

SOUTH WALES REGIONAL AGGREGATES WORKING PARTY

Minutes of meeting – 10am on Monday 27th March 2017, at The Innovation Centre, Bridgend

Present:

Llinos Quelch – Carmarthenshire CC (Chair)
Hugh Towns – Carmarthenshire CC (Secretary)
Justin Waite – Blaenau Gwent CBC
Murray Alston - BAA
Ruth Amundson – Caerphilly CBC
Ffion Morgan – Carmarthenshire CC
Graham Dorrington – Ceredigion CC
Ruth Henderson – CC Swansea
Nick Horsley - MPA
Mark Frampton – MPA
Jon Scott - NRW
Lindsay Christian –Newport CC
Gary Nancarrow – North Wales RAWP Secretary
Richard James – Pembrokeshire Coast NPA
Bob Smith – Pembrokeshire CC
Rob Anderson – The Crown Estate
Adrian Wilcock – Torfaen County Borough Council
John Raine – Vale of Glamorgan C
Joanne Smith – WG

1. Apologies:

Tom Boothroyd – Carmarthenshire CC
Stuart Williams – Cardiff C
Chris O'Brien - Merthyr Tydfil CBC
Malcolm Lawer – MPA
Mark Russell – MPA
Mike McGee - MPA
Martin Davies – Monmouthshire CC
Carl Comerford – Neath Port Talbot CBC
Owen Jones – Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC

2. Minutes of the SWRAWP Meeting 5th September 2016

The minutes were accepted as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. South Wales RAWP Update

The AS2014 Report has still not been published due to the MPA position that it should not be published until the Inspector makes his report on the Vale of Glamorgan LDP available. The Report is likely to be available at the end of April 2017 so the AS2014 and consequently the AS2015 Annual Reports will not be published until May 2017 at the earliest.

The Annual Survey forms for 2016 will be issued in April 2017.

Carmarthenshire County Council will be submitting a Grant Bid before the end of March 2017 to provide the Technical Secretary for the SWRAWP. There are some minor variations in the bid this time to reflect the work required on the RTS Review and also a change in emphasis in relation to secondary and recycled aggregates from collection of data to investigating why data collection is so difficult.

5. North Wales RAWP Update

Overall sales are improving, particularly in limestone. This seems to be driven by the growth of Greater Manchester and Merseyside although there is some housing growth in North Wales.

There are some major projects on the horizon – the upgrading of the A494/A55 By-pass, Wylfa B Nuclear Power Station and potentially a Tidal Lagoon around Colwyn Bay (although the lagoon is less certain).

The next NWRAWP meeting will be held in late April/early May 2017.

6. RTS 2nd Review

The Technical Sub-Group met on 23rd September 2016. The Group identified 6 questions (circulated at the meeting) that were fundamental to the RTS Review. It was envisaged that these questions would be put to a consultant appointed by WG. However, the WG research money for 2017-18 was fully committed and no funding was available to appoint a consultant. The MPA expressed its disappointment that there was no funding available for such an important piece of the MASS in Wales given the amount of money the industry pays in Aggregates Tax together with the demise of the ALSF.

LPA members asked for some additional background to explain how the questions came about. The Secretary agreed to provide additional information (in consultation with the MPA) which would be accompanied by a request for the views of individual Local Planning Authorities within

14 days. The Technical Sub-Group would meet to consider the questions and the responses in May with a view to producing a Background Paper for the consideration of SWRAWP members. The paper would be circulated for agreement and if necessary the Chair would call a Special Meeting of the SWRAWP to discuss any specific issues.

It was felt that the RTS should also look at an element of future proofing so that it could provide for changing circumstances before they happened and insure against under provision.

7. WG Update

WG are currently consulting on 'Reforming local government: Resilient and renewed' with a closing date of 11th April 2017.

Planning Policy Wales is being reviewed in the light of the wellbeing goals contained in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. It is not anticipated at this stage that there will be any fundamental change to policy in relation to mineral planning but the document will be different and will be set in a different context. Policy will be more integrated and will look at minerals alongside other topics and make the connections to other policies more specific. It is anticipated that the revised PPW will be consulted upon towards the end of the summer. Any comments on current policy would be welcomed but comments would need to be made within a month.

A Call for evidence in relation to a National Development Framework for Wales has just closed. The policy team are currently considering the responses to that consultation. The next stage is a consultation on options which is due to take place in September.

The National Natural Resources Policy has been drafted and is being considered by the Cabinet. Ministers want to ensure that the document reflects the cross-cutting strategies of the WG.

Consultants have been engaged in a piece of work in relation to DNS. It was noted that there has been no consultation with the SWRAWP.

8. NRW Update

NRW are re-organising internally to geographically reflect Area Statement Areas. Each area would have an Area Manager and the re-organisation is likely to have completed by the end of the summer. There will be 6 areas.

NRW have carried out pilot Area Statements and these have been considered to have gone really well. It is intended that Area Statements will be uniform in terms of themes although each area will have to reflect the characteristics of that area. It was felt that the SWRAWP should be more involved in the production of Area Statements given the minerals were an important natural resource and the Secretary was asked to write to NRW to express that view.

NRW are attending all Public Service Boards. The environment doesn't appear to be high on the agenda at this stage but that could change.

The MPA reported that they had met with NRW in January and were pleased that NRW were committed to the SWRAWP and to involvement with LDP's and Development Management matters. The Secretary was asked to include an NRW Update as a standing item on the Agenda.

9. MPA/BAA Report

The MPA has published its 5th Annual Survey of Members (AMPS2016). A key figures to note is that between 2001 and 2014 there has been a 44% reduction in aggregate reserves in England and Wales. The MPA will continue to monitor replenishment rates but the replenishment of landbanks is critical.

It is now taking 15 years on average from finding a site to delivering the site on the ground and 3 years of that is the planning application process.

The MPA is concerned that there is significant change ongoing in Wales but much of it is not 'joined-up'.

The outlook for the aggregates industry is improving but since 2008 many sites have been mothballed and productive capacity has been reduced. The industry therefore doesn't have the flexibility that it once had to respond to changes in demand. If major projects were to get the go ahead it would have significant implications for the supply of aggregates in South Wales. The Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon would swallow the entire concrete production of Wales for example. It was pleasing to note that the Hendry Review did talk about the supply chain but too often the supply chain is not considered early enough in the planning process.

There is a consultation on a proposed UK Mineral Strategy ongoing with a closing date of 1st April 2017. Responses from LPA's were encouraged.

There were some strange assumptions being made in Local Aggregate Assessments just across the border. Worcestershire County Council envisaged all sand and gravel for HS2 would come from the South East of England although the data for the South East would suggest otherwise.

10. Marine Dredging Update

The 2016 Tender Round is completed. Limited interest was shown in the Bristol Channel and Welsh Waters. The next Tender Round is due in 2018.

The portfolio document for 2015 has been published.

The consideration of the application for the Culver Sands extension is ongoing. NRW are taking the lead.

A Licence has been issued to Severn Sands for 7 million tonnes of material from North Middle Ground.

A new compliance system is being rolled-out over the next 18 months.

There has been a 70% take-up in new production agreements with the industry.

The industry is moving forward with a degree of optimism. New markets have been identified and there is investment in new vessels.

11. Secondary Aggregates

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

The contribution that secondary aggregates was making to minerals supply was discussed. The view expressed was that whilst not all potential secondary aggregate was being utilised, largely due to the owners apparent reluctance to market it, the amount of secondary material available to the market was being used.

12. LDP Update

Pembrokeshire Coast NPA – preferred strategy consultation to be undertaken in May 2017.

Blaenau Gwent – Full Review was commenced in November 2016. A Review Report is due to be published in June 2017.

Newport – adopted in January 2015, working on 2nd AMR.

Vale of Glamorgan – Matters Arising Changes out to consultation until 31st March 2017. Inspectors Report expected at the end of April 2017.

Swansea – Plan on Deposit last summer. Some additional evidence work has been undertaken since then but hoping to submit the Plan to WG in May/June 2017.

Caerphilly – Members resolved to seek to withdraw the Draft Replacement LDP in July 2016 due to concerns about housing numbers and infrastructure capacity. They also resolved to seek to work with neighbouring LPA's to seek a more strategic approach as part of the Cardiff City Deal.

Torfaen – will have to commence a review of its LDP this year to have a plan in place on its expiry in 2021; however, work may be delayed because of the potential of producing a Cardiff SDP instead under the City Deal.

Bridgend – don't expect to review before 2017 but are unsure what impact potential Strategic Development Plans will have on the timeframe. The LPA do not have the resources to do abortive work on an LDP if there is an SDP. SPG is currently being developed.

Ceredigion – a new Manager will be in place at the beginning of April. Working on the 4th AMR but also working towards a review. Delivery Agreement expected in September.

Pembrokeshire – lost their Manager to Ceredigion so low on staff numbers. LDP review to commence after the Local Government Elections in May.

Carmarthenshire – Review Report to be published in 2017

Powys – the LDP Examination is ongoing.

Merthyr Tydfil – working towards the Preferred Strategy of the 1st Replacement LDP in summer 2017. Deposit Summer 2018 and Adoption December 2019.

13. Major Projects Update

The Hendry Review reported in Autumn 2016 and concluded that Tidal Lagoons should be supported. A positive outcome on the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon is expected. This will need vast quantities of material whether that be imported or not. The project envisages constructing 100m of the lagoon outer wall per week.

The City Region Project will require large quantities of aggregate for the infrastructure improvements.

14. Any Other Business

There was some discussion around the issue of safeguarding of minerals. This is an issue that will need to be picked up during the RTS Review.

15. Date of next meeting – 10am on Monday 25th September 2017 at the Innovation Centre, Bridgend