

**Minutes of the South Wales Regional  
Aggregates Working Party Sub Committee  
RE: National Parks / AONB's, Innovation Centre, Bridgend  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

<b><u>Present:</u> -</b>	<b><u>Action:</u> -</b>
<p>M Hooker – (Chair), Consultant  S Bool (Secretary), Bridgend County Borough Council  R Millard – Minerals Products Association (MPA)  K Maddock-Jones, Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)  C Warburton, Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)  J Smith, Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)  C Morgan, Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP)  K Flanders, City of Swansea  J Kirk, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA)  H Towns, Carmarthenshire County Council  M Davies, Monmouthshire County Council</p>	
<p><b>1. <u>Apologies</u></b></p>	
<p>S Martin, Welsh Assembly Government</p>	
<p>The main purpose of the meeting was outlined and reference was made to the background paper produced by SB.</p>	
<p>RM confirmed the MPA had insufficient time to circulate the paper to key MPA members and therefore any views expressed were personal. Full MPA views would be forwarded in due course.</p>	<b>AII / RM</b>
<p>Reference was made to a report on building stone produced by the National Museum and it was agreed CM could circulate this for information. It was noted a National Museum representative would be speaking at the next POSW meeting.</p>	<b>CM</b>
<p>RM advised Blaenonneu quarry was considered to be an important asset value and simple closure did not take into account the wider implications for socio-economic interests. This quarry is subject to the stalled ROMP regulations and a request for scoping must be carried out by 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010. KMJ advised this may present a resource issue to CCW.</p>	
<p>KF questioned the status of Barland quarry near Swansea. It appeared this quarry would be subject to a periodic review and there have been issues of the status of the current planning permission with the owner's agent.</p>	
<p>It was confirmed there were 18 no. stalled ROMP applications in total.</p>	

<p>RM queried whether or not the MPA had been notified as the industry only have 3 weeks to respond. LA's have 8 weeks to give WAG what issues the scoping report should cover.</p>	
<p>It was confirmed the MPA had been consulted on the issue of the regulations on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Operators have 16 weeks to submit a draft Environmental Statement, unless a longer period is agreed between the Local Authority / developer.</p>	
<p>In relation to the <u>policy</u> situation, WAG confirmed there was no intention to revise MTAN1 or MPPW in the immediate future.</p>	
<p>It was noted the Coal Authority had been visiting all LPA's to outline new procedures / content of their statutory consultation response.</p>	
<p>Under paragraph 4.2. of SB's paper entitled 'current research' MH questioned if the research being undertaken in England on mineral extraction in National Parks / AONB's could be extended to Wales. SB to check but it was agreed to await the issue of the English research first.</p>	<b>SB</b>
<p>CW advised there had been research carried out on the subject of the meeting by NCC / English Nature. CW to confirm date of issue.</p>	<b>CW</b>
<p>It was agreed the main purposes of the National Park legislation (Sandford principle) should be added to SB's paper before circulation to MPA / SWRAWP members.</p>	<b>SB</b>
<p>RM queried in paragraph 4.3 the reference to the MPA not including information on the relinquishment of permissions in its recent Sustainable Development Report 2009 and felt the industry had in fact been very active in promoting sustainability as part of its operations.</p>	
<p>CW asked if the MPA were able to prepare a paper on sustainability. This could possibly be in response to the English research. RM advised it was his intention to call an urgent meeting with key members to try and take things forward. CM asked if he could attend as an observer and RM confirmed he would consult with his members. This course of action was acknowledged to be essentially in the spirit of Action 1 / Paragraph 8.</p>	<b>RM</b>
<p>MH questioned the scenario whereby all of the current reserves in the National Park / AONB's may disappear. RM acknowledged this would lead the MPA to explore alternative sources outside of the Parks but questioned if the same material would be available. The geology in South Wales is complex e.g. Pembrokeshire, and good quality rock is difficult to find or may be contaminated with shale.</p>	
<p>MH considered there should be some research to address the consequences of PO's and also geological exploration of sites both</p>	

within and outside of National Parks / AONB's.

CW advised the new Mineral Resource Map for Wales when published would assist in some ways but it would not give the quality of product.

Under Paragraph 8.2 of the paper, point 2, it was reiterated LA's are unable to meet the risk of significant costs arising from the issue of PO's or similar. Attention was drawn to a recent ruling where it was determined the cost of taking action by an LA can be taken into account when making a decision on orders.

WAG were asked if they were prepared to meet any legal costs but CW advised the necessary procedures were clearly set out in MPG14. There was a suggestion smaller quarry operators were more liable to be subjected to by LA's but there was no evidence presented at the meeting to support this.

Regarding, Point 3, Paragraph 8, HT felt financial considerations would dictate any decision on whether or not to pursue a suspension / discontinuance order. It was felt LA's may feel the need to carry out some comparable exercise, but in the current recession many LA's were unable to employ consultants to help them out. KF felt LA's may just have to employ a basic / 'gut' feeling on how to proceed with each case.

RM considered modern environmental controls via the imposition of conditions could be instrumental in controlling impact. Most officers acknowledged, however, the power of LA's was very limited to 'cosmetic' effects which for the most part did not control significant impacts such as quarry deepening etc. There also appears to be several statutory consultees who are either not mindful of each others remit, or if they are, hold conflicting views on proposals. This makes it difficult for LA's to balance or resolve disparate views on key issues.

The society's need for minerals was re-emphasised and the need for effective landbanks. Industry often find it is difficult to secure a planning permission and perhaps there is a need for governments to produce a strategic plan for minerals. In view of this situation, MH questioned if controversial applications ought to be determined by the IPC? There was no consensus on this issue.

Regarding, Point 4, Paragraph 8 (re. the need for a clear policy statement), HT highlighted the recent call-in applications for sand and gravel extraction at Trefigin / Pantgwyn sites in Pembrokeshire NPA. The reasons for call-in were as follows: -

- (i) the proposals raise issues which are greater than local importance;
- (ii) the assessment of alternative supplies has not been researched thoroughly; and
- (iii) the proposals conflict with National Park policy.

<p>In view of the existence of a Minerals Forum in England, there was a proposal one may be appropriate for Wales. After some discussion, there did not appear to be a clear consensus but it was acknowledged the opportunity for dialogue with key stakeholders such as the SWRAWP sub / com did provide a positive forum for discussion. As to the funding of such a forum, it was confirmed the CBI fund the forum in England.</p>	
<p>It was confirmed the minutes of the meeting would be referred to the full SWRAWP on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010.</p>	<p><b>SB</b></p>
<p>RM reiterated the minutes should clearly state the MPA's position at the start of the minutes. He also indicated he may be relinquishing his role with the Wales MPA this year and if so, Ken Hobden was likely to take over.</p>	<p><b>SB</b></p>
<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <p>The dates of the Trefigin / Pantgwyn sand and gravel inquiry were confirmed as the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010, inclusive. SB to check with WAG regarding attendance for all / part of the session.</p>	