

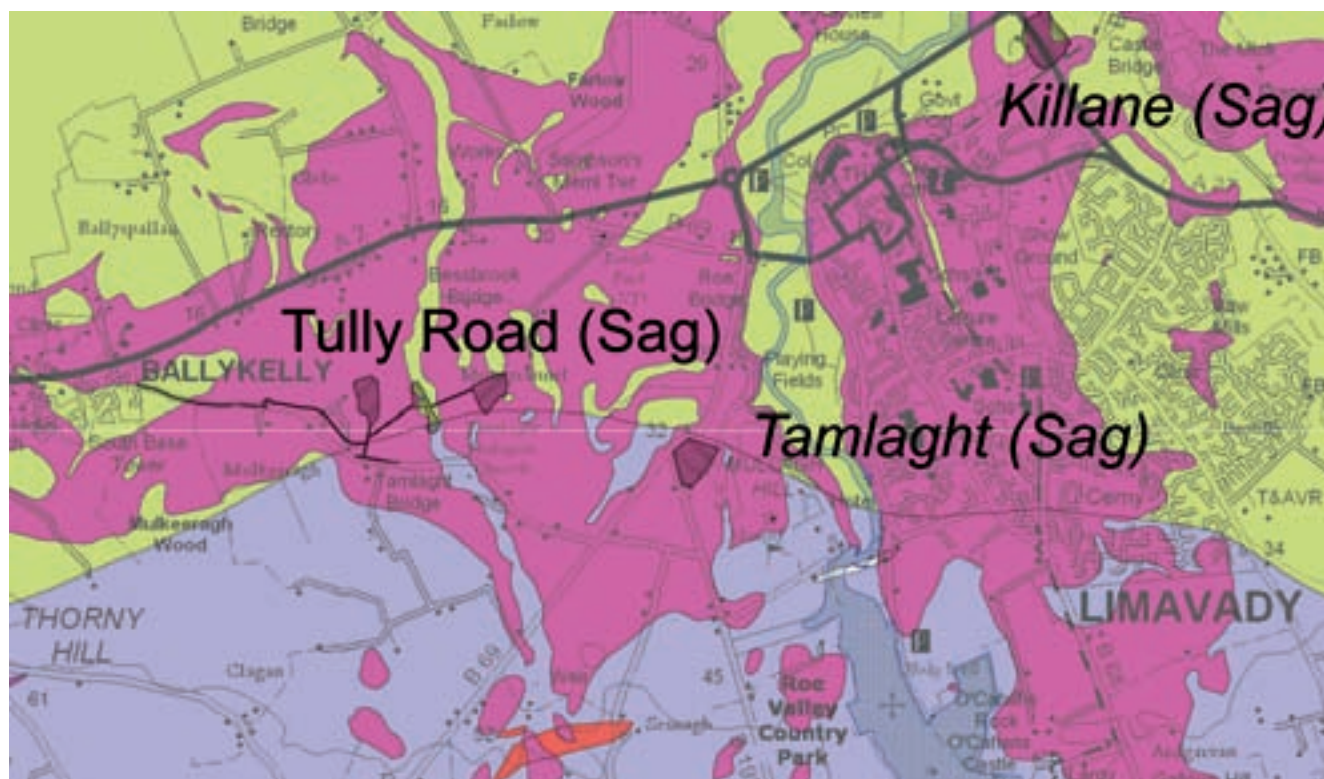
# The New Mineral Resources Map of Northern Ireland

**Although minerals underpin our economy, their extraction can impact on the environment. The new Mineral Resources Map of Northern Ireland will provide planners, industry and the wider community with a powerful new tool to assist in decision-making related to mineral supply and protection of the environment.**

A key aspect of sustainable development is the conservation and safeguarding of non-renewable resources, such as minerals. There is a need to ensure that these resources are not needlessly sterilised by other development thus leaving insufficient supplies for future generations.

Following a commission from the Department of the Environment, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment based Geological Survey of Northern Ireland has been working with its counterpart, the British Geological Survey, to produce a Mineral Resources Map of Northern Ireland.

The map is intended to assist strategic decision-making in respect of mineral extraction and the protection of important mineral resources against sterilisation. The map has been produced by the collation and interpretation of mineral resource data principally held



Extract from the Mineral Resources Map of Northern Ireland showing the mineral resources around Limavady and Ballykelly. Superficial sand and gravel resources (pink), sandstone (green) and psammitic rocks (purple) along with a small igneous intrusion (red) are depicted. Also shown are the River Roe Special Area of Conservation / Area of Special Scientific Interest along with the extant Tully Road and expired Tamlaght and Killane sand and gravel mineral planning permissions

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Sand and gravel extraction

The Mineral Resources Map of Northern Ireland comprises six sheets, one for each county (including county boroughs) at a scale of 1:100,000. The mineral resource data depicted on these maps are also available in a digital format for use within a Geographical Information System (GIS).

Mineral resources are valuable national assets and are vital to a modern economy. They are essential raw materials, which underpin many industries including manufacturing, construction, power generation and transportation. Global competition for mineral supplies is increasing. Indigenous mineral resources are, therefore, critical to the development of a sustainable economy and it makes good sense to use them where it is economically viable and environmentally sustainable to do so. Northern Ireland's varied geology means it has significant potential for a wide range of mineral resources including aggregates, industrial minerals, precious and base metals and fossil fuels. Minerals, especially aggregates, make a vital contribution to the economy of Northern Ireland.

Effective planning for the sustainable development of mineral resources in Northern Ireland requires knowledge of both their extent and location. The mineral resources map will allow all stakeholders to visualise the distribution of mineral resources and to relate them to other forms of land-use (such as urban areas or nature conservation areas) or to other factors (such as transport infrastructure). Specifically, the mineral resources map, along with the digital data set which underpins it, is required by planners when developing spatial plans.

Once published, the Mineral Resources Map of Northern Ireland will be made available for viewing on the Department of the Environment website.

by the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland. As such it brings together a wide range of information, much of which was not always available in a convenient form.