

DRAFFT

North Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party

Minutes of Meeting held on 25 January 2006

Mold, Flintshire.

Present.

Gareth Jones	Chair & Gwynedd
Jeremy H Gibbins	Gwynedd Council (Secretary)
Duncan Pollock	QPA
Paul Charmbury	AMSL
Viv Russell	QPA Wales
Meryl Read	Environment Agency
Gary Nancarrow	Flintshire CC
Gareth Lloyd	Snowdonia National Park
Tom Brown	Hanson
Paul Lusty	BGS
Mike Pender	Denbighshire
Richard Carter	Wales Environment Trust
John Ellis	Wrexham BC
John Williams	Anglesey CC
Darrel Williams	Independent Operators
Richard Hulse	QPA

1. Apologies

Iwan Evans	Gwynedd
Siwan Williams	Welsh Assembly Government
Basil Hollington	Welsh Assembly Government
Peter Huxtable	BAA Wales
Ceri Thomas	Conwy BC
Andy Farrow	N West RAWP
Rebecca Huck	Wales Environment Trust
Sue Martin	Welsh Assembly Government
Chris Morgan	Welsh Assembly Government
Steve Bool	S Wales RAWP
Jo Davies	RMC/QPA

Richard Hulse attended in place of Chris Dobbs

2. Minutes of Last Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2005 were accepted.

3. Matters Arising,

JHG reported that;

Deleted: 5

Reminders had been sent to all N. Wales mineral planning authorities regarding the need to submit to the Assembly their lists of candidate Prohibition Orders and their Annual Statement.

The Memorandum of Understanding had been forwarded to RTS Members Forum members. Copies were available on request.

The RTS Technical Sub-Group meetings had been recommenced and a revised Issues paper tabled.

Contacts and quotations had been sought and received for an RTS website.

Efforts to produce a RTS timetable and consultation strategy were on-going in conjunction with Steve Bool, S Wales.

Detail of the RAWP Secretary's job spec. had been forwarded to Denbighshire but without positive response.

Conwy had made a formal request and a meeting held with CT and the head of forward planning. No other authorities had been in contact.

PC had accepted the invitation to join the Technical Sub-Group.

4. N Wales Regional Technical Statement – Progress Report

4.1 Political Sub-Group. [RTS Members Forum]

[Members of the group had resolved that it be formally named the 'RTS Members Forum'.]

GJ The first meeting, on 9th November 2005, had been poorly attended, despite the invitation to attend the ENVIROS consultants' presentation of the IMAECA study and a buffet lunch. Only 6 of a potential 14 members attended.

Cllr. Dyfed Edwards [Gwynedd] was elected to the chair, and Cllr Gwilym Williams [Gwynedd] had been accepted as deputy.

Notes of the Technical Sub-Group of 7 November had been reported to the Forum, including the offer by the QPA Wales to prepare an industry 'position statement'.

This had been welcomed by members, although it was noted that the QPA position had since changed.

JHG members had resolved;

1. to accept the Memorandum of Understanding as presented
2. to change the name to RTS Members Forum.
3. to be allowed to be accompanied to meetings by an officer of their authority
4. that beyond an annual meeting, future meetings be called only when specific decisions were required to be made by members.

A list of members' names and authorities was available from the Secretary, as were copies of the Memorandum of Understanding.

4.2 Technical Sub-Group.

GJ The TSG had met on 6 January 2006 at which the QPA Wales had set out their modified position [as reported to S Wales the previous month]. QPA no longer considered the preparation of an industry 'position statement' to be appropriate. The matter was to be discussed at an all Wales QPA meeting just before the RAWP meeting.

VR The timescale of the S. Wales RTS and the drafting of an Options paper prompted QPA to focus on the RTS procedures. QPA were concerned as to where the required information would come from. The AM 04 and more particularly AM 05 Surveys will produce all the required information and the QPA confirms that it is happy to

cooperate in the collation and use of this information in the RTS. A formal QPA statement to this effect will be issued in a week or so.

GJ S Wales RAWP have issued a written request for information without reference to the AM surveys. Will the QPA be responding to that and will the response include N. Wales? There was concern that the new QPA position was going to impose a significant delay factor into RTS production both in North and South Wales.

DP the best information available to the industry will be the AM05 survey results, which will include all sales destinations and import / export data required by the RTSs.

VR confidentiality issues and the Freedom of Information Act remain problems for QPA members, who produce 80% of Wales's output. The QPA will clarify their overall position as soon as possible. David Hardiman is drafting a statement this week.

DP the AM 05 contract is to be let in a week or two. Forms will be out in Easter and all the results available no later than January 07, including import export figures.

GJ the Assembly will be happy to acknowledge the cooperation of QPA members, but may be more concerned at the additional delay incurred in waiting for the results of AM 05. They may require an earlier input from QPA members to keep the RTS momentum going.

DP the AM 04 survey will not give the required information, which will only be available through AM 05.

VR the QPA see this as the only way to do it. Their members critically need to examine the methodology of apportionment and need to discuss it before any draft RTS.

GJ the delay incurred by awaiting the AM 05 results will badly affect the RTS timetabling. The RTS may have to be proceed with limitations on the basis of current information and then subsequently reviewed when AM 05 data becomes available.

DP the information could be available by October 06 if one particular contractor were chosen. The ODPM official deadline is January 07

GJ is QPA fully embracing the RTS process?

VR QPA members recognise the need to be a part of the RTS process.

GJ the QPA is only part of the process, there are independent operators and the secondary aggregate sectors to consider.

DP the BAA is more relaxed about the issue of confidentiality

JHG the potential delay is disappointing and the RTS had to be moved forward. Given the limited response to the draft issues Paper, the Technical Sub-Group had been concerned as to the thoroughness of the consultation exercise. The TSG had recommended a short period for reconsultation to encourage responses from all members of the RAWP. Members should already have copies but he would circulate the draft paper next week for a further limited period of consultation until the end of February.

ACTIONS

Secretary to Contact WAG for their views regarding the inclusion or else of the AM2005 data. Do we include this information in a review of the RTS or do we wait until it is published in 2007 and therefore delay the production of the RTS?

Secretary to re-issue draft Issues Paper.

ALL RAWP members to respond to Issues Paper before end of February 2006.

4.3 RTS Action; Timetable

JHG N. Wales was following S Wales's lead on timetabling, and had been working on a critical path of its own. It was uncertain as to the extent to which retimetabling would now be required as a result of the QPA's position on AM 05. The formal response of the QPA to S Wales letter was required, and he assumed that a copy would be forwarded simultaneously to both to N Wales the Assembly.

5. N. Wales RAWP administration.

JHG reminded all of his retirement at the end of the RAWP contract on 31 March. He had been disappointed that no replacement lead authority was forthcoming from N. Wales. He had received an e-mail from CM that morning confirming that the Assembly was urgently seeking tenders from 'individuals' for a new secretary, possibly working from home.

There would also be a need to seek a new chairman, who should preferably come from the local authority side and be of chief officer level.

GN recognised that chief officer time was limited

DP confirmed that QPA preferred a chair from the authority's side.

JHG invited nominations for the position of RAWP chair from the authorities round the table, he would pass names to the Assembly, by end February please.

ACTION Secretary to remind mineral planning authorities of nomination deadline with all nominations to be provided by end of February 2006.

6. AM 04

JHG confirmed that this was underway, but no returns received yet. While it was early days it appeared that one operator's returns in particular were conspicuous by their absence.

DP If that operator was CEMEX the secretary should contact him and QPA would push.

GN confirmed that Denbighshire's returns would be handled by Flintshire and both counties' hard rock and sand and gravel figures would be merged if there were a confidentiality issue.

GN was concerned over the status of shales derived from former brick workings and which were not subject to Levy under the Act. The consensus was that the correct criterion was the end use of the material, not it's liability to Levy.

ACTION Secretary to advise QPA of recalcitrant operators.

7. Research / consultation papers

JHG the latest statement on research received from the Assembly had been appended to the agenda.

JHG referred to the IMAGIN [Irish Sea Marine Aggregates Initiative] study of marine sand and gravel resources in the Irish Sea. Information was available on the web at;

<http://www.imagin-eu.org/>

the North West Region Spatial Strategy, which had a mineral planning content at;

<http://rdsnwra.dialoguebydesign.net>

MP advised of an IMAGIN workshop to be held on 9 February in Llandudno Junction.

DP The Government has a Land Value Tax [Planning Gain by another name?] consultation paper out proposing a 20 % tax on increases in the value of land on the grant of planning permission.

ACTION secretary to circulate details of IMAGIN workshop

8. AOB

DP confirmed the QPA annual seminar for 11th May 2006 at the Wolverhampton racecourse.

MP enquired as to availability of the geological data layer in the IMAECA software. JHG confirmed his understanding that the information as contained in IMAECA was licenced only to, and therefore not distributable by, the RAWP Secretary. It was open to individual mineral planning authorities to request the data from the BGS directly, for which there would presumably be a charge.

9. Date / venue of next meeting

GJ advised that this was a matter for consideration by WAG. Was another RAWP meeting required during the remainder of Gwynedd's Administration of the RAWP contract (i.e. before the end of March 2006)? Ideally, a formal handover of the Secretariat should happen so that there is some continuity, but this seemed unlikely given the uncertainty regarding the future administration of the RAWP contract. Therefore, at present, no date or venue could be confirmed for the next meeting.

GJ and RAWP members thanked JHG for his work as RAWP secretary, under difficult circumstances, as well as for his valuable contribution to RAWP meetings over the years.