

SOUTH WALES REGIONAL AGGREGATES WORKING PARTY

Minutes of meeting – 10am on Monday 19th March 2018, at The Innovation Centre, Bridgend

Present:

Llinos Quelch – Carmarthenshire CC (Chair)
Hugh Towns – Carmarthenshire CC (Secretary)
Justin Waite – Blaenau Gwent CBC
Jonathan Parsons – Bridgend CBC
Ruth Amundson – Caerphilly CBC
Tom Boothroyd – Carmarthenshire CC
Ffion Morgan – Carmarthenshire CC
Graham Dorrington – Ceredigion CC
Nick Horsley – MPA
Mike McGee - MPA
Sarah Jones – Monmouthshire CC
Carl Comerford – Neath Port Talbot CBC
Bob Smith – Pembrokeshire CC
Phil Ratcliffe – Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC
Adrian Wilcock – Torfaen CBC
Joanne Smith – WG
Gareth Dudley-Jones - WG

1. Apologies:

Murray Alston – BAA
Stuart Williams – Cardiff C
Ruth Henderson – CC Swansea
John Raine – Merthyr Tydfil CBC
Malcolm Lawer - MPA
Mark Russell – MPA
Gary Nancarrow – North Wales RAWP Secretary
Richard James – Pembrokeshire Coast NPA
Peter Morris – Powys CC

2. Minutes of the SWRAWP Meeting 25th September 2017

The minutes were accepted as a correct record with the addition of Mark Frampton added to the list of attendees.

3. Matters Arising

Arising from Item 9, it was confirmed that an NCG was held on 11th October 2017. The industry has significant concerns about the reduction in the support for minerals at DCLG. Peter Latham at DCLG attended the NCG and asked for feedback but he has already moved on. It is understood that minerals is now allocated just 0.1 FTE staff resource. It is concerning that there is a requirement for 3 – 4 billion tonnes of aggregate to deliver what the Government wants to deliver by 2030, approximately 1 million tonnes per day, and there doesn't seem to be a realisation in DCLG that the MASS needs to be supported in order to achieve that. Replenishment rates for hard rock in England are at about 110% but for sand and gravel its 60%. This may result in additional pressures on marine resources or pressure on Welsh resources due to lack of adequate provision in England. WG confirmed that they have concerns about the position in England.

4. North Wales RAWP Update

Unfortunately, Gary Nancarrow was not able to attend the meeting due to illness.

5. South Wales RAWP Update

The AS2015 Report was published in December 2017.

The Draft AS2016 Report has been produced and was circulated with the Agenda. Sales of Primary Aggregates declined in 2016 for the first time since 2012 - from 9.71 million tonnes in 2015 to 9.5 million tonnes in 2016.

Sales of crushed rock increased by 430,000 tonnes in South East Wales but declined elsewhere. Sales of Marine Sand and Gravel however decreased in SE Wales by 190,000 tonnes but were stationary in SW Wales. The MPA asked whether arisings from harbour dredging were part of the total. The Secretary confirmed that data in relation to harbour dredging was not currently collected.

Land won S&G exclusively produced in SW Wales also decreased by 110,000 tonnes, one site has moved production from Aggs to Non-Aggs which accounts for the decline. The MPA advised that there is some uncertainty in determining which end uses count as aggregate and which do not. The consensus of the meeting was that anything that qualified for Aggregate Tax should be considered as aggregate. There has also been a move towards using crushed rock fines in concrete as a substitute for sand which may account for some of the changes evident in 2016 sales.

Only Blaenau Gwent and RCT have crushed rock reserves of less than 25 years but both have allocations within their LDP. Only Ceredigion has a S&G landbank of less than 22 years but also has allocations in its LDP. GD asked for it to be noted that Ceredigion is the only LPA outside the PCNPA with a major supplier.

Powys, Blaenau Gwent, RCT and Cardiff had crushed rock sales in excess of the annualised apportionment in the RTS. These 4 LPA's plus Bridgend and BBNPA have 3-year average production figures in excess of the 10 year average production.

Sales of secondary aggregate were up by almost 500,000 tonnes.

The MPA requested that comparison tables are inserted where comparisons are being made in the supporting text.

AW advised that Rachel Jowitt is now the lead officer in Torfaen.

Subject to the amendments set out above being made, it was agreed that the AS2016 Report be published.

6. RTS 2nd Review

WG confirmed that funding was in place to progress with the RTS Review. A specification has been produced, based around the outputs of the Technical Group. Final clearance to publish the tender is awaited but it is expected that it will be published shortly.

7. WG Update

The revised PPW is out for consultation. It looks very different but that is deliberate. The driver is compliance with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act which forces different behaviours. Currently the Future Generations Commissioners mailbag is 90% planning related. Development has to be considered in a more integrated way and PPW is designed to be read as a whole rather than be set out in specific chapters for each type of development. The document has stripped out duplication and stripped out process, which will go into the Development Management Manual and the Development Plans Manual. Consultation runs until 18th May 2018.

Consultation on the NDF preferred option is due out in April 2018.

The Law Commission Consultation closed on 1st March 2018 and the responses are currently being analysed. The MPA expressed disappointment that the process didn't seem to be about improving the planning process but merely about consolidation of existing process and removing irrelevant material.

8. NRW Update

There was no-one present from NRW to provide an update.

Concern was expressed about the potential impact of the removal of the quarry de-watering exemption on landbanks and consented aggregate reserves in some areas. A meeting with NRW to discuss the possible implications would be useful in order to get a better handle on the potential impact on resources.

9. MPA/BAA Report

Asphalt sales increased by 0.1% increase in 2017. MPA economists predict a flat 2018 with a slight increase in 2019 and 4% increase in 2020. Ready mixed concrete sales decreased by 2.6% in 2017 and are predicted to level out in 2018. The biggest drop in sales was related to sand and gravel due to crushed rock fines replacing sand in concrete.

The MPA is lobbying for the Aggregates Levy Fund to be reinstated on the back of the DEFRA 25 year plan having a 'community focus'. Aggregates Tax may be a devolved tax going forward.

MPA/RTPI Conference to be held on 24th May 2018.

The Minerals Strategy is to be launched at Living with Minerals 6 scheduled for 10th July 2018.

There is an Extractive Industries Geology Conference scheduled for 12-14 September 2018

10. Marine Dredging Update

There was no-one present to provide an update on the current position.

The Welsh National Marine Plan consultation is ongoing and closes on 29th March 2018. Concern was expressed about the unwieldy nature of the Plan and what was and wasn't 'policy'. Policies are set out in the Plan but it also states that the reasoned justification is also policy even though in some cases it appears to go beyond the scope of the policy itself. Concern was also expressed about overlapping Strategic Resource Areas and the overlap in the Integrated Coastal Zone between high and low water mark. The Plan also introduces confusion in relation to the status of iMADP which is identified as withdrawn as well as being a document which needs to be considered. It cannot be both.

11. Secondary Aggregates

There was no-one present to provide an update on secondary aggregates.

12. LDP Update

Carmarthenshire – The Delivery Agreement is out for consultation. The call for Candidate Sites is also out at the same time and extends until the end of May 2018. WG's request to consider a Joint LDP didn't work in terms of timescales.

Ceredigion – The Review Report was published in November 2017. The start date for the Review is 1st April 2018 and the Plan runs until March 2033. Consultation on Delivery Agreement ended in December and DA has been submitted to WG.

Blaenau Gwent – The Review Report was published in the Autumn of 2017 and indicated a full plan revision was required. The preference is an SDP with an LDP Lite. The Council is open to a joint LDP lite. The current plan expires in 2021.

Caerphilly – the Council has authorised the review to commence. The current plan ends in 2021 but the Council wants clarity on an SDP before committing significant resources.

Bridgend – LDP expires 2021 so declined WG’s request to consider a joint LDP with neighbours as plans were at a different stage. The Plan has been quite successful so sites are running out and a review is necessary. At officer level Bridgend are committed to the SDP process and work on that has commenced.

Neath Port Talbot – Neath Port Talbot – First AMR published in October 2017. The 2018 AMR is likely to flag some issues such as the rate of housing delivery and outline a much more challenging position on LDP delivery.

Pembrokeshire – Review commenced in May 2017. Draft Delivery Agreement and Review Report consultation closed on 5th January 2018. Evidence base is to be reviewed. Candidate Site process to commence on 22 March and end on 14th June 2018. The Council is looking for sand and gravel sites. No appetite for a Joint LDP at this stage.

RCT – Expecting an SDP for the South East Wales Region. Not currently progressing with a review. No appetite for a joint LDP.

Torfaen – don’t want to work with neighbours on a joint LDP due to timeframes and LDP ends in 2021. However, the Council will work with Monmouthshire as much as possible. Review Report and draft Delivery Agreement out for consultation in April. There is pressure on employment and open space.

Monmouthshire – consultation on Review Report and Delivery Agreement shortly. Looking to submit the DA to WG in May. Council to endorse working on SDP and will be working with Torfaen and other adjacent authorities as much as possible.

PCNPA – Deposit Plan being reported to Committee.

Swansea – LDP examination ongoing.

Powys – Inspectors Report received.

13. Major Projects Update

There are two current applications in Pembrokeshire going through the DNS process - a 49.9 Mw biomass energy plant at Blackbridge, Milford Haven and a Cogen Plant at Valero Oil Refinery, Milford Haven.

Work will commence shortly on the Cwmbran Hospital development.

14. Any Other Business

No other business

15. Date of next meeting – 10am on Monday 8th October 2018 at the Innovation Centre, Bridgend