

Policy 3: Safeguarding Minerals of Local and National Importance and Important Infrastructure

Safeguarding mineral resources

3.1 The following mineral resources, within the Mineral Safeguarding Areas shown on the Policies and Proposals Map, will be safeguarded against needless sterilisation by non-mineral development:

- a) Sand and gravel
- b) Limestone
- c) Cement shale
- d) Etruria Formation clays
- e) Anhydrite and gypsum
- f) Hollington Formation building stones
- g) Silica sand associated with the Rough Rock Formation
- h) Shallow coal with associated fireclays

3.2 Within a Mineral Safeguarding Area, non-mineral development except for those types of development set out in appendix 6, should not be permitted until the prospective developer has produced evidence prior to determination of the planning application to demonstrate:

- a) the existence, the quantity, the quality and the value of the underlying or adjacent mineral resource; and
- b) that proposals for non-mineral development in the vicinity of permitted mineral sites or mineral site allocations would not unduly restrict the mineral operations.

3.3 Within a Mineral Safeguarding Area, where important mineral resources do exist, except for those types of development set out in appendix 6, non-mineral development should not be permitted unless it has been demonstrated that:

- a) the non-mineral development is temporary and does not permanently sterilise the mineral; or,
- b) the material planning benefits of the non-mineral development would outweigh the material planning benefits of the underlying or adjacent mineral; or,
- c) it is not practicable or environmentally acceptable in the foreseeable future to extract the mineral.

Policy 3: Safeguarding Minerals of Local and National Importance and Important Infrastructure (continued)

3.4 Within a Mineral Safeguarding Area, where important minerals do exist and the above criteria have not been met, the non-mineral development except for those types of development set out in appendix 6, should not be permitted unless the development includes provision for the extraction of the mineral prior to the development being implemented.

Safeguarding important mineral infrastructure sites

3.5 Where there are mineral infrastructure sites used for mineral processing, handling, and transportation, except for those types of development set out in appendix 6, non-mineral development should not be permitted unless it has been demonstrated that:

- a) **the non-mineral development would not unduly restrict the use of the mineral infrastructure site; or**
- b) **the material planning benefits of the non-mineral development would outweigh the material planning benefits of the mineral infrastructure site; or,**
- c) **the mineral infrastructure can be relocated; or**
- d) **alternative capacity can be provided elsewhere.**

Reasons for the Policy

7.21 National policy requires that mineral safeguarding areas are designated which “cover known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development”¹ and also requires local planning authorities to safeguard mineral infrastructure used for processing, handling and transporting minerals.² In accordance with our Vision and Strategic Objective 1, Policy 3 aims to achieve an acceptable balance between non-mineral development and safeguarding Staffordshire’s important minerals and mineral infrastructure sites.

7.22 Policy 3 aims to safeguard a range of mineral resources that are considered to be of economic importance within the foreseeable future but not limited to the timeframe of the Plan and takes into account a review of mineral resources in the county produced by the British Geological Survey (BGS) in 2006³. As explained in the BGS report, each mineral resource area is protected by a

¹ Refer to [Annex 2: glossary of the NPPF](#)

² Refer to bullet point 4 of paragraph 143 of the NPPF.

³ [“Provision of Geological Information and a Revision of Mineral Consultation Areas for Staffordshire County Council” \(2006\)](#) – British Geological Survey

buffer zone which has been determined through consultation with the minerals industry and is used to define the MSA. MSAs are also defined where resources are found within urban areas but some types of applications will be exempt from the requirements of this policy (refer to appendix 6⁴). This will reduce the number of applications that need to be referred to the Mineral Planning Authority when District Planning Authorities are assessing proposals for non-mineral development within a MSA.

- 7.23 Where mineral resources are affected by non-mineral development and there is a requirement for extraction of the mineral prior to non-mineral development taking place, proposals for prior extraction will be considered against the policies of this Plan. For example, mineral extraction could take place prior to or as part of construction works.
- 7.24 Policy 3 also aims to safeguard: mineral sites and mineral site allocations (Policy 3.2 (b)); and, mineral infrastructure sites used for mineral processing, handling, and transportation (Policy 3.5); from non-mineral development which would unduly restrict the use of those sites. To assist developers and district planning authorities in applying this policy relevant sites permitted by the County Council, together with a 250 metre consultation zone drawn around each site, will be made publicly available via our internet based mapping service and the data will be shared with the district planning authorities for their use. We will also expect the district planning authorities to apply this policy to mineral infrastructure sites that they permit in their areas e.g. stand-alone concrete batching plants and coating plants.⁵ In relation to the disused railway that connects with the Cauldon quarries, the district local plan safeguards the route and supports the reuse for commercial purposes.⁶

⁴ Refer to paragraph 5.2.7 of [“Mineral Safeguarding in England: good practice advice”\(2011\)](#) BGS

⁵ Refer to paragraph [006](#) Reference ID: 27-006-20140306 of the PPG

⁶ Refer to Policy T2 of the [Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy – March 2014](#)