The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland and counterpart The British Geological Survey have produced the maps via a broadscale mapping exercise. This exercise formed part of the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland)’s (DoE’s) Minerals Sectoral Assessment 2009 – 2011. The maps should not be used to determine individual planning applications or in taking other decisions on the acquisition or development of mineral resources. The maps are intended to provide general information on the distribution and extent of mineral resources and may be reproduced free of charge in any form and by any means for educational and non-commercial purposes.

The purpose of the maps in this series, therefore, is to show the broad distribution of mineral resources, to indicate the limitations of mineral resources in terms of exploitable reserves and to present context information on other features of geological interest. The maps are at 1:25,000 scale and are not intended to be used for determining the quality of mineral resources which may vary locally.

During the distribution of the Mineral Resource Maps of Northern Ireland, the Mineral Legislation (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 was introduced which, amongst other things, introduced the concept of environmental protection zones. The maps are a valuable resource for those identifying potential areas suitable for mineral resource extraction. They are also useful for those identifying the environmental protection zones and determining the implications of the Order on mineral resource extraction.

The maps cover Northern Ireland, and each map area corresponds to an Ordnance Survey and Environment Agency unit area. These are based on the Local Government (Planning and Development) (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 and include the names of the Civil parishes and the Lower and Upper areas. As a consequence, it can be useful to refer to the Ordnance Survey and Environment Agency documentation for further information.

There are extensive resources of peat in County Tyrone, and several extant planning permissions for commercial extraction of peat. Peat is a product of the decay of vegetation in a bog or moss. Bogs occur in areas where they are dependent on rainfall for supply of water or in sedimentary basins in which groundwater percolation is slow. Peat is classified into four categories based on age and texture: recent peat (up to 2000 years old), shallow humic peat (2000 to 20,000 years old), acid peat (20,000 to 100,000 years old), and pale peat (100,000 years or older).

There are significant deposits of limestone in counties Tyrone and Fermanagh. These are in the Lough Neagh region and are part of the Ulster White Limestone Formation. The overlying Armagh Group is worked with an associated clay shale for cement production near Cookstown. The Ulster White Limestone Formation is an extremely hard, high purity product (>97% CaCO₃). This Cretaceous-age rock is extensively used in building. It is likely that more pelitic units would have furnished roofing slates, although this source of slate seems to be limited.

The presence of these operations generally reflect very local or specific situations. The type of quarrying activity undertaken varies with the type of mineral present, but usually involves the use of blast holes and explosives. The products of quarrying range from crushed stone and gravel for road/rail base with predictable, uniform properties, to sand and gravel for building aggregate. Volcanic rocks from the same complex are quarried in the Omagh area. It is likely that more pelitic units would have furnished roofing slates, although this source of slate seems to be limited.