

# Minerals in Designated Landscapes Position Statement

**Mineral working has been a feature of the landscapes that are now designated as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) for centuries. The resources within them will continue to have an important role to play in meeting the nation's requirements for minerals, particularly aggregates, in the short, medium and long term.**

A substantial proportion of some mineral resources in England & Wales occur within designated landscapes and their settings, often contributing essential high quality and/or rare minerals. This includes igneous and metamorphic rocks, limestone, sandstone and industrial minerals, which have limited geographic distribution with major resources and reserves occurring within or close to protected landscapes.

Against this background, the Mineral Products Association has developed a position statement for mineral resources associated with designated landscapes to update and replace the original QPA Four Point Plan for National Parks published in 1998.

## Minerals in Designated Landscapes – MPA Position Statement (2022)

- 1 Continuing supply of minerals from within designated landscapes and their settings will be necessary:** The landscape of National Parks and AONBs is directly influenced by its underlying geology. Given the limited geographic distribution of some geological resources, it is neither practical nor desirable to provide all the minerals society requires entirely from outside of designated landscape boundaries or their setting.
- 2 Mineral resources within designated landscapes and their settings often represent the most appropriate source of material for wider regional and national markets:** Permitted reserves within National Parks and AONBs and their settings provide important and sustainable sources of supply for regional and national markets beyond the immediate planning authority area. In doing so, extractive industries support valuable local rural employment and associated benefits through the local economy and society. For example, operations around the Peak District National Park contribute >£5m<sup>1</sup> in business rates alone, while Derbyshire County Council estimates that up to £50 million<sup>2</sup> is paid annually in salaries to employees in the minerals industries in Derbyshire, with many of these jobs in rural areas where employment can be scarce.

**3 The industry will continue to minimise adverse effects and deliver benefits:** The minerals extraction process is essentially temporary, and although changes to the landscape may be permanent, the industry has a long and recognised track-record of restoring sites to high standards, particularly mitigating effects on landscape and enhancing biodiversity. MPA members will continue to ensure environmental effects are minimised and positive benefits are delivered through sensitive restoration, aftercare and after use.

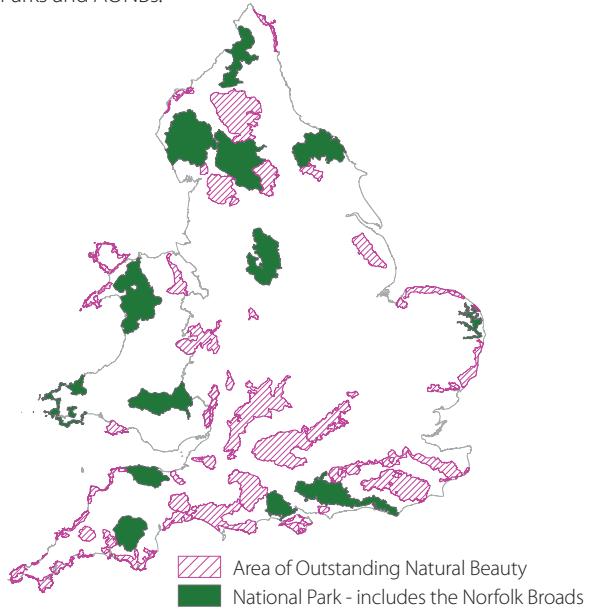
**4 The industry will operate within the requirements of national planning policy, and only promote sites and applications in designated landscapes where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.** MPA and its members will continue to recognise the great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and AONBs alongside the great weight that should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction, including to the economy. Where the need for new planning permissions arises, including for extensions to existing sites, the considerations of exceptional circumstances set out in national planning policies will be applied. These will need to demonstrate the need for the mineral in question and its economic importance, its distribution and location, the cost of and scope for delivery outside of designated landscapes, wider sustainability benefits, and the ability to mitigate and moderate environmental effects.

This position statement recognises that since the introduction of the original QPA Four Point Plan for National Parks in 1998, the direction of national planning policy around minerals and all designated landscapes has evolved, partially because of the various devolution settlements that have been established.

National planning policies in England and Wales recognise that minerals and mineral products are essential to the economy and our quality of life and apply great/significant weight to their need and benefit.

Both the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>3</sup> in England and Planning Policy Wales<sup>4</sup> also recognise that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic/natural beauty in National Parks and AONBs. They state that planning permission for major developments within these designated areas should be refused unless in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest, with a series of criteria defined against which those exceptional circumstances should be assessed. This includes '*the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations*' which allows the quality, distribution and/or need for the mineral to be considered, alongside other provisions. This allows the impact of permitting or refusing an application on the local economy, the cost of and scope for developing outside of the designated area, and the detrimental effects and ability to mitigate these, to be taken into account

The formation of the Mineral Products Association in 2009 significantly widened the mineral interests beyond those originally represented by the QPA (predominantly construction aggregates). MPA interests now include cement, dimension stone, and a range of industrial minerals that operate across England and Wales, with a significant number of these operations in and adjacent to both National Parks and AONBs.



## England

**16%**

active quarries are located inside boundaries of National Parks or AONBs (201/1269 sites)

**31%**

active quarries are located within 5km of National Parks or AONBs (396/1269 sites)

**47%**

active quarries are located inside National Parks or AONBs, or within 5km of their boundaries (597/1269 sites)

## Wales

**15%**

active quarries are located inside boundaries of National Parks or AONBs (19/129 sites)

**31%**

active quarries are located within 5km of National Parks or AONBs (40/129 sites)

**46%**

active quarries are located inside National Parks or AONBs, or within 5km of their boundaries (59/129 sites)

*Mineral Products: essential for schools . . . hospitals . . . homes . . . roads . . . railways . . . energy supply . . . airports . . . ports . . . food . . . water . . . agriculture*

## **History of the original Four Point Plan for National Parks**

Against the background of the Environment Act 1995 and review of old mining permissions, and concerns that dormant sites within National Parks may be reopened, a Four Point Plan for National Parks was introduced by the Quarry Products Association (the MPA's predecessor organisation) in 1998. It demonstrated a continued commitment to minimising the environmental effects of the industry's activities in National Parks across England and Wales.

The original Four Point Plan indicated that members would:

- 1** Work with the Government and National Park authorities to identify dormant planning permissions in National Parks which will not be reactivated and respond positively to initiatives by appropriate authorities to seek prohibition orders.
- This goes further than the present statutory position that they should not be reopened without the imposition of modern planning conditions.
- 2** Work with National Park authorities to identify and clarify current permissions which are uncertain in scope or extent. Every effort will be made to resolve any areas of uncertainty without recourse to the courts.
- 3** Not submit any planning application for new mineral workings in a National Park unless there is a national need in terms of minerals supply or where the proposal has benefits for the National Park in question.
- 4** Only propose the extension of existing sites in National Parks where: there is a national need in terms of minerals supply; or the proposal has benefits for the environment, landscape and economic well-being of the National Park in question.

Following adoption of the Four Point Plan, formal Prohibition Orders were successfully served on a number of dormant mineral sites within National Parks.

In other cases, mineral operators voluntarily relinquished interests as a consequence of the commitments made.

Examples of quarries relinquished by the minerals industry following the introduction of the QPA Four Point Plan include:

**Arenig Quarry - Snowdonia**

**Blaen Onneu Quarry - Brecon Beacons**

**Cawdor Quarry - Peak District**

**Coolscar Quarry - Yorkshire Dales**

**Furness Quarry - Peak District**

**Hartington Quarry - Peak District**

**Hartshead Quarry - Peak District**

**Helwith Bridge Quarry - Yorkshire Dales**

**Hillhead Quarry – Peak District**

**Isle of Skye Quarry - Peak District**

**Old Ingleton Quarry - Yorkshire Dales**

**Ribblehead Quarry - Yorkshire Dales**

**Yatt's Brow Quarry - North York Moors**

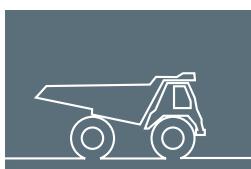
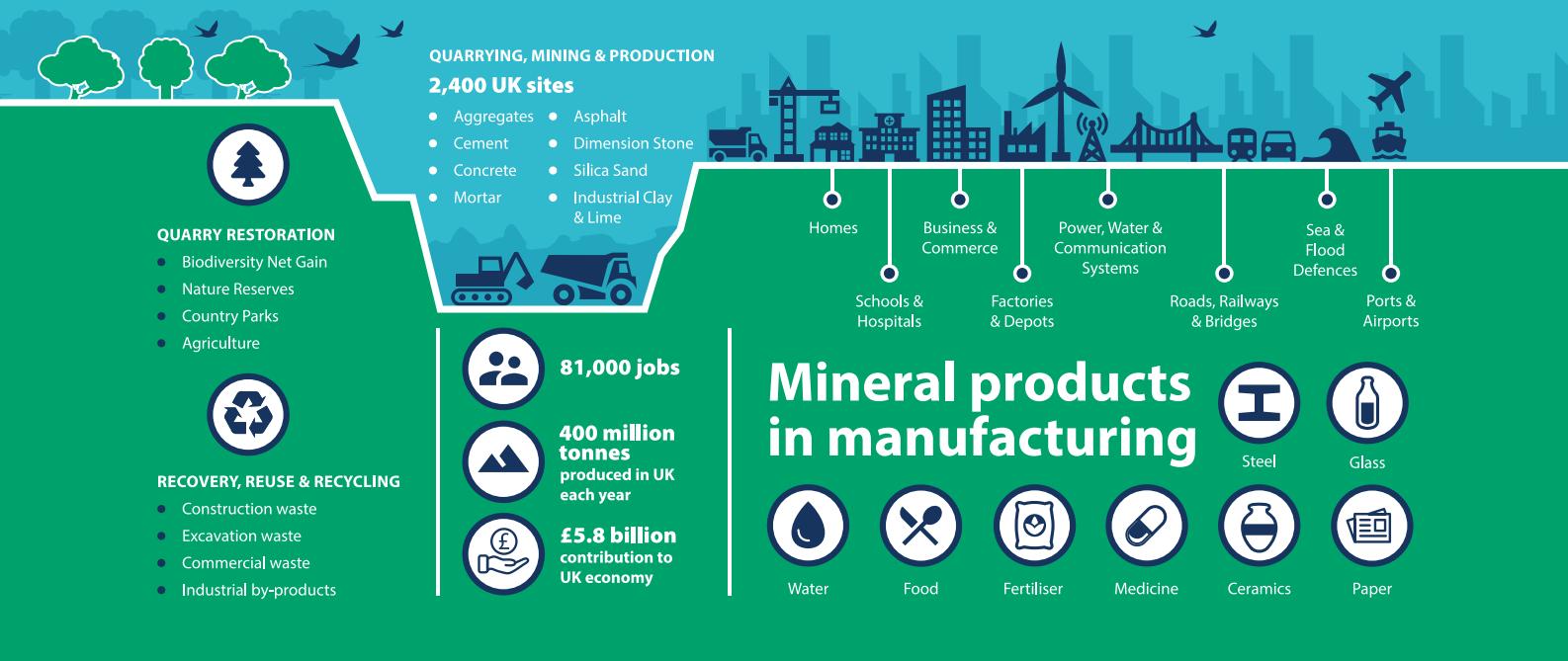
**Three further areas of minerals permissions were relinquished by china clay operators in the Dartmoor National Park.**



## **References**

- <sup>1</sup> Minerals & Aggregate Extraction in High Peak & Derbyshire Dales Economic Impact Assessment, June 2017
- <sup>2</sup> Derbyshire and Derby Minerals Local Plan, Towards a Minerals Local Plan: Spring 2018 Consultation, Background Paper Spatial Context, December 2017
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://gov.wales/planning-policy-wales>

# Mineral products in construction



**400mt**

GB production of aggregates and manufactured mineral products (GB)



**4 times**

The volume of energy minerals produced in the UK including oil, gas and coal



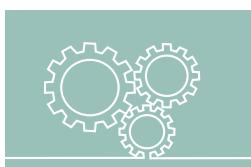
**£16bn**

Annual turnover for the Minerals and Mineral Products industry (UK)



**£5.8bn**

Gross value added generated by the industry (UK)



**£597bn**

Annual turnover of the industries we supply (UK)



**81,000**

People employed in the industry (UK)



**£172bn**

Value of construction, output, our main customer (UK)



**3.5m**

Jobs supported through our supply chain (UK)

The Mineral Products Association is the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, dimension stone, lime, mortar and silica sand industries.

For further MPA information visit [www.mineralproducts.org](http://www.mineralproducts.org)

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*Mineral Products: essential for schools... hospitals... homes... roads... railways... energy supply... airports... ports... food... water... agriculture*