

North Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party

Minutes of Meeting held on 12 October 2005 Mold, Flintshire.

Present.

Gareth Jones	Chair & Gwynedd
Jeremy Gibbins	Gwynedd Council (Secretary)
Chris Morgan	Welsh Assembly Government
Duncan Pollock	QPA
Paul Charmbury	AMSL
Viv Russell	QPA Wales
Steve Bool	S Wales RAWP
Gary Nancarrow	Flintshire CC
Gareth Lloyd	Snowdonia National Park
Ceri Thomas	Conwy BC
Paul Lusty	BGS
David Highly	BGS
Jo Davies	RMC/QPA
John Bradshaw	QPA / Tarmac
Jonathan Cawley	Denbighshire
John Ellis	Wrexham BC
Rebecca Huck	Wales Environment Trust
Alistair Hoyle	N West RAWP

1. Apologies

Iwan Evans	Gwynedd
Siwan Williams	Welsh Assembly Government
Basil Hollington	Welsh Assembly Government
Peter Huxtable	BAA Wales
Meryl Read	Environment Agency
Andy Farrow	N West RAWP
Chris Dobbs	QPA Wales
Tom Brown	Hanson
John Williams	Anglesey CC
Sue Martin	Welsh Assembly Government

NOTE

As temporary chair, GJ advised that IE was on long-term sick leave, having had a recurrence of the cancer he had suffered from last year.

The RAWP offered its best wishes to Iwan for a speedy and successful recovery.

Secretary reported the following changes in membership.

Ricky Carter [EA] replaced by Meryl Read

Basil Hollington [Welsh Assembly Government] replaced by Siwan Williams

Sion Roberts [AMSL] replaced by Paul Charmbury

Denbighshire [formerly Gareth Jones] now represented by Jonathan Cawley

Wrexham [formerly Bob Sheffield] now represented by John Ellis

BGS to be represented by Paul Lusty.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting.

SB reminded the Secretary that he had attended the meeting.

There were no other corrections. The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2005 were accepted.

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3. Matters Arising.

ACTIONS.

Secretary reported that nomination of members of the Political Sub-Group had been completed and the inaugural meeting set up for 9 November.

RTS - SB had forwarded documents and advice from the S. Wales RAWP RTS experience to N Wales Secretary.

Secretary acknowledged the significant help of SB.

RAWP administration; Gwynedd had considered its role as lead authority and discussions had been held with Flintshire and Welsh Assembly Government. See this Agenda item 5.

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Wrexham had been invited to nominate a RAWP representative and Rebecca Huck had now joined the RAWP for the duration of the Wales Environment Trust's work.

ODPM had kept Welsh Assembly Government informed as to the on-going exchanges between the Department and QPA over the implications of the Freedom of Information Act on statistical returns made by the industry to the RAWP / mpas. Secretary had made contact with Paul Wilcox West Midlands RAWP Secretary and had agreed an informal arrangement of exchanges of RAWP minutes for the time being.

Industry representative SH had raised the issue of the desirability of each mineral planning authority producing a list of Prohibition Order sites and reminded mpas of the need for an Annual Statement. Progress had been slow.

CM confirmed that the deadline date for action had been 31/12/04. The best that could now be achieved was the end of 2005.

ACTION

All mpas to send list of Prohibition Order Sites to the Assembly before the end of 2005, and to produce their Annual Statement.

4. N Wales Regional Technical Statement – Progress Report

4.1 Political Sub-Group.

Secretary reported that the Political Sub-Group constitution had been prepared and he acknowledged the assistance of SB in providing South Wales's Memorandum of Understanding.

The draft was circulated for information.

The Memorandum of Understanding would be sent to N. Wales Political Sub-Group members tomorrow [13th. October] with a request for observations in order that the document could be finalised at the inaugural meeting on 9 November. Both primary and reserve members had been invited to this initial meeting.

RAWP mineral planning authority members, if they have not already done so, were advised to contact and brief their elected members.

The meeting will appoint a chair, and will receive a presentation of the IMAECA study by ENVIROS.

A decision will also be made on whether the political members were to be accompanied by an appropriate officer from their authority.

CT enquired as to the relationship between the Political Sub-Group and TSG and RAWP Secretary confirmed that there was no direct relationship between the PS-G and TSG, they were both satellites of the RAWP.

SB confirmed that S Wales had decided to include officers with the political members as a matter of course.

ACTION

Secretary to forward Memorandum of Understanding to Political Sub-Group members

4.2 Technical Sub-Group.

Secretary recognised the urgent need to restart TSG meetings. Five of the original ten members had dropped out in the last 6 months. Membership of the TSG had been redrafted and reduced to 7 members in the interest of administration efficiency.

Noted that RB [former Secretary, now with Flintshire], had offered to serve on the TSG in place of GN

ACTION

Secretary to reconvene TSG meetings soonest

4.3 RTS Action; Timetable

Responses to the Draft Issues paper had been received from;

Chris Dobbs Tarmac QPA,

Wrexham

Conwy

Welsh Assembly Government – Environment Planning & Countryside

QPA

Denbighshire.

These were being addressed and a final Issues Paper prepared.

ACTION

Secretary to revise Issues Paper and take to Technical Sub-Group.

IMAECA. The software had now been installed on the Secretary's PC and, after some problems now appeared to be functioning.

Secretary outlined a number of RTS issues which had to be addressed, including;

Final Issues paper format / TSG / Options Paper / public consultation [press release / formal notices / information sheets / web site] / degree of member involvement / mpa committee reports / public parish council meetings. A brief round table discussion ensued.

GJ considered that the preparation of a RTS contents list was a high priority, with a work programme, but decisions would need to be made on the level of consultation and setting up a web site.

SB confirmed that S Wales had a web site, funded by the BAA, with an acknowledgement. It was being translated and registered.

There were no responses to GJ's invitation for sponsors for the N. Wales website.

GLI enquired as to the need for SEA in the RTS.

Secretary confirmed SEA and HIA would be required

SB had undertaken a SEA preliminary scoping exercise but had not yet had responses from EA or CCW. The IMAECA software constituted some baseline data but health and socio-economic information was still required. He had insufficient time and resources and saw a need for the SEA to be independent of the RAWP.

S Wales had decided to leave the level of consultation on the RTS to the individual mpas who would consult Community Councils as they considered appropriate.

JB asked whether the IMAECA study was part of a consultation tool

SB confirmed it was one element of the RTS.

GJ enquired of press releases in S Wales

SB none yet, to be undertaken at Final Options stage

GJ enquired as to S Wales posters, leaflets

SB S Wales TSG considered them ineffective, better to target stakeholders. Public consultation would also be needed as part of SEA

GJ enquired as to support from WAG in undertaking SEA and HIA

CM could not confirm.

SB public consultations would need clear programme and vision of what it was hoped the RTS would achieve, with a timetable. S Wales Final Options were planned for end December the Draft Options were currently out to consultation

GN expressed the need to consult Community CIs and seek opinion from adjacent RAWPs in England

Secretary confirmed that he would be meeting N West and West Midlands RAWP Secretaries.

SB confirmed his belief that the North and S Wales RTSs should be co-ordinated in terms of content and policy, to appear as an all-Wales document.

ACTION

Secretary to pursue funding for website and consider attachment to S Wales website

Secretary to produce the RTS timetable and Consultation Strategy

Secretary to continue to liaise with S Wales over RTS content and format.

5. N. Wales RAWP administration.

GJ set out the background. Gwynedd had undertaken the role of lead over the last 3 ½ years, and until the end of 2004 when the former Secretary resigned, RAWP administration had been undertaken effectively.

For a number of reasons, including pressure of work on the Chairman, failure to find a full-time replacement Secretary, and internal departmental and staff changes, Gwynedd found itself in a difficult position for continuing the lead role beyond the present contract period of 31 March 06.

Discussions had been undertaken with Flintshire to explore a potential change of lead but without positive result.

A new Secretary had to be in place by, or preferably before 31 March 06.

Secretary confirmed that he would be retiring on 31 March 06.

The need to advertise the secretaryship was becoming urgent and should be undertaken before the end of 2005 to allow a realistic period to make an appointment to be in place before 31 March. Gwynedd was reluctant to undertake the task, given its difficulties as lead authority.

Its strong bilingual policy would require them to seek Welsh speakers, the practical effect of which would be to reduce the potential number of applicants.

It was unfortunate but there appeared to be a lack of interest among the N. Wales authorities to share the secretaryship. The former Counties of N. Wales had regarded Mineral Planning as a flagship service but the new generation of unitary authorities appear to regard it more as an unwelcome burden. The Assembly would have to recognise that this is a real problem.

GN enquired whether the Assembly could undertake the Secretaryship

CM the Assembly would strongly prefer the lead to be with a N. Wales authority. It would be difficult to run from Cardiff. Consultants could be an option but would be expensive. If the industry were to step in how would mpas react?

DH enquired as to the principal RAWP tasks – Annual Report and the RTS.

SB and CM confirmed current S Wales workload

JC considered Denbighshire would consider the lead role, if Gwynedd could pass on some details

Secretary confirmed

VR saw problems of confidentiality if the industry were to take the secretaryship

CM would discuss the matter further with N. Wales authorities, including Denbighshire.

DP confirmed that if office accommodation was a problem, two England RAWP secretaries [SW & SE] worked from home

DH enquired as to a RTS ‘template’

CM confirmed that the RTS was an iterative process for which there was no particular guidance other than the objectives of Minerals Technical Advice Note 1. The bottom line was that the RTS will balance geological resources and environmental capacity to produce an apportionment to each constituent mineral planning authority

RH asked whether it was thought that the Secretaryship had to rest with a mineral planning authority. Wales Environment Trust might be in a position to consider it as an independent centrally funded organisation.

ACTION

Secretary to pass details of job description and contract to Denbighshire.

6. AM 2004

DP reported that the impasse over confidentiality and the Freedom of Information Act had been broken.

After prolonged discussions with ODPM and extensive legal advice the QPA had recognised that the mineral planning system was too important to jeopardise.

ODPM had not been able to accept the QPAs suggested system of data collection which involves the mpas passing information to the RAWP Secretary but the QPA had put forward a revised proposal in which it accepted a small risk of ‘leakage’ of information but which would allow the collection and collation of commercial information for the purposes of RAWP data.

QPA was concerned that AM information had become extensively used by individual mpas for their own forward planning purposes without the permission of the industry. In future, output and reserve information would be available to mpa’s forward planning teams only with the agreement of the individual operator.

A briefing note was being prepared for circulation setting out the QPA’s requirements. These would include;

- Statistical returns to be returned by the mpa within 2 weeks
- A guarantee given that no copies taken
- Mpas to secure the operator's consent if there is a request to reveal figures under the Freedom of Information Act.

SB returns would have to be handled by one officer

DP mpas to collate and pass to RAWP Secretary.

DH enquired how this will maintain confidentiality

DP through the returns being coded

DH there will be a need for a standard collation method, particularly for AM 05

DP confirmed that for the industry, destination data is one of the most commercially sensitive datasets, second only to reserves

DH expressed the need to design both paper and electronic collation forms.

7. Research / consultation papers

CM sand and gravel survey for n East Wales has been postponed in favour of a survey in S West Wales; much information is already available for the N East, none in the S West; the N East will be covered in the following financial year Assembly is financing BGS to complete mid/west Wales geological mapping exercise.

A coal TAN draft for consultation will be issued in the new year.

The IMAGIN Irish Sea marine sand and gravel survey is proceeding.

8. AOB

8.1 WET - Rebecca Huck gave a summary of the Trust's work. A full presentation would be given next year. The business plan was complete and first year priorities and targets. The WET aggregate website was established in June.

Priorities are construction and demolition materials, road planings and use of secondary aggregates.

8.2 Secretary confirmed that RAWP material would henceforth be distributed electronically.

8.3 JC expressed concern that the relative timings of the RTS and LDPs in N. Wales were raising Delivery Agreement problems.

Secretary saw this as a problem inherent in the inclusion of Minerals and Waste planning policy in UDPs. The mineral and Waste planning processes tended to run on their own extended timescales and that did not readily accommodate themselves to Local Plan timetables.

CT confirmed similar concerns in Conwy with their DA.

GJ each mpa, regardless of environmental capacity issues should have future aggregate output tonnages in mind.

ACTION

All authorities to contact Chair and Secretary to arrange meetings to discuss approaches to potential apportionment

8.4 Secretary was aware of a proposed S Wales Technical Sub-Group on marine aggregates. Given the potential role of secondary aggregates in N. Wales, was there a need for a Secondary Aggregates TSG in N Wales? Another Sub-Group would

consume scarce Secretary's resources. PC had been invited to join the main RAWP as AMSL's representative and to give a direct voice for secondary aggregate issues.

PC confirmed his vision of the potential role of slate in the supply of primary and secondary aggregates from N. Wales.

CM suggested that rather than set up specialised sub group, PC be seconded to the RTS Technical Sub-Group.

RH was concerned as to representation of the smaller secondary aggregate producers.

Secretary considered that WET would provide the platform for their contribution directly onto the RAWP.

GN saw the high potential of slate waste as a source of secondary aggregates.

It was agreed that PC should join the TSG.

ACTION

Secretary to action

9. Date / venue of next meeting

GJ certainly to be held before 31 March 06 to allow introduction of new Secretary

CM saw a need for a January meeting to keep RTS momentum. Two or three TSG meetings between now and then?

The next meeting Wednesday 25 January 2006 at Mold.

ACTION

Chair and Secretary to organise.