

**Minutes of RTS Member Forum -**  
**31st October 2007**  
**10:30 am, Innovation Centre, Bridgend Science Park,**  
**Bridgend**

<p><b><u>Present:</u></b> -</p> <p><b>Members:</b> - Cllr R Burns – Bridgend County Borough Council Cllr G Caron – Torfaen County Borough Council Cllr A Robinson- City and Council of Swansea Cllr P Seaman – BBNPA Cllr A W Jones – Carmarthenshire County Council Cllr R R Hayes – Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority</p> <p><b>Officers:</b> - M Hooker - Bridgend County Borough Council S Bool, (Secretary) - Bridgend County Borough Council L Christian – Newport City Council A Wilcock – Torfaen County Borough Council M Davies – Monmouthshire County Council M Lucas - Vale of Glamorgan Council S Williams - Cardiff County Council C Morgan – BBNPA C Warburton – Welsh Assembly Government S Martin – Welsh Assembly Government O Jones – Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council N Morgan – Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council H Towns - Carmarthenshire County Borough Council C A Williams - Pembrokeshire County Council M Dunne - Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority G Dorrington – Ceredigion County Council</p> <p>Councillor R Burns introduced the purpose of the meeting to those present. The main purpose was to agree the draft RTS (as revised) for the formal consultation stage of the process..</p> <p><b>1. <u>Apologies</u></b></p> <p><b>Members:</b> - Cllr R Bevan – Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council Cllr Saxon – Monmouthshire County Council Cllr W Jones – Powys County Council Cllr H George – Pembrokeshire County Council Cllr D Games – Merthyr County Council Cllr C J Williams – Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council Cllr Heath – Newport County Council Cllr H Harris – Ceredigion County Borough Council</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> -</p>
--	-------------------------

Cllr D Lewis – Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

**Officers: -**

J Kirk – Pembrokeshire NPA  
I Thomas – National Stone Centre  
R Thomas – Vale of Glamorgan Council

**2. Minutes of the last meeting - 21/09/05**

These were agreed as a correct record.

**3. Matters Arising**

AW enquired as to why no SEA/AA had been carried out as part of the RTS process. MH responded by confirming the IMAECA assessment was an environmental assessment in itself and as the RTS did not refer specifically to individual sites, the appropriate regulations were not relevant. In addition, MH had written to the WAG setting out the reasons and no response/objection had been received.

**4. Election of Chair/Vice-Chair**

In the absence of any nominations MH confirmed that as lead authority for the SWRAWP/RTS Cllr. R Burns was happy to be nominated for Chair. Cllr Burns was duly elected as Chair but no Vice-Chair was nominated.

**5. Consideration and Approval of the Draft RTS for Consultation Purposes**

MH set out the context for the RTS.

The need for it was enshrined in MTAN1 and in principle, a more sustainable approach to mineral extraction for aggregates was sought. It was possible this would mean aggregate extraction being encouraged to move to less environmentally sensitive areas subject to local considerations being satisfied/met. SB referred to an example of the IMAECA assessment on the screen which essentially comprised of a series of red, orange and green km squares on the OS grid. The supply and demand for tonnages per MPA would then be assessed taking into account the landbank (resources with planning permission). It was evident in S. Wales, there were difficulties with apportionment due to the large number of relatively small authorities with limited number of quarries. Hence, it was difficult to achieve a regional approach.

AW raised a concern about the lack of dialogue with officers/Members over the RTS which had generated a concern in Torfaen that the RTS appeared to be based solely on consumption rather than the

environmental capacity of a particular area to meet demand. Torfaen feel they cannot readily meet their apportionment figure (5/6mt) due to environmental and topographical constraints. If they concluded that they had no appropriate resources, what would happen then? It was noted that if the RTS apportionment had been fully investigated at MPA level but no available resources could be identified after vigorous assessment this should meet the test of soundness.

MH acknowledged that each unitary authority is responsible for their own LDP but it is difficult to impose the regional planning process. A planning inspector would, however, need to be convinced that soundness of approach had been pursued in any determination. There could be a scenario where a number of authorities may conclude they are unable to accommodate any apportionment but the development plans would not be sound. GC questioned how any inspector considering LDPs on a piecemeal basis could take a regional 'holistic' view. MH responded by confirming existing quarries meet the current demand quite comfortably but the RTS still needed to be followed to ensure more sustainable patterns of supply were considered for the future.

AW queried whether or not the quarry industry were satisfied with the draft RTS and MH advised they had been fully involved with the process and notwithstanding some amendments they were happy for the draft to proceed to consultation.

LC confirmed Newport were satisfied with the process to date.

MD expressed general satisfaction but raised a query with the third bullet point of the executive summary. MH requested SM to clarify the National Park position. SM advised MPW set out clear principles, but MTAN1 contained no requirements for landbanks in National Parks. She questioned whether or not the authorities adjoining the National Parks would be happy to pick up the apportionment within the National Parks. She felt it was important to maintain an adequate supply of aggregates for the economy but it was also necessary for all of the constituent authorities of the SWRAWP to discuss/debate these types of issues to try and reach some consensus on the way forward. It was obviously undesirable to generate long transport haulage distances.

It was mooted National Parks needed to justify why they could not take up their apportionment tonnages so that adjoining authorities could justify the need to take up this additional tonnage to elected Members.

CM felt there should be discussion about the issue of gradual withdrawal of aggregate extraction from National Parks and the likelihood of this taking place. He confirmed the BBNPA would continue to oppose the safeguarding area process.

CM referred to the Torfaen objection / expression of concern, and

described the RTS process as an opportunity for local democracy to take place but against a background where fundamental changes were being proposed as to how aggregate supply was maintained in a sustainable manner. Historically the rail network, some of which survives today, serviced the majority of quarries for transportation. It is for Local Authorities to make the industry realise the importance of sustainable aggregate extraction to counter adverse impact on the environment.

AR referred to the Gower AONB and the constraints such designation placed on appropriate aggregate extraction. Consequently, Swansea needed to be made aware of the need to examine limestone or alternative resources to supply their area in a sustainable way.

HT confirmed his authority appeared to be the main recipient of the need to provide future resources currently provided by the BBNP.

NM explained the complex position regarding two high psv quarries in Neath. These quarries produce much valued high quality sandstone for export to England. This national need for material places significant demands on production as opposed to material used for local needs. In order to satisfy the proximity principle, other authorities need to look at alternative resources so that high grade material is not used for low grade uses. There is no doubt the need for general fill will increase and Neath recognise they are required to underpin the economy.

AW considered in view of the high psv streams flowing into England, was a research project needed to get a handle on the flows and the part Wales should play in providing such stone. SM felt this may be covered by the review, but the 20 – 27 mt tonnages specified in MTAN1 were not a cap but a range for demand including exports to England. Reference was made to the DCLG biennial monitoring report, which is expecting a status quo in supply patterns. SB confirmed IT had identified difficulty in obtaining valid figures from AM2005 and other sources. SB to discuss with IT.

SM highlighted the difficulty of controlling the use of high psv for solely high end use. This was essentially an efficiency issue which was difficult if not impossible to control using planning conditions / agreements. MH felt there was still an urgent need for answers to such issues and CM considered each authority must look initially at its procurement process so that only local and appropriate stone for end use should be used.

RB felt it would be useful to list all of the concerns expressed with the necessary actions. MH considered any concerns could be deferred until after the consultation period because some actions would need further research and the provisional timetable may be delayed bringing the final approval of the RTS very close to the elections next year.

**SB**

<p>It was <u>resolved</u> the consultation period should commence as soon as possible.</p>	<p><b>SB</b></p>
<p><b>6. <u>RTS Timetable</u></b></p>	
<p>(i) it was confirmed it was the intention to revise the draft RTS before circulation;  (ii) with respect to the Executive Summary, this needed slight amendment following suggested amendments from SM;</p>	
<p>SM considered a publicity launch would be appropriate but she did not wish to delay the RTS timetable by any significant amount (date to be confirmed).</p>	<p><b>SM</b></p>
<p>CW enquired as to whether or not a flier would be produced and SB confirmed it would.</p>	<p><b>SB</b></p>
<p>It was agreed there would be a <u>10</u> week consultation period.</p>	
<p>Discussion took place about the need for a RTS sub committee to consider the report of consultation prior to reporting to the main SWRAWP. It was agreed MH would consider this further but it would go straight to SWRAWP unless there were any particular and significant issues which could only be addressed by the Sub Committee.</p>	<p><b>MH</b></p>
<p>HT queried if member approval was required of the RTS or could some authorities abstain or not give approval. MH advised it would be beneficial to achieve a consensus. ML considered the need for each MPA to endorse the final RTS which may be difficult to fit into the tight timetable. Hence, consultation period extended to <u>10</u> weeks.</p>	<p><b>RTS</b></p>
<p>It was agreed MPAs should consult any community councils and/or liaison groups in their area as appropriate on the draft RTS. All comments received to be forwarded to SB/IT.</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p>
<p>RB recommended that the draft RTS (as revised) should go out for consultation and this was agreed.</p>	<p><b>SB</b></p>
<p><b>7. <u>AOB</u></b></p>	
<p>CW questioned the current situation regarding the RTS in N. Wales. SM advised a full SWRAWP meeting/Member Forum had been convened for the 11<sup>th</sup> December, but the process was slightly behind compared with S. Wales.</p>	
<p><b>8. <u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p>	
<p>Date to be confirmed.</p>	

--	--