

**Minutes of the South Wales Regional  
Aggregates Working Party  
18<sup>th</sup> January 2006**

<b><u>Present: -</u></b>	<b><u>Action: -</u></b>
<p>M Hooker (Chairman) – Bridgend County Borough Council S Bool (Secretary) – Bridgend County Borough Council H Towns – Carmarthenshire County Council C A Williams – Pembrokeshire County Council / NPA R Amundson – Caerphilly County Borough Council D Canney – Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council M Lucas – Vale of Glamorgan Council A Bull – Powys County Council D Cameron – British Geological Survey C Morgan – Welsh Assembly Government S Martin – Welsh Assembly Government D Pollock – QPA M Lawer – QPA (Tarmac) M Frampton – QPA (Hanson) K Seaman – QPA (BMAPA) G Bishop – Welsh Environment Trust M Davies – Monmouthshire County Council A Wilkes – Environment Agency Wales J Hooker – Newport City Council G Dorrington – Ceredigion County Council S Williams – Cardiff County Council R Brown – Brecon Beacons NPA Adrian Wilcock-Torfaen</p>	
<p><b>1. <u>Apologies</u></b></p>	
<p>Karen Maddock-Jones – Countryside Council for Wales Neville Morgan – Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council David Highley – BGS Jason Golder – Crown Estates Jeremy Gibbins – NWRAWP Paul Meller-City and County of Swansea</p>	
<p><b>2. <u>Minutes of the last meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005</u></b></p>	
<p>Agreed as a correct record subject to amendments listed in para 3..</p>	
<p><b>3. <u>Matters arising</u></b></p>	
<p>On Page 3, Paragraph 8. Heading should read <u>Welsh Environment Trust</u> not Welsh Trust.</p>	

<p>On Page 3, Paragraph 8. MF sought clarification that in the penultimate paragraph the 25% referred to related to the re-use of construction and demolition waste and not secondary aggregates. It was agreed this was correct.</p> <p>On Page 4, Paragraph 11. The rate of sand extraction from Helwick Bank per year was confirmed by KS as 300,000 tonnes per annum over 15 years.</p> <p>On Page 5, CM confirmed that unfortunately no flowchart for marine sand and gravel had been produced. CM to pursue.</p> <p><b>4. <u>Chairman's report</u></b></p> <p>MH reported there had been a meeting of the NCG where the main items of discussion centred on (i) the 2<sup>nd</sup> monitoring report where there is a mis-match in the timescales of the report itself and the regional statements. ODPM are seeking to address this anomaly.</p> <p>(ii) Draft MPSI  (iii) FOI issues  (iv) AM 2005 – funding for this survey has been approved and tenders have been issued.</p> <p>Regarding the Annual Survey 2004, DP confirmed that at least one MPA in England had mis-interpreted the QPA requirements / controls over how operator responses were dealt with. There were reported delays from Cemex.</p> <p>MF indicated he would liaise directly with SB over the Hanson survey response.</p> <p>ML confirmed Tarmac returns had been submitted for primary aggregates but not slag (Neath / Newport).</p> <p><b>5. <u>Secretary's report</u></b></p> <p>SB reported the main and variation contracts were under consideration with WAG. It is anticipated the main contract will continue for a further 4 years running from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006. The details of the variation of contract from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 have been forwarded to WAG for approval.</p> <p>SB advised that Richard Hilton of the ODPM had retired in December 2005, and it would be appropriate to forward a letter thanking Richard for his contribution to the work of the SWRAWP over the years.</p> <p>With regard to the Annual Survey 2004, MPA officers were requested to chase up non-returns from operators as soon as possible. SB should be advised of any problems with the new procedure.</p>	<p><b>CM</b></p> <p><b>MF / SB</b></p> <p><b>SB</b></p> <p><b>MPA Officers</b></p>
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<p>SM confirmed there had been no interest shown by the North Wales authorities to take on the role of lead authority for the NWRRAWP. Hence, the WAG were seeking procurement from other sources.</p>	<p><b>SM</b> <b>SB</b></p>
<p><b>6. <u>RTS Sub committee</u></b></p>	<p><b>SB / SM</b></p>
<p>IMAECA protocol – SM to approve and circulate to Members asap. SB to locate protocol on website.</p>	
<p>Reserves – SB / SM to liaise regarding the responses received from MPA’s relating to Paragraph 31 MTAN1 lists. SM to forward list to QPA.</p>	<p><b>SB</b></p>
<p>DP reported the QPA Wales sub-committee was meeting next week 24<sup>th</sup> January 2006 and it would be beneficial if the lists and the critical path analysis for the RTS process was forwarded for consideration. The QPA agreed that after the meeting any information required to assist the RTS process should be provided as quickly as possible.</p>	<p><b>DP</b> <b>SB</b></p>
<p>AW requested a copy of the RTS timetable to be forwarded to him.</p>	
<p>CM emphasised the need to maintain momentum with the RTS process and questioned the delay in the consideration of the issue of reserves. MPA’s should pursue prohibition orders where necessary and finalise their lists and forward them to the WAG / SWRAWP Secretary asap. To this end WAG would write to Chief Planning Officers reminding them to respond as a matter of urgency. WAG to copy the list to the QPA.</p>	<p><b>CM / SM</b></p>
<p>Regarding Paragraph 5 (sub paragraph 3) on the timespan of the process, it was agreed <u>15</u> years was a reasonable time period as this would be comparable with the timespan of the majority of LDP’s.</p>	
<p>Regarding Paragraph 6. MH emphasised that the SWRAWP contract did not include work necessary for the SEA.</p>	
<p><b>7. <u>Minerals research</u></b></p>	
<p>The pre-meeting note prepared by SM was tabled. CW queried why the Pembrokeshire research work had been deferred. WAG acknowledged that it was a question of prioritisation of resources and the Coal TAN had been given top priority.</p>	
<p>AW questioned if any work on high psv sandstone was likely to be undertaken and reference was made to existing literature such as the Technical report produced by Travers Morgan on high specification aggregates for road surfacing materials (1993) and BGS Mineral Resources – summary of mineral resource information for development plans (1997).</p>	

<p><b>8. <u>Development Plan update</u></b></p> <p>The summary of development plan progress by authority was tabled.</p> <p>MH referred to the Coychurch sand and gravel safeguarding area High Court challenge in Bridgend. He confirmed Bridgend were advised to withdraw from the case as the defendant did not have an opportunity at public inquiry to defend his case. Bridgend had to pay costs and the Coychurch area has been removed from the UDP.</p> <p>SB agreed to produce a revised development plan summary to circulate to Members.</p> <p>CM commented that the Inspector's report on Monmouthshire's plan endorsed the WAG policy and embraced all of the issues.</p> <p>MH suggested that there ought to be an agenda item on LDP progress at the next meeting. There was acknowledgement that delivery agreements needed to be submitted for WAG approval as soon as possible as the approval period could take 2 / 3 months.</p> <p>MH questioned whether or not the LDF process in England was more advanced than the LDP process in Wales. DP considered there was little difference as public consultation seemed to be causing significant problems. Whilst professional facilitators were being used to conduct workshops, some SCI's were being delayed by huge public responses. There also appeared to be some well informed objectors. MH queried whether or not public consultation on minerals and waste ought to be conducted separately in the LDP process. SM considered this would generate significant resistance and would not be supported by WAG. However, stakeholder meetings could be held independently.</p> <p><b>9. <u>MPA monitoring of mineral and landfill permissions</u></b></p> <p>SM reported on the steering group held by WAG on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2006 to progress a code of practice for the new regulations. Issues discussed included the liability to pay and chargeable visits. It is anticipated that the draft guidance notes will be issued by the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2006.</p> <p>SM confirmed there was no requirement for MPA's to request fees. If, therefore, some authorities have very few sites they may wish to ignore the fee regulations.</p> <p>MH confirmed he had written to all Chief Planning Officers (CPO's) in Wales requesting views on whether or not a post could be created to service several authorities who have a small number of sites and / or lack of mineral expertise. It was acknowledged that any prospective contractor needed to be vetted carefully to address issues of impartiality etc. So far there had been a poor response from CPO's for joint</p>	<p>SB</p> <p>SB</p>
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<p>working arrangements.</p> <p>DP confirmed that the QPA had responded fully to the consultation process with several reservations and suggestions for improvements.</p> <p>MF confirmed the increased workload would not only effect MPA's but also the industry i.e. increased paperwork / site inspections.</p> <p>It was agreed MH would send an e-mail to collect the remaining responses from Chief Planning Officers and analyse the results.</p> <p>GD confirmed Ceredigion may not be able to give a view as they are currently the subject of a review by consultants.</p> <p>The ability of the Environment Agency to meet consultation deadlines was questioned. Would the EA be able to support / advise on the new workload as it currently struggles to cope with the existing workload ? Several members expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the EA which led to delays in processing planning applications.</p> <p>AW confirmed that the EA accepted there were deficiencies and they were under-resourced. However, the good news was that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 there would be a reversion back to 3 area teams and existing staff numbers would be boosted from 15-23 staff. Reference was made to TAN15 which had generated a considerable amount of work and hindered progress.</p> <p>MH felt that the situation may be improved if a system of prioritisation was implemented by MPA's so that more important applications were dealt with more expeditiously. AW confirmed that the EA find it difficult to ascertain what the planners feel is a high priority as this is never indicated on the planning application forms.</p> <p>Reference was also made to procedures in the GDPO and scoping opinions, which the EA have difficulty dealing with in a reasonable timescale. DP also alluded to problems in England concerning PPS25. Mineral operations appear to be prohibited in 'functional floodplain' areas whereas these areas are the most likely to source sand and gravel. The QPA have sought clarification of this guidance in the interest of common sense but none has been forthcoming to-date.</p> <p>ML highlighted the problems encountered with CCW which mirror those highlighted with the EA.</p> <p><b>10. <u>Safeguarding geological resources (hard rock) in LDP's</u></b></p> <p>Discussion took place regarding the query which originated from the City and County of Swansea concerning the safeguarding of hard rock resources. Clarification was sought as to how MPA's with limited staff / expertise could assess whether or not geological resources could be</p>	<p><b>MH</b></p>
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merit in SWRAWP submitting a letter to the Minister reinforcing the need for a continuous supply to maintain the South Wales economy.

Culver – An application has been submitted to the ODPM rather than the WAG, and is in the final stages of the determination period. This application would appear to be less contentious than others.

KS confirmed that marine sand was being transported by train into the new LNG terminal under construction in Milford Haven from South East Wales. Sand is also being transported by sea. It is evident the current markets for good quality sand is usually high but the current situation is that the market is slightly depressed which is helping to relieve the pressure.

It was noted there had been no significant progress on the Marine Bill.

## **12. AOB**

- (i) DP indicated the QPA / RTPI annual conference seminar would be held in Wolverhampton on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006.
- (ii) DP confirmed that consultation by the Treasury on the issue of planning gain was underway. There are strong industry concerns about the way in which any land tax is imposed i.e. on day 1. QPA are seeking an alternative approach and questioning aspects of valuation.
- (iii) DC extended thanks to all MPA officers for assistance with the AMRI survey.
- (iv) CW queried what impact, if any, the Government of Wales Bill would have on minerals. SM thought there would be none but it was acknowledged the Treasury had strong powers to impose sanctions which may have far reaching consequences.
- (v) CM confirmed the Coal TAN would be issued in the near future.
- (vi) As a matter of general interest, CW claimed that the largest barge in Europe (not contested) was being used in Milford Haven as a platform for the recycling of concrete for the LNG facility.

**Date of next meeting:** - 10:00 am Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2006 (Innovation Centre – same venue as this meeting)