

SOUTH WALES REGIONAL AGGREGATES WORKING PARTY

Minutes of meeting – 10am on Monday 21st March 2016, at The Innovation Centre, Bridgend

Present:

Martin Hooker – Consultant (Chair)
Hugh Towns – Carmarthenshire CC (Secretary)
Susan Jones – Bridgend CBC
Murray Alston - BAA
Ruth Amundson – Caerphilly CBC
Tom Boothroyd – Carmarthenshire CC
Ffion Morgan – Carmarthenshire CC
Graham Dorrington – Ceredigion CC
Ken Hobden – MPA
Mark Frampton - MPA
Ceri Morris – Neath Port Talbot CBC
Carl Comerford – Neath Port Talbot CBC
Gary Nancarrow – North Wales RAWP Secretary
Adam Turner – Pembrokeshire CC
Owen Jones – Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC
Adrian Wilcock – Torfaen County Borough Council
Steve Bool – WG

1. Apologies:

Ruth Henderson – Swansea CC
Mark Russell – MPA
Martin Davies – Monmouthshire CC
Lindsay Christian - Newport City Council
Richard James – Pembrokeshire Coast NPA
John Raine – Vale of Glamorgan C
Joanne Smith – WG
Stuart Williams – Cardiff CC

2. Minutes of the SWRAWP Meeting 14th September 2015

The minutes were accepted as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

Section 6 – there was no-one in attendance from NRW to give an update on the Environment Bill, which is due to receive Royal Assent in April 2016. The Industry is concerned about the way in which the interface between natural resource planning and the planning system is going to operate and that the primacy of the planning system is at risk. WG are currently considering how the content of the Environment Bill is going to be transposed and the interface with

planning legislation given all the changes in the planning system resulting from the Planning Act 2015 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. Added to that the EU are considering identifying mineral resources of strategic importance and potentially elevating these resources to the same level of protection as Natura 2000 sites. It was suggested that a presentation from NRW at the RTPI/MPA Conference on 18th May in London may be useful. The MPA agreed to take that suggestion back to the organising committee.

Section 6 – there is still a risk that the plan-led system in England will disappear but the risk appears to have reduced. The AWP contracts have been renewed until 2018 albeit that there are break clauses at the end of every year. The MPA are confident that the Government has finally made the link between their aspirations for house building and the importance of a steady supply of minerals. However, the minerals and waste team in DCLG has been reduced to 2 people.

Section 7 – the MPA requested a copy of the SPG on Safeguarding and Prior Extraction produced by Newport CC.

4. South Wales RAWP Update

The contract for 2015-16 comes to an end on 31st March 2016. Carmarthenshire County Council has submitted a grant bid for 2016-17 which is under consideration. However, there is no indication that WG will withdraw funding for the RAWP's.

The Annual Survey forms for 2015 will be issued in May 2016 with a view to getting the returns submitted over the summer period.

5. North Wales RAWP Update

Output appears to be steadily increasing for both crushed rock and S&G. Crushed rock reserves are comfortable. S&G reserves look good on paper but there is a significant locational disparity with 90% of the reserve being at a single site.

Flintshire is way ahead of any other county in terms of production and that appears to reflect its proximity to the markets in Manchester, where construction is booming, and the Mersey Gateway. Gwynedd used to be a major producer but it is lagging behind in terms of the recovery. Haulage costs would appear to be a factor.

6. Aggregate Reserve and Industrial Reserve

The Inspector at the Vale of Glamorgan LDP Examination recently considered the issue of how to deal with the reserves at quarries where the mineral was suitable for both aggregate and industrial mineral uses. The Inspector's clear opinion was that the split of reserves should be made on current evidence and based on what the industry is telling the LPA is happening and the current likelihood of industrial mineral sales. The LDP should include monitoring arrangements and adjustments should be made as necessary during the monitoring process.

It is national policy that high specification aggregate should not be wasted by using it for lower specification uses therefore it is important that the landbank reflects the actual position and does not overly rely on high specification mineral for general aggregate. Doing so would lead to a danger of under provision.

The Inspector also placed great weight on the fact that the RTS had been endorsed by the LPA and WG. In his view this fact meant that the RTS could not be corrected even though all parties agreed there were errors in it. He considered that the only amendments that could be considered were evidence that was not available at the time of the RTS endorsement.

It was agreed that given the emphasis that the Inspector placed to the RTS there was a need for the SWRAWP to commence work on time-lining the next revision due in 2019. It was agreed that a sub-committee be set up to progress this work comprising the Chair, Secretary and representatives of industry, LPA's and WG. If possible this should be at an all Wales level. The NWRAWP was meeting on 18th April 2016 and will discuss the issue.

7. AS2014

The MPA considers that the AS2014 should not be published until the Inspector makes his Report on the Vale of Glamorgan LDP available, in order to avoid inaccuracies in the reporting of aggregate/non-aggregate reserves. The MPA had submitted detailed comments to support their view. The Secretary indicated that the Report is based on figures provided by the Industry and therefore figures would be as industry has reported. The Report is also for 2014 and should reflect the position as it was then. However, the raw data could be checked to ensure there was no clear discrepancy and if necessary the data could be caveated. The Secretary also advised that it was a requirement of the contract with WG that an Annual Report is published. Any decision on delaying the publication of the report would have to be made by WG. WG to advise on course of action. The MPA requested that if the SWRAWP decided to publish the Annual Report then it should be made clear that the MPA did not support it together with their reasons for not supporting it.

8. WG Update

Neil Hemmington of WG addressed the MPA Wales Conference in relation to the implementation of the requirements contained within the Planning Act 2015. The details on pre-application requirements have been introduced although it is unclear whether these apply to ROMP submissions. It has not been determined whether mineral applications will be DNS although the collaborative working arrangements appear to be working well. It is also unclear as to whether minerals will sit within any Strategic Development Plans.

MPPW has been subsumed into PPW as Chapter 14. The review of PPW to reflect recent legislative changes is ongoing.

Work is ongoing in relation to the implementation of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015. Key aspects for minerals will be the requirements for pre-application discussions and the scope for major mineral applications being included as developments of national significance (DNS).

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 comes into force on 1st April 2016.

The Environment Bill has passed through its stages and is scheduled to receive Royal Assent in April 2016.

Work is proceeding in relation to LGR but further development will be post WG elections in May 2016.

All LPS's are encouraged to respond to the consultation on water abstraction which seeks to bring formerly exempt activities under the new licensing scheme.

9. MPA/BAA Report

The upturn in activity is continuing and the MPA are taking an optimistic view about the future. The MPA are looking at scenario planning in terms of potential changes in supply patterns as the country emerges from the recession.

Replenishment rates of crushed rock in the UK are generally on a par with production but for S&G the replenishment rate is less than 50% of what is being used.

The MPA has produced a number of reports which are available on the MPA website. The AMP report contains useful statistics.

The Industry is concerned about the implications of the Water Abstraction Licensing changes currently being consulted upon. The MPA position is that introducing further regulation is pointless as the protection of water resources is already covered by the planning permission and planning conditions/legal agreements. DEFRA argued that the WFD requires it but they have backed away from that position under challenge from the MPA. They are now arguing sustainability although the MPA argues that its not sustainable to elevate water considerations above all the other sustainable development considerations. The changes may also lead to additional unintended environmental consequences.

The MPA has been participating in the Cutting Red Tape challenge in England and finally Ministers appear to have understood the repetition and waste that the various regulatory regimes introduce. Ministers appear to be receptive to the idea of a banking system whereby operators can 'bottom out' an issue once and then bank that issue for use in other regulatory systems. The MPA has some concerns about totally front loading the system as there are business risks in doing that as they would be making a significant investment without any comfort that they would get a 'permit to work'.

10. Marine Dredging Update

The MPA advised that nothing significant has changed since the last meeting.

The Review of IMADP is ongoing and consultation has been undertaken in relation to Marine Plans.

11. Secondary Aggregates

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

The MPA advised that 29% of the aggregates market in GB came from secondary or recycled sources. The figure was contained within the MPA Sustainability Report.

The use of secondary aggregate in South Wales seems to have settled at around 750,000 tonnes per annum but it was twice that in 2012. No reasons for that reduction are evident.

12. LDP Update

Bridgend – don't expect to review before 2017

Torfaen – don't expect to review before 2017

Neath Port Talbot – adopted Plan in January 2016

Ceredigion – looking to review next year

RCT – in the early stages of review and preparing evidence to decide what form the review will take

Caerphilly – out to consultation on preferred sites

Pembrokeshire – looking to review next year

Carmarthenshire – plan adopted December 2014

PCNPA – in the early stages of a partial review

BBNPA – Plan adopted December 2013

Vale of Glamorgan – Examination ongoing

Powys & Swansea remain without an LDP

13. Major Projects Update

The Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon has had its DCO. It seems that the material required for construction will be sourced from coastal quarries in Scotland.

The proposed M4 Relief Road at Newport is subject to ongoing consultation with a possible start date of 2018.

Network Rail is looking at safety at its level crossings in Powys and is considering bridges to reduce safety risks.

The City Region Project had its funding announced last week. A link road to Cardiff Airport is under consideration. The Heads of the Valleys dualling is well underway.

14. Any Other Business

The Chair announced that he would be stepping down from the role at the end of 2016. He had been in the role for 20 years and felt that it was now time for someone else to take over.

Ken Hobden announced that this would be his last SWRAWP meeting and in future Nick Horsley would be attending in his place. The Chair thanked Ken for his input and sound advice over many years and wished him well for the future.

15. Date of next meeting – 10am on Monday 5th September 2016 at the Innovation Centre, Bridgend

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