

DALRADIAN: THE FACTS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY



Although the idea of gold mining at Curraghinalt dates back at least 30-years, Dalradian appreciates that our proposals have raised interest in what modern mining operations entail. We have sought to address those questions through a variety of methods, including public consultations, tunnel tours and press articles.

As part of the planning process Dalradian has also provided detailed explanations of its proposals to over 30 regulatory and statutory bodies, from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) through to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Northern Ireland Water.

As it should be, this is a thorough and rigorous process that subjects every element of the project to public scrutiny, and assesses it against strict planning and environmental standards. This degree of scrutiny should address misconceptions about the level to which the project is accountable.

MISCONCEPTION: The planning process is too quick

FACT: Dalradian's engagement with local residents and authorities began almost a decade ago in 2009 when we acquired the project. That exploratory stage was guided and subjected to strict licence conditions stipulated by the then Department for the Environment (DoE).

Curraghinalt has been identified as a regionally significant project - offering a 20-25 year lifespan which will make it a transformative economic project for the local area.

As Dalradian will be part of the community for the long-term we are committed to getting the planning process right and providing authorities with everything they need to assess the project.

The current planning process began in 2015 with meetings and discussions with DfI (formerly DoE) to establish preliminary project designs and important environmental / social issues. DfI responded officially in August 2016 and pre-application meetings continued to revisit key issues as the project design developed.

Before planning was submitted in November 2017 Dalradian and its consultants met with the authorities on over 40 separate occasions; we also held two sets of public consultations in January and November 2016 consisting of seven individual events.

Since then DfI and its consultees have been scrutinising the planning application. This is an evolving process of providing clarifications and answering questions. It will also generate new information and further consultations and reviews. As another level of scrutiny, DfI is likely to refer the project to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC), an independent body, to hear and report on a Public Inquiry. This was recommended by the then Minister, Chris Hazzard, a view also endorsed by Dalradian in January 2017.

MISCONCEPTION: There is not enough scrutiny

FACT: As with all major investment projects, Dalradian's proposals are, quite properly, subject to intense scrutiny. This is reflected in the level of detail contained in the planning application which includes:

- 10,000 pages
- 40 expert reports from internationally recognised environmental consulting firms
- 150 separate drawings

Dalradian has also undertaken baseline studies by specialists to provide information on the project's

environmental / social setting. Many of these have extended over multiple seasons and they cover 14 separate disciplines ranging from ecology to health to soil. The studies have informed multiple impact assessments and the measures required to manage them.

MISCONCEPTION: Mining operations aren't regulated enough

FACT: Much of our application concerns environmental aspects over the life of the mine, including restoration and aftercare. We address topics such as air quality and noise, water, health (including human and animal welfare), ecology, economics, landscape and visual impacts, traffic, closure and reclamation.

Mining and the environment are heavily regulated by the EU and the UK with measures such as the European Water Framework or the European Habitats Directive. The UK Government has already committed to adopt these into UK law following Brexit.

The planning application includes a Pre-application Community Consultation Report, a Design & Access Statement and an Environmental Statement. Further supporting information includes a Statement of Economic Impacts, a Transport Assessment and a Mine Waste Management Plan.

These reports, all publicly available, will help the PAC and subsequently DfI, make a decision on the planning application, taking account of planning policy and other considerations. In addition to planning permission, which will be the subject of planning conditions regulating the development, the construction and operation of the project will require a series of further consents, permits and licences that will themselves involve further scrutiny and provide additional regulation.

DfI and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs are responsible for regulating and assessing the project, drawing upon both in-house and external expertise as required.

MISCONCEPTION: The public don't get enough say

The authorities have set out what level of public scrutiny regionally significant projects such as Dalradian's should provide - we have always sought to exceed those standards.

Our application has taken several years to complete and is informed by multiple engagements and public consultations with local communities over the past number of years. These were an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback about our plans. These views helped shape the final planning application.

More than 270 people attended our two public information events and 5,000 households have been sent information about the project. We continue to engage the public with our dedicated on-site community team and have provided tunnel tours to around 1,300 people since July 2016.

Dalradian is committed to building a safe project, and we are happy to work with authorities and the local community to design processes that meet or exceed regulatory requirements.



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