

MINERALS

Draft NPF4 supports the provision of raw materials for manufacturing, construction, agriculture and other industries. The planning system should safeguard important mineral resources and balance the provision of sufficient resources with minimising impacts on the environment and local communities.

Local Development Plans should:

- support the 10 year landbank at all times in the relevant market areas while promoting sustainable resource management.

Development proposals:

- for the sustainable extraction of aggregates should be supported where they:
 - will not result in adverse impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment, sensitive habitats and the historic environment;
 - provide an adequate buffer zone between sites and settlements;
 - demonstrate acceptable impacts on nearby homes, local communities and sensitive receptors and designations;
 - demonstrate acceptable levels of noise, dust, vibration and potential pollution of land, air and water;
 - minimise transport impacts;
 - have appropriate mitigation plans in place for adverse impacts; and
 - include schemes for a high standard of restoration and aftercare, and a commitment to undertake it at the earliest opportunity, including financial guarantee options;
- that seek to explore, develop and produce fossil fuels (excluding unconventional oil and gas) should not be supported other than in exceptional circumstances (which must demonstrate the proposal is consistent with national energy policy and greenhouse gas emission targets);
- for borrow pits should be supported where it is a specific, time-limited project, where the operator is required to comply with the mineral extraction criteria and appropriate restoration proposals are enforceable;

The Scottish Government does not support the development of unconventional oil and gas - development connected to the onshore exploration, appraisal or production of coal bed methane or shale oil or shale gas using unconventional extraction techniques, including hydraulic fracturing and dewatering for coal bed methane.

Responses to the Position Statement

There was support for NPF4 including a clear strategy for sustainable minerals supply, and reflecting the fact there is only limited coal extraction in Scotland. There

was support for the current moratorium on unconventional extraction of coal and gas and a suggestion that NPF4 should clarify the Government's position.

Policy changes

The proposals for mineral extraction in Draft NPF4 build on the principles outlined in NPF3 and SPP which noted that minerals will be required as construction materials and facilitating their responsible use. In order to help meet Scotland's commitment to net zero, NPF4 introduces a change in policy around the exploitation of coal, oil and gas from that expressed previously, by explicitly withdrawing support for developments which seek to explore, develop and produce fossil fuels. It also includes a clear statement opposing unconventional oil and gas extraction.