

**Minutes of the South Wales Regional
Aggregates Working Party
Wednesday 17th September 2008**

<u>Present: -</u>	<u>Action: -</u>
<p>M Hooker (Chair) – Consultant S Bool (Secretary) – BCBC R Smith – Pembrokeshire CC C Williams – Pembrokeshire CC B Hollington – Welsh Assembly Government H Towns – Carmarthenshire CC N Bateman – Carmarthenshire CC R Amundson – Caerphilly CBC G Dorrington – Ceredigion CC M Russell – BMAPA K Hobden – QPA R Millard – QPA G Bishop – WET M Wrigley – The Crown Estate M Lawer – QPA J Kirk – PCNPA R Henderson – City and County of Swansea M Lucas – Vale of Glamorgan Council M Davies – Monmouthshire CC J Smith – WAG Planning Division S Martin – WAG Planning Division L Christian – Newport CC A Wilcock – Torfaen CBC O Jones – Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC M Frampton – QPA</p>	
<p>1. <u>Apologies</u></p>	
<p>T Gilman – BAA A Wilkes – EAW K Maddock-Jones – CCW I Thomas – NWRAMP S Packer – Powys C Morgan – BBNP S Williams – Cardiff CC N Morgan – Neath Port Talbot CPC</p>	
<p>2. <u>Minutes of the last meeting – 27th February 2008</u></p>	
<p>Agreed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>3. <u>Matters arising</u></p>	

<p>None.</p> <p>4. <u>RTS update</u></p> <p>SB confirmed only Torfaen CBC had decided to abstain from endorsing the document. Torfaen are, however, seeking funding from the Aggregates Levy for collaborative working.</p> <p>The revised RTS foreword was endorsed and it was agreed the RTS would be forwarded to the WAG. The first Minister will then be consulted to 'agree' the document.</p> <p>SM confirmed it was the intention to include a foreword in the NWRAMP RTS to ensure a consistent approach. It was agreed SM would forward a copy to RM.</p> <p>It was agreed 2 hard copies and a CD would be forwarded to each MPA. It would also be made available on the SWRAWP website. For non-MPA members, it was decided to forward a CD only.</p> <p>MH expressed his gratitude to all those who had contributed towards the production of the RTS.</p> <p>5. <u>Annual Survey</u></p> <p>SB referred to the problems of collecting survey responses within a reasonable timetable. Reference was made to the AMRI (Annual Mineral Raised Inquiry) survey which was mandatory but did not include all of the information requested for the AS.</p> <p>In order to elicit a quicker response from operators, SB sought views on whether or not a revised survey form and / or survey timetable should be explored. It was agreed the format of the form could be improved but this was not essential. It was, however, recommended the survey should be commenced in March rather than January and the response date be given as the end of June, rather than April, to tie-in with the AMRI response date. QPA considered this would assist the industry in making two returns (AMRI and AS) at the same time.</p> <p>MH asked KH if there were survey problems in England. KH responded by confirming the delay in survey returns was always an issue but no action had been taken to address it as such. KH offered to contact his members and put it higher up the QPA agenda. He did consider the first paragraph of the form P1 ought to be rewarded regarding the issue of confidentiality but this issue may be the subject of charges in the 6 months.</p> <p>ML considered the submission of an electronic form sent straight to the RAWP secretary would speed the process up. MPA officers were</p>	<p></p> <p>SM</p> <p>SB</p> <p>SB</p> <p>KH</p>
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<p>asked for their views but the consensus was the survey process with officers despatching the forms should be retained.</p> <p>SB confirmed the annual survey statistics received per authority were not to be used for development plan purposes. Any data for the purpose should be obtained direct from the operator in accordance with the QPA / RAWP protocol.</p> <p>With regard to the use of a standard mineral application form, it was agreed SB would raise this matter at the next RAWP secretaries meeting in London in November. It was agreed an electronic form would be beneficial.</p> <p><u>6. Standard of restoration</u></p> <p>SB reported the concerns raised at the last POSW Minerals and Waste Topic Group meeting about this issue. It was evident several officers reported difficulties with securing final restoration on a range of sites. Arising from discussion at this meeting, WAG requested details of problem sites to be sent in. Regrettably only details of one site was received which made assessment difficult.</p> <p>SM advised she and David Harding (QPA) had discussed this matter and he felt the recent takeovers / mergers were to blame.</p> <p>RM felt the industry would be dismayed and very concerned to find there were such problems across the board. He reiterated the QPA's intentions to ensure high quality restoration to maximise the benefits to all interests. It was considered detailed evidence was required to confirm if this was just a problem in Wales.</p> <p>ML felt formal site monitoring should pick up any problems as a matter of routine but others felt this may not get to the root cause of the problem.</p> <p>It was agreed all MPA's ought to forward details of any problem sites with a view to SB producing a short summary for WAG and QPA Wales. Any outcome may warrant further research.</p> <p>KH confirmed the QPA guarantee fund was in place to ensure restoration by default but there had never been any claims against the fund (there was a limit of £0.5m per site).</p> <p>ML advised there had been one restoration award to a site in Carmarthen (Carmel Woods) and there may also be a problem of interpretation over the point at which a site had reached completion. Poor weather conditions over the last few years may also be to blame in some circumstances. Other reasons may be that modern biodiversity action plans may warrant a 'do nothing' strategy to maximise benefit to biodiversity.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>SB</p> <p>ALL / SB</p>
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7. Validity of reserve figures

MH referred to a number of appeal cases in North Wales where discrepancies were highlighted. Such reserve figures were at variance with annual survey returns which generated obvious concerns the annual reports were inaccurate.

RM referred to the issue of quality and highlighted the sand and gravel reserves in the Usk Valley where drilling revealed quite marked differences.

The application of a factor for waste was used by MF to illustrate his point that the net workable tonnage should be quoted as the reserve figure, not the in situ tonnage. Even detailed boreholes cannot determine the final reserves as they may not be totally representative of the reserves.

ML identified Health and Safety issues as a possible restriction which could affect reserves.

HT confirmed in a number of cases the operational profile of the quarry was not reflected in the restoration profile. There was in effect a mismatch.

SM referred to the DCLG mineral supply research which highlighted a significant difference in AS returns when compared with the 4 yearly AM surveys.

ML considered this difference may be due to a re-calculation of reserves carried out on a 5 year basis.

CW drew attention to the calculation of reserves under a primary plant and questioned whether or not these should be included in the overall reserve. It was considered such matters needed to be assessed on a site by site basis.

It was agreed SB would raise this issue at the forthcoming RAWP's secretaries meeting in London in November. He would raise the issue of whether or not the minutes of these meetings could be placed on the SWRAWP website.

8. SWRAWP Website

SB reported the number of 'hits' the website had been subject to (1070 over a 3 month period). He confirmed funding for this would cease in 2010 and the WAG should fund it as part of the RAWP contract rather than rely on the goodwill of an industry association. SM agreed to consider further.

SB

SM

<p>9. <u>Sub-regional planning for minerals (voluntary co-operative working)</u></p> <p>The possibility of setting up a RAWP sub group to explore the feasibility of such working was discussed. There was general support for such a group.</p> <p>SM considered this was a development recommended by the report on the Evaluation of the RAWP's produced by Capita Symonds.</p> <p>HT reiterated Carmarthenshire CC were already working with the National Parks on issues such as monitoring.</p> <p>The representation of the group was discussed and RM requested the QPA should be actively involved. The possible composition of the group was discussed and reps of the WLGA / POSW / QPA / BAA / WAG / MPA's were thought to be reasonable.</p> <p>MPA officers were advised to contact their Chief Officers to inform them of such developments. In theory, a specialist team of mineral officers would deal with applications, policy and monitoring, giving expert support to all MPA's to underpin the lack of mineral expertise in the majority of authorities.</p> <p>KH referred to the presence of recognised courses for mineral and waste planning.</p> <p>LC noted there were very little jobs in minerals per se and the specialised nature of the work generates a lack of interest.</p> <p>It was acknowledged Member training was required and the WAG are pursuing this issue.</p> <p>SB / MH to confirm representation on the sub-group in due course.</p> <p>10. <u>Date of next meeting</u></p> <p>March 2008(date to be confirmed)</p> <p>11. <u>AOB</u></p> <p>(1) MH expressed his thanks and those of the group to CW for her significant contribution to the work of the RAWP and mineral planning in South Wales. CW is to 'retire' shortly but may continue with some mineral related work.</p> <p>(2) SM gave an update on the stalled ROMP situation (new regulations). Regulations were issued in England in 22/07/08 but separate legislations is being issued in Wales. Regrettably there has been significant delay in the completion of the regulations due to the</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>SB / MH</p> <p>SB</p>
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<p>need for legal input and other priority work. At present, guidance notes are being prepared which may need further consultation. The regulations are very complex and are not easy to understand so guidance notes are essential.</p>	
<p>The number of stalled sites is 18. A target has been set for the end of December 2008. SM was able to confirm they may not mirror the regulations in England.</p>	
<p>KH identified the blame for delays in dealing with some stalled sites was not just down to industry. A number of delays were attributable to working agreements between both the industry and MPA's.</p>	
<p>(3) SB referred to a challenge to Staffordshire County Council's decision to release only restricted info / data under the FOI Act / EI Regs 2004. The final decision on this matter could have significant implications for the release of RAWP data held in confidence in the future.</p>	<p>SM / SB</p>
<p>(4) MR asked if WAG had been able to find monies in their research budget to fund a review of the Bristol Channel Study. SM advised she would pass on an update to SB for circulation.</p>	<p>SB</p>
<p>(5) It was noted marine developments were not on the agenda and this should be added to future meetings.</p>	
<p>(6) AW requested the industry to consider if there were any new potential quarry sites in Torfaen / Monmouthshire as he was pursuing collaborative working with other authorities in accordance with the allocated apportionments under the RTS.</p>	<p>RM RM</p>
<p>(7) RM confirmed that as from the 5th September 2008 the QPA had merged with British Cement and * as one trade association. No name for the joint association had been agreed to date. There would be no anticipated change of business or personnel.</p>	
<p>(8) SM advised the BGS had made a bid to the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for funds to provide geological mineral resource maps for Wales (also including safeguarding areas). A decision should be known by the end of September. If approved, SM would be seeking reps. for a steering group.</p>	
<p>(9) GB advised the current WET contract funded by the Aggregates Levy Fund expires in March 2009. This contract has covered secondary and recycled aggregates and has supported the RAWP's work in Wales. He confirmed his report on the arisings in 2007 should be available by the end of October.</p>	
<p>(10) SM reported that in North Wales, a new RAWP contract had been agreed until March 2009, with Ian Thomas (National Stone Centre).</p>	

<p>Thereafter, interest had been expressed by a local authority to take on the contract.</p> <p>(11) SM confirmed that a prohibition order issued in respect of Bryngwyn quarry (Denbighshire) had gone to a public inquiry where the issue of the possibility of re-working had been debated. It was important to note the Inspector <u>upheld</u> the decision to grant an order giving a clear message that any evidence produced needed to be more robust than the Ewenny case.</p> <p>(12) SM advised that prohibition order served in the BBNP had been deemed invalid. No costs were awarded to the landowner as no Public Inquiry had been held.</p> <p>(13) 1 App Form. David Payne has been in discussion with several authorities to determine if a standard form for minerals should be available electronically. SM to discuss with POSW Minerals and Waste Topic Group on the 12th November.</p> <p>(14) D. Harding of MPA to receive copies of agenda/minutes in future.</p>	<p>SM</p>
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