

**Minutes of the South Wales Regional
Aggregates Working Party
Wednesday 13th April,2011.**

<u>Present: -</u>	<u>Action: -</u>
<p>Martin Hooker (Chairman) – Consultant Steve Bool (Secretary) – Bridgend County Borough Council Mark Frampton (MPA) Neville Morgan (Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council) Hugh Towns (Carmarthenshire County Council) Martin Lucas (Vale of Glamorgan Council) Ruth Amundson (Caerphilly County Borough Council) Ruth Henderson (City and County of Swansea) Stuart Williams (Cardiff CC) Malcolm Lawer (MPA) Joanne Smith(WAG) Sue Martin(WAG) Julie Kirk(PCNPA) Graham Dorrington(Ceredigion CBC) Liam Jones(Vale of Glamorgan Council) Gary Nancarrow(Sec. NWRAMP/Flintshire CC) Ivan Skidmore(RWENpower) Ken Hobden(MPA) Owen Jones(RCTCBC) Martin Davies (Mons CC) Adrian James (CCW) Ceri Morris (NPTCBC) James Morris(WAG) Lindsay Christian(Newport CC) Adrian Wilcock(Torfaen CBC) John Cuddy(Cuddy Demolition)</p>	
<p>1. <u>Apologies</u></p>	
<p>Karen Maddock–Jones (CCW) Mark Wrigley(Crown Estate) Chris Morgan(BBNP) Mark Russel(BMAPA) Anthony Wilkes(EAW) Tony Gilman(BAA)</p>	
<p>2. <u>Minutes of the last meeting</u></p>	
<p>These were agreed as a correct record subject to:- Page 3 para 2-the word “vigorous “being deleted and replaced by “rigorous”. Page 3 para 5 the word “policy” be inserted after the word “planning”.</p>	

<p>3. <u>Matters arising</u></p> <p>Page 4.KH to forward copy of MPA position statement re national parks to SB for circulation to members.</p> <p>Page 4 MH to speak to chair of POSW re the issue of shared service provision.</p> <p>Page 5.KH has spoken to Gerry McLoughlin and the MPA are still using the econometric model utilising economic parameters and national survey data to forecast demand.</p> <p>It was noted there had been no NCG meeting for some years.</p>	<p>KH</p> <p>MH</p>
<p>4. <u>AM2009</u></p> <p>SB outlined the current situation regarding the national 4 year minerals survey.The final results still need to be ratified by Ministers but it is anticipated the final report will be issued at the end of April.As the SWRAWP AS2009 relies on this survey for the baseline data, the issue of AS2009 has been delayed accordingly.</p> <p>The officers and operators who participated in the survey were thanked for their efforts by SB at a time when survey overload seemed to be the order of the day.A number of headline figures from the survey were relayed to the group.It was noted the general decline in sales seemed to be continuing with no apparent recovery in sight.</p> <p>A significant figure of 3mt exports from Wales to England is evident in the survey.In comparison,the exports in N.Wales has decreased which indicates a noticeable change in past trends.</p> <p>ML considered S Wales and also Wales as a whole should be proud of the level of exports which was boosting the economy.It was acknowledged the export figure consisted mainly high psv sandstone but this high quality end product generated a lot of waste.Producers had therefore to sell this waste as well as the main product to remain economically viable.It was noted high psv quarries such as Cwm Nant Lleici and Gore were able to maintain their sales better than others at a time of economic depression.</p> <p>MH questioned whether or not the continued export of hard rock to England was a politically sensitive issue but it appeared not.The lack of reserves in England for this rock type was noted but despite the lack of permissions being granted for new reserves the market demand was being satisfied if not by the UK, from other sources.</p>	
<p>5. <u>North Wales RAWP update</u></p> <p>GN stated that since Roger Bennion’s retirement he had been carrying out the NWRRAWP secretarial duties on a temporary basis.The market situation in N Wales was depressed with many quarries running at only 50% capacity.Interestingly,however,blacktop sales still seemed to be buoyant but this could probably be accounted for by the need to carry out extensive road maintenance after the extreme cold weather conditions.He also cited an example of a cement manufacturing operation which had been set up in a time of recession.This was only running at 30-50% capacity and gave an indication of the poor demand</p>	

<p>at present.</p> <p>There also seems to be more mobile plant utilised at present which provides more flexibility in the provision of output. With regard to the "Making the Connections" initiative, Andy Farrow (chair of NWRRAWP) was keen to support the project to promote Flintshire as the lead authority. This shared service provision includes several authorities and may include Powys in due course. Such contracts may run for 3-4 years with current staffing levels running at 7/8 persons. The aim of the service is to achieve consistency of approach in all areas of mineral planning by experienced staff.</p> <p>The next meeting of the NWRRAWP is on the 17.5.11 where the AS2009 survey will hopefully be approved.</p> <p>6. <u>South Wales RAWP update</u></p> <p>SB confirmed the AS2009 would be issued shortly including the necessary amendments to update table 2 (Vale figs) and Tarmac amendments.</p> <p>The SWRAWP website has been visited by 5000+ people over the last 6 months. A shared service provision for the S Wales and N Wales RAWP's website has been sought to reduce costs. This has been agreed by the website provider.</p> <p>The secretary has held several meetings with WAG, and also steering groups responsible for driving forward site waste management plans in Wales.</p> <p>Whilst attempts have been made to obtain robust data for c and d waste this has been difficult to achieve since the EAW waste interrogator has waste codes which include mixed waste. There is no specific code for waste which substitutes solely for aggregates. SM expressed concern the in-house waste team at WAG were working on the basis the codes could give an accurate idea of how much waste was being used for aggregates. SM to explore further with Andy Rees' waste team.</p> <p>KH confirmed the industry were anxious to promote recycling and were actively engaged in promoting the activity. However, the level of recycling has grown to a level which suggests the bulk of this material is being utilised.</p> <p>It was agreed SB would ask the EAW to clarify the position regarding the codes to see if these could be refined to produce data suitable for the RTS review. It was also suggested the tonnages of c and d material going to landfill could be obtained to confirm how much was being disposed of over and above that used for blinding purposes.</p> <p>JC advised very little c and d waste material was being taken to landfill as it was more economic to leave it on site as crushed/screened waste for use as fill, or capping, or private drives (but not sub base)</p> <p>MF drew attention to the fact that the general public had pre-conceived ideas about the impact of recycling operations and did not consider all such operations, even in existing quarries, were worthy of support across the board. He cited examples where such proposals had been opposed in quarries where such operations would normally be acceptable in principle.</p>	<p>SM</p> <p>SB</p>
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7. RTS review-looking forward

MH introduced the paper produced by SB. This paper was prepared to initiate discussion on the RTS review and set out the current issues that needed to be addressed by the SWRAWP in accordance with the WAG contract. In essence, this contract called for a strategy to be prepared by the beginning of 2012, to inform the review of the RTS. KH responded by stating that MTAN1 was quite clear in that the RTS will be reviewed every 5 years. It is therefore a duty for the RAWP to carry it out or the SWRAWP to recommend an alternative action. MF was concerned there would be a delay in the delivery of the next RTS and ML reinforced this view by stating the 5 year review was appropriate.

SM considered the industry response was understandable but questioned whether or not a full re-write of the RTS was necessary or alternatively a review of the important figures to underpin the apportionment exercise.

It was agreed a sub-committee be convened to discuss this matter further and the composition of the committee be the same as previous. MH confirmed a sub committee would be convened in the summer and the minutes/outcome reported back to the full SWRAWP.

8. Industry report

KH advised the MPA produce regular sustainability reports as set out on the MPA website.

MH enquired as to how MPA discussions with CLG were proceeding on the localism agenda. KH confirmed the current government were more receptive and mindful they must deliver and be open to ideas. There was also better access to Ministers. It was evident there was strong political support for a continued managed supply for aggregates. KH referred to the report of the committee for the abolition of the regional spatial strategy and in particular the fact several recommendations refer to the retention of a managed supply. No decision has yet been taken on the future of RAWP's.

9. WAG update

MH advised this was the last meeting SM would be present before her retirement and wished her well for the future. He thanked her for her valuable and enthusiastic contribution to mineral planning over a significant number of years. In response, SM thanked all present for their assistance with her work which had been much appreciated. With regard to the ALSF, she confirmed there is continued support for the fund in Wales despite the demise of the fund in England. However the number of applications for funding has dropped significantly particularly from local communities. At present the current applications are:-

Kaya sands-the testing of a dry sand manufacturing process with origins in Japan to ascertain if sand can be produced in larger quantities in quarries for commercial use. A steering group is being set up to progress this and there are links with Cardiff University.

SB

Constructing Excellence in Wales have two projects that have been ongoing for the last two years..Namely, Recycled Aggregate for Minor Schemes(RAMS) and the Testing of Recycled Aggregate for Minor Schemes(TRAMS).20 operators are involved and their products are tested to determine the quality of product.Cuddy demolition are involved .Early results suggest the existing specification(SHW) for main highways has been set too high.A new specification is therefore required and the project will look to develop this as part of the main objectives set.CEW will be organising a series of workshops throughout Wales to present the specification and the supporting evidence to local authorities and private sector highway engineers.

Minerals mapping update-the resource maps have been published but this issue of the safeguarding maps have been delayed still further.The delay is attributable to further consideration of the review of para 13 of MTAN1.A target has been set for the end of the year.

Future research projects.There is a budget for future geological research such as sand resources in the S.West and N.E. Wales.

ROMP fees.There has been no action to continue consideration of this issue by WAG.Chief Planning Officers have however been forwarded planning delivery grant correspondence and under the theme “capacity to deliver” it includes a provision for planned mineral planning expenditure.

Attention was drawn to a current consultation on the rationalisation of WAG directions(call-in/departures).This essentially asks if the current regs are fit for purpose.

Another publication”The lost lands of our ancestors” has been issued which explores the submerged landscapes of prehistoric Wales.

JS

10.Marine update

JS confirmed she was working on an update of the table circulated previously to fill in some updated info.North Midlle Ground and Nobel banks have both been recently approved.JS to forward revised list to SB for circulation.

SB referred to information provided by Mark Russel of BMAPA which noted the new UK marine Policy Statement was published last month.This document sets out the high level objectives for the sustainable use of UK seas to guide future licensing and marine planning and includes sector specific statements,including one for marine.

WAG have met with the Crown estates and they have indicated they will take steps to increase their participation in RAWP matters.

11.Quarry restoration

SB referred to the partnership between Cemex and the RSPB which highlighted good practice for protection/enhancement of nature conservation interests.A launch was recently attended at Taffs Well quarry where a national biodiversity strategy between the partners was advertised. |Surrounded by beech woodland,a designated SAC,home to bats,peregrine falcons and rare spiders.This initiative was lauded by

<p>the outgoing Environment minister Jane Davidson at the recent MPA annual seminar. KH referred to “Nature after “Minerals” supported by the MPA. Unfortunately the NAM does not cover Wales but tKH has recommended to the NAM team that this be carried out in Wales.h</p> <p><u>AOB(1)</u> HT gave an update on the emerging POSW Minerals and Waste topic group guide on mineral and waste conditions.He advised the guidance was produced to ensure consistency and to assist less experience dc officers with a base document for framing conditions.He did stress,however,it was not definitive and the sub group has finalised a draft after consultation with CCW/EAW and the planning inspectorate.The document will be reviewed every 6 months at the normal POSW meetings.MF expressed surprise industry had not been consulted on the document.HT responded by saying CCW and the EAW had been consulted as they were statutory consultees.Consultation may be considered with the industry in the future but this may set a precedent which may generate the need to consult a wider audience including the public.In view of the intended purpose of the document and its status it was considered this may be counter productive.KH confirmed industry would be receptive to a request for consultation. MF queried if there was any distinction in using the guide for new and ROMP applications,particularly the possibility of compensation being payable on conditions which affect working rights.HT advised ROMP applications were referred to in the guide and this would be kept under review.</p> <p><u>AOB(2)</u> MH referred to an enquiry made by the Environment Agency involved in a coastal flood defence scheme near Borth.In this instance,the only source of readily available blockstone had been found to be France.This generated some concern that local markets could not be found and it appeared unsustainable to transport the rock such distances. MH wondered if quarries may keep a stock of such stone so that it may be available to provide local schemes. ML responded by advising the cost of carrying stock would be prohibitive and it would also be difficult to avoid unfair competition by companies if one company was involved.</p> <p>The question was raised as to whether or not this warranted a research project. KH felt the onus was on the Environment Agency to provide the stock and they should stockpile it at their expense.MH to refer industry response to EA.</p> <p><u>AOB(3)</u> SB raised the issue of up to date aerial imagery and wondered if it would be possible to generate ALSF support for new aerial photograph</p>	<p>MH</p> <p>SB</p>
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<p>coverage of aggregate sites in Wales.It was agreed SB would request each LA to confirm how up to date the coverage was per authority.</p>	
<p><u>AOB(4)</u> KH drew attention to central government who had circulated a schedule of legislation imposing regulatory duties on LA's,including planning.With regard to the ROMP review process there were questions as to whether or not it should be retained or not.This would determine if the burden of the process i.e EIA's etc,was worthwhile and if it warranted a change or indeed abolition.It was acknowledged some adverse effects of quarrying such as noise and dust were controlled by existing legislation enforced by Public Protection departments in local authorities.</p> <p><u>AOB(5)</u> MF questioned if the Vale were imposing pre-application charges on ROMP applications.ML questioned whether or not fees were paid for pre-application discussions.These questions generated a round authority update on this issue together with the planning delivery service as follows:-</p> <p><u>Swansea</u>:Pre app advice free.</p> <p><u>Pembs NPA</u>:Pre app advice free.Planning services under review.</p> <p><u>Carms</u>-pre app charges under consideration.Mineral assistant seconded to other post.</p> <p><u>Ceredigion</u>-Pre app charges in place.Planning budget cuts thought not to be significant.</p> <p><u>Vale</u>:Pre app charges in place.Job evaluation/restructuring to be undertaken.Minerals officer retiring-junior officer to take over some duties(site monitoring)</p> <p><u>RCT</u>:Budget has not changed service provision to date.Pre app advice free.</p> <p><u>Mons</u>:reviw of system in placeDC and Bldg Control being combined. Pre app advice free.No plans to do so.</p> <p><u>Neath</u>:No serious budget cuts.Pre app charging under consideration. Site monitoring undertaken-some sites warrant 8 visits.</p> <p><u>Caerphilly</u>:No serious cuts envisaged.No redundancies. Pre app advice not charged.Monitoring visits not charged to date.</p> <p><u>Cardiff</u>:7% cut on planning budget.3 senior posts gone.Merger of strategic plan/dc.Pre app charging in place since 1.4.11 No charge for site monitoring.</p> <p><u>Newport</u>:Restructuring undertaken and experienced officers lost.Pre app advice free.No monitoring.</p> <p><u>Torfaen</u>: 80 redundancies across the Council.Temp jobs released.Pre app advice free.No monitoring undertaken.</p> <p><u>Bridgend</u>.:No significant impact on services since major restructuring in 2009/10.Pre app charging in place since 1.4.11.All site monitoring undertaken with charges.</p> <p><u>Date of next meeting</u> Wednesday 5th October,2011.10am Bridgend</p>	

Innovation centre.	
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