proposed woodland planting and its rate of maturation. However, I must also have regard to the fact that NIEA Natural Environment Division, the statutory nature

conservation body, has not raised any objections in terms of the establishment of Phase 1 woodland planting or the long-term restoration strategy.

It should be highlighted that trees and vegetation are already present in close proximity to the current quarry operations and have remained viable despite ongoing activity.

Dust mitigation measures will support the successful establishment of new planting. As an additional safeguard, it is recommended that any grant of planning permission include a condition requiring replacement of any new trees that die or are damaged during the period of establishment.

Landscape and Visual Amenity Impacts

Some objectors expressed concern that the proposed extension will permanently alter and cause harm to the local landscape. A number of objectors also referred to the potential impact on Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The site is not covered by any landscape designation and is located approximately 2.5km from the Strangford and Lecale AONB at its closest point. As already considered in the main body of this report, the Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence (ZTVI) suggests there is potential for visibility of the proposed extension area from Scrabo Hill and Tower which forms part of this landscape designation. Scrabo Tower is located a significant distance from the site - approximately 5.25km. It is considered that the separation distance and intervening screening will ensure that the site would not be a prominent feature from elevated viewpoints within that section of the AONB.

It is also noted that the ZTVI has been modelled to illustrate where the proposed development could theoretically be visible from within the surrounding landscape. It is calculated using topographical data only, providing worst case scenario of potential visibility and does not take account of screening by vegetation, built structures or localised topographical variation.

Objectors have expressed concerns in relation to the potential impact on the setting of Scrabo Tower. One objection referred to existing views of the Scrabo Hill and Tower along a section of Ballyrussell Road. It states that from this location the proposed landscape mitigation along the western boundary of the site has the potential to detract from this landmark feature and negatively impact the sense of place of those living near the application site.

A series of photomontages of the proposed development from viewpoints along Ballyrussell Road, prepared by a chartered landscape architect on behalf of the Applicant, shows the proposed landscape mitigation at various stages of growth. The photomontages indicate that the proposed landscape mitigation would remain below the skyline formed by Scrabo Hill and Tower when viewed from the main public viewpoints along Ballyrussell Road.

Moreover, HED: Historic Buildings Unit has considered the proposed development and advised that the quarry site, whilst within the extensive setting of HB24/11/031 Scrabo Tower, is a sufficient distance from this listed asset to have a negligible impact upon its setting.

The ZTVI indicates that there would negligible potential for views across the wider AONB.

Taking into account all these relevant factors, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not result in any unacceptable harm to the special character of this designated landscape.

An objection raised potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development when viewed from Hillhead Road, with particular concern expressed about the loss of elevated land and its effect on local character.

Whilst views of the existing quarry are restricted along much of Hillhead Road due to topographical and boundary screening, a partial view is available from a short section of road north of the site, in the vicinity of No.25 Hillhead Road. From this location, elements of the existing quarry operations to the south of Ballystockart Road can be viewed, although these are experienced in the wider context of other established man-made features including agricultural buildings, a large factory building (TG Eakin), and NIE pylons.

The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) assessed this viewpoint (viewpoint 5) and concluded that the proposed extension would be effectively screened by existing mature vegetation. As a result, the development would not cause harm to the character of this area.

The potential for long-distance views of the quarry was raised as a concern (including from Dunlady Road in Dundonald). It is considered that the quarry would represent only a small element within the wider landscape when viewed from elevated locations along Dunlady Road. As such, it would not give rise to an unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape character or visual amenity of the area.

One objection noted that, whilst welcoming the restoration proposal's intention to provide accommodation for nesting raptors by leaving the waterline below the tip of the quarry faces, the retention of exposed quarry faces would remain inconsistent with the character of the local landscape.

It is proposed that following cessation of operations, all Phase 1 screening landform and woodland would be retained. The restoration plan proposes the creation of two lakes, with the majority of the quarry area being submerged. However, a limited number of benches and rock faces would remain above the final water level. Further planting will take place during the restoration phase, supporting the natural regeneration of the site. This will include species rich grassland, scrub thorn, and native woodland planting.

It is considered that advanced and post-operational planting will effectively screen views of the restored quarry from wider vantage points. Consequently, the restored site will integrate into the surrounding landscape without causing harm to its character.

A representation has been received from a Landscape Architect (Gordon Clarke) acting for an objector. The representation expresses concern in relation to the proposed landscape mitigation strategy. It considers that placing large, linear mounds parallel to the site boundaries is at odds with the rolling drumlin formation of the landscape and will not mitigate any negative visual impact. It further states that a better approach to mitigation would be to undertake extensive woodland planting on the existing ground in advance of quarry development and in a form and shape that will properly reflect the natural landform and not property boundaries.

Following receipt of this objection letter, an updated Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was submitted as part of the 2023 ES Addendum. The further Environmental Information (FEI) was subject to the publicity requirements prescribed in the 2017 EIA Regulations. No further comment has been received from the objector's landscape architect.

The photomontages within the updated LVIA provide further clarity on the scale of the proposed development and its likely landscape and visual effects (including the effectiveness of landform and landscape mitigation) at various stages in the development from a range of viewpoints within the wider area.

As part of the assessment of the landscape and visual impacts, I have carried out a number of site visits taking into consideration the environmental information, detailed plans/drawings for each phase of the development and the matters raised in objection letters. Whilst it is acknowledged that the construction of the screening bunds may result in short term negative landscape and visual amenity impacts, once established, I am satisfied that the proposed mitigation will prevent any significant adverse long-term landscape and visual impact during the operational and restoration phases.

Overall, I am satisfied that, subject to the proposed mitigation, the development will integrate into the landscape and will cause no harm to the character of the area in accordance with policy requirements.

Cumulative Impact

Chapter 17 of the 2023 ES Addendum states that where appropriate, potential cumulative effects in the context of the existing and future baselines have been identified in the individual assessments contained within the ES. The application has been subject to consultation with statutory consultees and other environmental bodies, and no objections have been raised.

TG Eakin's pharmaceutical facility is a long-established feature of the existing environment. While an extension to that facility was approved in July 2023 (Ref: LA06/2023/1513/F), it is noted that the approved scheme was assessed as low impact, involving only a modest increase in staffing. The consultation response from

Environmental Health states that no noise breakout from the proposed extended factory floor is expected to occur. Given its scale and nature, it is considered that the extension would not materially alter the environmental conditions and, even if considered cumulatively, would not give rise to significant adverse environmental effects in combination with the proposed quarry extension.

Whilst an objector expressed concern in relation to the cumulative impact with other quarry development, I am satisfied that Ballystockart Quarry is located a sufficient distance from any similar development in the wider area to prevent any unacceptable cumulative impacts.

Former Alleged Breaches of Planning Control

Some objection letters allege that operations at the existing quarry site have breached conditions of extant planning permissions. Concerns also exist that the quarry operator may not comply with any future planning conditions intended to safeguard the environment and protect the amenity of nearby residents.

Having reviewed the planning enforcement history of the site, I am satisfied that there is no evidence of a widespread breach of planning controls at the existing quarry. A summary of recent enforcement investigations is provided below.

Only the most recent planning permission to extend the quarry is subject to a condition restricting operational hours. Following an enforcement investigation, it was concluded that condition 12 of X/2007/1408/F applies only to the specific area of the quarry outlined in red on the approved site location plan. The enforcement case was closed as there was no evidence of works being carried out outside the permitted hours within the defined site boundary.

It was further alleged that quarry blasting took place on a public holiday in breach of condition 12 of permission X/2007/1408/F. Given the isolated nature of this incident, the Council issued a formal warning letter to the operator to ensure full understanding of the relevant planning condition and the potential consequences of any future breaches of planning control.

In addition, the Planning Service Enforcement Unit undertook a detailed site investigation in response to complaints concerning the extent of extraction and height of scree. The investigation concluded that there was no evidence of any on-going breach of planning control.

An earlier enforcement complaint in 2013 in relation to unauthorised infilling of land resulted in an application for planning permission to regularise the breach. This application, for the retention of earthworks to allow safe access for future maintenance of NI Water Infrastructure, was granted planning permission in June 2018.

All complaints received in relation to the quarry have been appropriately investigated by Planning Service. In each case, it was considered that the evidence did not substantiate the instigation of formal enforcement action.

It is recommended that the Council enters into a formal legal planning agreement with the operator to secure the hours of operation for the wider quarry site. This will provide the Council with greater control over future site activities. Any future grant of planning permission will also be subject to robust conditions designed to protect residential amenity and safeguard the environment. The planning agreement and conditions will be capable of being enforced by the Council to ensure on-going compliance, alongside monitoring.

Level of Consultation with the Local Community

Community engagement has taken place at various stages of the planning process.

At the pre-application stage, the Applicant carried out statutory community consultation to provide an early opportunity for members of the public to review and comment on the emerging proposals.

Following receipt of the planning application and accompanying Environmental Statement (ES), the Council fulfilled its statutory duty to notify 'identified occupiers' on 'neighbouring land'. For this purpose, an 'identified occupier' is defined as the occupier of premises within a 90 metre radius of the boundary of the application site, while 'neighbouring land' refers to land that directly adjoins the site or would do so but for an entry or a road less than 20m in width.

In recognition of the scale and nature of the development, Planning Service went beyond statutory requirements by extending neighbour notification to a radius of 500 metres from the site boundary.

The Council ensured compliance with the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, which require publicity of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) developments.

Details of the application were published on the Council's website and in local newspapers. Within the Ards and North Down Borough Council Area only, advertisements of planning applications are normally only placed in the Newtownards Chronicle and The County Down Spectator. For this application, the Council took a further step to maximise engagement by placing an additional notice in the Belfast Telegraph to broaden awareness and reach a wider audience.

The Council also carried out additional neighbour notification and publication of the application following the receipt of Further Environmental Information (FEI) to ensure that interested parties were given further opportunities to review and comment.

Therefore, I am satisfied that meaningful consultation with the public has taken place at key stages of the planning process and in line with, and exceeding, statutory requirements.

Plans and Environmental Information

An objector has expressed concern that survey data within the Environmental Statement is out of date. The objector made specific reference to groundwater and ecological surveys.

Planning Service requested comment from NIEA: Regulation Unit and Natural Environment Division in relation to this matter. Regulation Unit advised that Appendix 6.1 of the 2023 ES: Hydrology and Hydrogeology Assessment utilises data recorded in boreholes up to April 2023, along with a desktop water features survey maps and graphics dated September 2023. Regulation Unit confirmed that this is not considered to be outdated when assessing groundwater impacts due to the longer time periods involved in groundwater effects.

NIEA: Natural Environment Division advised that habitat, terrestrial mammal, bat and breeding bird surveys were first carried out in 2021, with updated surveys for habitats, birds and badgers undertaken in 2023. In accordance with NIEA survey specifications, these surveys were submitted to Planning Service within one year of being carried out. NED confirmed it has no concerns with the dates of the submitted surveys and that it has no concerns regarding impacts to Northern Ireland Priority Habitats or species on site subject to mitigation.

An objector has pointed to an alleged inconsistency between the information included in the planning application form and the description of development provided in the Environmental Statement concerning the proposed frequency of blasting. In particular, the objector expressed concern that blasting operations could occur in excess of two occasions per month.

In accordance with advice from the Council's Environmental Health Department, it is recommended that any approval of the application is subject to a planning condition to restrict the frequency of blasting to a maximum of two occasions per month. It is considered appropriate to deal with this as part of the planning legal agreement

It has been suggested that the plans and maps detailing the proposed development are unclear. An objection requested clarification in relation to colours and lines shown on the plans, including the dark green shading which represents existing vegetation and field boundaries; turquoise lines which indicate changes in topographical features; and the transition of contour colouring from brown to dark blue which denotes areas where levels fall below 0 metres AOD.

Having reviewed the submitted plans, I am satisfied that, when considered together, they provide sufficient detail on the proposed development. This includes the scale

and location of the proposed screening bunds, the planting specifications, the maximum extent and depth of the extraction area, the phasing operations, and the proposed restoration concept. All elements of the proposed development are located within the defined red line boundary of the application site.

It is not considered necessary for plans to include full details of boundary features located beyond the boundary of the site, as this land lies outside the control of the Applicant. I am satisfied that the submitted information is sufficiently clear to enable a full and proper assessment of the planning application.

The effectiveness of Phase 1 screening landform and woodland planting has already been considered in detail within this report, and a detailed planting specification has been provided, setting out the proposed heights and planting densities. In response to concerns regarding terminology, I am satisfied that the terms 'berms' and 'bund's' may be used interchangeably to describe the earth mounds that will visually screen the quarry.

Objectors have made reference to previous planning permissions to extend the quarry, and the potential for further applications to extend the quarry in the future.

Reference was made to a 2019 representation, submitted on behalf of the quarry operator, to the Council's Development Plan Team on the Preferred Options Paper (POP) for the Local Development Plan (LDP). This representation expressed support for safeguarding areas around existing quarries to ensure that potential expansion is not prejudiced by future surface development. A map appended to the representation showed the proposed extent of lands adjacent to Ballystockart Quarry that could potentially be safeguarded. This includes additional land outside the red line boundary of the site and beyond the Applicant's ownership.

It is not a statutory validation requirement for quarry planning applications to include a map identifying land which the Applicant may wish to work in the future. Nevertheless, this representation has been included within the appendices to the 2023 ES Addendum and has been made available to view on the Planning Portal.

An objector has also raised concern relating to the proposed operational lifetime for the development. The July 2025 ES Addendum provides clarification in relation to this matter, proposing a 23-year time period. It is recommended that any potential approval of the application be subject to a condition requiring extraction to cease following this period to ensure the site can be restored.

In the consideration of these objections, it must be acknowledged that this application is itself an extension, a feature that has been properly raised by objectors. Nevertheless, the Council is under a statutory duty to determine any application placed before it, on its own merits and in line with the prevailing planning policies. Matters relating to potential future extensions are speculative and any future proposals would require separate planning permission.

Need for the Proposed Development and Benefit to the Local Economy

As outlined in the main body of this report, Ballystockart Quarry serves both the local construction market and export markets in Great Britain. Some objectors have questioned the need for the proposed extraction at the Ballystockart Quarry site, given that a portion of the mineral resource is exported for use elsewhere.

Planning policy recognises the straightforward proposition that minerals can only be extracted from where they naturally occur. The 2023 ES Addendum confirms that Ballystockart Quarry produces +68PSV high specification aggregate (HSA), which is widely acknowledged for its superior skid resistance and is used for the construction of durable, high-performance road surfaces. Only a very limited number of existing quarries can produce an aggregate to this standard; in fact, the 2023 ES Addendum highlights that Ballystockart Quarry is the sole producer of +68PSV aggregate in Northern Ireland.

The quarry also benefits from its strategic location. The short haulage distance from Ballystockart Quarry to Belfast port makes it well-placed to efficiently serve both local construction needs and the requirements of export markets.

Although concerns have been raised regarding the carbon footprint associated with transporting aggregate, the quarry's location ensures that inland transportation distances are minimised, thereby reducing overall emissions.

Ballystockart Quarry is long established with significant infrastructure already in place. In line with planning policy, extensions to existing mineral workings, such as Ballystockart Quarry, are generally preferred over the opening of new quarries elsewhere, to minimise environmental disturbance in the countryside.

Some objectors have also expressed concern that the proposal may not directly benefit the regional or local economy. The economic contribution of the quarry has, however, already been addressed in detail within this report. Data provided in support of the application highlights that approximately 69% of all sales from Ballystockart Quarry in 2023, and 63% in 2024, were made to the local market.

It is therefore considered that the quarry makes a meaningful contribution to both the local and regional economy. Whilst a portion of the aggregate produced at Ballystockart Quarry is sold to the export market (including to Great Britain), such exports are widely recognised as an important driver of economic growth, as they generate wealth from outside the region.

NIE Infrastructure

A representation from MBA Planning, on behalf of objectors, referred to the potential relocation of NIE pylons. The objection points out this has not been referenced within the proposal description or site address. Moreover, it highlights that the ES does not include an assessment of the likely environmental impacts associated with diverting the pylons and does not include the information required to reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the project on the environment.

As previously stated in this Case Officer report, the potential relocation of the pylons does not form part of the application presently under consideration by the Council. The submission of any future planning application to divert the pylons will be a matter for NIE as the statutory undertaker.

Nevertheless, following receipt of this objection, Planning Service received the 2023 ES Addendum which evaluates the likely significant environmental impacts associated with diversion of the NIE pylons. The 2023 ES Addendum was advertised in local newspapers to engage interested parties and has been subject to consultation with statutory consultees and other environmental bodies. The environmental information has been considered in the assessment of the current application. I am therefore satisfied that the requirements of the EIA Regulations have not been circumvented in relation to this matter.

Fishing

The Comber Inler Angling Club has objected to the planning application. It alleges that there has been a history of environmental breaches and pollution from Ballystockart Quarry into surrounding tributaries and ultimately the Inler River. The representation highlights the importance of the Ballystockart tributary as a spawning ground for migratory salmonoid species.

The Club states that environmental considerations should be paramount in any decision taken.

NIEA: Inland Fisheries has been consulted on the application and advised that it has no objection to the application provided the other sections of NIEA are content with the attenuation measures to protect the aquatic environment from deleterious discharges.

It is recommended that any approval of the application should be subject to planning conditions to prevent pollution to the water environment as recommended by expert consultees.

Climate Change

Objections refer to potential downstream Green House Gas (GHG) emissions because of the end-use of the mineral. In response, an Addendum to the Environmental Statement comprising a GHG Assessment was submitted to the Council in January 2026. This assessment considers both direct and indirect emissions.

The GHG Assessment includes an alternative baseline scenario in which the mineral would be sourced from other quarries and transported to the same end users. While objections raise concern in relation to the reliance on this alternative baseline, it is considered that this alternative baseline reflects a realistic scenario given the ongoing demand for mineral resources.

It is also relevant that the site produces a high specification aggregate for which there are a limited number of alternative suppliers. The site is in relatively close

proximity to Belfast port, which provides advantages in terms of the distribution of material. This reinforces the likelihood that alternative supply may need to be sourced from less well-located quarries.

The proposed restoration concept involves the creation of waterbodies and substantial new planting across the site. While such measures would not directly offset the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the operational phase of the development, they are a material consideration to be weighed in the planning balance.

One objection is concerned that repeated extensions to the quarry may defer restoration and associated carbon sequestration benefits. Whilst the planning history of the site is relevant, the decision must be based on the effects of the development now proposed against the lawful baseline.

The only previous planning permission at Ballystockart Quarry that requires restoration following the cessation of extraction relates to the active extraction area at the northern quarry (X/2007/1408/F). Whilst the proposal would extend the period during which extraction could occur at the northern quarry, the current application seeks holistic restoration of the entire quarry site at the end of the extraction period. The proposal therefore provides an opportunity to deliver a comprehensive restoration and aftercare scheme which can be secured through planning conditions. On balance, having taken into account the environmental information and proposed restoration concept, it is considered that cumulative and climate-related impacts would not be unacceptable in planning terms.

Restoration

In relation to the proposed restoration concept, an objection has been raised regarding the absence of a detailed final restoration plan at this stage. NIEA: Natural Environment Division has confirmed it has no objection to the proposed restoration concept.

Any planning approval will include a condition requiring the submission of a detailed final restoration plan and its subsequent implementation (which must be in broad accordance with the restoration concept) towards the end of the quarry's operational life. This approach ensures the plan will be based on the actual final landform, takes into account any changes in site conditions during operations, and reflects current environmental standards, best practice and restoration techniques available at that time.

Impact on tourist accommodation

The owner of Bed & Breakfast accommodation at No.60 Peartree Hill has raised concerns about the potential impact on their business due to the site's proximity to the property, including possible noise, dust and effects on visual amenity and landscape character. The property is approximately 890 metres from the boundary of the existing northern quarry. The proposed lateral extension would reduce this distance to around 780 metres.

Having regard to the environmental information, including consultation responses from expert bodies, I am satisfied that the separation distances, combined with the recommended noise and dust mitigation measures, will prevent any unacceptable adverse impact on the premises. Furthermore, the separation distance, intervening rolling drumlin landform and vegetation will also prevent any unacceptable harm in terms of visual amenity and landscape character.

Countryside Litter

A number of objections have expressed concern in relation to countryside litter. There is no evidence before the Council to indicate that the proposed development would result in an increase in litter within the wider area. Matters relating to litter are managed under separate statutory regimes and are not matters for control under the Planning process.

Impact on Property Values

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed development would negatively impact property values. The impact of development on the value of neighbouring properties is not regarded as a material planning consideration that could justify the refusal of planning permission. Impacts on amenity have been carefully considered, and it is considered that appropriate mitigation can be secured through planning conditions and the planning legal agreement.

10. Legal Agreement

Section 76 of the Planning Act Section 76 of the 2011 Act enables the relevant authority, that is either a council or, as the case may be, the Department, to enter into a planning agreement with any person who has an estate in land.

Section 76(1) of the 2011 Act provides that any person with an estate in land may enter into an agreement with the relevant authority to:

- facilitate or restrict the development or use of the land in any specified way;
- require specified operations or activities to be carried out in, on, under or over land;
- require the land to be used in any specified way;
- require a sum or sums to be paid to the relevant authority or to a Northern Ireland government department on specified date / dates or periodically.

Section 76(2) of the 2011 Act provides that a planning agreement may be:

- unconditional or subject to conditions;
- impose any restriction or requirement (mentioned in subsection (1)(a) to (c) of section 76) for a defined period of time or indefinitely; and

- if it requires a sum or sums to be paid, require the payment of a specified amount or an amount determined in accordance with the instrument by which the agreement is entered into and, if it requires the payment of periodical sums, require them to be paid indefinitely or for a specified period.

A breach of a planning agreement may be enforced by way of a court injunction as per Section 76(6).

The SPPS 2 on Planning Agreements

The SPPS 2 sets out the policy tests for the use of planning agreements as follows:

Planning authorities can use planning agreements to overcome obstacles to the grant of planning permission where these cannot be addressed through the use of conditions.

A planning agreement may facilitate or restrict the development or use of land in any specified way.

A planning agreement may be considered appropriate where what is required cannot be adequately addressed by the imposition of conditions and:

- Is needed to enable the development to go ahead;
- Will contribute to meeting the costs of providing necessary facilities in the near future;
- Is otherwise so directly related to the proposed development and to the use of the land after its completion, that the development ought not to be permitted without it;
- Is designed to secure an acceptable balance of uses;
- Is designed to secure the implementation of development plan policies in respect of a particular area or type of development; or
- Is intended to offset the loss of, or impact on, any amenity or resource present on the site prior to development.

The overall site of Ballystockart Quarry is currently subject to multiple planning permissions relating to mineral development. It is therefore recommended that the Council enters into a formal planning legal agreement with the operator to secure the coordinated approach to extraction. This includes the hours of operation, blasting and a prohibition on all extraction of mineral and associated drilling and blasting, under the 'Aged Consents', as well as a removal of permitted development rights regards plant/machinery. It is also recommended that the s76 planning agreement secures the additional mitigation proposed in the GHG Emissions Assessment.

Should the Committee determine to grant planning permission, the Planning Agreement will be finalised prior to a final decision being issued. As such, the Head of Planning would seek delegated authority to negotiate and execute the agreement

as a deed prior to the issuance any planning permission. The Planning Agreement would then be placed on the Statutory Charges Register as per the requirement in Section 245 of the 2011 Act. This will make the agreement a matter of public record and ensure that the provisions of the agreement are enforceable against successive owners of the lands the subject of the agreement.

In summary, it is considered that it is appropriate to require a planning agreement for those elements referenced above. Planning Service is satisfied that such an agreement will comply with the requirements of Section 76 of the Planning Act and also the policy provisions of the SPPS 2.

A Section 76 Planning Agreement, entered into under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, is required to secure mitigation and operational controls that cannot be adequately addressed through planning conditions alone.

11. The Planning Balance

The process of 'weighing up' the relevant factors, is often described as the 'planning balance'. The planning authority must exercise its judgement and consider many (sometimes) conflicting issues to decide whether planning permission should be granted. This balance is carried out pursuant to Section 6(4) of the 2011 Act which is detailed at the start of this report requiring that a decision under the Act must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This will mean examining the development plan and taking material considerations which apply to the proposal into account. These matters must be properly considered otherwise the decision of whether or not to grant permission will have excluded a consideration.

This proposal has been considered weighing, inter alia, the matters detailed below.

The environmental impact of the proposed development has been assessed in detail, taking into account the Environmental Statement, its Addenda and appendices. I have considered the responses from expert statutory consultees and other environmental bodies. Consultation responses are available to view on the Planning Portal and have been summarised in this report. In determining this application, consideration has also been given to the reports commissioned by objectors and to the material planning considerations raised in objections to the application.

This assessment has had regard to the Development Plan and has been carried out in the context of all relevant regional planning policy, including the mineral planning policy tests contained within the SPPS 2.

Policy MIN 1 of APSRNI requires that the need for the mineral resource be balanced against the protection and conservation of the environment. This requires consideration of environmental, economic and other relevant factors. The evidence demonstrates that that the proposed development will not result in harm to

designated sites. In addition, it has been demonstrated that the application is not likely to result in harm to protected species or the unacceptable adverse impact or damage to priority habitats/species and other natural heritage features. This is subject to conditions to secure environmental mitigation. No objection to the proposal has been received by NIEA or SES.

HED has provided no objection to the proposal in terms of the impact on the historic environment. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal complies with the SPPS 2 and the retained policies of PPS 6.

Minerals can only be extracted where they occur. In this case, Ballystockart Quarry provides a resource of +68 High Specification Aggregate, the nature of which reduces the likelihood of securing an alternative source of supply to serve established markets. The economic benefits of the proposal weigh in favour of the grant of planning permission for the proposed development.

The proposed development will secure the long-term future of an active established quarry. Planning policy recognises that extensions to existing minerals workings which minimise environmental disturbance, are normally preferred to the establishment of new quarries. The proposed development will utilise existing infrastructure and processing facilities. As such it has the potential to cause less environmental impact and disturbance than the opening of a new quarry on an alternative site.

Having carefully weighted all material planning factors, it is considered that the proposed development complies with the SPPS 2 and Policy MIN 1 of APSRNI.

The conclusions of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment are accepted. Subject to planning conditions securing appropriate landscape mitigation, it is considered that the proposed development will integrate with the surrounding environment and will not result an unacceptable impact on landscape character and visual amenity. The proposal therefore complies with the SPPS 2 and Policy MIN 2 of APSRNI.

In accordance with the SPPS 2 and Policy MIN 6, it has been demonstrated that the quarry design meets normal quarrying safety standards and that there will be no unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of sensitive receptors, including from blasting, vibration or dust subject to robust mitigation secured through planning conditions or the planning legal agreement.

DFI Roads has considered the Environment Statement and raised no objection to the proposed development. It is therefore considered that the development will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience traffic flow, and that it complies with the SPPS 2, Policy MIN 7 of APSRNI, and Policy AMP 2 of PPS 3.

The proposed post-extraction restoration concept is acceptable and in line with the SPPS 2 and the requirements of Policy MIN 8 of APSRNI.

It has been demonstrated that site drainage will not result in flood risk to people, property or the environment in accordance with the SPPS 2 and PPS 15.

NIEA has provided no objection to the proposed development in terms of harm to the natural environment. The proposal has also been considered under Regulation 43(1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). Shared Environmental Service, on behalf of the Council, concluded that based on the information provided, and in light of the expert opinion of the Statutory Nature Conservation Body (NIEA), the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed extension to the existing quarry will not result in any significant adverse residual environmental effects, subject to the recommended mitigation.

Subject to the completion of a s76 planning agreement, and the imposition of appropriate planning conditions reflecting the advice of expert consultees, the development is considered acceptable in planning terms and approval is recommended.

12. Recommendation

Grant Planning Permission

13. Conditions & Informatives

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011.

2. Extraction shall be for a limited period only and shall permanently cease on or before 23 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To secure completion of extraction and restoration of the site within an acceptable timeframe.

3. The total quantity of mineral transported from the Ballystockart Quarry site shall not exceed 500,000 tonnes during any rolling 12-month period. All mineral transported from the site shall be recorded by the weighbridge system. Weighbridge records shall include the date and tonnage of all material transported from the site. Copies of such records shall be retained for a period of 3 years and shall be made available to the Council within 14 days of a written request.

Reason: To control the intensity of quarrying operations and to enable effective monitoring of mineral output.

4. Prior to the commencement of development, the existing vehicular access to No. 61 Ballystockart Road shall be permanently stopped up and closed to all vehicles. The stopping up shall be in accordance with a landscaping scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This approved landscaping scheme shall include details of species, planting density, planting heights and maintenance measures, and shall be implemented in full prior to the commencement of development. The landscaping shall be permanently retained thereafter at a minimum height of two metres.

Reason: To ensure the closure of the existing access in the interests of roads safety.

5. All noise mitigation measures specified in Section 7.6 of the Environmental Statement Addendum 2023 shall be fully implemented and adhered to during the construction, operational and restoration phases of the development hereby approved.

Reason: To protect neighbouring amenity in relation to noise and vibration.

6. Except where a temporary higher noise threshold is permitted under condition 7, the cumulative noise levels from all quarrying, drilling and ancillary operations associated with Ballystockart Quarry shall not exceed the following threshold:

48 dB LAeq,1 hour (free field) at any of the Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSRs) along Ballystockart Road identified on Figure 7.2 and Table 7.5 in Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement Addendum 2023;

46 dB LAeq,1 hour (free field) at NSRs along Ballyrussell Road identified on Figure 7.2 and Table 7.5 in Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement Addendum 2023 or any other Noise Sensitive Receptor within the vicinity of the site.

Reason: To protect neighbouring amenity in relation to noise and vibration.

7. During the overburden removal, bund formation and restoration phase of the development, the noise level measured at any Noise Sensitive Receptors identified on Figure 7.2 and Table 7.5 in Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement Addendum 2023 shall not exceed 70 dB LAeq,1hr (free field).

This temporary higher noise level of 70 dB LAeq,1hr (free field) shall apply for a maximum of 8 weeks in any calendar year.

The operator must give the Council prior written notice (at least 5 working days) of the commencement and anticipated duration of any works subject to this temporary higher noise threshold.

Reason: To protect neighbouring amenity in relation to noise.

8. Within 28 days of the receipt of a written request from the Council, (following a complaint from a Noise Sensitive Receptor relating to noise from the quarry the quarry operator shall appoint a suitably qualified and competent person to undertake a noise test at the complainant's property to assess the level of noise emissions from the quarry. The test results, including all calculations, audio recordings and the raw data upon which it was based, shall be submitted to the Council within three months of the date of the written request, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council.

Reason: To protect neighbouring amenity in relation to noise.

9. Prior to the commencement of development, a Blasting Monitoring Scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Blasting Monitoring Scheme shall include:
 - Details of monitoring of Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) and Air Overpressure associated with blasting operations.
 - The location of monitoring equipment, which shall include monitoring at the nearest sensitive receptors as shown on Appendix 2 of the Blast Impact Report, prepared by Ulster Industrial Explosives Limited and included in Appendix 13.1 of the Environmental Statement Addendum 2023 and contingency measures to be implemented where approved monitoring locations are not accessible at the time of blasting.

Monitoring of PPV and Air Overpressure shall be carried out during all blasting operations in accordance with the approved Blasting Monitoring Scheme. The results of monitoring (including all calculations, audio recordings and the raw data upon which it was based), together with records of dates, times, monitoring locations, blast design, charge sizes, shall be retained for a minimum period of two years following each blast. Blasting records must be submitted to the Council within two weeks of any written request.

Reason: To protect neighbouring amenity in relation to noise and vibration.

10. The Phase 1 screening bunds shall be fully constructed, in accordance with the approved details on Drawings Nos. 03 and 07, prior to any mineral

extraction hereby approved by this decision taking place and the screening bunds shall be permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: In order to safeguard landscape character and visual amenity.

11. All Phase 1 planting shall be carried out, in accordance with the details and specifications included on the Advanced Screening Plan Drawing No. 7, during the first available planting season following formation of the screening bunds and prior to any mineral extraction hereby approved by this decision taking place.

Reason: In order to safeguard landscape character and visual amenity.

12. If any proposed trees or plants are removed, die, or become seriously damaged or diseased, during the operational lifetime of the development hereby approved, they shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants. Details of the location, species and size of replacement landscaping must be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Council and implemented in accordance with that approved.

Reason: In order to safeguard landscape character and visual amenity.

13. All existing boundary trees and hedgerows along the redline boundary of the site and as shown on Drawing No.08A shall be retained. No retained tree or hedgerow shall be lopped, topped, reduced in height, cut down, uprooted or otherwise destroyed without the prior written approval of the Council. If any existing boundary planting is removed, dies, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased or dying, during the operational lifetime of the development hereby approved, it shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants. Details of the location, species and size of replacement landscaping must be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Council and shall be implemented in accordance with that approved.

Reason: In the interests of character and appearance of the area.

14. Prior to the commencement of development (including demolition), a Dust Mitigation Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Dust Mitigation Plan must, as a minimum, incorporate all of the dust mitigation measures specified in Section 10.6 of the Environmental Statement Addendum 2023. The Dust Mitigation Plan shall be fully implemented and adhered to throughout the demolition, construction, operational and restoration phases of the development.

Reason: To protect the amenity of neighbouring dwellings with respect to dust.

15. No development, works, site clearance, site preparation or demolition shall commence until a Protected/Priority Species Management Plan (PSMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The PSMP shall be prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and shall include the following:

- Details of updated surveys for protected species (bats and badgers) undertaken prior to the commencement of development or works in accordance with NIEA survey guidance and current best practice methodology.
- Badger sett closure plan to include the recommendations set out in ES Addendum 2023 Appendix 2.1 Ecological Impact Assessment: Ballystockart Quarry - Appendix 1 Badger Survey Report: Section 3.3
- Details of appropriate measures (including timescales for implementation) to protect badgers from harm during the extraction phase
- Details of the location of bat boxes and details for installation of bird boxes for Tree Sparrows (including installation timing).
- Details of the appointment of a competent ecologist to oversee the implementation of Protected/Priority Species mitigation measures during the extraction phase, including their roles, responsibilities and timing of visits

The approved PSMP shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the approved details and timescales contained therein unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council. All bird and bat boxes, shall be permanently retained unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council.

Reason: To protect badgers and their setts, bats, and mitigate impacts to priority species.

16. A buffer of at least 10 metres must be maintained between all refuelling areas, oil/fuel storage, concrete mixing and washing areas, storage of machinery/material /spoil etc. and the redline boundary of the site, shown on Drawing No.02A, during the demolition, construction, operational and restoration phases of the development.

Reason: To prevent adverse effects on features of the hydrologically connected Strangford Lough SAC/SPA/Ramsar.

17. No development hereby approved shall take place until a consent to discharge for the proposed development has been granted under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 (as amended). Prior to the commencement of

development, a comprehensive review of any existing discharge / abstraction consents must be carried out and any necessary variations to existing consents or new discharge/abstraction consents for the development must be granted under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 (as amended) by the relevant authority. Details of the review and a copy of any required variation to the existing consents or new consent must be submitted to and agreed by the Council in writing prior to the commencement of development hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure no adverse effect on the water environment and to protect the conservation features of Strangford Lough SAC/SPA/Ramsar from adverse effects.

18. No development, works, site clearance, site preparation or demolition shall commence (other than that required to fulfil this condition) until detailed plans for silt fences designed to prevent sediments entering adjacent drains/watercourse have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The plans must show:

- The type and specification of the silt fences.
- Where they will be installed.
- How they will be monitored and maintained.

The approved silt fences shall be installed in the agreed locations prior to the commencement of development or site clearance, preparation or demolition works and shall be retained in situ and monitored and maintained in accordance with the approved details until the Phase 1 screening bunds have been fully constructed and planted in accordance with the details shown on Drawing Nos.3 and 7.

Reason: To ensure that the appointed contractor is aware of and implements the appropriate environmental mitigation that will prevent adverse effects on features of the hydrologically connected Strangford Lough SAC/SPA/Ramsar.

19. Prior to the commencement of development, a ground water monitoring plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Council. The groundwater monitoring plan shall be broadly in accordance with the details included in Chapter 6 of the Environmental Statement Addendum 2023 and shall include:

- the location of monitoring boreholes (clearly identified on a site plan);
- monitoring frequency and duration;
- the parameters to be monitored (including groundwater levels referenced to metres Above Ordnance Datum);
- reporting procedures; and

- defined trigger levels and associated mitigation measures including implementation timeframes.

The approved plan shall be subsequently implemented strictly in accordance with the approved details and timings.

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors, including groundwater, to ensure the site is suitable for use.

20. A detailed Final Restoration Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council at the earliest of the following:

- Within the six-month period before the permanent cessation of extraction in accordance with condition 2, or
- Within three months of any prior cessation of extraction for a continuous period of three months, or
- Within three months of a written request by the Council following a temporary or premature cessation of extraction.

The Final Restoration Plan shall provide for the removal of all quarry plant, machinery, buildings, foundations, structures, vehicles, and other materials from the site and shall be in general accordance with the restoration concept shown on Drawing No.8A and detailed in Section 4.10.4 of the Environmental Statement Addendum 2023. The final restoration plan shall apply to the entire site outlined in red on Drawing No.01 and shall include the following as a minimum:

- final landform and surface levels;
- details of all plant, machinery and buildings/structures to be removed;
- planting, seeding, and habitat creation measures including new hedgerow planting in accordance with the approved restoration concept. The Final Restoration Plan shall provide no less than the total length of hedgerows shown on Drawing No.08A;
- drainage arrangements; and
- a timetable for completion of all works.

Reason: To ensure restoration of the site.

21. The Final Restoration Plan shall be implemented as approved and restoration must be fully completed in strict accordance with the approved timetable unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure benefit restoration of the site.

22. A final Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council during the six-month period prior to the permanent cessation of extraction.

If extraction ceases for a continuous period of three months before this time, the plan shall instead be submitted within three months of cessation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.

The Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan shall apply to the site outlined in red on Drawing No.01 and shall include, but not be limited to:

- Clear aims and objectives of proposed habitat management /restoration;
- Maps, clearly identifying habitat management areas;
- Detailed methodology and prescriptions of habitat management and restoration measures, including timescales, and with defined criteria for the success of the measures;
- Details of the regular monitoring of the effectiveness of habitat management and restoration measures using appropriate methodology in years 1, 3, 5 and 10 after cessation of operations;
- Details of the production of regular monitoring reports which shall be submitted to the Council within 6 months of the end of each monitoring year and which shall include details of contingency measures (including timescales for implementation) should monitoring reveal unfavourable results.

The Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (including the implementation of any agreed contingency or remedial measures) shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details and timescales.

Reason: To compensate for any loss of and damage to Northern Ireland Priority Habitats and to mitigate for impacts to breeding birds.

23. No site works of any nature or development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work (POW), prepared by a qualified archaeologist, is submitted to and approved in writing by the Council in consultation with Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities.

The POW shall provide for:

- The identification and evaluation of archaeological remains within the site;
- Mitigation of the impacts of development through licensed excavation recording or by preservation of remains in situ;
- Post-excavation analysis sufficient to prepare an archaeological report, to publication standard if necessary; and
- Preparation of the digital, documentary and material archive for deposition.

Reason: To ensure that archaeological remains within the application site are properly identified and protected or appropriately recorded.

24. No site works of any nature or development shall take place other than in accordance with the programme of archaeological work approved under condition 29.

Reason: To ensure that archaeological remains within the application site are properly identified and protected or appropriately recorded.

25. A programme of post-excavation analysis, preparation of an archaeological report, dissemination of results and preparation of the excavation archive shall be undertaken in accordance with the programme of archaeological work approved under condition 29. These measures shall be implemented, and a final archaeological report shall be submitted to the Council within 12 months of the completion of archaeological site works, or as otherwise agreed in writing with the Council.

Reason: To ensure that the results of archaeological works are appropriately analysed and disseminated, and the excavation archive is prepared to a suitable standard for deposition.

26. This permission authorises mineral extraction only within the part of the site to the northwest of Ballystockart Road, as indicated on Drawings No. 3, 4, 5 attached to this permission. No extraction shall take place outside the proposed boundary of extraction indicated on Drawings No. 3, 4, 5 & 6 attached to this permission.

Reason: To limit the extent of extraction authorised by this permission.

27. No extraction shall take place below the cross-section levels as indicated on Drawing Nos. 5 & 6 attached to this permission.

Reason: To limit the extent of extraction authorised by this permission.

28. No overburden, aggregates or other materials shall be stockpiled or stored within the portion of the site to the north-west of Ballystockart Road shown on Drawing No 2A unless otherwise approved in writing by the Council. This restriction does not apply to the construction and maintenance of the

approved Phase 1 screening bunds in accordance with Drawings No.03 and 07 attached to this permission.

Reason: To control the nature of operations within the proposed extension area.

29. All infill material, used as part of site restoration, must be strictly inert.

Reason: To protect the water environment.

30. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved by the Council, in writing, prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved (including soil stripping and demolition).

The CEMP shall, as a minimum:

- Identify the perceived risks to the aquatic environment e.g. from cement, concrete, grout, fuels/ oil/ hydrocarbons and suspended solids;
- Identify potential pollution Source – Pathways - Receptors;
- Demonstrate adherence to good working practices as detailed in current guidance. All relevant Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) e.g. GPP 5: Works and Maintenance in or Near Water and
- GPP 6: Working on Construction and Demolition Sites;
- Detail all measures to be employed to minimise the risk of pollution to any waterway (as defined by the Water (NI) Order 1999) including those identified in the Fluids Handling Protocol included in Appendix 9 of the Hydrogeological and Hydrological Assessment & Drainage Strategy 2023. As a minimum, the CEMP shall include:
 - Safe refuelling procedures and secondary containment for chemicals, oil, fuels etc
 - Emergency spill procedures
 - Best practice for handling and storage of earth stockpiles
 - NIEA's Pollution Prevention hotline number 0800 80 70 60 and the following statement 'in the event of a water pollution incident the NIEA water pollution hotline shall be contacted within 30 minutes unless it is not safe to do so.'

All pollution prevention measures shall be in place prior to the commencement of any works or development hereby approved (including soil stripping and demolition). The approved CEMP shall be fully implemented and adhered to during demolition, construction, operational and restoration phases of the development hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure effective avoidance and mitigation measures for the protection of the water environment.

31. Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved, a working strip shall be provided to facilitate clear access to the existing watercourse, as shown on Drawing No. 10 (Environmental Statement Appendix F12 2024), and shall be permanently retained and kept free from obstruction thereafter.

Reason: To facilitate future maintenance of the watercourse.

32. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council, the extraction of mineral, stripping and storage of soils, and placement of overburden and mineral waste shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the phased working scheme, direction and sequencing set out in Chapter 4 of the 2023 Environmental Statement Addendum and Drawing Nos. 03, 04 & 05.

The development shall proceed sequentially on a phase-by-phase basis only. No excavations, soil stripping or mineral extraction within any subsequent phase shall commence until the preceding phase has ceased in its entirety in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure orderly phased mineral working and to minimise its impact on the amenities of the local area.

Informative

1. This Notice relates solely to a planning decision and does not purport to convey any other approval or consent which may be required under the Building Regulations or any other statutory purpose.
2. This application is subject to a Planning Agreement prepared under section 76 of the Planning Act 2011.

Advanced Screening Bunds and Planting



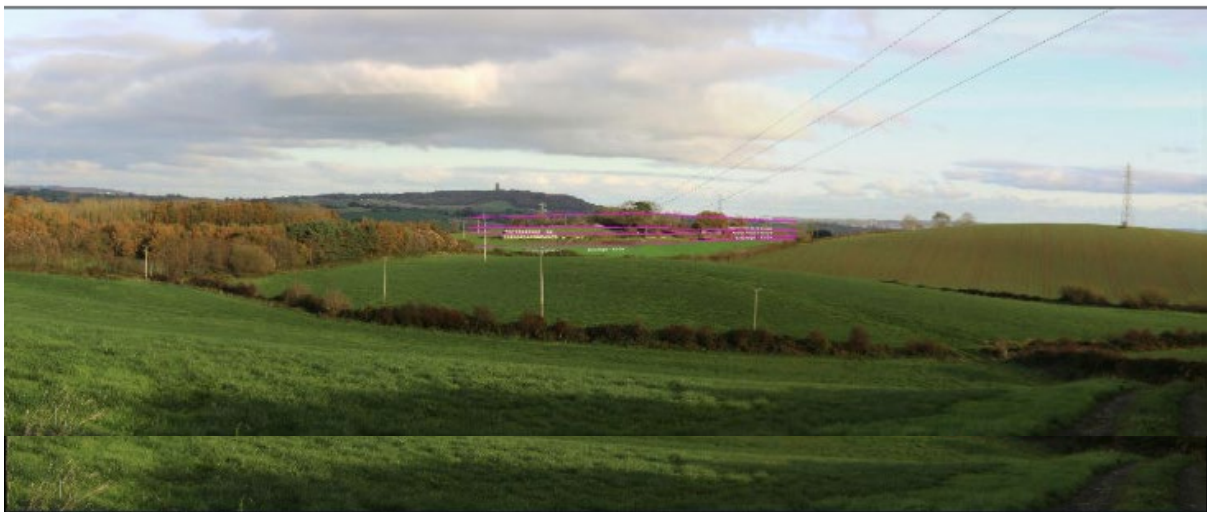
Existing view of site from Ballyrussell Road (east of the site)

PHOTOMONTAGE 1 (P1) - EXISTING VIEW



Existing view of site from Ballyrussell Road (east of the site) with proposed landscape mitigation

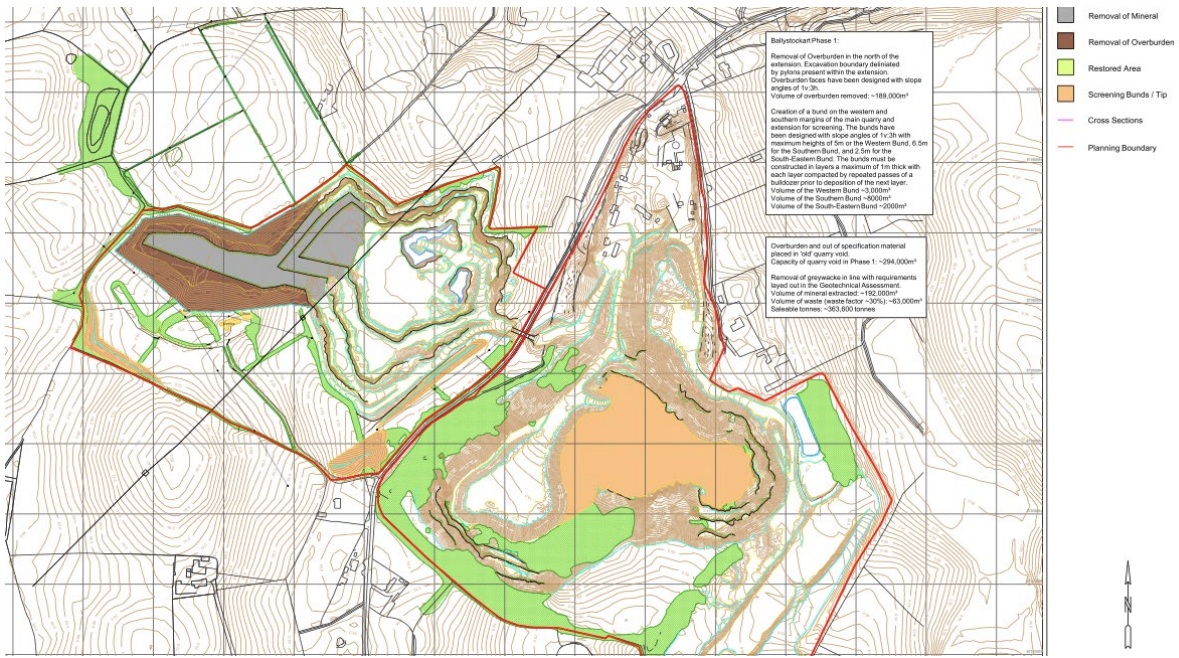
PHOTOMONTAGE 1 (P1) - EXISTING VIEW WITH 3D MODEL



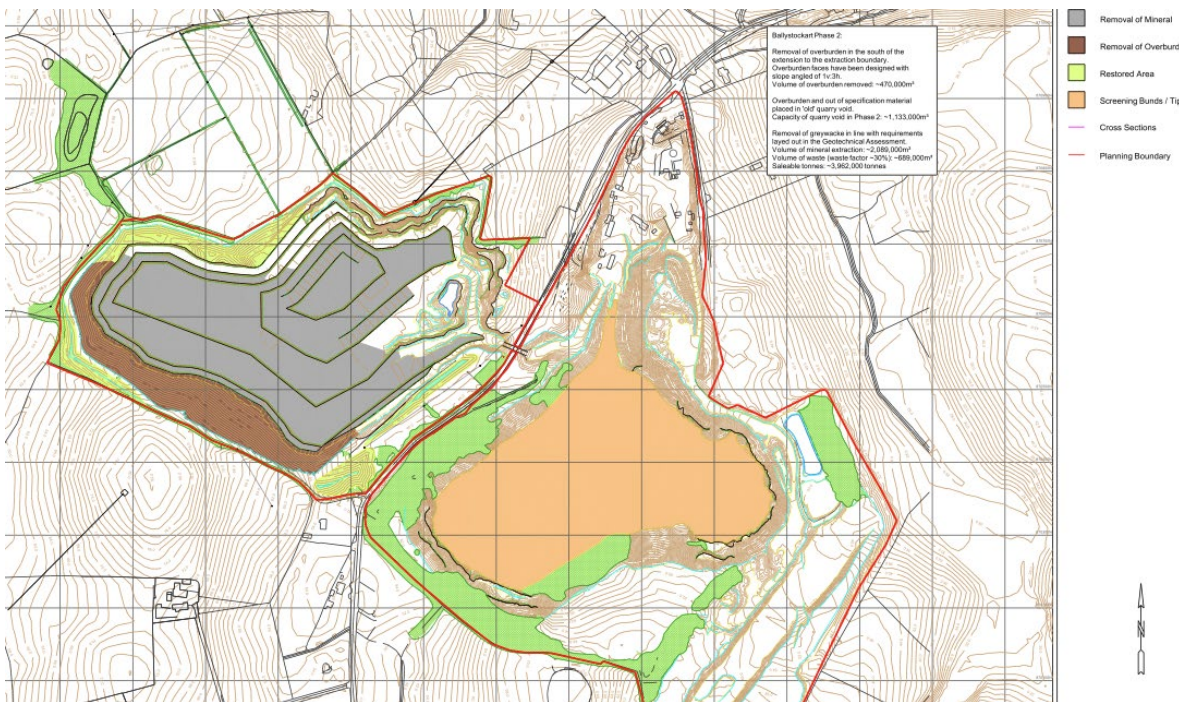
PHOTOMONTAGE 1 (P1) - PROPOSED BERM WITH SCREEN PLANTING @ 15-25 YEARS GROWTH



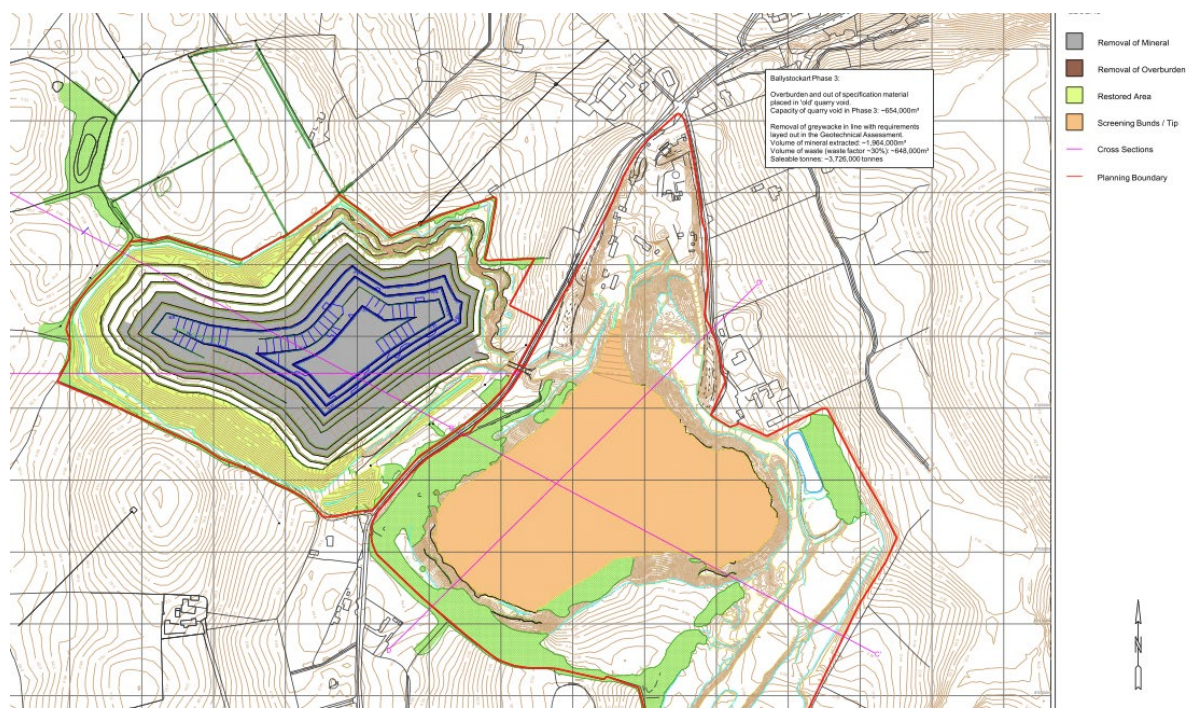
Phase 1



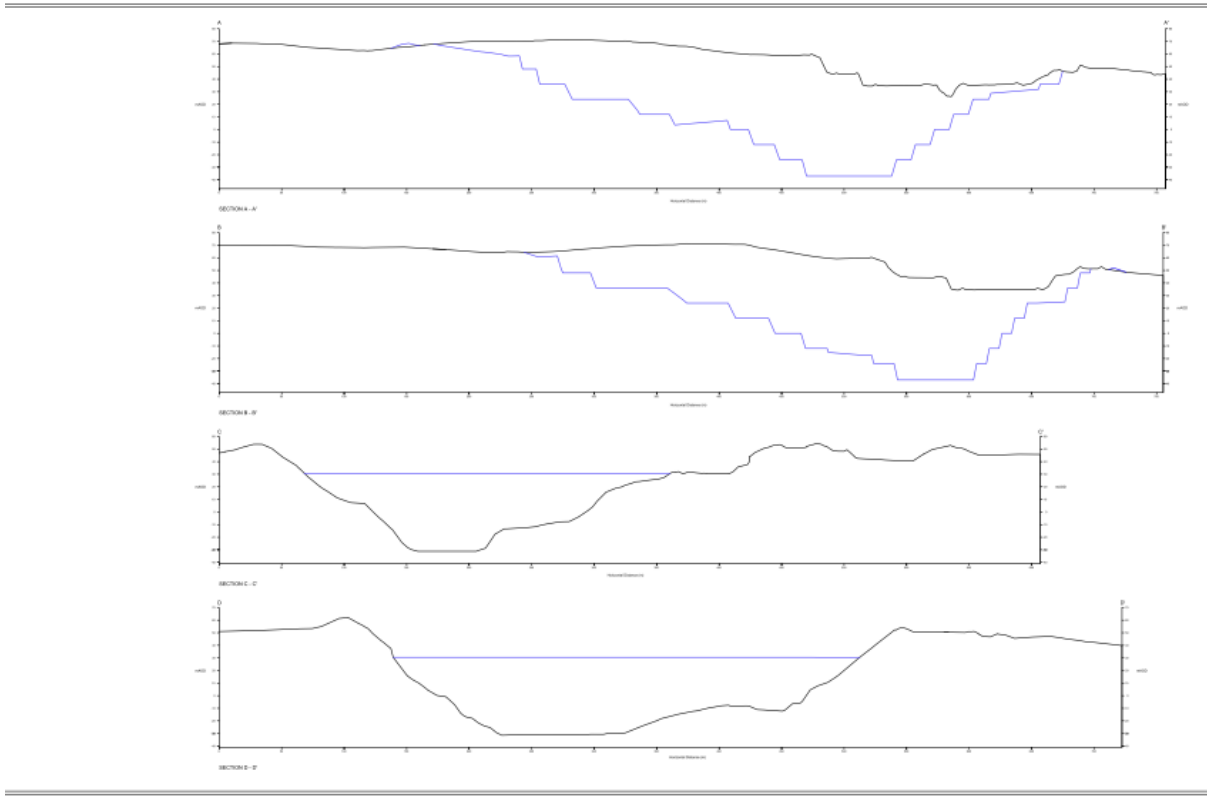
Phase 2



Phase 3



Cross Sections



LEGEND
— Current Topography
— Planned Topography

Proposed Restoration Concept

