

## Castlenavan Quarry

### The Proposal

CES Quarry Products Ltd intends to submit a planning application seeking permission to deepen and extend the existing operational quarry located at 131A Newcastle Road, Seaforde, Downpatrick, BT30 8PR.

The proposal involves three key elements:

- **Deepening** the existing quarry floor to access further reserves of gritstone.
- **Extending** the quarry westward into approximately 6 hectares of adjoining agricultural land to continue long-term extraction operations.
- **Restoring** the entire site upon completion of quarrying, with a comprehensive restoration plan designed to return the land to a beneficial after-use.

In addition, should planning permission be granted, extensive boundary planting will be carried out prior to any development on the existing greenfield land. This will significantly limit visibility into the site and reduce visual impact on the surrounding area.

A Pre-Application Notice was submitted to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council on 2 June 2025, and CES plans to follow this with a full planning application in September 2025.

### Site Description

Castlenavan Quarry is a long-established, high-quality gritstone quarry featuring a substantial processing plant and an associated concrete batching facility. The site is located off the A24 Newcastle Road, approximately 8km from Ballynahinch, and has been in continuous use as a quarry for over 40 years.

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Originally owned and operated by the Department of the Environment – Road Service, the quarry has been under the management of CES Quarry Products Ltd since the mid-1990s.

Current extraction and processing activities are authorised under three separate planning consents, the most recent of which was granted in 2016. The proposed extension and deepening of the site are essential to secure the long-term future of quarrying operations, protecting associated employment and the broader economic benefits the site provides.

It is important to note that this proposal does not seek to increase production levels. Instead, it aims to maintain existing output by accessing additional reserves. If approved, the proposed development would provide sufficient material to sustain operations for an estimated 60 more years at current extraction rates.

A Location Plan is included to show the position of the quarry in relation to the surrounding area. The Existing Site Plan outlines the full proposed application area, which encompasses all land currently under the control of CES Quarry Products Ltd.

### **Planning Context and Application Area**

The proposed application area has been carefully drawn to encompass the entire Castlenavan Quarry site, including all land currently under the control of CES Quarry Products Ltd.

While the quarry presently operates under multiple historical planning approvals, this new application seeks to consolidate operations into a single, comprehensive “masterplan” scheme. By doing so, it provides a clear & consistent planning framework for the future of the site.

This approach ensures:

- Greater **clarity** for regulators, the local community, and the operator;
- A more **streamlined** and effective set of planning **conditions**;
- Improved **monitoring and compliance**, as all activities will be governed under one unified consent.

This masterplan scheme represents a proactive step toward responsible, long-term site management and environmental accountability.

## **Project Description**

This planning application does not propose any changes to the existing methods of extraction or processing at Castlenavan Quarry.

The current production process will continue as follows:

- **Drilling and blasting** of rock to fragment the material;
- **Excavation and haulage** using dump trucks to transport the blasted rock to the processing plant;
- **Crushing and screening** in multiple stages to produce a range of graded aggregate products;
- **Stockpiling** of finished materials on the quarry floor for sale, distribution, and internal use in concrete product manufacturing.

Extraction will be carried out using industry standard slope angles, bench heights, and bench widths. All quarrying activities will be undertaken in full compliance with the relevant quarry safety regulations.

The existing processing plant, internal infrastructure, and site access from Newcastle Road will remain unchanged. Importantly, this application does not propose any extension of the current operating hours.

## **The Importance of Mineral Extraction**

Mineral extraction only takes place where there is a **clear demand** and need for the material. The minerals industry plays a vital role in supporting the economic viability of Northern Ireland and underpins a wide range of sectors, including construction, manufacturing, and infrastructure development.

The industry is also an **important local employer**, directly supporting jobs and facilitating the growth of related industries. At a time when Northern Ireland is facing a well-documented housing shortage and infrastructure deficit, the need for a reliable and sustainable supply of quality aggregates has never been greater.

Material extracted from Castlenavan Quarry is used in road-building, infrastructure, and construction projects both locally and nationally. The quarry has long-standing roots in the

local area, employing 20 full-time staff and supporting additional jobs through lorry drivers and local contractors who are engaged in the site's ongoing maintenance and operations.

The scale of demand is significant, on average, nearly **14 tonnes of aggregates are needed per person** each year in Northern Ireland. To put this into context, a typical family indirectly uses the equivalent of three lorry loads of aggregates annually.

This proposal ensures that Castlenavan Quarry can continue to produce the essential materials required to meet ongoing and future demand from the construction and agricultural sectors, helping to support growth and resilience across the region.

### **Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

Under Section 27 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, there is a statutory requirement for prospective applicants to consult the local community in advance of submitting a planning application for major development.

As part of this process, local residents within 300 metres of the proposed application area have been formally notified of the scheme. In addition, a press notice has been prepared and published in local newspapers to inform the wider community.

To ensure broader accessibility, full details of the proposal are also available online at:  
[www.six-west.com/public-consultation](http://www.six-west.com/public-consultation)

These consultation methods give all interested parties an opportunity to review the plans and provide feedback. All comments received during this pre-application stage will be carefully considered, and amendments may be made to the proposal where appropriate before the formal planning application is submitted.

Once the application is formally submitted to the Council, a further public notice will be issued, and members of the public will have the opportunity to formally support or object to the application as part of the Council's statutory planning process.

## **Environmental Considerations**

Environmental protection, sustainability, and health and safety are core priorities for CES Quarry Products Ltd. All proposed developments are guided by the company's overarching policies in these areas, reflecting our long-standing commitment to responsible operations.

The quarry has been operated to a consistently high standard, demonstrating CES's understanding of the environmental sensitivities associated with the extractive industry. Importantly, the site is not located within any designated protected environmental areas, such as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Careful consideration has been given to the relationship between on-site activities and sensitive receptors beyond the site boundary. As part of the proposal's early design, specific control measures have been incorporated to minimise off-site impact. For example, a minimum 100-metre buffer zone will be maintained for all blasting operations — in line with standard practice across hard rock quarries in Northern Ireland.

A comprehensive suite of environmental assessments will accompany the full planning application. These will cover key topics such as noise, dust, water management, ecology, traffic, and landscape impacts.

In the long term, once extraction is complete, the site will be fully restored. All plant and machinery will be removed, and a carefully designed restoration plan will be implemented to return the land to a beneficial after-use, with full consideration given to the local environment and landscape. An updated restoration plan will be included in the full planning submission.

