

Corporate Objectives:

- 1. Reduce area and number of mineral workings and ensure that those that remain are worked to the highest modern environmental standards (Priority level 2)*
- 2. Influence national government and regional policy and other bodies on mineral working in National Parks including responding to consultation documents (Priority level 2)*

The Minerals Strategic Action Plan was produced to prioritise the wide range of work undertaken by the Authority, covering both statutory and non-statutory functions.

A significant outcome in the past year is the Authority's successful challenge to the Court of Appeal regarding the long-running legal dispute over mineral extraction on the eastern end of Longstone Edge. Although the landowner is now petitioning the European Court of Human Rights, the Court of Appeal judgement is a significant step forward in resolving this major minerals matter.

A further success on a high priority enforcement case is Smalldale Head Quarry, where a High Court challenge to the Authority's enforcement action over unauthorised limestone quarrying was dismissed in 2009. However, a challenge to that High Court decision has been lodged with the Court of Appeal and we are awaiting a final outcome to this matter.

We continue to engage at all levels on important minerals-related matters and have provided responses on two key national consultation documents in the last 12 months. The first was in connection with proposed changes to national policy statements on mineral extraction, while the second was providing specific comments on mineral extraction in protected areas, in response to a Defra consultation on National Parks.

We have continued to improve on the number of quarries working to modern environmental standards, such that 80% are now doing so. In addition, the number of quarries has reduced from 52 to 50. This has led to a modest reduction in the area of the Park being quarried, to 3,398 hectares.

The remaining Review of Old Mineral Permission (ROMP) applications are progressing. Of the 8 sites in question, five have either been granted extensions of time or held in abeyance, two sites have fallen into automatic suspension and one rests with the Secretary of State for determination. Alternative consolidating schemes are being pursued in certain cases in an effort to secure environmental gains from the rationalisation of existing planning permissions.

Monitoring of minerals sites continues to play a significant role in ensuring compliance with planning permissions. We have carried out 31 charged for monitoring visits, an increase from 19 in the previous year. In many cases, these visits have led to potential compliance issues being identified and addressed at an early stage, before they become more serious.

Looking ahead to 2010/11

We will pursue creative solutions to seek to reduce the environmental impact of four major quarries by negotiating the consolidation of permissions, exchanges or less environmentally damaging extensions.

Key actions for 2010/11 include:

- *Reviews of old mineral permissions*
- *Review and consolidate/ exchange old mineral permissions to secure modern working standards*
- *Pursue prohibition orders for dormant sites that are unlikely to re-open*
- *Pursue minerals enforcement in accordance with a robust prioritisation process*
- *Continue the enhanced levels of site monitoring*

Reviewing Old Minerals Permissions (ROMPs)

The Review of Old Minerals Permissions is a legal process allowing Mineral Planning Authorities the opportunity to review old permissions, with a view to requiring modern standards of operation. Permissions granted in the 1940's and 1950's are often relatively liberal, without the exacting environmental requirements of more modern permissions.

For over 10 years the review of old permissions was stalled, due to conflicts in government legislation. Recently, following continued requests from Mineral Planning Authorities, including ourselves, the Government provided a formal remedy in law. Legislation was enacted in July 2008 empowering Mineral Planning Authorities to suspend mineral working at sites where operators fail to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment by a specific date.

The Authority has set dates for all outstanding Assessments. As a result, 2 quarries (Barton Hill and Canyards Hill) have been put in automatic suspension, reducing the number of active quarries in the Park and one other has an extension to mid-2010.

In 4 cases, consolidation/exchange applications are being pursued as an alternative approach. In one case, where working the quarry may have a significant detrimental impact on the water environment and the associated adjoining Special Area of Conservation, an application has been submitted to work in an alternative area. Another quarry is considering taking a similar approach and the Authority has granted an extension to facilitate this process.

The Authority is working with another operator where an alternative proposal could involve changing the shape of the quarry to avoid working a sensitive area of open moorland.

At Longstone Edge East Quarry a further extension of time has been agreed to mid- June 2010 for the operators to provide the additional information. Extensions of time have been agreed on this major site to allow for enforcement and legal challenges to be resolved. The operators have requested the Review of Old Minerals Permission application be further held in abeyance pending the outcome of a petition to the European Court of Human Rights, challenging the Court of Appeal judgment. The Authority has advised the operators that unless there are justifiable reasons, it does not intend to give a further extension of time beyond 30 June 2010.

